

## 6

# Marketing Security Matters

## Undermining de-securitization through acts of citizenship<sup>1</sup>

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This chapter suggests that marketing by private security companies is undermining the potential for de-securitization through acts of citizenship, not because of spectacular fear mongering, but because of the scope for acts of citizenship and securitization it re-produces. To make this point I look at the decidedly sober web-marketing of the respectable commercial security company Control Risks (CR)<sup>2</sup> and explore how it co-constitutes the two processes at the core of this volume: acts of citizenship and securitization. I argue that marketing restricts the space for ‘acts of citizenship’ (AoC)<sup>3</sup> to reclaim politics/constitute political subjectivities, and entrenches ‘securitizations’ that turn something into an existential threat<sup>4</sup> (see [Figure 6.1](#)). This argument addresses a broader concern, namely what happens to the potential for de-securitization through AoC in a context that goes under the general (disputed and ambiguous) name ‘neo-liberalism’,<sup>5</sup> where an increasing number of things (including security) are governed through (quasi-)market mechanisms. The chapter does not (and could not possibly) analyse all the processes linked to the commercialization of security. Instead, it focuses on one specific process – marketing by security companies.



**Figure 6.1** Marketing shaping the acts of citizenship – desecuritization link

The reason for singling out marketing is that, in contemporary society, it plays an increasingly important role in creating value and meaning (see, for example, Arvidsson 2006). More than this, however, the visual plays an important role in creating meaning. This is captured below with reference to the ‘intertextual’ linking of images and text. While images and visualization have had a place in International Relations (IR) discussions – including those surrounding security (e.g. Shapiro 2011) – the images produced by companies to market themselves have been conspicuously absent. This chapter aims to address this gap. It does so by analysing how the web-marketing of one company – Control Risks – is co-constituting the space for de-securitization through AoC. This analysis of CR’s marketing is used to tell a ‘typical story’, as Abbott puts it (2001: 160).<sup>6</sup> It is a story about ‘co-constitution’ in a dual sense: not only are there many other meaning producers<sup>7</sup> but, as with most contemporary marketing, CR integrates its clients to co-formulate meaning and values (e.g. Lury 2004). This is *not* a deterministic story about CR dictating the prospects for AoC and/or securitizing processes.

To tell this ‘typical’ story about how markets matter for the constitution of political being, the chapter proceeds by analysing how CR’s marketing co-constitutes first the space for AoC and then for de-securitization. The result is analogous for both processes (AoC and securitization): while marketing holds some potential for enlarging the space for each process, this potential is countered, or even reversed, by the strictures it also

formulates. First, while marketing supports a non-statist framing of the right to claim protection rights that ought to broaden the scope for AoC, this is more than outweighed by the clientelization and contractualization of this right in CR marketing. The end result is that the scope for AoC is restricted. Second, while CR's marketing banalizes security, which ought to ease de-securitization, its contribution to the diffusion and consolidation of security expertise hampers any critique of securitizing moves, thus entrenching securitization. With the scope for AoC restricted, and securitizations entrenched, the space marketing co-constitutes for re-politicizing securitized spaces through AoC appears limited. However, precisely because this is a typical story of co-constitution, it is worth telling. Recognizing that marketing, even when unspectacular, matters, is a first step towards resisting the 'discursive harm' it does.

### **Restricting the scope for acts of citizenship**

If citizenship is the right to have rights as Arendt (1979/1951), for example, would claim, one way of understanding the enactment of citizenship or 'Acts of Citizenship' is that they are acts claiming this right; and hence of constituting oneself as a political subject with rights (Isin 2008). In this sense, focusing on AoC shifts attention 'from subjects as such to the acts (or deeds) that produce such subjects' (see Isin 2008: 2). One of the more fundamental rights is the right to be protected or to be safe (see Antje Wiener's discussion in this volume). The right to this right is more often than not linked to the capacity to constitute oneself as a political subject of a state from which one can demand the right to be protected. Yet not only do some of the most direct security threats to people come from states, states also have the capacity to deny people their status as subjects to be protected, as well as the possibility of even trying to claim this status. The consequence is that thinking is held in a double bind where the state is acclaimed both as the key source of insecurity and as the main provider of protection (for discussions see Sofsky (1996) and Weber (2008)). Even the most ardent critics of the state seem to have been prone to reinforce this bind as is the case, for example, with Hannah Arendt's work on totalitarianism (Arendt 1979/1951) or Pierre Hassner's critique of state neglect/maltreatment of refugees (Hassner 1998). Both argue that even if

