

”Human uses carefully managed”

- A critical discourse analysis of the Chagos Marine
Protected Area

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”Human uses carefully managed” – A critical discourse analysis of the Chagos Marine Protected Area

Författare

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Sammanfattning

Det stora skyddade marina området som etablerades 2010 runt Chagosöarna, även kallat Brittiska territoriet i Indiska oceanen (BIOT), har lett till en konflikt som sträcker sig över naturskydd, kolonialism, suveränitetsdispyter och inte minst de mänskliga rättigheterna för de landsförvisade Chagossianerna som på 1970-talet förlorade sitt hem. Genom att applicera en Foucauldiansk inspirerad kritisk diskursanalys utforskar och undersöker denna studie hur förhållandet mellan människa och natur porträtterades under och efter skapandet av Chagos havsreservat. Från ett politiskt ekologiskt perspektiv med hjälp av Foucaults teori om biomakt och territorialisering kastar denna uppsats nytt ljus på en miljöåtgärd som ansetts vara en framgångssaga hos vissa, medan andra ser den som ett mörkt kapitel av nykolonial geopolitik och brott mot mänskliga rättigheter. Slutligen applicerar jag Tim Ingolds politiska filosofi som berör konceptet *glob* och *sfär* för att diskutera konsekvenserna av en miljöskyddsdiskurs som vill separera människan från naturen.

Abstract

The large marine protected area (MPA) declared in 2010 around the Chagos Archipelago, also known as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), has led to a conflict in the thick of environmental protection, colonialism, sovereignty claims, and the human rights of the Chagossian people that once were exiled from the islands in the 1970s. By applying a Foucauldian inspired critical discourse analysis, this study interprets and examines how the nature/human relationship was portrayed during and after the creation of the Chagos MPA. Applying theories and concepts from political ecology and Foucault's idea of biopower sheds new light on a conservation effort argued as a global environmental success by some, and a geopolitical social justice disaster by others. Finally, this thesis applies Tim Ingold's philosophical concept of the *globe* and *sphere* to discuss the implications of inclusion or withdrawal from nature.

Nyckelord

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Keywords: large-scale marine protected areas, political ecology, biopolitics, social justice, territorialization, critical discourse analysis, chagos marine protected area

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1. Introduction

Over 500 million people in developing countries directly or indirectly depend on fishing for food and livelihood (FAO 2017). More than three billion people rely on fish as their source of protein. Sustainable management of these fish stocks will become critical as global population and demand for protein sources rise. In natural sciences, there is no debate about how valuable our marine ecosystems are (PAME 2015; Long, Charles & Stephenson 2015; FAO 2017). Overexploitation of marine resources, shipping, pollution, ocean acidification and climate change related phenomena put pressure on marine systems and threaten their future (Long, Charles & Stephenson 2015). As a response to the need of safeguarding our oceans, following globally agreed targets, the creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) have for decades arisen as a conservation policy — often justified in utilitarian terms with conservation of biodiversity and fish stocks serving the needs of the global population. Vast areas have been placed under protection as nation states announce ever larger MPAs (Leenhardt et al 2013). This trend has led to suspicions that states might abuse this conservation tool for the extension of geopolitics to serve other purposes than saving the environment (Caron & Minas 2016). Large marine protected areas (LMPAs) in particular provide cases for further understanding the politics of territorialization of the oceans. States can enter into partnerships with global public-private networks and through this process create new governance at sea (Gruby et al 2015).

Despite the rapid increase of LMPAs around the world there are still many knowledge gaps that need to be understood. The human dimensions - political, social, cultural and economic - of establishing a large protected area have to be properly addressed for a MPA to achieve long-term success and address social justice as well as conservation. LMPAs have been debated to be more cost efficient than smaller ones, but with that comes problems such as enforcement, monitoring and legal authority (Christie et al 2017; Davies et al 2017).

There has been a long standing debate around the policy decisions made by the UK in the middle of the Indian Ocean (Harris 2014). The large marine protected area declared in 2010 around the Chagos Archipelago, also known as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), has led to a conflict in the thick of environmental protection, colonialism, sovereignty claims, and the human rights of the Chagossian people that once were exiled from the islands in the 1970s (Sand 2012). The islanders were removed by the British government after allowing the United States to build a strategic military base on the largest island in the archipelago, Diego Garcia. Furthermore, the archipelago was separated from Mauritius during

questionable undertakings in 1965, three years before independence was given to Mauritius by the UK in 1968, an action that Mauritius claims breached the UN resolution prohibiting the breaking up of colonies prior to independence (Bowcott 2017). The resettlement of the original inhabitants remains an ongoing dispute alongside the sovereignty claims as a coastal state mainly regarding fishing and mineral extraction rights by Mauritius against the UK (Sand 2012). The proclamation of the Chagos MPA, at the time, the largest marine reserve of its kind, has led to a trilemma where the UK deployed environmental conservationist strategies together with the support of marine scientists and large NGOs to assert power of a postcolonial territory, possibly masking military purposes in the name of global environmental benefits. The hasty creation of the MPA further complicated the exiled Chagossians' ability to ever return home while simultaneously ignoring Mauritius' rights to consultation regarding the design of the MPA under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Caron & Minas 2016).

The Chagos MPA, with its complexities of high biodiversity, numerous stakeholders and a colonial history, has become an ethical and highly politicized conflict. The case sheds light on the issues of territorialization regarding marine reserves (Caron & Minas 2016), discourses on environmental conservation and the idea of withdrawal and exclusion or participation and inclusion of the human/nature relationship (Jeffrey 2013). The main objective of this study is to critically examine the environmental discourse and arguments used in the Chagos case that ignored and overlooked important social, political and historical issues. Seeing and understanding how humans were portrayed and valued in relation to nature by specific actors may help to reveal asymmetrical abuse of power between the involved stakeholders. The Chagos MPA exemplifies many problematic geopolitical and social aspects of ocean conservation (Christie et al. 2017), and so the broader aim of this analysis is to add to the research that considers human dimensions in large-scale marine protected areas. The research questions that I have focused upon in this thesis are:

- How was the nature and human relationship portrayed in the conservation discourses used during and after the creation of the Chagos MPA?
- From a political ecological perspective, who are the scientific experts that dictate the discourses?
- Who bears the cost of the Chagos MPA? Does this framing consider the colonial history at work and to which actors does the discourse legitimize power?

2. Background

2.1 Marine Protected Areas

Marine protected areas (MPAs) can increase the marine biomass, promote biodiversity and help fisheries of the world become sustainable. If MPAs are managed correctly they can protect critical ecosystems as well as preserve cultural and historical heritage for coming generations (MPAtlas 2018). In the last couple of years the number of MPAs have steadily increased, with large-scale marine protected areas (LMPAs) dominating the figures; only since 2000, the areas covered by MPAs have seen a tenfold increase going from a total global cover of 0,7% to 6,35%; covering 23 million km² (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2016). LSMPAs, defined as around 100,000 km² or more in size, have been established all over the world. Some have been declared to protect overseas territories, such as in the United States, while in the South Pacific Ocean, some Island-states protect their entire national waters as LMPAs. Of the total global coverage of MPAs, about 70% of these protected areas can be defined as LMPAs (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2017; Wells et al 2016; Christie et al 2017). In 2010, the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) updated the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, to include the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for the period of 2011-2020 (CBD 2017). The targets have established a goal of setting aside at least 10% of global coastal and marine areas for protection by 2020 (Christie et al 2017). The targets call for the need of integrating an ecosystem-based approach that protects biodiversity in all large development practices. MPAs do not only play an important role in protecting biodiversity, but also in promoting sustainable development (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2017).

2.2 The Chagos MPA

The Chagos Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the Chagos Archipelago, also referred to as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), is one of the largest MPAs in the world. When the British Government established it in April 2010, it was boasted as the world's largest of its kind, a conservation legacy with a no-take zone covering 640,000 km² (MPAtlas 2018). It was and still is, recognized as a globally important and unique environment that needs to be preserved for the present and future generations. However, this 'pristine' environmental refuge has also been an area challenged by territorial disputes, colonialism and the deportation of indigenous inhabitants (Harris 2014; Jeffrey 2011; De Santo 2013).

The Chagos Archipelago, consisting of seven coral reef atolls and more than 60 individual tropical islands, became populated during the latter parts of the 18th century as European colonialism expanded in the Indian Ocean. Chagos was administered as part of the colony of Mauritius (Jeffrey 2011). France became the first country to exploit the islands around the archipelago using slave labor mainly from Madagascar and East Africa (Snoxell 2008; Jeffrey 2011). Britain seized the islands from France in 1810 under a treaty that handed over Mauritius, Seychelles and other small islands in the area including the Chagos Archipelago. Slavery ended in 1835 and was replaced by a labor system where the people living on the islands became workers for the plantations. With time, the plantations were passed on to private companies and managers of these companies eventually started governing the islands. Workers were continuously brought over from the neighboring colonies of Mauritius and Seychelles, and by 1935 the permanent populations on all the islands kept rising (Snoxell 2008).

