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ESSAYS

The End of War and Peace: The Thesis of Frédéric Gros and the Federal Intervention in Rio de Janeiro
Vitória Alves

Can Bullets Kill Soft Power?:
The National Rifle Association as a Threat to America's Attractiveness Abroad
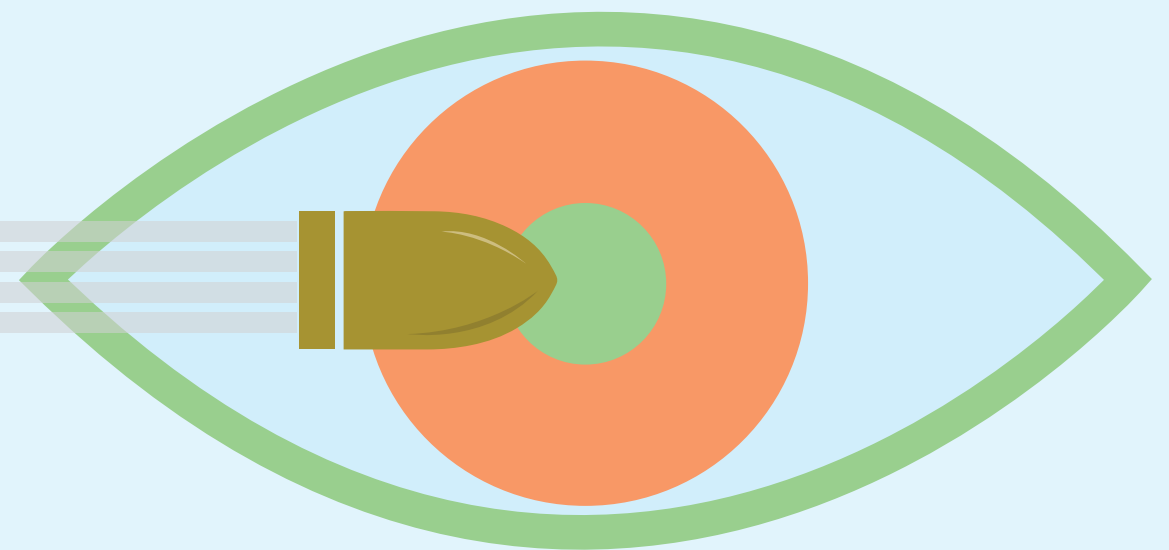Darcy Taylor

Reconciliation in Settler-Colonial States:
A Study of the Political Apology
Hannah Chong

Slovak Insecurity and Europeanization:
Ontological (In)security in Slovak Foreign Policy
Kamila Potocarova

IN THIS ISSUE:

CAN BULLETS KILL SOFT POWER?:

THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION AS A THREAT TO AMERICA'S ATTRACTIVENESS ABROAD

GLOBAL ISSUE 2018 | YRIS.YIRA.ORG

The Yale Review of International Studies

Global Issue 2018

Staff

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Global Issue of the Yale Review of International Studies.

As YRIS begins a new year, we are turning over a new leaf with a revamped issue structure. The Global Issue supplants the Intercollegiate Issue and allows submissions from students at universities based outside of the United States. As part of this change, our Winter and Spring issues have been opened to all undergraduates' submissions, while the fourth and final issue of each academic year, our Acheson Prize issue, remains Yale-only.

The YRIS executive board made this change after much deliberation due to a desire to expose our readership to perspectives beyond the thus far U.S.-centric norm of our publishing. This summer, we put decided effort in solicitations to international universities to remedy the current lack of essays from Asian, African, South American, and Central and Eastern European countries. We solicited papers from students in 400 universities around the world, and we received nearly 100 individual essay submissions. The quality of work that we were privileged to receive underscores the necessity of taking up this endeavor: topics ranged from a comparative analysis of the ethnopolitics in Chittagong Hill Tract, Bangladesh to an examination of checks and balances in Zimbabwe. Our goal of "stimulating broad and multi-faceted debate" and "addressing questions of international interest" could not be achieved without expanding the range of voices that we publish.

We picked four outstanding works to be featured in our print issue as well as online, and around 24 works total from were selected to be published on our website, yris.yira.org.

As always, thank you for reading. We couldn't do this without your support. We are, as ever, humbled by the wonderful work of our contributors.