the problems they are analysing originate with the state, reclaiming the right to be recognized as a political subject of the state is also the solution. The beauty of markets, at least at first sight, and as reflected in CR's marketing, is that they promise to loosen, if not break, this double bind by weakening the link between states and the right to protection rights. Thus, the right to protection rights can be claimed through markets rather than states. Upon closer inspection, however, this promise turns out to be an empty one. The possibility of voicing one's claim is conditional upon being an economically and politically respectable client, capable of entering a contractual market relationship. This clientelization/contractualization tandem more than counters the potential opened up by marketing for enlarging the space for AoC.

### ***Marketing opening space for acts of citizenship***

Security markets share the revolutionary potential of markets more generally. Not only classical liberal (Adam Smith) and Marxian (Karl Marx, himself) thinkers, but also a wide range of sociologists, have been fascinated by the extent to which markets promise to be liberating. As persuasively shown by Karl Polanyi, for example, the invention and imposition of self-regulating markets played a key role in freeing social interactions from the shackles of tradition, 'disembedding' them – as he would say – at an enormous cost. As the title of Polanyi's book tells us, self-regulating markets are at the 'origin of our times', and for him that meant the Second World War (Polanyi 1957). There is, of course, a long tradition, also reflected in Polanyi's work, for showing the extent to which disembeddedness is less radical than thought, as elements of social rules inevitably pervade markets.<sup>8</sup> However, these qualifications have not eliminated scholars' fascination with the revolutionary potential of markets.

CR's web-marketing provides ample ammunition for those who wish to underline the revolutionary potential of markets generating potential rights to protection rights beyond the state. The company offers a way of circumventing the intractable difficulties that appear when there is no state to demand protection from, when the state does not allow the request to be formulated, or when it is against the state that protection is needed. Hence, the fundamental answer CR offers to the question 'why us?' is that

the world in which our clients operate grows ever more complex and many are driven to work in overtly hostile environments where protecting people, assets and reputation is a real challenge ... we have a proven record in helping them manage risk and maximize opportunity.

(CR 2011g)

The 'world' CR refers to is one where the possibility of demanding the right to protection rights through states is only available sometimes. Moreover, and according to the website, this possibility is decreasingly available, given the 'growing complexity'. Most of their clients, therefore, have no choice; they are 'driven' to work in overtly hostile environments and to search for innovative ways of claiming their right to protection rights. CR underlines that what exactly is required 'varies between companies, countries and cultures' (CR 2011j). CR leaves little doubt that it plays an important role in resolving this complexity, because it 'enables our clients to pursue their interests wherever in the world they may wish to operate' (CR 2011j). The message here is one of empowering the people, companies, organizations and states that buy CR's services, increasing the possibilities they have for engaging, by ensuring their security. This communication is framed in positive terms. There is no hint on CR's website of an explicit critique of the failure of states to provide protection,<sup>9</sup> let alone of an exclusivist statist framing of the right to claim protection rights. Rather, and characteristically for firms in commercial security, CR presents itself as taking a 'practical approach' to real problems (CR 2011f). Their services focus on providing actors with the possibility of 'pursuing their interests' wherever they want. Unlike many other security companies, CR does not explicitly make the point that their services are a prerequisite for groups or individuals to act in, or sometimes against, oppressive states. However, there are hints in this direction. Under the heading 'Satisfied Clients', CR tells its potential customers that

although the nature of our work does not permit us to name our clients, they are national and multinational business in all industrial and service sectors, governments from any part of the world and an increasing number of nongovernmental organizations.

(CR 2011k)

Note that CR underlines the *increasing* number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), precisely those organizations most often identified with 'political being' beyond the state.

So far, I have shown that CR's webpage marketing is enlarging the potential for AoC beyond the state. In a positive empowering voice, and refraining from criticism of the state, it promises that it can offer services that compensate for the failure of state systems to ensure the right to claim protection rights. It also holds out an alternative. CR makes it possible for those who cannot claim the right to protection rights through the state system to claim them through the market.