During the 1960s, the Cold War was in full bloom, and the US was searching for a location to establish a new strategic military base in the Indian Ocean. With the archipelago's perfect location right in the middle between East Africa and Southeast Asia, the Americans set their sights on Chagos. The problems being that the Chagos islands belonged to Mauritius, on their way to gaining independence from the UK, and the 2000 inhabitants living on the islands (Snoxell 2008; Jeffrey 2011). When Mauritius gained independence in 1968, part of the negotiations resulted in a questionable deal that separated the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius. The UK bought the plantations and slowly started to remove locals, calling them a 'transient populations of workers' rather than natives — although many had been born on the islands and lived there for generations. Labeling the inhabitants temporary workers served the dual purpose of rendering the territory as uninhabited and not having to report it to the UN as a colonial territory. The UK split the archipelago away from Mauritius and declared it an overseas territory called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). A year later the UK signed a contract with the US allowing them to start building a military base on the largest island Diego Garcia, at the time still housing about half the archipelago's inhabitants (Jeffrey 2011; Snoxell 2008).

During 1965 and 1973 the cleansing of the local population took place. First, the strategy was to deny access to islanders returning from trips to Mauritius or Seychelles. The coconut plantations were shut down and animals belonging to the inhabitants were slaughtered. The last groups of families that refused to leave was rounded up and forced on a ship to Mauritius. With no compensation and the difficulties of adapting to the Mauritian

society, the Chagossians' life in exile turned into one filled with hardship, poverty and illness. The population living in Mauritius finally received some financial compensation from the British government in 1982; however, not all, and the ones living in Seychelles were left empty-handed (Jeffrey 2011). These events have since been an ongoing dispute of human rights and several court appeals, with NGOs supporting the Chagossians and themselves fighting for their right to return. In 2012 the European Court of Human Rights rejected their case vs. the UK as inadmissible since the Islanders had accepted financial compensation and had therefore renounced their claims 30 years ago (Vidal & Owen 2012).

The Government of Mauritius has in parallel to this been claiming sovereignty over the BIOT since the 1980s with the latest legal dispute resulting from the British declaration of the Chagos MPA. Mauritius never interpreted the undertakings in 1965 as a loss of their sovereignty rights over the archipelago, but merely a lease of the territory to the UK for defense purposes under the compensation of 3 million pounds. For the UK to establish the world's largest marine protected area without their consent, or recognition as a coastal state over the territory, was seen as a violation of their sovereignty rights. On December 20, 2010, Mauritius took the UK to court under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The arbitration did not go in favor of the UK, and the Tribunal saw the MPA as incompatible with UNCLOS (Appleby 2015).

The Chagos MPA comes from two separate legislations; first, the UK announced an 'environmental and preservation zone' that covers everything within 200 nautical miles from the state's territorial water. In April 2010, the British government told the BIOT Commissioner to announce a full no-take MPA, a month before the national general elections (Appleby 2015; Jeffrey 2011). A full no-take zone equals a complete ban on all types of commercial fishing and destructive activities (Leenhardt et al. 2013). British foreign secretary David Miliband said that the MPA would not impact the UK's obligations to return the archipelago to Mauritius when it was no longer needed for defense purposes, and also that the decision in no way would interfere with the previously mentioned future human rights case of the Chagossians. The UK claimed this was purely an environmental act, following their duties of preserving biodiversity. The MPA has been contested by critics as a disguised way of strengthening their sovereignty in the area, protecting the US military base and complicating resettlement for the exiled Chagossians (Jeffrey 2011; Sand 2011; Harris 2014). A WikiLeaks cable that surfaced at the end of 2010 points to other intentions rather than the purely environmental ones that are still today publicly argued. A conversation between the British

political counselor Richard Mills and the Secretary of State in Washington revealed how the BIOT Commissioner writes about the MPA. Concerning how it will continue to ensure that Diego Garcia stays isolated: “He said that the BIOT’s former inhabitants would find it difficult, if not impossible, to pursue their claims for resettlement on the islands if the entire Chagos Archipelago were a marine reserve.” (WikiLeaks 2018, ¶1). The leak also stated that the US does not need to worry about environmental and military priorities colliding, but instead closing the area as an MPA will ensure that all access is restricted except for scientific research (Jeffrey 2011; De Santo 2013).

Before the announcement of the MPA, the British Foreign Common Office (FCO) arranged a consultation document presenting the case. Scientists, environmental NGOs, individuals, and politicians were urged to respond to whether to establish the MPA as a full no-take reserve or not. The document only showed three options, all of which were no-take MPAs (FCO 2009). Mauritius boycotted the consultation all together as they thought that it bypassed bilateral negotiations between Mauritius and the UK, and that consultation processes should have waited for their approval. The Chagossian community was asked to respond, and most of them rejected the proposal entirely on the basis that it could interfere with resettlement (Jeffrey 2011).

From a natural science perspective, The Chagos Archipelago has high biological significance. As the only protected area in the Indian Ocean, the MPA serves to safeguard the unique flora and fauna surrounding its reefs and islands. Sheppard et al. (2012) recognize the wrong-doing of evicting the Chagossians 40 years ago, but writes that part of the marine environment’s recovery and success has been because the islands are unpopulated. Global pressures from pollution, population growth and overfishing require that we set off large areas for conservation to restore threatened fish stocks and indeed if the Aichi targets are to be met, the Chagos MPA may play an essential role (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2017).

3. Theories and concepts

For this study, I have chosen to use Norman Fairclough's approach and model for critical discourse analysis (CDA) in combination with an explicit focus on power and politics inspired by a Foucauldian analysis. These two approaches to discourse analysis complement each other: a Foucauldian analysis is primarily focused on questions concerning the broader understanding of a discourse — the macro level, while the more linguistically oriented approach investigates the so-called micro level (Pechtelidis & Stamou 2017; Bergström & Boréus 2000, p 358). Michel Foucault, a French philosopher and social theorist, wanted to understand how people position themselves in large-scale conflicts and social practices (Parker 1992). Since critical discourse analysis focuses on studying the empirical material thoroughly to identify topics and themes, and thereafter examining the text from different angles using linguistically analytical tools (Parker 1992), I argue that this method is appropriate for studying the explicit and implicit variations of language used around the creation of the Chagos MPA. Furthermore, it can be useful for highlighting if and how conservation and territorialization are closely linked and reveal asymmetrical power dynamics between actors. By adopting a political ecological lens, and thus accepting that protected areas are inherently political as a policy tool (Adams & Hutton 2007), my primary concern was to understand how the human nature relationship was portrayed. Ideas of nature as pristine — as something that humans should withdraw from — have long been a subject of investigation for political ecologists (Escobar 1999). To further discuss the implications of the prevailing Western views of human-nature dichotomy in more philosophical terms (Ingold 2000, p 217), I applied Tim Ingold's perspective of the *globe* and the *sphere* that grounds its ideas in a phenomenological and human-ecology school of thought (Knudsen 1998).

3.1 Political ecology

From a political ecologist's perspective, any type of action aimed at preserving biodiversity, through the establishment of closed off protected areas, is naturally political (Adams & Hutton 2007). Political ecology consists of a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches occupied in the relationship and interactions between how nature is understood (Adams & Hutton 2007; Bassett & Peimer 2015; Bryant and Bailey 1997). Political ecology, in a Foucauldian sense, should be viewed as a discourse (Bühler 2014). A

discourse that arranges itself around objects such as populations and nature, manifestos and text, law, scientific knowledge, institutions and concepts connected to politics and the economic system, i.e., sustainability or ecosystem services (Bühler 2014). The interdisciplinary field of political ecology emerged in the 1970s as a critique of Neo-Malthusianism (Adams 2012), and has since aimed to explicitly investigate and explain linkages and logic between the economic system, environmental policy, and the ecological consequences. Political ecologists base their general ontology mainly on Marxist theories of political economy (Adams 2012). Marxist ideas had two fundamental concepts. Firstly, Marx held a materialist explanation over an idealist one. He argued that society changes as production and the social relations that govern production and consumption of goods change. Secondly, he defined capitalism as the extraction of surpluses from nature and human labor (Gwynn 1998). This means that political ecologists see the systems that govern the use, degradation and conservation of nature as structured into a broader social engine — they do not just happen but are a result of political and economic processes (Adams 2012).

Since protected areas can restrict and control common natural resources and access to large areas, political ecologists feel that more often than not, these domains also become spaces of conflict. Conflicts will result in various patterns of how resource management and development takes shape (Bassett & Zimmer 2003; Neumann 2015). The use of biodiversity in the name of creating protected areas in terrestrial and marine environments should be in conservationist terms seen as a surrogate for *nature* (Neumann 2015). Political ecologists think that how we interpret nature (in society) has serious implications for how certain policy tools become the norm (Adams 2012). Protected areas, Adams & Hutton (2007) argue, reveal a dichotomy of human society and nature that is rooted in the Western worldview. To fully understand the modern politics of conservation from the Global North, one must consider both colonialism and the expansion of capitalism towards the Global South. Traditional forms of fortress conservation demand the separation and withdrawal of humans from the non-human world (Neumann 2015). The control and rationalization of nature can be traced back to European imperialism from the 16th century. Governance of nature has since been built on the idea that we can understand, control and skew nature for the benefit of people. The command of nature has moved from the complex interactions of local inhabitants, wildlife and resources, to a narrower idea of productivity and management aligned with capitalism (Harvey 1978; Adams & Hutton 2007). The idea of nature as pristine (Chagos ¶129) has its origin from the enlightenment thinking (Adams & Hutton 2007). The notion of nature as pristine that would best exist in its natural state and untouched by humans paved the way for

controlling many areas in colonial Africa, setting them aside as protected from humanity. These parks would become a place where Western society could come and rediscover nature as an unspoiled 'Eden,' at the cost of the expelled locals (Neumann 2015). This very Euro-American idea of producing wilderness has since largely legitimized the removal of indigenous people from their homelands (Adams & Hutton 2007; Rangarajan & Shahabuddin 2009).