Best,
Elisabeth Siegel
Editor-in-Chief (2018-2019)

Essays

VITÓRIA ALVES

DARCY TAYLOR

HANNAH CHONG

KAMILA POTOCAROVA

Vitória Alves
University of Sao Paolo, Brazil

The End of War and Peace:

The Thesis of Frédéric Gros and the Federal Intervention in Rio de Janeiro

The war as 'armed, public and just conflict,' slowly disappears, with its lies and its nobilities, its atrocities and its consolations. The future of the states of violence, regulated by security procedures promising to reduce its risks, stand before us, requiring thought to inspire new attention and to invent new hopes.[1]

Such is how Frédéric Gros, French political philosopher and professor at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris (SciencesPo), concludes his well-received book States of Violence: An Essay on the End of War.[2] Assuming that the dichotomy between national and international studies is innocuous insofar as these fields are evidently intertwined, Gros' work can help us critically understand the current situation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

At the request of governor Luiz Fernando 'Pezão' de Souza to "put an end to serious compromise of public order," President Michel Temer placed the state under federal intervention in the sphere of public security since February 2018

and is expected to remain so until the end of the year.[3] Temer named Army General Walter Souza Braga Netto as Interventor Federal [loosely translated to Federal Interventionist], who in practice assumes the powers of the State Secretary of Public Security. Also according to the decree, "the position of Interventor is of a military nature."[4] It is important to note that the Interventor is not a regular political nor military position in Brazil. It is put in practice only in special or urgent contexts, and appointing one is a power vested upon the President by the Constitution (art. 84, caput, X).[5]

It is within this context that Gros' argument about the intriguing diversity of actors involved in the sphere of contemporary violence becomes relevant. In "classical conflicts," soldiers of a given country would confront each other on

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1   Frédéric Gros, Estados de violência: ensaio sobre o fim da guerra [States of Violence: An Essay on the End of War] (São Paulo: Ideias e Letras, 2009), 254.
2   Information about the author's current academic position was found in É Realizações (Editora, Espaço Cultural e Livraria – Publisher, Cultural Space and Bookshop – author's translation).

3   Michel Temer et al, "Decree No. 9.288," February 16th 2018, accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2018/decreto/D9288.htm.
4   João Paulo Charleaux, "Intervenção federal no Rio: as justificativas e as contestações [Federal intervention in Rio: justifications and contestations]," Nexo newspaper, February 16, 2018, accessed May 3, 2018, https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2018/02/16/Intervenção-federal-no-Rio-as-justificativas-e-as-contestações.
5   Brazil. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988 [Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988], 1988, accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm

a particular battlefield. That is, the ones who would fight were considerably easier to identify, usually unified under a clearer motto and confronting each other at a pre-determined space. On the other hand, in the case of Rio de Janeiro, violence embraces multiple actors, starting with the State itself, consisting of various entities such as the Army troops, the Interventor Braga Netto, President Temer himself, the state's governor, and the police. In this cloudy battlefield, private actors gain prominence, just as Gros predicts as a global trend, with local criminal factions such as the famous Comando Vermelho (Red Command) active in the favelas, or shantytown communities, which are not only populated by criminals but also by a resounding number of families (women, children, elderly, etc.). Here, we can observe how the frontiers of conflicts become less predictable, once one's own neighborhood can be classified as a potential area of war. The national media is also a separate and private actor, serving as an important influencer and articulator of political narratives.

Another, perhaps more cruel, problem highlighted by the French political philosopher is the perpetuation of this scenario, which can even extend to the point where the security system and the recent intervention regulate (and do not combat) the states of violence in Rio de Janeiro. This framework can be understood as a result of faulty, overly bureaucratic, and corrupt security and justice systems, making it clear that federal intervention is aimed at maintaining the political status quo, ignoring the urgency of structural reforms (e.g. investments in education and health) that could bring more positive changes to the state of Rio in the long run. Again, there is a noticeable contrast between conventional forms of violence and

violence today, the former with its formal temporality (e.g. declaration of war, mobilization of armies, ceasefires, etc.) and the latter converging with Gros' concept of perpetuation of tension, where a dispute can continue to occur (and take victims) over an indefinite period.

Thereby, just by deducing from Brazilian political history and recent coverage by national newspapers, one can expect as an immediate result the imprisonment and death of those marginalized by this security system: black, poor, and young population of the local favelas. This expectation is, unfortunately, corroborated by the law approved by Temer last year, which guarantees that violations committed by military officers will be judged only in military courts, rather than in civil courts.[6] Enabling impunity of common military and police violence with a tendency towards serious humanitarian costs under this law correlates with another point by Gros: the barbarization of conflicts.

A study conducted by the Observatory of the Intervention, arranged by Candido Mendes University's Center for Studies of Security and Citizenship, shows little to no significant improvement in state security resulting from the intervention.[7] For instance, two months prior to the intervention, 1,299 shootings occurred in the city of Rio and in the Metropolitan Region, while two months after the intervention, this number increased

6   Michel Temer and Raul Jungmann, "Law No. 13.491, October 13th 2017," accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/L13491.htm.
7   Silvia Ramos, À deriva: sem programa, sem resultado, sem rumo [Adrift: no program, no result, aimless] (Rio de Janeiro: Observatory of the Intervention, Center for Studies of Security and Citizenship of the Candido Mendes University, 2018), https://www.ucamcesec.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Relatório-01-Observatório-da-Intervenção_final.pdf.