### ***'Clientelization' conditioning acts of citizenship***

The revolutionary potential of markets is not for everyone. Markets are for those who have the necessary resources – economic, political, cultural and symbolic – to act in them. This is also true of security markets. Hence CR is explicit about the economic and political prerequisites of being a client.

CR provides its services to 'clients' of different kinds, and in different contexts, but always to 'clients' (CR 2011c: passim). It carefully underlines that clients may include the full panoply of actors, individuals, as well as public and private organizations and NGOs, and that it can adjust its services accordingly: 'CR is set up to suit our clients' purpose' (CR 2011k) and

we review the risks faced by each client on an individual basis according to their areas of operations and the specific threat levels their industry might face. Our philosophy is that no two organizational entities are alike and that a whole host of issues such as the nature of their business, the profile of their employees and the geographical spread of their assets, uniquely determine their level of exposure.

(CR 2011e)

The fundamental point is that CR is talking about a variety of *clients*, excluding everyone who is not and/or cannot be a client. To be CR's client is to *buy* its services. To buy services presupposes possession of the necessary means to do so. Inherent in the emphasis on the client, therefore, is an exclusionary hierarchy where those who have (and are willing to use) resources can get the best package, those who need to save can get a slightly lesser package, and those who have no resources at all will be excluded altogether. There is no need for CR to insist on this or spell it out on its webpage. If someone should fail to grasp this simple point, the account manager will quickly dispel the misunderstanding. The expansion

of the scope for AoC is, in other words, economically conditioned in the CR web-marketing.

Along similar lines the scope for expanding AoC is politically conditioned. CR presents itself as a law abiding ‘good citizen’, as the business jargon has it (e.g. Matten and Crane 2005). CR is an ‘ethical and independent company’ (CR 2011h). It has a code of ethics, which emphasizes that ‘all CR employees are required to comply with the laws and regulations of the countries in which they operate’ (CR 2011b: 1). It also has a Business Integrity Policy underscoring that ‘integrity includes compliance with the law but goes beyond it. Legal thresholds and the standards of companies are constantly rising. Control Risks aims to be ahead of its clients’ expectations, not lagging behind them’ (CR 2011a: 1). Finally, the company has a Human Rights Policy which includes a pledge to abide by the recognized standards in the area, specifically those defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Voluntary Principles on Sovereignty and Human Rights, the Montreux Document and the UN Global Compact (of which CR is a member) (CR 2011l).<sup>10</sup> CR has also developed its own policies on, for example, the use of weapons, whistle blowing, subcontractor management and Third Party complaints. This will no doubt be welcomed by rights activists, lawyers and clients. However, it is also signalling the political conditioning of the AoC CR will support. ‘Contesting the laws and regulations’ is precisely what AoC do in contexts where these are biased against specific groups or ideas. Hence, even if CR ‘has a policy of strict political neutrality’ (CR 2011b), this policy entails a profound bias against (in fact, an explicit ban on) activities, including AoC, which transcend the state system and constitute political being against it. To dispel any remaining doubts, CR insists that it ‘will cooperate with governments and other official bodies in the development of policy and legislation that may affect our legitimate business interests or where we have specialist expertise’ (CR 2011h).

To summarize, the clientelization at the core of CR’s marketing articulates a clear economic and political conditioning. Clients have to be economically and politically acceptable. By the same token, the clientelization delineates a restrictive political and economic conditionality

for the kinds of AoC it could be mobilized to support. This move is the first to counter the opening to AoC generated by markets.

### ***‘Contractualization’ disenfranchising citizens***

The second way CR’s marketing counters the potential broadening of the space for AoC centres on how it plays into the broader contractualization of citizenship. The ‘contractualization of citizenship’ is ‘an effort to reorganize the relationship between the state and the citizenry, from non-contractual rights and obligations to the principles and practices of *quid pro quo* market exchange’ (Somers 2008: 2). This transformation disenfranchises people (and institutions) who do not/cannot fulfil their contract, and hence further restricts the space for AoC. CR’s marketing reinforces this transformation.