Adams & Hutton (2007) claim that the modern state still does this in a way that simplifies the actual complexity of the situation. The Chagossians, evicted from the islands in the 1970s, were promised a new and better life, but instead suffered from hardship (Mann & Malkin 2000). Displacement by the creation of protected areas do not only include the people living inside its borders, but also the restriction of access for people living outside the area. Mauritians who lost their rights to traditional fishing (Chagos ¶463) around the Chagos archipelago generates economic loss and 'involuntary restrictions from access' — as the Worldbank calls it (Adams & Hutton 2007).

Political ecology does not claim that conservation in itself is wrong. Conservation can speak for the minorities and incorporate their values and ideas into suggested policy. Or, they could be allied with a top-down agenda that place minorities on the bottom of the consultation process (Adams 2012). The ideas of nature that fit the needs and rights of governing authority, such as the UK, can risk creating unequal power relations that exclude social dimensions (Adams & Hutton 2007). The very nature of knowledge is one factor to consider; actors might understand knowledge differently, whereby they see the environment differently (Adams 2012). Whose knowledge becomes evidence and whose knowledge is accounted as not suitable? Narratives about the environment often contribute to strengthening authority rather than being authoritative in themselves (Bassett & Peimer 2015). Bran Büsher (2015) highlights how the rhetoric in conservation and development can have "anti-political" tendencies. Planners of protected areas might use technical and bureaucratic language in an attempt to depoliticize decisions that are fundamentally political.

3.2 Biopolitics and biopower

Foucault depicts biopower as a power that enables life (Taylor 2014). This type of power emerged during the 18th century and replaced the old rights over life, also called sovereign or juridical-power (Biermann & Anderson 2017). Sovereign power acts mainly through actions of deduction, not only by its right to take away life (by death) but also as a

power to subtract services, wealth and products (Taylor 2014). The agents of this juridical power are institutions such as law, government and the police (James 2011). Biopower, or the power to give life, works the other way around and instead of subtractive could be called productive (Taylor 2014), or as Foucault put it, establishes the right to “making live and letting die”:

“Beneath that great absolute power, beneath the dramatic and somber absolute power that was the power of sovereignty, and which consisted in the power to take life, we now have the emergence, with this technology of biopower, of this technology of power over "the" population as such, over men insofar as they are living beings. It is continuous, scientific, and it is the power to make live. Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die.” (Foucault 1976, p.247)

Biopower aims to make life more productive through frequent administration, statistics, controls and regulations (Taylor 2014). Foucault outlined two distinct forms of power under the term biopower: disciplinary power and biopolitics. Disciplinary power works on the individual level, and biopolitics manages populations (Biermann & Anderson 2017). The two could be argued to work in conjunction for governing life. Biopolitics manages life through measurements and control over biological processes, for example, mortality and health (Taylor 2014), while disciplinary power acts on the individual level as the person internalizes the norm created by the state or institutions via their biopolitics (James 2011). Humans will self-regulate according to the norm, and an example of that would be the production of scientific knowledge working to discipline society and control how biopolitics regulate and governs life (Biermann & Anderson 2017).

Since life has to be optimized through biopolitics, threats to the human race or society must be under constant surveillance. In the case of biodiversity loss, which threatens both livelihood and the future of the global commons, biopolitics will continuously try to make judgments about what life should be supported and which has to be removed (Büscher 2017). Cavanagh (2014) argues that we can see biopower at play in the way governments encourage environmental awareness and stewardship towards its citizens. Scholars have begun to examine how conservation and conservation discourse is biopolitical: Even if Foucault’s

theory focused on humans only, the argument is that these theories could help in understanding the regulatory interplay of the human and non-human populations in conservation projects (Fletcher 2010; Biermann & Anderson 2017; Cavanagh 2014). The theory is that when humans categorize and structure the natural world using biopolitical tools, the way humans are considered in relation to those techniques, or what Foucault calls subject positions, becomes the norm. Biopower acts over multiple scales between humans and the non-human world affecting both human populations and nature. The sovereign power that can seize and control life using bare force is one kind, and a more subtle type would be the one of biopower where a specific hegemony and mentality can have consequences for our relationship to other humans and nature (Robertson 2015). As conservation efforts often stem from an asymmetrical valuation of life, where some lives take priority over others thus “making live or letting die”, applying the theoretical idea of Foucault's biopower provides a different angle in which a researcher can evaluate specific types of discourses and techniques where this is pronounced (Biermann & Anderson 2017). In that light, this theory provided more a point of departure for my study without specifying precise analytical tools.

3.3 Territorialization

Sack (1983) defines territoriality as “*the attempt to affect, influence, or control actions, interactions or access by asserting and attempting or enforce control over a specific geographic area*”. An area can be a territory at times but also cease to exist; therefore territories need constant maintenance. They are a means for controlling and influencing a place and can assert power of people and relationships within that zone. Sack argued that territoriality belongs to the terminology “social construct” as they are not an object but a product created from interaction and conflict, thus connected to social relations (Elden 2010).

Territorialization has long been an essential concept within the field of political ecology. Neumann (2015) describes it as a centralized authoritative act where states take control over nature and people. When states declare and separate an area for conservation, they also create an explicit duality of nature and the non-nature in what Neumann (2015) calls internal territorialization.

Conservation can shift the management, control, and ownership of an area from local to state owned when extending its authority over a territory (Vaccaro, Beltran & Paquet 2012). Marx viewed territory as property and that the relationship between the earth and

property was settled through the violent or peaceful claims of possessions of land (Elden 2010). Studying different claims for territorial sovereignty reveals how nation-states operate. Territory as a word has a particular connotation with fear and violent conflict. Elden (2010) argues that making closed spaces could be inherently considered aggressive as it involves inclusion or exclusion where a breach of territory becomes offensive. Foucault suggests that we should not view territories as mainly geographical entities but rather as first and foremost juridical-political ones (Elden 2010; Vaccaro, Beltran & Paquet 2012)

Conservation efforts of the oceans as well as terrestrial spaces provide cases for examining and understanding territorialization (Neumann 2015). Marine protected areas (MPAs) become spaces for complete exclusion, and Harvey (2003) argues that this should be seen as an accumulation done by expropriation. As a part of conservation practices, the policing state of the MPA can territorialize previously weakly protected zones and make them more strictly protected. Another way MPAs can territorialize an area is through so-called re-territorialization; where claims of a territory are made, it can proclaim the waters as belonging to the state rather than a territory of several actors (Chmara-Huff 2014). Mansfield (2005) says that territory and state relationship has changed, the territorial state is not gone, but have changed its power strategies. A territory is changeable, fluid, geographical and in some sort of constant flux (Elden 2010). How then does conservation discourse and the human and nature relationship to the environment reflect territoriality?

3.4 Globe and sphere

Ingold (2000) is concerned about the impact of the image of the globe in contemporary debates about the environment. Even if the globe has long existed in geopolitical terms, he suspects that its use as a representation of the environment is fairly recent. We live in a time where states, institutions, scientists and policy-makers tell us that the environment is under a large unprecedented threat, where climate change can make large areas of the Earth uninhabitable (Ingold 2015). He does not deny this threat or try to underestimate it. He, however, questions whether what we call “environment” in contemporary policy and scientific discourses is one that people, or any animal for that matter, have ever inhabited (Ingold 2015). From a phenomenological approach to perception, Ingold sees the environment as something one has to sense to appreciate, while the modern worldview’s version of the environment becomes something we can barely only imagine (Ingold 2015).

The implications of this is a presented world that differs grossly from our lived experience, one which we can only interpret through categorization, measurements and observations displayed to us in maps, images and graphics (Ingold 2015). This modern global view of the world, is a colonial one that greatly distances itself from the one which humans relate to. From first standing in the center, what Ingold (2000) refers to as a spherical perspective, (Fig.1A) humans become increasingly suspended away from it (Fig 1B). This discourse of a global environment has the opposite effect of reconnecting people to nature but rather communicates a process of separation; we become as he puts it “exhabitants rather than inhabitants” (Ingold 2000; Ingold 2015).

Even if we accept responsibility for the *global* environment perspective, it is hard for people to feel that they belong (Ingold 2015). So how should we then respond to the forecasts of science? Ingold does not suggest that we should ignore what the natural sciences tell us but focus on closing the ever-growing gap between the lived environment and the currently dominated projected version of it (Ingold 2015). Current scientific knowledge and inhabitant knowledge occupies two poles in a hierarchy of power. What policy-makers would call a top-down situation with science on the top and inhabitants at the bottom. Science itself is not the problem, but the institutionalized co-option of science and powerful interests is (Ingold 2015). It presents us with the idea of a preformed surface waiting to be occupied, to be colonized first by living things and later by human (usually meaning Western) civilization (Ingold 2000).