"The Worker's Party is looking toward various judicial avenues to confirm Lula's detention as unconstitutional and is reinforcing the idea of his participation in the upcoming elections."

enced the public's perception of violence. As also identified in the Observatory's report, media coverage has been often sensationalist or simply incomplete; for instance, it would merely highlight increased robbery rates while neglecting historical police violence. Indeed, according to the aforementioned report, 87 percent of the residents of the city of Rio "are afraid" of being murdered and 92 percent "are afraid" of being hit by a stray bullet. The media's articulation of expectations as well as its biased approach are dangerous given the persistent sociopolitical narratives disseminated in the country by the conservative elite. The coverage even provides a pretext for the federal intervention with an army general as the Interventor. In practical terms, this trend in the media may influence the population (or electorate) to approve "military in politics" (again).[10] This media influence is particularly pertinent this year with the upcoming Brazilian election and the presidential candidacy of current Federal Deputy Jair Bolsonaro (Social Liberal Party, Rio de Janeiro) and his radically conservative agenda defending the former military dictatorship (1964-1985) and citing torture as a legitimate practice.[11] On June 28, 2018, the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics disclosed that, without Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Sil-

to 1,502 shootings. Between February 16 and April 1, 2018, there were twelve cases of homicide with fifty-two victims; according to Nexo, during the equivalent period last year, six cases were registered with twenty-seven people killed in total.[8] The latest report also indicates that after five months, the number of shootings rose to 4,005, including the death of a fourteen year-old boy who was on his way to school and shot from behind by the police in a helicopter during an "operation" at a community known as "Maré."[9]

The "mediatization" of the violence, as articulated by Gros, is also an important component in Rio's case. The press' treatment appears to have potentially influ-

8   André Cabette Fábio, "A situação do Rio após dois meses de intervenção, segundo este relatório [The situation of Rio after two months of intervention, according to this report]," Nexo newspaper, April 27, 2018, accessed May 3, 2018, https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2018/04/27/A-situação-do-Rio-após-dois-meses-de-intervenção-segun-do-este-relatório.

9   Silvia Ramos, Cinco Meses de Intervenção Federal: Muito Tiroteio, Pouca Inteligência [Five Months of Federal Intervention: Too Much Shooting, Little Intelligence] (Rio de Janeiro: Observatory of the Intervention and Center for Studies of Security and Citizenship of the Candido Mendes University, 2018), http://observatoriodaintervencao.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CINCO-MESES.pdf

10   Ibid.

11   "Perfil: Jair Bolsonaro, deputado federal, PSL [Profile: Jair Bolsonaro, Federal Deputy, PSL]," Gazeta do Povo, accessed in May 3, 2018, http://especiais.gazetadopovo.com.br/eleicoes/2018/candidatos/presidente/jair-bolsonaro.

va (former President of Brazil from the Worker's Party, 2003-2010) running as a candidate, Bolsonaro is expected to be the leading candidate in the first round with a margin of 17 percent points.[12] Lula has been in prison since April 7, 2018, accused of passive corruption and money laundering in the Triplex Case (bribes to Petrobras, the state's oil company, through the purchase of the apartment/triplex). The Worker's Party is looking toward various judicial avenues to confirm Lula's detention as unconstitutional and is reinforcing the idea of him participating in the upcoming elections (or nominating an ally/substitute).[13]

Other factors that fuel the popular approval of the federal intervention include recent cases of corruption in Rio, involving high political positions and state bankruptcy. Such misconduct highlights the idea that the Armed Forces are not corrupted by regional crime and thus would be able to "solve the problem."[14] This context is also problematic in the field of constitutionality: according to Eloísa Machado, professor of Constitutional Law at Getulio Vargas Foundation/Sao Paulo, the military nature of Rio's Interventor who only responds to Temer, is unconstitutional because such a "position of Interventor is imminently civil.[15] Moreover, albeit restricted to the area of public security, Braga Netto has the power to sanction governmental action; however, according to Eloísa, the Constitution of 1988, that marked the re-democratization of Brazil, such governmental action should only be civil and non-military.

Thus, we see the end of the war in its "classical" sense, with a significant nebulosity of actors and interests. We also

"Indeed, according to the aforementioned report, 87 percent of the residents of the city of Rio are afraid of being murdered and 92 percent are afraid of being hit by a stray bullet."