In what Turner terms the ‘constant battle between *schism* driven by material interests and *solidarity* forged by common values’ (2008: 183), CR’s marketing decidedly weighs on the former side. It does so through the political and economic conditioning intimated by Turner and discussed above. However, this conditioning is an expression of a more far-reaching and radical individualization that is part and parcel of the contractualization process. The contractualization of citizenship is a process whereby an understanding of citizens as members of a community with a general common purpose is unsettled/displaced by a contradictory and incompatible understanding of citizens as individuals who sign contracts (Åkerstrøm Andersen 2008). They sign contracts with the state and, even more radically, in many contexts they sign contracts with themselves (Åkerstrøm Andersen 2007: 119). This contractualization expresses a displacement of responsibility: from the community to the individual. The individual is responsible to the state, the social worker, and herself for fulfilling the contract. Not fulfilling the contract breaks the relationship, and with it the right to claim rights to welfare, support, security and so on. Citizens that do not fulfil their contracts lose their rights. The entitlement to the right to rights is based on living up to the contract, not on sharing values or belonging to a community. This understanding of citizenship is the one communicated in CR’s marketing, particularly in how the company frames its support for those seeking the right to protection rights. CR offers anonymous ‘clients’ the possibility of buying its security services not



because they share certain values, but because they can enter a contractual relation. More than this, CR's marketing echoes the understanding that its clients also have to sign contracts with themselves, as for example when it explains that 'employers have a duty of care to support their employees to cope effectively with these [risk and security related] challenges' (CR 2011f). This distancing of citizenship from values and community is starkly captured by the images CR uses. The image on the web page 'Why us?' shows a typical boardroom table with empty chairs (CR 2011g). The counter image would be an agora where embedded and embodied people debate and disagree on the common good. The point to note about the CR's boardroom image is that there is no need to populate it with embedded/embodied people; anyone who can live up to a contract is invited to take the chair. The rest are not. They are disenfranchised.

The way CR's marketing constitutes the prospects for AoC is discomfoting. CR's marketing holds out the promise of enlarging the space for those wishing (or having no choice but) to escape traditions (such as the statist framing of the right to claim protection rights). On closer inspection, this promise is a delusion. The economic and political conditions under which the promise will be kept are highly restrictive. As I have just demonstrated, contractualization restricts the promise to those with the necessary resources, and clientelization disenfranchises those who do not have the resources to live up to their contracts. Thus, while it is useful to recall the potential of AoC against all odds (including, for example, the post 9/11 'accidental citizenship' in the US (Nyers 2006)), it also important to recall (as this section has) that if the 'accidents', subversions and diversions that re-politicize securitized spaces are not to become rare to the point of disappearing, it is essential to pay attention to the processes that restrict the space for AoC, including marketing by companies such as CR.

### **Entrenching securitization**

The rather discomfoting image of how marketing co-constitutes the prospects for AoC could perhaps be balanced by its potential role in bolstering de-securitization. Securitization processes are mostly associated with (and studied through) states and their armed forces, suggesting that these are the main locus of insecurity. Indeed, 'liberals' have long hoped

and suggested that non-state entities, including companies and markets, could be counted on to play a positive role in limiting insecurity and war generally. Taken into the discussions surrounding (de-)securitization processes the question is, are they right? Can commercialization be counted on to co-constitute a ‘politics of insecurity’, shrinking the securitized realm and the scope of the securitized, and thus enlarging the space for ‘a politics that invests and articulates visions of the political – of the nature and place of political community and practice’ (Huysmans 2006: 10). Analysing CR’s marketing leads to an answer in the negative. Even if CR’s marketing facilitates de-securitizing moves by rendering insecurity a banal/normal matter of everyday risk management, it also entrenches securitization. It does so first by rendering security expertise more diffuse and de-securitizing moves more difficult to direct, and second by rendering it more solid/scientific, making the contestation necessary to de-securitize harder to articulate.

### ***Banalization facilitating de-securitization***

Securitization is usually discussed as a grand and spectacular event. Thus a ‘speech act’ transforms an issue into an existential threat that warrants ‘exceptional measures’ and distinguishes it from ‘normal politics’. For this event to take place, certain ‘felicity conditions’, that make it possible to persuade the relevant ‘audience’, have to be fulfilled (Buzan *et al.* 1998). Commercial security certainly does not contribute to this kind of securitization. On the contrary, commercial security emphasizes the ‘normal’ and ‘unexceptional’ about security and is very careful not to engage in fear mongering.