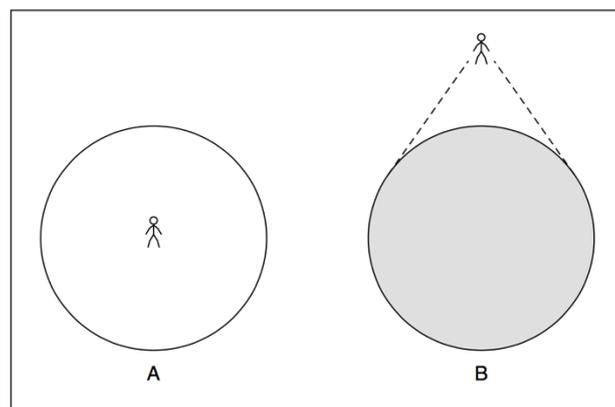


Figure 1. Two views of the environment: (A) as a lifeworld; (B) as a globe. (Ingold 2000)

3.5 Discourse theory and practice

Discourse analysis is strongly tied to assumptions about what constitutes social relationships and reality through the use of language, and can from that perspective, be called a constitutive theory. In other words, language can shape norms and identities in various discourses (Bergstöm & Boréus 2000, p358-359). Following that assumption, social practices may then also be understood by the construct of discourse. As the discourse constructs the very object itself, it can also, according to Foucault, allow, limit, constrain or enable what can be said, by whom, where and when (Gibbs 2015). Scholars offer a broad range of explanations for what the term “discourse” actually means. Discourse could simply mean communication in words or speech, longer sentences or even images. Another, slightly more complex way of describing it is that discourse takes form as a regulatory system that legitimizes specific knowledge, and through that enlists authority and rights to one subject and less to another. Discourse analysis attempts to understand multiple dimensions of written or spoken language, not only the text, but also the social practice from which it originates (Bergstöm & Boréus 2000, p358-359). A central idea from Foucault (1978) is that discourses in society are tied to knowledge and power. He challenges the notion that power is exercised only by actors that can assert domination or force in society but instead claims that “power is everywhere.” It is important to distinguish discourse from power (Parker 1992). Discourses certainly can create relations of power, but this does not assume that power should become a criterion for recognizing a discourse. Knowledge is a central point of departure which Foucault (2002) argues regulates people’s conduct. Scientific knowledge and scientific findings can, for example, become established knowledge that can both restrict, discipline and enable our behavior in both positive or negative ways (Bergström & Borréus 2000, p 361; Gibbs 2015). Accepted knowledge can then be called a type of meta-power, or as Foucault calls it ‘regime of truths’ that permeates society and produces discourses of truths.

3.6 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (or CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that assumes language to be a form of social practice. Fairclough (2003) views any kind of language used as a communicative event to be interconnected with social life. Analyzing linguistic and semiotical meanings in social practices and political contexts can

help raise awareness about what governs society and its discourses (Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon 2012).

Fairclough and Wodak, two prominent names in CDA, claimed the following basic assumptions: CDA addresses social problems, discourse consists of society and culture, discourse is historically connected and discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory (Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon 2012). The concept of nature conservation and protected areas can be examined with CDA as it could be argued to come from a construct of peoples' views on society and nature. CDA aims to investigate which forces dominate the hegemonic discourses that both culturally and ideologically gets interpreted and legitimized by powerful interests (Budinsky & Bryant 2013). According to the general theory of CDA, language should not be perceived as authoritative by itself, language gains power as dominant subjects utilize it. It can be used to resist power, change how its distributed and corrupt it. CDA should look for power in grammatical variations and choice of words, but also uncover who and what social contexts have control over the subjects and genres found in the text (Wodak 2001, p.10-11). This is the reason many critical linguistics choose to argue from a perspective of the disadvantaged and those who suffer. In my analysis, I approached the empirical material from a perspective that empathized with both the exiled Chagossians and the rights of Mauritius as victims of imperialism and neo-colonialism exercised by the UK. Even if this view of the dispute is supported by several academics (Appleby 2015, Harris 2014; Sand 2012; Jeffrey 2013), it will affect the subjectivity towards the analysis and the outcome of how the discourses found becomes interpreted. From this perspective it could also be argued that CDA never holds a politically neutral position and thereby should be viewed as a politically involved in social change.

3.6.1 Fairclough's three-dimensional model

Fairclough's model for critical discourse analysis connects three different concepts of discourse; detailed linguistic text analysis, micro-sociological tradition using conversation analysis and finally a macro-sociological analysis of social practice — in line with Foucault's theories that do not have a specific method (Jorgensen & Philipps 2002, p.158). For Fairclough, all discourse is a communicative event consisting of social identities, relations, and systems of knowledge. Therefore, it is appropriate to see every use of language as having three dimensions. The first dimension consists of text, a word level. Here the analyst looks for things like attitudes towards subjects, how things are described and tries to interpret the text.

The second dimension is called the discursive practice. This level involves the production or constitutions of text. The third dimension is the social or sociocultural practice. Discourse is a social practice that creates norms, traditions and upholds power (Jorgensen & Philipps 2002, p.67-71).

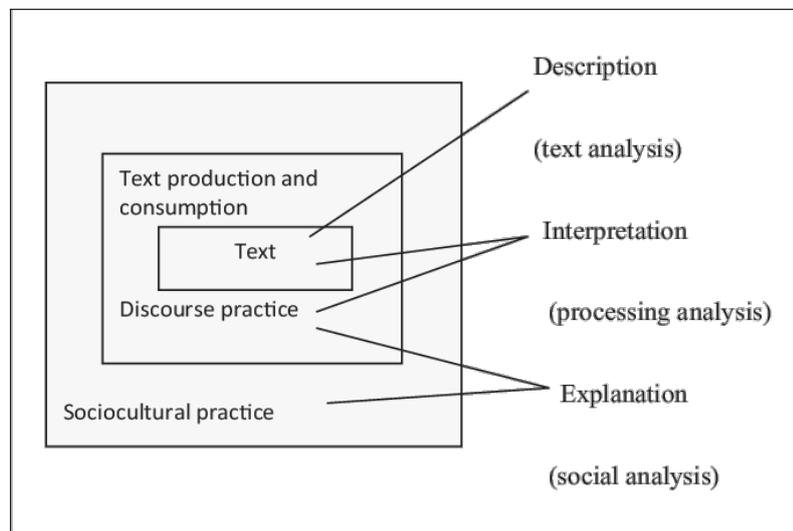


Figure 2. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Dahl, Andrews & Clancy 2014)

4. Method

4.1 Empirical material

My main empirical material was a 217 page document from the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Haag. The Arbitration Award deals with the sovereignty disputes between Mauritius and the UK following the declaration of the MPA in 2010. This document included a historical background on the Chagos Archipelago, beginning with negotiations for Mauritian independence building up to the MPA proposal and post its establishment. Arguments used before the tribunal and notes on the historical communication between UK and Mauritius helped me understand the underlying reasons for the dispute. I have delimited this study from analyzing or interpreting the legal aspects of the Arbitration Award or the MPA's compatibility with UNCLOS. Focus has been on how discourses on nature can act as a way to assert different forms of power. I supplemented the Arbitration Award with documents made by the UK for the consultation of the MPA in 2009, the latest BIOT

Management Framework and finally an article by Dr. Sheppard, chair of the Chagos Conservation Trust and one of the leading proponents of the MPA. The analysis could have benefitted from investigating and using texts from media channels that wrote about the MPA and the human dimensions revolving it. However these were not included due to my limited time frame. Of all the material I found on the Chagos case, both in newspapers and scientific articles, the following documents were chosen as empirical material for my critical discourse analysis:

- The Chagos Marine Protected Area Arbitration Award (Chagos 2015)
- FCO Consultation document (FCO 2009)
- BIOT Interim Conservation Management Framework (BIOT 2014)
- Response to the article by Peter Harris: Fortress, safe haven or home? The Chagos MPA in political context (Sheppard 2014)

4.2 Operationalization

Following Fairclough's suggestions on how to prepare a critical discourse analysis (Meyer 2001, p 28-30) I began with focusing on a specific problem that had a semiotic aspect. First I read through all of my empirical material to understand the Chagos conflict thoroughly, and then I went outside of the text to further read about issues that arise from protected areas in general. I then revisited the empirical material to identify genres and discourses that related to the theories and concepts I chose to approach this issue from. For example, I used Foucault's theory on biopolitics to look for positive statements about the management of the environment in the Chagos case that could be questioned from a variety of angles. Critically looking for words that implied micro- or macro-management over life helped me to pick the particular lines of text I further wanted to analyze. Following both Foucault and a political ecologist approach I tried to identify resistance against the dominant styles found in the discourse and categorize lines of text into the four chosen themes: *pristine nature*, *global legacy*, *control*, and *experts*. After these steps I went through the three dimensional model following tools suggested by Fairclough (Meyer 2001, p 28-30).

At the first dimension I looked at the text's transitivity, nominalization, and modality. Transitivity is used to understand how a particular angle or perspective of something determines how actions or relationships are described. It has three cornerstones: processes, participants, and circumstances to investigate text. Processes refer to all kinds of actions or

events and can be both material and verbal. Participants can be divided into agents, goals, recipients and beneficiaries. Recipients are those who receive something and beneficiaries are those benefitting from the process. Non-human participants are referred to as objects. Circumstances in the text will consider time and place.