12   Alessandra Modzeleski. "Lula tem 33%, Bolsonaro, 15%, Marina, 7%, e Ciro, 4%, aponta pesquisa Ibope [Lula has 33%, Bolsonaro, 15%, Marina, 7%, and Ciro, 4%, Ibope research points out]," G1 Globo, June 28, 2018, accessed July 18, 2018, https://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2018/noticia/lula-tem-33-bolsonaro-15-marina-7-e-ciro-4-aponta-pesquisa-ibope.ghtml
13   Conrado Corsalette and Olívia Fraga. "Por que um desembargador mandou soltar Lula agora. E por que ele continua preso [Why an appeals court judge ordered Lula to be released now. And why is he still in prison?]," Nexo newspaper, July 8, 2018, accessed July 18, 2018, https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2018/07/08/Por-que-um-desembargador-mandou-soltar-Lula-agora.-E-por-que-ele-continua-preso

14   André Cabette Fábio, "A situação do Rio após dois meses de intervenção, segundo este relatório [The situation of Rio after two months of intervention, according to this report]." Nexo newspaper. April 27, 2018. Accessed May 3, 2018. https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2018/04/27/A-situação-do-Rio-após-dois-meses-de-intervenção-segundo-este-relatório.
15   João Paulo Charleaux, "Intervenção federal no Rio: as justificativas e as contestações [Federal intervention in Rio: justifications and contestations]," Nexo newspaper, February 16, 2018, accessed May 3, 2018, https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2018/02/16/Intervenção-federal-no-Rio-as-justificativas-e-as-contestações.

observe the end of peace with a full-functioning political system of security and intervention enacted by Temer in February, which has historically proven important in Rio for regulating and perpetuating intrastate violence. Finally, beyond pondering the morality of the violence—both those in classical terms during the 1500s by the great powers that colonized Latin America, and cases of contemporary violence across the world—States of Violence: An Essay on the End of War proposes a systematic analysis of how violence is articulated nowadays, intertwined with narratives and sometimes seemingly too complex for a quick understanding. In this sense, such systematization of social and political phenomena can be translated from its initially global terms to national or even state contexts. This transferability ultimately strengthens the social function of International Relations by recognizing the complexity, potential scope and sociopolitical contribution of its studies.

About the Author:

Vitória Alves is from São José dos Campos, Brazil. Currently in her fourth year, she is an undergraduate student of International Relations at the University of São Paulo. International Politics and Law are her main areas of interest, even before going to university, given her personal experience of four years living in East Timor, at the time, facing post-independence tension. Recently, she's been focusing on the analysis of Brazilian politics, nevertheless, bringing her International Studies' background.

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Darcy Taylor
University of Toronto, Canada

Can Bullets Kill Soft Power?:

The National Rifle Association as a Threat to America's Attractiveness Abroad

Introduction

On March 5th, 2018, a threatening video made headlines throughout the United States and gained international attention. With Wild West music playing in the background, a woman wearing all black sits in a dark room with an hour glass. After listing enemies of "individual liberty in America," including the New York Times and Washington Post, she flips the hour glass and warns, "Your time is running out."[1] The woman featured in the video was Dana Loesch, official spokesperson for the National Rifle Association. The video was released in response to highly publicized calls for gun control from American students. This movement emerged in wake of a horrific mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.[2] Ms. Loesch's combative tone and threatening words perfectly illustrate the longstanding reality of the NRA as a radical non-state actor that aggressively influences America's gun control debate.

Gun control remains one of the most polarizing issues in American politics.[3] This public and political debate is primarily focused on the potential for Congress to take modest action in order to reduce gun violence. It has gained significant attention in recent years, considering the number of high profile, and deadly, mass shootings.[4] Advocates of gun control point to measures such as banning semi-automatic rifles and increasing background checks for firearms purchases. While they push for restrictions on gun ownership (for mentally ill people, wanted terrorists, etc.), they usually refrain from opposing the fundamental right to bear arms.

This paper analyzes the NRA as a

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1   See, for example, Alina Polianskaya, "NRA issues threatening video warning journalists 'your time is running out'," The Independent, March 5, 2018. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/nra-video-threatens-journalists-gun-laws-us-florida-shooting-twitter-dana-loesch-a8240341.html ; Nicole Gaudiano, "NRA spokeswoman warns media, Hollywood and athletes 'time is running out'," USA Today, March 5, 2018.

2   See, Richard Luscombe, "Florida students try to rebuild their lives – but they won't stop pushing for gun control." The Guardian, February 24th, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/feb/24/florida-parkland-school-shooting-survivors

3   For more on the gun control debate in recent years, see, Sabrina Siddiqui, "'Shameful day in Washington': five years after gun reform failed, is change coming?" The Guardian, April 17th, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/apr/17/us-gun-control-sandy-hook-five-years-later ; Michael Jones and George Stone, "The U.S. Gun-Control Paradox: Gun Buyer Response to Congressional Gun-Control Initiatives," Journal of Business & Economics Research (Online) 13:4 (2015), 167-168.