CR’s marketing illustrates this point. There are no grim images from wars or terrorist attacks. Quite the opposite, in fact. In its discussion of ‘Security Management and Consultancy’, under the heading ‘What We Do’, CR has placed a picture of an anonymous hand placing the missing piece in a puzzle (CR 2011e), presumably indicating that CR can help fill in the one missing piece in a company’s strategy. The only image on the webpage with any direct pictorial reference to violence is one directed not primarily at clients buying security services but at potential participants in CR’s training programmes (CR 2011d). Similarly, there is little trace of ‘securitizing

wording'. Instead, the entire webpage is framed around an emphasis on the specific and contextual risks of the individual client. Indeed, the sentence immediately following the heading 'Security Management and Consultancy' is 'You know that the global risk climate has changed' (CR 2011f). You (not CR) feel the pressure of risk and need services to manage it. The overall approach of CR's marketing emphasizes the inevitable presence of risks that have to be managed. Unfortunately, CR seems to say, risks are a banal and inevitable part of everyday business life. Consequently (and this time explicitly) CR offers to 'advise organizations on developing and implementing an overall corporate security strategy'. CR is focusing its communication on banal, routine procedures, not on the exceptional and the extraordinary. This is reinforced by the way CR's marketing locates security-related risk management services in direct connection with other services. Under 'What We Do', business intelligence, business ethics, legal technologies, business continuity services, and governance and development are listed at the same level as security management and political risk analysis (CR 2011e). This presentation reflects the evolution of CR's activities from an initial focus on protection against kidnapping and executive security to a far more general focus on risk management, including assessment of investment-related risks, risk linked to financial transactions and operational risks.<sup>11</sup> Hence for CR, as for many other companies in commercial security, it is only logical to consider security as one among many risks to be managed. This levelling of types of risk, and their constant overlapping, underlines the extent to which the management of security is part of the banal and normal risk management that any company is required to engage with. Quite simply, security is integrated in the general move to 'organize uncertainty' or to risk manage 'everything' (Power 2004, 2007).

CR's marketing communicates a world where insecurity is a banal and omnipresent feature of life, and risk management the normal response; a world where 'speech acts of insecurity are less important in securitization than various social and political processes' (Huysmans 2006: 150). This banalization should enhance de-securitizing moves. On the face of it, refusing the extension of security measures in this normalized environment is relatively easy and legitimate. The introduction of new risk management

tasks in companies, governmental organizations and/or NGOs, and the related redefinition of professional roles (including the transformation of the tasks of Central Risk Officers to also cover security) entail the reallocation of resources and reshufflings of authority that one would expect to trigger reactions, including successful ones. A recent study confirms that, in Denmark at least, this is indeed the case. The enlargement of security functions is more often than not resisted by companies where security officers find themselves isolated and marginalized in their attempts to introduce new security measures/functions (see PET and DI 2010). Whether or not this is characteristic of the situation elsewhere, it underscores the extent to which banalizations of security, such as that inherent in CR's marketing, has the potential to limit securitizing moves and perhaps also to more openly question securitizations that have already taken place. Banalization makes de-securitization part of the normal, everyday contestations that take place in organizations and among people.

### ***Diffusing expertise disorienting de-securitization***

The opening in CR's marketing towards the co-constitution of a context in which de-securitizing moves are eased is, however, rapidly closed off. First, because the world of banalized insecurity is also one where authority over, and management of, insecurity and risk are highly decentralized, as well as detached from identifiable persons. De-securitizing strategies therefore confront an anonymous, amoebic 'expertise' rather than an embedded, embodied individual. This is disorienting and makes de-securitization more difficult. CR's marketing increases this disorientation by delineating an understanding of acceptable contestation that excludes contestation if it is not focused on specific acts or people.

CR's marketing makes clear that the company's security expertise derives from networks where the most competent people draw on the most adequate technology on a case by case basis. Hence, CR 'assembles the best and most appropriate team of specialist consultants' for each assignment, with the obvious implication that the members of the teams are constantly shifting (CR 2011j). In addition to this, although the company relies on specific models and categorizations for analysing risks and advising its clients, it adjusts and develops these to suit each contract, through a