Nominalization is another linguistic term that I applied onto transitivity. Nominalization, in essence, means how an action or statement can exclude actors and simplify or depoliticize text. By replacing verbs and adjectives with substantives, the text can erase responsible agents (Bergstrom & Boréus 2000, p.279-284).

Modality defines to what extent an actor can be tied to a specific statement or description of an event. It underscores the strength that statements have ranging from low, medium or high modality. High modality could be considered to be related to truth or authority in statements. Saying that something 'can be' is using a lower modality than arguing that something 'will be.' Modality also means looking at what is said explicitly and what is left out. Modal verbs will give the researcher a sense of how confident the agent is, and so it is important to consider why a low or high modality was used.

In the discursive practice stage, dimension two of Fairclough's model, I tried to understand the intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the discourses. Intertextuality or intertextual chains are lines of text that relates to each other and can be found in other documents. Interdiscursivity means understanding if the discourse is related to other discourses such as connected genres. This could involve examining who is referenced and used to support certain arguments. In the third dimension of the model I took the findings and results from the first two levels and tried to place them into a social framing, to discuss what ideologies and type of power the discourse revealed (Bergstrom & Boréus 2000, p.375-377). I tried to see how the discourse related to other environmental discourses affecting the human and nature relationship. At this stage and for my discussion I synthesized the concepts and theories under section 3 to analyze the results from a broader perspective of power.

4.3 Validity, reliability and reflexivity

The collected empirical material used as data for analysis should be able to answer the posed research question to be considered valid. Since my empirical material is closely related to arguments about human and nature relationships within marine conservation, this criteria should not become an issue for this particular study. The criteria for data may differ and is, in essence, an epistemological discussion that defines the quality of knowledge and scientific

results (Jorgensen & Philipps 2002, p.172-175). One relevant aspect of validity in discourse analysis becomes the ability or the fruitfulness of the analysis (Jorgensen & Philipps 2002 p.125). This is the ability of the study to explain and convey the different aspects of the discourse the researcher is examining, and to what extent the researcher finds new explanations and makes sense of them by relating back to the research question. I have strengthened the validity of my study by explaining the analytical process. I have shown a number of quotes from my empirical material and attempted to explain how I analyzed them. This is done to illustrate my thought processes and allow the reader to determine if my constructs and views of the issue makes sense to them or not.

Reliability describes how accurately the researcher has measured or analyzed what he or she intended to and defines to what extent the measurements or analysis could lead to similar results if done by another researcher. This reproducibility is also called intersubjectivity which could be better or worse depending on how the researcher describes its process (Howell et al. 2012). As a social constructivist practice, discourse analysis always runs the risk of getting low reliability as the subjective position the researcher has will affect how analyzed material gets interpreted. Therefore it becomes crucial for the researcher to keep an open reflexivity in the text and be as transparent as possible about prejudices or specific existing views of the discourse (Jorgensen & Philipps 2002, p.49). I aimed to increase the reliability and intersubjectivity in this discourse analysis by using linguistic analytical tools for the textual stages. My continued discussion and analysis of that content is reflected through the political ecological lens and a Foucauldian view of power. Looking at the material through other theoretical lenses would render a different discussion on this particular discourse about conservation.

5. Analysis

This section contains the results from my analysis. I found four themes that related to my research questions and aim, and structured the results around those.

5.1 Pristine Nature

In the empirical material used for analysis there were several arguments by the UK that grounds the establishment of the Chagos MPA in a repeated notion of a space that is untouched and void from human activity. The area is described as an environment that is unique and rare, having little consideration for temporal and spatial scales. In this way, the UK leads the discussion and takes charge of what unique nature should encompass - a universally understood entity that has an inherent goal of reaching a certain pristine level or returning to an original state through protection and control. Some arguments are resembling the idea of returning the environment back to a steady-state or of the previously mentioned Euro-American production of wilderness (Adams & Hutton 2007; Rangarajan & Shahabuddin 2009). In an exchange found in the Arbitration Award between UK and Mauritius following the news that a giant marine park was planned, the Mauritian account records the British arguments for creating the MPA:

*“The region **is still pristine** as a result of **non-settlement**; and should remain one of the very few such rare areas in the world; the benefits out of fishing activities accrue **mostly** to developed countries rather than to those of the region; and the conservation and preservation of the **pristine environment outweighs, by far**, the benefits derived from fishing activities.”* (Chagos ¶129)

When the area is described from this environmental perspective the author establishes an image of an environment that flourishes as a result of the exclusion of human settlement. As a rare place left in the world that has to remain as is, away from human activity. Political ecologists argue that this type of language increases the nature and culture dichotomy and enhances the Traditional Western image of humans as subjects and the natural world as objects that benefit from the separation of society (Heynen & Van Sant 2015). The words highlighted in bold lead the discourse in a particular way, and therefore require further discussion. What precisely pristine means in practice is unclear, and that this pristineness has included a large military base is left out throughout the text except in a few comments stating

its minimal impact. Instead, the UK writes that preservation has been made possible by the absence of humans, “non-settlement”, and the environmental stewardship of the BIOT Administration and the US military (Chagos ¶166). That the area is pristine could give credit to the former stewards of the environment, the Chagossians. Instead the text links pristineness with restricted access towards certain participants, i.e., the previous settlements, while accepting the residency of the US army, and visits by scientists and tourists. Other processes that challenge the pristine environment in the text above are fishing activities. The ones affected by the process, the local fisheries, are given little concern. Most profoundly as the main beneficiaries are named those in developed countries. This reveals asymmetrical power where whatever benefits local fishermen may get, support of their livelihoods are less valued and outweighed by the environmental benefits. Who do they actually benefit? The argument assumes that fishing rights needs to be terminated all together as well as a future human settlement to maintain the prevalent pristine nature. The text has high modality and an authoritative way of speaking, using words as “is **still** pristine” indicates it is under threat, and “by far,” leaves little room for argument but from an analytical perspective much for interpretation. It also uses lower modality and nominalization techniques about the beneficiaries of fishing through the word “mostly” and by not specifying or exemplifying who these losing their benefits are.

Even stronger modality and use of authoritative language were used later by the British Attorney-General defending the broad environmental aspects of the MPA:

*“[. . .] That the scientific case for the BIOT MPA is **robust** actually hasn’t been challenged in this case **at all**. The waters around British Indian Ocean Territory are some of the **most pristine** in the Indian Ocean, indeed **on the planet**, and have a **genuinely** worldwide importance: scientists **agree** it is an exceptional place and merits protection.”* (Chagos ¶290)

Here the agents are scientists and the objects the BIOT, Indian Ocean and basically the whole planet. It is a very firm and trustworthy statement to say that the scientific case had not been challenged “at all”, especially since it was admitted that the MPA had been criticized by the concern from scientific organizations and respondents worrying about the resettlement of the Chagossians (FCO 2009). This statement implicitly decides what is “scientific” truth through agreement of scientists and authorizes scientists as an authority over nature. To use the verb “agree” suggests that there was no conflict of opinions whatsoever. The scientific

“agreement” refers to the marine and biological benefits of the conservation effort, minimizing the impact of the military base and leaving out the political aspects of both Mauritius and the exiled Chagossians. Based on (Harris 2014), a political scientist that criticizes the MPA and its process from a political perspective, the Chair of the Chagos Conservation Trust writes:

*“However, **marrying scientific and political issues** as Harris sets out to do is less helpful in this instance than distinguishing between the two. Blurring these boundaries can risk the future of the Chagos Marine Preservation Area (MPA) and the **invaluable protection** it affords the many species (including important food species) now thriving in the Chagos Archipelago.”* (Sheppard 2014)

This quote illustrates parts of the discursive practices and views that have dominated the discourse on conservation in the Chagos MPA case. One that paints a picture of nature as something humans should withdraw from to protect, though paradoxically still under the administration of a selected few. The authors arguing for the MPA in all the empirical material examined seem to avoid a mixture of political issues with environmental arguments at all cost. Büscher (2010) calls this anti-politics tactics, where technical language that emphasizes environmental good risks to de-politicize underlying political issues. I am not arguing that these statements are not valid on a natural science basis, but merely the formation of words, composition, and attitudes towards particular subjects indicate that other factors might be left out of the equation in favor of a certain model or dominance. Phrasing the Chagos Archipelago as pristine contributes to maintaining a dominant Western human nature relationship, and thus has low interdiscursivity. It could however, be tied to, or borrow from a sustainable development discourse in how it appeals to the utilitarian protection of a global environmental health.