4   CNN Library, "Deadliest Mass Shootings in Modern US History Fast Facts," April 1, 2018. https://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/16/us/20-deadliest-mass-shootings-in-u-s-history-fast-facts/index.html

controversial non-state actor in the context of the gun control debate within the United States. It first provides background information on the organization, then proceeds to emphasize the sources of its influence in American politics and society. It contends that the group is a remarkably powerful actor that serves as a leading obstacle to gun control legislation in the US. The paper subsequently considers the potential for the NRA to have consequences for the US beyond the domestic realm. It specifically argues that due to its prominent role as the leading opponent to any form of gun control, the NRA serves as a threat to American soft power, broadly defined as the ability to exert international influence through attraction as opposed to coercion.[5] In this light, the NRA is not only indirectly killing Americans through its role in opposing gun control, but also killing America's influence as an effective democracy, 'city on a hill,' and symbol of progress around the world.

The National Rifle Association: General Background

The NRA proudly describes itself as "America's longest-standing civil rights organization."[6] According to their official website, members are "proud defenders of history's patriots and diligent protectors of the Second Amendment."[7] With roughly five million members and revenues exceeding 200 million dollars annually, the non-state actor is well known for lobbying against gun control not only in Congress, but also in state legislatures and local counties.[8] This crucial work is primarily carried out through the NRA Institute for Legislative Action and the Political Victory Fund.[9] It is important to note, however, that the association is involved in a much wider variety of activities, ranging from firearm training programs to producing its own television station.[10]

In contemporary American society, particularly among Democrats, the NRA is often

"In this light, the NRA is not only indirectly killing Americans through its role in opposing gun control, but also killing America's influence as an effective democracy, 'city on a hill,' and symbol of progress around the world."

5   Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "Soft Power," Foreign Policy, No. 80, Twentieth Anniversary (Autumn, 1990), 166-168.

6   National Rifle Association, Official Website. https://home.nra.org/
7   Ibid.
8   For membership numbers, see NRA official website; for revenue, see Jones and Stone, "The U.S. Gun-Control Paradox," 168.
9   Scott Melzer, Gun Crusaders: The NRA'S Culture War (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 225.
10   Laura Reston, "The NRA'S New Scare Tactics," The New Republic, October 3, 2017. https://newrepublic.com/article/145001/nra-new-scare-tactic-gun-lobby-remaking-itself-arm-alt-right

associated with an extreme glorification of the Second Amendment and is viewed as an uncompromising force against any form of gun control.[11] When mass shootings trigger debates about the need to regulate automatic weapons, for example, the NRA responds to counter the move-

"Ultimately, it is clear that broad public support for moderate gun control remains frustratingly ineffective in the face of the NRA's financial influence, aggressive advocacy, and ubiquitous political capital."

ment.[12] The group embraces the slippery slope logic, essentially contending that any form of gun control is the first step in a government plan to confiscate all guns and restrain individual liberty.[13] One of their most famous arguments against gun control, "the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," ironically calls for more firearms in order to address gun violence.[14] Another well-known talking point, "guns don't kill people, people kill people," attempts to shift blame away from guns, and towards "monsters" and "lunatics."[15] Vice Executive President Wayne LaPierre has claimed that dangerous, crazy people are roaming the streets, and believes that all Americans deserve the right to defend themselves using whatever firearm they chose.[16] Founded in 1871, the NRA was simply a recreational group whose objective was to "promote and encourage rifle shooting on a scientific basis."[17] For much of its history, the organization was largely

11   See, for example, Tim Dickinson, "How the NRA Paved the Way for Mass Shootings," Rolling Stone, June 15, 2016. https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/how-the-nra-paved-the-way-for-the-orlando-shooting-20160615 ; Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, "Statement on Republicans Advancing NRA's Toothless Gun Legislation," July 1, 2016. https://www.democraticleader.gov/newsroom/pelosi-statement-on-republicans-advancing-nras-toothless-gun-legislation/
12   See, for example, The Guardian, "NRA: full statement by Wayne LaPierre in response to Newtown shootings," December 21, 2012. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/21/nra-full-statement-lapierre-newtown

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15   Robert Richards, "The Role of Interest Groups and Group Interests on Gun Legislation in the U.S. House", Social Science Quarterly 98:2 (2017), 471; The Economist, "The curious strength of the NRA," March 16th, 2013. https://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21573545-americas-gun-lobby-beating-back-post-newtown-push-gun-controls-curious.
16   The Economist, "The curious strength of the NRA."
17   British Broadcasting Corporation, "US gun control: What is the NRA and why is it so powerful?" January 8, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35261394

indifferent to political advocates of second amendment rights. The group even officially supported gun control laws in 1934 and as recently as 1968.[18] Nevertheless, the NRA became increasingly political in the 1970s, institutionalizing lobbying efforts and moving towards their current position as absolute defenders of the second amendment.[19] At present, it would be impossible to have any political discussion regarding guns in America without confronting this increasingly ubiquitous, vocal, and relentless pro-gun organization.