‘network of offices which work seamlessly to develop and implement strategies anywhere in the world’ (CR 2011j). Security expertise is, in other words, anchored in shifting and adjustable networks and technologies that are generated on a case by case basis and produce case by case strategies. The form of securitization this kind of expertise produces is, therefore, not only amorphous, but also volatile, and therefore fugacious and self-sustaining. It has a lot in common with the processes through which risks spread in organizations<sup>12</sup> but only distantly resembles a conventional speech act (a priest creating a marriage by declaring it, for example). For de-securitizing strategies, this is of considerable import. The move from the personalized, fixed, institutionally embedded and visible implied in the speech acts of security to the networked, technological, impersonal, and de-localized securitizing by CR, poses a major challenge. One can argue with a speaker (priest or security expert) about security, rights, and the common good and contest his/her authority. It is more difficult to do the same with an impersonal network or with technological models, especially if these are constantly shifting. It is more difficult to be an active citizen in relation to a network where authority is at best diffuse.

CR’s marketing deepens the challenge by making contestation of diffuse authority appear illegitimate and unwarranted. It does so by underscoring that the insiders are satisfied: ‘Few consultancies can claim to have retained original clients through more than 30 years of growth and development, but Control Risks can’ (CR 2011k). The emphasis on insiders’ satisfaction makes outside contestation tenuous. If CR’s clients want the company’s services, the logic goes, outside complaint constitutes unwarranted interference. Beyond client satisfaction, if outsiders still want to have a say about CR’s authority, CR’s marketing has a ready answer. CR presents itself as a good corporate member of the communities in which it operates. CR joined the UN global compact<sup>13</sup> and it has a general Third Party Complaint Policy (CR 2011h). Its code of ethics underlines that it ‘will investigate any complaints made by external stakeholders concerning suspected human rights abuses or other professional malpractice’ and that, even if not prompted, it ‘will consider the risks that transfer of weapons or equipment to local agencies may lead to human rights abuses’ (CR 2011b). CR’s marketing conveys openness to debate and invites discussion. However, it

also sets boundaries for the acceptable, welcome and expected contestation. The contestation CR encourages is that of directly implicated 'stakeholders'. It focuses on identifiable human rights abuses and violence, especially by public security agencies (CR 2011h). The contestation of amoebic networks and their technologies (both, in all likelihood, perfectly legal) are not on the agenda.

CR's marketing is entrenching the security expertise located in diffuse networks and processes that is inherently difficult to question, *and* it is making the contestation of this expertise appear unwarranted. In the process it is impeding de-securitizing/re-politicizing moves. When Mary Douglas observed similar processes in her work on risk, her conclusion (which was reached in the context of the US, in the 1980s) was that 'congresses and parliaments should repossess themselves' of the authority to manage risks instead of leaving it to professional experts, since this process was integral to 'the latent purposes of the nation as a whole' (Douglas 1992: 79). However, now (as then) even if this admonition was followed it would probably lead the 'repossessed' policy-makers to consult the professional experts. The grip held by these experts (both public and private) on security imaginaries is a second major hurdle to would-be de-securitizing moves.

### ***Solidifying expertise blocking de-securitization***

Through its embrace of, and deference to, security expertise, CR's marketing tends to increase the obstacles confronting de-securitizing moves. Indeed, security expertise is difficult to contest, not only because it is diffuse, impersonal and technological, but also because it rests on the qualified judgements of professionals who know which securitizations are warranted. The more solid this expertise is, the more difficult it becomes to question it.

First, and most explicitly, CR markets its own expertise, including the relevant qualifications of its staff. Contrary to its clients, CR has the expertise and knowledge necessary to judge security issues. 'While you're aware of security issues, you might not be focusing on the right ones' (CR 2011e). CR does know how to judge security issues, and insists it does. Its marketing is replete with references to expertise and professional knowledge. Characteristically, the first thing CR tells readers about their

approach is that it is ‘applying the right mix of *skills and experience*’. ‘While Control Risks would never presume to know our clients’ business better than they do, we do *know how* to analyze the risks they can face.’ It proceeds to underline that ‘dedicated client account managers have *in-depth sector knowledge*’ (CR 2011j). But more than this CR stresses that it ‘deploys *specialist security* coordinators to their clients’ operations’ (CR 2011f). The differential presentation of the company’s service areas underlines its expertise. In forensics it offers ‘*advanced* solutions to complex problems’. ‘Control Risks’ Legal Technologies business delivers the *optimal* combination of software, services, and consulting to meet your unique case needs’ (quotes from relevant sections of CR 2011i, emphasis added). In the process of asserting its expertise, CR draws on, and feeds into, the consolidation and establishment of private sector self-sanctioned expertise, backed up by various standards and certifications ample enough to have generated a secondary industry of companies specialized in auditing and certifying the certification.<sup>14</sup> To de-securitize, in other words, involves contesting the solidly anchored, formally certified and sanctioned accumulated knowledge and experience of the commercial security industry.