5.2 Global legacy

The idea of the Chagos MPA contributing to a global environmental legacy is something that the UK has pushed in most of the texts concerning the value of the conservation effort (Chagos 2015; FCO 2009; BIOT 2014). That the marine environment is in urgent need of protection from an ongoing global degradation of biodiversity, overfishing and pollution have been made clear by several scientists (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN 2017; Long,

Charles & Stephenson 2015). And if the international Aichi targets by the CBD are to be met, then indeed more ocean and land areas have to receive protected status (CBD 2017). The framing of this discourse on global environmental responsibilities however also should consider the human dimensions and human rights for equality set out by the sustainable development goals (UN 2018). In many of the arguments formulated by the UK, they seem to want to separate issues with local inhabitants from the ‘global’ population. This attitude resembles Ingolds (2000) theory of the globe and the sphere perspective that he claims dominates in the Global North. In 2009 the UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband wrote to Mauritius Foreign Minister saying:

*“[...] I believe we both agree that **without prejudice to wider political issues**, discussed below, there is an opportunity to protect an area of **outstanding natural beauty** which contains islands, reef systems and waters which in terms of preservation and biodiversity are among the richest on the planet.”* (Chagos ¶139)

To say that this opportunity should be discussed “without prejudice” to the broader political disputes it entails shows an attempt to use a disciplinary form of biopower against Mauritius. I interpret this as an attempt to internalize a norm of priorities where the preservation of nature takes presidency over both the sovereignty issues and the resettlement dispute. The intertextual properties contribute to upholding a power structure where the MPA is framed as a savior of natural beauty and should therefore only be discussed on those merits. The use of strong modality signals that the environment is in crisis and that the protected area will provide shelter. The announcement of the MPA released in April 2010 described the policy in following terms:

*“The MPA will cover some quarter of a million square miles and its establishment **will double** the global coverage of the world’s oceans under protection. Its creation **is a major step forward for protecting the oceans, not just around BIOT itself, but also throughout the world. This measure is a further demonstration of how the UK takes its international environmental responsibilities **seriously.**”*** (Chagos ¶288)

To use the formulation of the size of the physical space that the MPA will cover compared to a total global coverage contributes to the view of the UK having the authority to

act as a global guardian protecting the oceans. The author boasts about its size, with high modality and this fact alone means a major step forward in the global endeavor of protecting life. That the protection is a win throughout the world is open to interpretation and what this exactly means becomes abstract. One way of interpreting this sentence is that the UK see the Chagos MPA as a groundbreaking example of nature conservation. While leaving out the dark history of the BIOT, this type of language is in my opinion greenwashing the territory. The use of the modal adverb “seriously” in the text emphasizes that the decision is well grounded and that the international environmental community can count on the UK embracing a leading role in environmental protection — much in line with their own portrayed image.

When analyzing the theme of global legacy using transitivity, it is clear that most of the text about creating a “legacy” is illustrated through the processes of physical actions, called material processes (Berstrom & Boréus 2000, p.281). There are relational processes evident where implicitly the actor describes an entity and then relates to it in a possessive way. The participant's controlling actor is still defined by as the BIOT Commissioner under the charge of the British Government. The affected goals are understood to be defined by the global community and conservationists, and the beneficiaries both the global human population and non-human objects such as biodiversity and ecosystems. The territory is phrased as an entity with its own particular needs all the while failing to specify what these needs truly are, thus leaving them for open interpretation. Following text, describing the intended vision of the MPA comes from the UK Interim Conservation Management Framework last updated in 2014 states:

*“To maintain and, where possible, **enhance** the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the British Indian Ocean Territory, recognising and celebrating its unique global value. We want to see its ecosystems thrive, its **human uses carefully managed**, such that BIOT continues to act as a reference site for global conservation efforts and an observatory for undisturbed ecosystems; and to see our own efforts, formerly piecemeal, corralled and **prioritised** alongside a continued understanding of the **Territory’s needs**.” (BIOT 2014)*

The author describes actions taken in the territory as a celebration of the UKs global duty. It is explicitly stated that the human uses of the area will be limited and prioritized according to the BIOTs needs, and not necessarily only for the sake of the environment. The authors refer back to themselves as creators of a reference site for conservation practice and

contributions to the scientific community by providing an observatory. This statement implicitly blames human uses in the area for potential degradation, which could be explained as a process to further strengthen their case baring the resettlement of the Chagossians. In practice this means making the military environmental stewards of the area. This stewardship is limited to practices such as beach cleanings, measurements and instructions to avoid polluting the area (BIOT 2014).

5.3 Control

The British Foreign Secretary has repeated many times that they will cede the territory to Mauritius once it is “no longer needed for defense purposes”. Furthermore, the UK side describes the MPA as a potential bilateral partnership of trust between the two parties that would “make something of the remarkable features that exist in BIOT” (Chagos ¶131). By repeatedly referring to the area as the BIOT, the UK indirectly reiterates that it is their territory to govern, while at the same time they have merely borrowed it from Mauritius for military purposes for the time being. During a round of talks between the two parties in July 2009 the UK stated:

*“The Territory and its environs had become **one of the most valuable sites in the world** for coral biodiversity and also **had the cleanest oceans** and was a valuable scientific resource. This **was** due to lack of inhabitants. The UK derived no commercial benefit from resources. The fishery was a **loss-making** venture and **heavily** subsidised by HMG. Looking ahead, the value of BIOT as a reserve/sanctuary for marine life and coral would only increase. It was **better** to invest available resources in a higher level of environmental protection.”* (Chagos ¶128)

This text clearly shows an authoritative way of stating necessities and possibilities of the Chagos Archipelago. It puts nature and the territory in financial terms by claiming that the fisheries in the area were “loss-making.” Without saying for whom. The Mauritians stated that a total ban on fishing would not be compatible with future resettlement (Chagos ¶131). Using the modal adverb “heavily” strengthens the argument of the territory as better serving another purpose, namely a reserve. To claim that the area had become “one of the most valuable sites in the world” displays the use of epistemic modality, but fails to indicate who exactly reached this conclusion. Further, the adjectives “cleanest” and “valuable” laden with strong modality

in claiming this was because the area lacked inhabitants. It does not specify who these inhabitants were or their ancestral claim, but instead serves to argue that isolating the area, except for the military, is the best solution. This displays an example of Foucault's biopolitics to protect the environment in order to increase the marine life, none the less by excluding others (Taylor 2014). The arguments manifest territorialization as they suggest more geopolitical power and control to the state and a few selected actors (Neumann 2015).

In a conversation between the BIOT administrator and the British Foreign minister, it was exposed that:

*"[...] While we are confident in the strength of our legal case, a decision by Mauritius to challenge our position on sovereignty would be awkward. We will need to develop an active approach to Mauritius, therefore, being clear about our red lines, but being positive about bilateral talks and options for an **advisory role** in the implementation of the MPA. This might include options, such as offering Mauritius a "**privileged partnership**" where Mauritius **could play** an advisory role in the **management of the MPA**, which does not impact on the sovereignty position. While we are **not obliged** to offer Mauritius this, it might help to bring them along with us on the issue."* (Chagos ¶156)

Here the processes are described from an action perspective, meaning that particular participants are given responsibility for what is occurring (Bergstrom & Boréus 2000, p.283). UK suggests actions to negotiate the ownership and control of the MPA on their terms. Based upon Mauritius challenging UK's sovereignty over Chagos, there will be certain available outcomes and options depending on how Mauritius acts. In essence, UK describes a process where they have no obligations to give Mauritius any rights concerning decisions on the establishment of the MPA, however strangely are still willing to give Mauritius a "privileged partnership" that would minimize their claims as a coastal state down to an advisory role. This could happen as long as no "red lines" are crossed, which exact meaning is unclear. The use of the words "could play" describes potential benefits for Mauritius in taking this offer but indicates bad diplomacy and attitudes from the UK. By offering Mauritius an advisory role, the plan was to soften Mauritius claims on sovereignty which they threaten by the control of the BIOT. The actor here is the UK asserting power over the recipient Mauritius by offering only a slice of the material object of dispute, the Chagos Archipelago. This illustrates both the use of traditional sovereign power that takes away through deduction, but also a form of

biopower that cements a neocolonial attitude towards Mauritius' territorial right claims which they sum up as “awkward”.

*“Neither we nor the US would want the creation of a marine protected area to have any impact on the operational capability of the base on Diego Garcia. For this reason, it may be necessary to **consider the exclusion of Diego Garcia** and its 3 mile territorial waters from any marine protected area.”* (FCO 2009)

In the quote above drawn from the FCO Consultation (2009), other statements of an empty territory lacking inhabitants falls flat on its own premise and reveals biopolitics that enables access to some but restricts others. The UK takes control of the discourse by upholding a low level of interdiscursivity, they exclude other perspectives and values of how nature and humans should be controlled or co-exist. The discursive practices in these texts hold strong to the value of nature in the Chagos Archipelago as something pristine, arguing for traditional fortress conservation. In the same text at the very end of the consultation document the FCO briefly addresses the Chagossians and whether the MPA affects their right to return or not:

*“[...] the current position under the law of BIOT is that there is **no right of abode** in the Territory and all visitors need a permit. Under these **current** circumstances, the creation of a marine protected area would have no **direct immediate** impact on the Chagossian community.”* (FCO 2009)

The distinction of the law of BIOT as controlling agent here detaches official responsibility from the British government, as if they had no control over it. The UK has stated that they regret the circumstances in which the population was removed (Chagos ¶99), but is still only willing to give them the same rights as any other visitor, including tourists. To use the phrasing that the MPA would have no “direct immediate impact”, could be argued as irrelevant for a group of people looking to return to their ancestral home, with the no-take MPA adding one more logistical obstacle in this pursuit.

5.4 Experts

In all of the texts analyzed much of the supporting foundation for the establishment of the MPA comes from scientific knowledge and expert opinions. The knowledge put forward dictated the discourse on how conservation should be viewed and shaped. As discourse is directly tied up with power and knowledge (Foucault 1978), and thus the very nature of knowledge, who is using it and whose interest it serves, requires critical consideration (Adams 2012). The scientific value of the MPA overshadowed both human rights issues and the unresolved dispute over sovereignty with Mauritius. The choice of scientific experts whose voices were heard during the creation of the Chagos MPA play a decisive role in subsequent events (Neumann 2015), and also which selected group of scientists are allowed in the territory and which are excluded.