The Power of the NRA as a Non-State Actor in the United States

Following a mass shooting in San Bernardino in 2015, Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced a bill to prohibit individuals on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Terrorist Watch List from purchasing guns.[20] After the proposal was defeated, she stated, "If you need proof that Congress is a hostage to the gun lobby, look no further than today's vote."[21] In this context, gun control remains a political issue where any progress appears impossible. Even when public pressure and Democratic legislative initiative have gained momentum following mass shootings in recent years, laws remain unchanged.[22] Notwithstanding widespread public support for minor reforms (such as universal background checks), Congress consistently fails to act.[23]

This political environment sheds light on the power of the NRA. Despite statistical evidence linking the number of guns in America to significant rates of violence, and widespread public support for reform, any sort of legislative change remains out of reach.[24] To be clear, the NRA is not the only reason why gun control remains unthinkable in Congress. First of all, it is part of a wider gun lobby.[25] Secondly, factors that include a highly partisan political climate as well as historically ingrained pro-gun values among many lawmakers have also influenced the debate independently of the NRA. Nevertheless, it is well documented that the NRA is the single most powerful component of the gun lobby and that it has played the leading role over the past several decades in blocking measures that would have controlled or restricted the sale or use of firearms in the US.[26] As the upcoming section will illustrate, it has done so through its ability to raise money, lobby, create a pro-gun culture, and mobilize supporters.

Direct Political Power: Congress, Elections, and Lobbying

In a surprisingly explicit illustration of NRA influence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told reporters in 2016 that he "couldn't imagine" his Republican-controlled Senate confirming any Supreme Court nominee who lacked the support of the NRA.[27] His comment reveals the pervasive influence of the or-

18   Ibid.
19   Ibid. See also, Melzer, 73
20   Dickinson, "How the NRA Paved the Way for Mass Shootings."
21   Ibid.
22   Richards, "The Role of Interest Groups and Group Interests on Gun Legislation in the U.S. House," 471.
23   Baxter Oliphant, "Bipartisan support for some gun proposals, stark partisan divisions on many others," Pew Research Center, June 23, 2017.http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/23/bipartisan-support-for-some-gun-proposals-stark-partisan-divisions-on-many-others/

24   For more on the relationship between the number of guns and gun violence, see: Harvard Injury Control Research Center, "Firearms Research: Homicides." https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/
25   See, for example, Gun Owners of America (https://gunowners.org/), National Association for Gun Rights (https://nationalgunrights.org/).
26   See for example, Jones and Stone, 168.
27   Dickinson, "How the NRA Paved the Way for Mass Shootings."

ganization, not to mention the deepening politicization of the Supreme Court by an increasingly partisan Senate, which appears to take its cue from this omnipresent lobby group. Beyond efforts to block gun control, the group appears to be a consistent political consideration for Senators, even when considering appointments for the highest judicial office in the land.

This type of influence is hardly surprising considering the increased political involvement of the NRA in recent decades. For example, research has connected NRA advocacy to the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives in 1994.[28] With a Republican back in the White House in 2000, the group supported two major pieces of pro-gun legislation that were adopted by the Bush administration.[29] In the 2004 national elections, the Director of the NRA Institute for Legislative Action boasted about the group's 6.5 million endorsement postcards and letters, 2.4 million endorsement phone calls, and 28,000 television advertisements.[30] Campaign donations, overwhelmingly directed to Republicans, have served as a critical tool. In the 2016 elections, Republican Speaker Paul Ryan received over $170,000 from the group.[31] Even at the state level, the NRA recently funneled over $400,000 to its chosen candidates in Colorado in order to defeat two incumbent Senators who had supported minor gun control policies including universal background checks.[32] At the Presidential level, the NRA became the second highest funder of advertisements

for Donald Trump, and contributed thirty million dollars to his campaign overall.[33] LaPierre and his team spent millions more helping win five key Senate races in 2016.[34] The NRA outspends all other gun-related organizations when it comes to supporting or opposing candidates.[35] Beyond the campaign trail, it also serves as a significant political force for elected officials to contend with. This was illustrated by the rapid mobilization of lobbyists to the Connecticut State Legislature to counter gun control efforts following the slaughter of 20 children at Sandy Hook Elementary School.[36] Ultimately, it is clear that broad public support for moderate gun control remains frustratingly ineffective in the face of the NRA's financial influence, aggressive advocacy, and ubiquitous political capital. However, the contribution of the NRA to the lack of gun control in America goes beyond direct political activity.