This ‘private expertise’ is further solidified by the surreptitious invocation of the state in CR’s marketing. The state is presented as approving of, encouraging, collaborating with, and relying on CR expertise. That CR is operating with state sanctioning is an omnipresent marketing theme, and is not confined to the statements on ethics and company policy cited above. ‘Governments’ are referred to as CR’s clients, underscoring that state institutions take company expertise seriously enough to pay for it. State backed standards are invoked as informing and guiding the company training courses. The course entitled ‘close protection training’, for example, is accredited by the Security Industry Authority (SIA), which is part of the UK Home Office. Three of the courses marketed by the company are designed for ‘service personnel’ (CR 2011d). A course with the title ‘Hostile Environment Close Protection Operations’ requires participants to have at least seven years with the military and three operational tours in a hostile environment. CR’s marketing also emphasizes that it trains those who will work directly for the state. The CONDO [‘Contractors on

Deployed Operations'] course, for example, is designed according to the standards of the Ministry of Defence. Finally, CR's marketing emphasizes the extent to which the state supports and promotes its status as an expert security service provider by subsidizing course participants. 'We have now achieved Approved Learner Provider Status, which enables service leavers to claim back 80% of the close protection course costs (excluding food and accommodation) from the MoD as part of their resettlement package' (CR 2011d). The state is clearly mobilized in CR's marketing to underline the legitimacy of company expertise and activities. The historically constituted authority of the state in determining legitimate knowledge (its 'monopoly on symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1994)) is particularly strong when it comes to the use of force. This makes this mobilization particularly effective in confirming the solidity of the securitizing expertise.

De-securitization necessarily involves contesting securitizing expertise so as to reconceptualize issues and problems as not being about security; that is, to re-politicize them. The solidification of security expertise operated in CR's marketing through its recurring references to state approval, as well as to professional standards and certificates, becomes a real hurdle for de-securitization. The more solid this expertise, the more difficult the de-securitizing moves. A second hurdle is added by CR's marketing in the form of the diffuse, technological and impersonal understanding of expertise it presents. Hence, even if CR's marketing could make it easier to de-securitize because it makes security issues more banal, these two hurdles work in the opposite direction; they entrench the securitizations based on expertise.

## **Conclusion**

By now it should be abundantly clear why the potential for reconstituting political being at the interstices of AoC and de-securitization seems to shrink when viewed in a neo-liberal context, where security is commercialized. However, to reiterate the argument once more: the way CR's marketing co-constitutes the two core processes (AoC and de-securitization), the effect of commercialization is to restrict the space for AoC and to make successful de-securitization less likely. Although the strictly statist framing of AoC is broken, which would seem to enlarge the



scope for AoC, this is countered both by the economic and political conditioning of citizenship tied to clientelization, and by the disenfranchising exclusion of citizens who do not fully shoulder their responsibilities linked to clientelization. Similarly, although the scope for successful de-securitization processes is widened by the banalization of security, formidable hurdles are also put up through the diffusion and solidification of the security expertise that has to be countered for successful de-securitization to take place. To be clear, even at its most respectable and unspectacular, the marketing by commercial security companies does more to hamper than to help the prospect of reclaiming politics at the interstices of AoC and de-securitization.

This is not to deny that we could, and hopefully will, find enactments of citizenship re-politicizing securitized sites. There is always scope for resistance, or ‘consumer production’ (De Certeau 1984: xii and passim). Against the odds, subversion and diversion may displace and question overarching logics. Consequently, there is no reason to think that the commercialization of security (let alone CR’s marketing) could exclude mutually reinforcing AoC and de-securitizations. But as this chapter has underscored commercialization processes, as captured through CR’s marketing, make them decreasingly likely. One can follow De Certeau in his more cynical moments and argue that at any rate consumer production always takes place ‘without any illusion that it [the order] will change any time soon’ (1984: 26). So at the end of the day it might not matter much if commercial security/CR’s marketing hampers the re-politicization of securitized spaces through de-securitizing AoC. The prospects of changing orders are moot anyway. However, stopping here (and De Certeau does not) would be profoundly disturbing. I therefore want to close by pointing out that engaging with commercial security at its most banal and innocuous, as captured through CR’s marketing, is a way of pinpointing which processes have to be countered if mutually reinforcing AoC and de-securitizations are to become more likely. Flowing directly from the above, this would include the contractualization and clientelization of citizenship, as well as the diffusion and solidification of security expertise. More generally, it follows that an explicit debate about how (and if) to regulate the marketing by commercial security companies so as to limit the ‘discursive harm’ (Radin 1996: 174) they do – for example, by restricting AoC and entrenching