In the characterization of the MPA, the Tribunal did not accept arguments put forward by the UK saying that the MPA was solely a measure related to the termination of commercial fishing. The Tribunal noted that the UK had used much broader terms to justify its creation (Chagos ¶286). The UK described the added value during the public consultation process of creating the MPA as:

*“There is **high** value to scientific/environmental **experts** in having a **minimally** perturbed scientific reference site, both for Earth system science studies and for regional conservation management.”* (Chagos ¶286)

The first part of this sentence shows how the authors add scientific values to the MPA by the use of high modality and authority. That natural scientists can benefit from a reference site with little interference from the outside world is stated in factual terms. However, how much this may be true, is hard for a reader to judge. To incorporate “experts” into the claims legitimizes the proposal. Even if this statement fails to define who these particular experts are, the last part in the sentence proposes that Earth system scientists and those in conservation management will benefit. Mauritius has acknowledged the environmental importance of the MPA but expressed that it was inappropriate for the British Government to start a global consultation process outside their bilateral talks concerning the sovereignty issues in the Archipelago. The manner which the MPA proposal was handled made them “feel that it was being imposed on Mauritius with a predetermined agenda” (Chagos ¶144).

Around the time of the consultation, Foreign Secretary David Miliband's wrote a letter to Mauritius to make amends:

*"I would like to **reassure** you again that the public consultation **does not in any way** prejudice or cut across our bilateral intergovernmental dialogue with Mauritius on the proposed Marine Protected Area. The purpose of the public consultation is to **seek the views** of the wider interested community, including scientists, NGOs, those with commercial interests and other stakeholders such as the Chagossians. [...]" (Chagos ¶383)*

This line of text describes a verbal and relational process relating to the material one. The responsible actor, the Foreign Secretary Miliband is seeking the views of a broader group of stakeholders to generate opinions on the MPA. At the same time, he relates to the whole public consultation by reassuring Mauritius that nothing in the consultation would in "any way" change the dialogue between the two parties. It is however less clear if the consultation is used in favor or against Mauritius' position. Mauritius becomes the target participant possibly affected by the processes' outcome, while scientists, NGOs, and other stakeholders the recipients who will be granted an opinion. In my opinion the involvement of the "wider community" does minimize the importance of bilateral talks with Mauritius, giving less credit to them as any kind of expert. Mauritius did boycott the entire consultation, but still the consultation noted that Mauritius was "in principle supporting the MPA" (FCO 2009). In the order of stakeholders categorized in the document the Chagossians came last. This could subtly be a way to give them less credit, attention and devalue their local knowledge of the Chagos environment. In the consultation, their authority as a previous indigenous group from the islands is greatly minimized as they are merely bunched together as an equal stakeholder alongside the public community. Mauritius had made it clear that in their opinion a "full no-take" MPA would violate the rights Mauritius had for traditional fishing (Chagos ¶369). Nevertheless, in the consultation document, the only three choices recipients could vote on were all no-take zones with different variations in scale (FCO 2009). The consultation discusses benefits in this way:

*"in recent years **scientists and environmentalists have stressed** the value of a large-scale ecosystem approach to conservation. For geographical, economic and political reasons there are **few places** where this is possible. BIOT is a place where it is possible. While recognising that it is a contentious subject, the fact is that the **absence** of a settled human*

*population, the strict environmental regime and the **minimal** footprint of the military base have enabled a **high** level of environmental preservation to have occurred.” (FCO 2009)*

This text demonstrates how the BIOT is considered to have no serious geopolitical issues, arguing that in fact, the area is one of the “few places” in the world where full large-scale protection is possible. At the same time, it recognizes this statement as a “contentious” subject but then highlights how the “absence” of a settled population is beneficial. The text uses nominalizations and simplifies the human dimension by not mentioning that the absence of settlements is because the indigenous people were removed. The military is portrayed as a positive agent enabling scientists and environmentalists to attain a large-scale conservation of nature through their minimal footprint. The knowledge about this type of conservation is offered uncritically and I interpret it as what Foucault called a truth regime. By constantly putting the presence of the US military in positive connotations the UK gains power over the discourse through a certain accepted “truth”. The regime used to generate and give status to this favorable truth are the selected natural scientists.

The discursive practices seen throughout the texts in this section show underlying attitudes that portray certain actors as experts that will benefit from the MPA, while other fields such as social sciences, that highlight injustice, as having less value. Claiming that the BIOT will provide the natural sciences with a “laboratory” and a “scientific benchmark” under which oceanography and biodiversity studies will be rewarded (FCO 2009), undermines the critique put forward by anthropologists and political scientists. The intertextuality between the documents studied is high, maintaining that the BIOT should be seen as a global science project for the natural sciences studying biodiversity, climate change, and oceanography. Interdiscursivity could be considered low as less favorable discourses on the creation of the Chagos MPA are continuously left out (Chagos 2015; FCO 2009; BIOT 2014; Sheppard 2014).

5.5 Social practices

The four themes depicted in previous sections show a certain type of discursive order that forms and restricts the language used in the Chagos dispute. Painting a picture of the Chagos Archipelago environment as pristine and best left untouched gives power and access to the territory to a few selected actors while others are excluded. The terminology ‘protected

area' signals that someone has to protect something from others. Mauritius in fact expressed that they would rather call the MPA preservation or conservation of nature, or more specified "protection of the marine environment", as the term protected area in their minds assigned authoritative power to the UK and diminished their rights as a coastal state (Chagos ¶145). From understanding the history of this dispute, it is not surprising that Mauritius expresses concern about losing power to its formal colonial owners. The traditional framing of fortress conservation can lead to asymmetrical geopolitical actions when a powerful actor unilaterally uses this kind of discourse against a less internationally strong opponent (Adams 2012). The discursive order that existed in the empirical material and the arguments put forward by the British Government, as exemplified in the texts, shows an attempt to maintain a hegemonic view of what conservation of marine resources should be. Some truths and interpretations of reality take presidency over others. Mauritius opposes this biologically emphasized discourse by trying to establish and bring in a justice discourse that primarily argues from a deontological perspective of moral rights rather than ignoring historical wrong-doings. The British counter this attempt using a utilitarian type of health discourse that designate the global population as beneficiaries. By constantly rephrasing the scientific value of the territory the discourse here also becomes defined by what is left out. This has consequences for social practices as it creates norms of what marine conservation policy should include and exclude. The UK tries to continually show that they recognize that the islands were once populated, but neatly turns this around in favor of their own agenda by proclaiming this lack of settlement as the very reason for the area's unique and rare ecosystem. No time is spent on actually proving that the marine environment suffered during the time the Chagossians lived on the islands. Here the social practice could be seen as being shaped by a Western worldview. To assume that resettlement would not be feasible based on the view of that a settlement would lead to the destruction and degradation of nature stems from the view of an industrialized society largely based on production and overconsumption of goods (Ingold 2000; Adams & Hutton 2007).

In the theme global legacy, the development discourse and the neoliberalization of nature penetrate the debate. The UK attempts to separate political issues from environmental conservation policy as if it exists in a vacuum. The fact that the conservation takes place in the Global South but controlled by the Global North, and defended as global environmental responsibilities reveals a Eurocentric view on development. The environment needs to be managed and limited in order to preserve the resources and biodiversity for future use and the

global population, much like a corporation manages its stocks. In the consultation document, it is stated that the cost of establishing the MPA is practically “nil” and that the economic benefits of coral reef protection annually would be around \$100.000 to \$600.000. Putting the area into monetary terms like this might limit the considerations for social, political and ethical impacts.

Since the discourse contains many different participants such as scientists, NGOs, and politicians it becomes hard to pinpoint all the different non-discursive practices that relate to shaping it. Thus the social practices can be hard to trace as they are the result of a discursive order (Jorgensen & Philipps 2000). Following the theory of biopower, I focused my analysis on statements that framed the governance of nature based on biological measurements, observations, and data. The included arguments rely on a conservationists discourse that values specific knowledge of nature as expertise for protecting the environment, while the former inhabitants, in this case, the Chagossians, are portrayed as having harmed the Archipelago - or threatens to harm it in the future by their presence - and condemned as non-experts. Little attention is paid to the environmental pollution coming from the military base on Diego Garcia. The discourse could even be argued as contributing to a norm of acceptance for the militarization of environmental protection. The military is framed as an excellent environmental warden of the Archipelago, which together with stringent policies, restricts and prohibits other humans from entering the territory.