Beyond Money and Lobbying: Fostering a Pro-Gun Culture

In a recent article, Bill Scher convincingly argues that the NRA "has built a movement that has convinced its followers that gun ownership is a way of life, central to one's freedom and safety, that must be defended on a daily basis."[37] He contends

28   Melzer, 237.
29   Ibid., 238.
30   Ibid., 230. Note this was in 2013.
31   Tyler Fisher, Sarah Frostenson, and Lily Mihalik. "The gun lobby: See how much your representative gets," Politico, February 21st, 2018. https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017-gun-lobbying-spending-in-america-congress/
32   Jones and Stone, "The U.S. Gun-Control Paradox," 169-170.

33   Bill Scher, "Why the NRA Always Wins: It's not the money. It's the culture," Politico, February 19, 2018. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/19/why-the-nra-always-wins-217028 ; Lynda Kinkade, "Activists, NRA wage ad war over gun reform," CNN, March 24th, 2018. https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2018/03/24/gun-laws-ad-wars-kinkade-pkg.cnn
34   Note post Parkland shooting- Scher, "Why the NRA Always Wins."
35   Jones and Stone, "The U.S. Gun-Control Paradox," 169.
36   The Economist, "The curious strength of the NRA,"; Jonathan Freeland, "Washington DC shootings: America's gun disease diminishes its soft power," The Guardian, September 17, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/17/washington-dc-shootings-america-gun-disease
37   Scher, "Why the NRA Always Wins."

that this cultural influence is the primary source of the NRA's political power. Numerous other scholars and commentators have similarly claimed that the NRA thrives on creating a culture of fear.[38] In order to promote the rights of citizens to own firearms with as few restrictions as possible, the association attempts to appeal to the public through various warnings that emphasize the necessity of their second-amendment rights. As the Economist noted in 2013, the group provides an "alternative narrative about America as an exceptionally violent dystopia," featuring dangerous individuals who liberals allow to roam free.[39] Following this logic, the NRA publically argues that "good citizens need semi-automatics" to defend themselves from potential threats.[40] LaPierre made this idea clear in 2012, arguing that arming 'good guys' at schools was, "the only way to stop a monster from killing our kids."[41] Considering the fact that two-thirds of American gun

"In this context, the NRA has become part of the broader conservative movement...one that prioritizes individualism over interventionist liberal ideas ranging from universal health care to progressive taxation."

owners list protection as a main reason for possessing a firearm, this culture of fear appears to have a receptive audience.[42]

Not only does the NRA warn the public about 'bad guys with guns,' but also about politicians in Washington, who allegedly want to prohibit citizens from defending themselves. In this light, the culture of fear is amplified by portrayals of an intrusive federal government that threatens individual freedom. In an explicit and inaccurate claim, the NRA warned "Obama will take our guns."[43] This narrative has proved appealing to certain Americans, especially in the context of broader conservative culture, and has therefore provided the NRA with a high degree of grassroots support and popular legitimacy.

38   See Melzer, 11.
39   The Economist, "The curious strength of the NRA,"; Luigi Esposito and Laura Finley, "Beyond Gun Control: Examining Neoliberalism, Pro-Gun Politics and Gun Violence in the United States," Theory in Action 7:2 (2014), 91.
40   The Economist, "The curious strength of the NRA," note LaPierre remarks post Newtown.
41   Ibid. Note also, Chad Kautzer, "Good Guys with Guns: From Popular Sovereignty to Self-Defensive Subjectivity," 176, LaPierre remarks regarding NRA's new 'National School Shield Program.'

42   Ruth Igielnik and Anna Brown, "Key takeaways on Americans' views of guns and gun ownership," Pew Research Center, June 22, 2017. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/22/key-takeaways-on-americans-views-of-guns-and-gun-ownership/
43   Esposito and Finley, "Beyond Gun Control: Examining Neoliberalism, Pro-Gun Politics and Gun Violence in the United States," 82.

Sociologist Scott Melzer has highlighted how this culture of individual freedom resonates particularly well with a core base of NRA supporters- older conservative white men, who believe that government should refrain from intruding in their lives.[44] Considering the normative power of the Second Amendment, and the historical American narrative that the Federal government has the potential to inappropriately infringe on individual liberty, the NRA finds listening ears among many of America's conservatives. In fact, Pew Research Centre has found that nearly 75% of gun owners believe that the right to bear arms is "essential to their sense of personal freedom."[45] Certain scholars have persuasively connected the NRA's popular appeal and successful grassroots mobilization to neoliberal ideals that have dominated American society since the 1980s. They specifically relate the gun control debate to negative perceptions of government intervention, and highlight how "rugged individualism" is positively associated with "virtue and responsibility," according to neoliberal thinking.[46] In this context, the NRA has become part of the broader conser-

vative movement in the US, one that prioritizes individualism over interventionist liberal ideas ranging from universal health care to progressive taxation.[47] Pointing to NRA coverage of non-traditional issues such as immigration, University of California Professor Adam Winkler argues that "We're seeing the NRA become an extreme right-wing media outlet, not just a protector of guns."[48] Through association with a larger political ideology, one that is rooted in the core national value of individual liberty and that is championed by the Republican Party, the NRA has clearly developed a degree of normative political power that helps its pro-gun message resonate with those on the American right.