securitizations – is long overdue. Although we are used to thinking that harm is much worse if someone is really hurt, the discursive harm which redefines and re-constitutes should perhaps be engaged more seriously in discussions about AoC, securitization and elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> Certainly if the above argument holds and the unspectacular, non-fear mongering, rather dull marketing by respectable companies, illustrated here by Control Risk, restricts the scope for AoC and entrenches securitizations, such an engagement, focused particularly on marketing, does matter.

## Notes

- 1 I wish to acknowledge helpful comments by the participants in the original workshop (and contributors to this volume), Birgitte Sørensen, Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver, and would like to thank the editors for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.
- 2 CR has some 1,000 employees, with offices in 34 countries. It was established originally by the insurance broker, Hogg Robinson, to reduce kidnapping risks. Its ownership structure has since changed and it has diversified into a wide range of activities. CR refrains from controversial activities and has been the subject of relatively few scandals compared, for example, to Aegis, Blackwater, CACI or DynCorp.
- 3 To focus on acts of citizenship is to ‘focus on those moments when, regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens, or better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due’ (Isin 2008: 18).
- 4 Securitization/de-securitization are the core concepts of the Copenhagen school of security studies. For an updated discussion see Security Dialogue (2011).
- 5 An extensive literature and range of controversies exist on the topic. I follow the Foucauldian tradition where neo-liberalism is understood as a rationality of governance.
- 6 Abbott proceeds to argue that such stories are telling because ‘a social science expressed in terms of typical stories would provide far better access for policy intervention than the present social science of variables’ (2001: 160).
- 7 As any other meaning/value creation, it is one among many. There is an ongoing and unequal struggle over which meaning/values will prevail, captured for marketing by the book title ‘Sign Wars’ (Goldman and Papsen 1996) or for academia by Bourdieu’s critique of the scholarly self-delusion of possessing/imposing a superior truth (Bourdieu 2000).
- 8 A classic is Mauss’ demonstration of the ‘potlatch’ elements in contemporary markets and his insistence on eradicating the radical division between the primitive and the modern economy (1981) – which is at the heart of Bourdieu’s call for an ‘economic anthropology’ (Mauss 1950: esp. 193–222).
- 9 With the possible exception that, in its ethics and human rights codes, CR pledges to ensure that its activities do not reinforce violence or abuse by local ‘agents’ and ‘institutions’ (CR 2011g: ethical and independent).
- 10 For a discussion of the performativity of Codes of Conduct in this sector see Leander (2012).
- 11 ‘In the mid-1970s international business executives had become the target of kidnappers in parts of South America. The insurance industry sought more professional advisers to minimize their exposure and Control Risks was born’ (CR 2011i).

- 12 These have been described as ‘rhizomatic’ (from plants spreading through their roots) processes (Haggerty and Ericson 2000) wherein models of analysis or ‘boundary objects’ (Power 2007: 27) spill over from one part of the organization to the next.
- 13 The Global Compact is ‘the world’s largest corporate citizenship and sustainability initiative’ according to the website of the organization (for an overview and introduction see Ruggie (2004)).
- 14 For further discussion of secondary industries of certification see Power (1997). For discussion specifically in relation to private military/security markets see Leander (2012).
- 15 Radin’s examples include prostitution, trafficking in human beings and trade in organs. In all these cases the harm done to people is generally thought to be worse than discursive harm and therefore takes up the bulk of attention and space in legal argument. Radin’s point is that this is misguided as discursive harm is not only a harm in its own right but usually a precondition for other forms of harm (that is, for the woman, baby, kidney to be dealt with as a commodity in the first place, which is the origin of the other harms discussed).

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