6. Discussion

The Chagos MPA was declared as a result of an environmental lobby of NGOs and a chosen group of natural scientists along with the British Government eager to make a global environmental statement. It is the only large MPA of its kind that has so far claimed complete protection (full no-take) in its entire environmental economic zone (Dunne et al. 2014). Sheppard (2014) writes that it was impractical to wait with the designation of the MPA because of a dispute that had been going on for decades, and that revisions of the MPA could always be done later. This utilitarian logic of reasoning can be dangerous as it implicitly says that some social issues can be ignored as long as we protect the environment. The public consultation contained minimal information about the sovereignty dispute with Mauritius nor of the dislocated Chagossians (FCO 2009). Leenhardt et al. (2013) write that the Chagos MPA does not represent the success story its proponents like to claim. Much of the natural scientific studies used in the push to establish the MPA have later been said to be based on insufficient data (Dunne et al. 2014). It is not all clear that the MPA will provide support for the fish stocks it claims to protect or make a significant difference to the reefs that were already protected under international law since 2003 (Dunne et al. 2014). It defied the principles of thoroughly analyzing scientific evidence and instead is an example of geopolitical motives triumphing over social justice (Harris 2014; Leenhardt et al. 2013). Excluding the largest island Diego Garcia from protected status allows this area to continue to be degraded from one of the US' largest military base. The unilateral decision to hastily declare the MPA disregarded diplomatic respect towards many stakeholders with divergent interests. This type of marine protection policy may raise suspicions from developing countries about the real intentions of powerful nations in the West (De Santo 2013; Dunne et al. 2014; Caron & Minas 2016).

The act of shifting resources by restricting access can have detrimental consequences for the “outside” populations it affects. How should we determine who is allowed access? Looking at the Chagos MPA as the utilization of biopower; it leaves some to “die” while others are “let live.” Can sustainability or conservation justify the “killing” of those who stand in the way of investing in a healthy global environment, and who then shall grant those decisions? The UK still argues that resettlement of the Chagossians would impede defense purposes in the archipelago and that an independent feasibility study came to the conclusion that resettlement was not financially viable (Harris 2014). Yet would resettlement really impact the facilities on Diego Garcia? The other islands are over a hundred miles away, and

US military bases have populations living in close proximity all over the world (Harris 2014). The military base has been a CIA black box with no journalists allowed on site for over 30 years (Vine 2015). Could it be that resettlement would involve the creation of politics and governance in the area that renders unwanted legislation in the BIOT?

Conservationists have argued that the inhabitation of the islands would become too costly from an environmental perspective. Inhabitants would destroy the possibility of having a “benchmark space” to which one could compare the reef’s health (Harris 2014). After the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s ruling against the UK (Chagos 2015, p.215), the UK has to negotiate with Mauritius on how to co-manage the territory and hopefully this will lead to a conclusion that bilaterally gives equal rights to their former colony and inclusive and rightful access for the Chagossians. As Caron & Minas (2016) point out, other cases where geopolitical disputes are present and marine protected areas are suggested might not be settled as peacefully, as the on-going conflict in the South China Sea demonstrates (Valencia 2017).

This study illustrates how a hegemonic discourse on conservation painted a picture where nature should be separated from humans; blatantly reiterating how the area became ‘unique, pristine and of global importance’ with non-settlement used as the rationale. It illustrates a misuse of biopolitics as no evidence was provided that Chagos could not sustain its local people or how it would be detrimental to nature would they return. On the contrary, apparently over 5000 people residing in the military base (Vidal 2014) still serves to keep the nature “pristine.” The recent trend for LMPAs is driven by politics based on international environmental targets that take a precautionary principle (Leenhardt et al. 2013). This trend is important as we can not close our eyes to the current state of the oceans; overfished and under extreme pressure from pollution and climate change (Lewis et al. 2017). However, we also have to pay close attention to the fact that protected areas are not a zero-sum game (De Santo 2013). Linking social justice issues to conservation efforts includes understanding how material and resources shift and how power gets redistributed (Neumann 2015). In the Chagos case, we see samples of how the UK finds it “awkward” for Mauritius to question their authority. Rather than respectfully collaborating with their former colony they consulted with “scientific experts” and used this knowledge to trump any resistance from the Mauritanian side.

Conservation planning cannot be dominated purely by natural sciences (Adams & Hutton 2007). Sustainability as defined by the Brundtland Commission in *Our Common Future* (1987) looks to more than just biological benefits but also social and economic stability for all citizens on Earth. The fact that the Chagos MPA is a full no-take zone may be

serving the nature from an ecological perspective. But the exclusionary model that was chosen does not approach sustainability from a social perspective that also embraces equity. To explore the Chagos case from all possible social angles was beyond the scope of this study, but interesting future research would be to explore how/if sustainability is compatible with LMPAs or not. Closing off large areas to meet international targets is not the same as automatically providing a policy that will ensure sustainable outcomes in the long run. The territorialization used in the Chagos MPA shows how environmental tools can be used as a form of state re-territorialization. The MPA added further territorial restrictions to the area and thus more control. One type of resistance to this would be to create more community-based management, but even then, the state holds the power since they can choose to end the collaboration if the people do not succeed in governing under the laws of the state (Chmara-Huff 2014). Large marine protected areas (LMPAs) could also themselves become a tool of resistance. They could act as a way to balance the fact that 71% of current fish captures end up in only ten countries (O’Leary et al. 2018). Redistribution of control and fishing allowances to local populations would resist the neocolonial fortress conservation seen in the Chagos MPA. This is why LMPAs are even suited for combating social injustice and could help to rearrange and alleviate unequal distribution of power between the North and the South (Christie et al. 2017).

When scientists and NGOs are consulted for their view on biodiversity and value of nature during the creation of a protected area, equal attention should be given to social issues that arise from both traditional ‘fortress’ conservation and participatory conservation (Vaccaro, Beltran & Paquet 2012). Ignoring these dimensions may undermine the whole idea of protecting and managing the environment. The Global South may become increasingly skeptical about the true intentions if more LMPAs are created under similar questionable conditions as Chagos.

Withdrawing humans from the environment rather than creating a policy for inclusion may protect biodiversity but simultaneously decrease care and understanding of the natural world (Ingold 2000). International conservation efforts should initiate projects by asking if the action for using biopolitics to promote life destroys, what Ingold (2000) calls, people’s “line of life.” If so, how can we then instead protect natural resources while also making sure humans and local inhabitants are given the same value as an empty nature reserve? There currently exists a project called Half Earth, lead by the renowned biologist and author E.O Wilson. His vision, and the large movement behind him calls for protecting half of the Earth’s surface from humans and human activity (Half-Earth project 2018). What is remarkable about

this idea is that the protection of the environment is thought to be able to coexist without any trade-offs to the current neoliberal market. Could we imagine who the beneficiaries and losers would be in that equation?

This thesis aimed to raise questions about the nature-human relationship outlined in this type of conservation. But also hopes to contribute to a knowledge-gap of social science perspectives in large-scale marine conservation (Gruby et al. 2015). The analysis of the discourse found in the Chagos MPA of saving nature for the global good shows how easily ignored some injustices can be, overshadowed by an eagerness to protect the environment. An environment the Global North wants to preserve for the future, that needs saving largely because of overconsumption of products and carbon emissions. Some of the interpretations in this study easily tend to lean towards a dramatic pursuit of words that displayed a story of the UK as villains. Perhaps this is a common trap while doing CDA and it therefore requires a high level of self-criticism. Even then, it feels hard to say that any results presented are scientifically “true.” My analysis does not prove that the UK acted wrongly but leaves it up to the reader to agree or disagree with my explanations. My goal was to cast light on this conflict from a critical social science perspective portraying how the nature-human relationship unfolded. I have done that, but digging deeper into the minds of the authors of the text would require a more detailed study perhaps with qualitative interviews to complement the data.

Several of my arguments and findings are similar to others who have analyzed the Chagos MPA. However, since the UK still argues that their intentions were purely environmental and not political this case still deserves attention. One can read in a British Governmental initiated marine programme (Blue Belt 2017), that they are planning to expand enforcement and protection in their overseas territories. In light of Brexit and UK losing European political power and financial aid (Morris 2018), there might be more hasty moves on protected areas to secure control for the future. Insights from this study may be helpful in understanding these future prospects, critically looking for the lack of a complete scientific picture that includes the global, local, and different human dimensions. Overemphasizing global benefits over local ones made the environmental discourse less diverse and hard to debate. That rich biodiversity is globally beneficial may be true, but this framing is far from the perceived environment of local everyday people (Ingold 2000).

After 2020, an update in UNCLOS will likely lead to an increase in LMPAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJs). These parks could protect biodiversity (UNEP-WCMC, IUCN 2016) but require attention to political disputes and allow the same authority, be it a Small Island Developing States rights to fish or the environmental interest of countries

in the Global North. Implementing and communicating this in a way that does not further push the human relationship to nature into a dichotomy may be important. Using a discourse about nature as something that people also live in correlates better with the perception of the environment from our everyday lives (Ingold 2015). To talk about nature and the environment in abstract terms can increase the dissonance to it, such as is happening in the case of climate change in the West (Stoknes 2015). Perhaps not lowering general concern, but creating a feeling of inability to act in a way that improves the environment. This is similar to ocean protection, where it is overwhelming for a largely terrestrial based population to grasp the environmental issues at sea, and so we leave it to experts. If these experts then talk about the environment as something separated from us (see Figure.1) this contributes to a widened gap between valuing inhabitants' knowledge and scientific knowledge (Ingold 2000). This may play into the hands of a fortunate few that can maneuver around human rights and benefit from a public that is increasingly concerned about an environment in crisis. The events during and after the creation of the Chagos MPA presented neo-colonial attitudes towards Mauritius that illustrated how arguments benefitted and gained power over its opponents using an abstract way of describing the environment. It tells us that we must always stay critical to how, why and for whose benefit environmental policies and actions are designed.

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