In summary, the NRA has attempted to foster a pro-gun culture in the US, telling citizens to fear dangerous monsters with guns, as well as Washington liberals who allegedly want to strip them of their

"Through public diplomacy tools, American soft power contributed to destabilization of the Soviet Union, and to ultimate victory in the Cold War."

second amendment rights. It has done so through its public statements, television network, national magazine, annual na-

44   Melzer, 2; Brown and Igielnik, "Key takeaways on Americans' views of guns and gun ownership," Pew Research Center, note white men are actually twice as likely to own a gun than white woman as well as nonwhite men.
45   Brown and Igielnik, "Key takeaways on Americans' views of guns and gun ownership," Pew Research Center.
46   Esposito and Finley, "Beyond Gun Control: Examining Neoliberalism, Pro-Gun Politics and Gun Violence in the United States," 76-80.
47   See Melzer, 8.
48   Reston, "The NRA'S New Scare Tactics."

tional meeting, and media spokespeople, among other avenues. The essential point to note, however, is that this culture has facilitated the political mobilization of followers. By appealing to certain Americans' fears and their love for individual liberty, the NRA can subsequently influence politics through its members and supporters. Through voting information packages, ratings of candidates, and endorsements, the NRA effectively encourages civic participation.[49] Noting this influence, Melzer has claimed that the NRA's powerful lobbying status is "a reflection of the group's influence at the polls," and that its "big stick" is members who base voting on the issue of guns.[50] Negatively incorporating Democrats into their culture of fear, the NRA consistently calls on Americans to engage in political action at the local, state, and national level.[51] Considering the fact that 46% of NRA gun owners "have contacted a public official to express their opinion on gun policy," their mobilization strategy appears effective.[52] Examining data since the 1970s, researchers have found that "gun owners are developing a power political identity" that is increasingly associated with predictable voting behavior.[53] In this context, it appears as though there is always an inspired group of citizens for the NRA to stir up.

Is the NRA Really That Powerful?

Critics seeking to downplay the power of the NRA will likely argue that the group simply acts on behalf of Americans who have always valued the second amendment, or that it's campaign contributions remain relatively modest.[54] What remains clear, however, is that the NRA has served as the most prominent, organized, and holistic actor speaking on behalf of gun rights. Perhaps they repeat a pro-gun message that numerous conservative citizens and politicians already agree with, but they consistently make that message loud, clear, and uncompromising.

Gun violence in America is the worst among any developed nation.[55] With almost as many guns in the country as people, the country has the most firearms per population in the world.[56] Whether its related to gangs in inner cities, domestic violence at home, or mass murder at schools and churches, gun violence has touched countless lives in America and has consistently raised questions about legislative reforms. It is in this context that the NRA should be viewed as an extremely influential non-state actor that has been a key player in preventing any sort of gun control measures. Through funding campaigns, lobbying in Congress, supporting a culture of fear, and appealing to proponents of individual liberty, the NRA supports a political agenda where major gun control is inconceivable, even in wake of tragedies.

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49   BBC, "US gun control: What is the NRA and why is it so powerful?"

50   Melzer, 234-235.

51   See, Eric Lipton and Alexander Burns, "The True Source of the N.R.A.'s Clout: Mobilization, Not Donation," New York Times, February 24, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/24/us/politics/nra-gun-control-florida.html

52   See, Kim Parker, "Among gun owners, NRA members have a unique set of views and experiences."

53   See, Mark Joslyn, Donald Haider-Markel, Michael Baggs, and Andrew Bilbo, "Emerging Political Identities? Gun Ownership and Voting in Presidential Elections," Social Science Quarterly 98:2 (2017).

54   See, for example, Richards, "The Role of Interest Groups and Group Interests on Gun Legislation in the U.S. House,"471-472.

55   Jonathan Masters, "U.S. Gun Policy: Global Comparisons," Backgrounder, Council on Foreign Relations, November 14, 2017. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-gun-policy-global-comparisons

56   British Broadcasting Corporation, "America's gun culture in 10 charts," March 21, 2018. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081

Soft Power in International Relations: An Essential American Consideration

The term 'soft power' (also referred to as co-optive power) was famously coined by Joseph Nye nearly three decades ago. In an international environment featuring economic interdependence, new technologies, an increase in transnational actors, and new cross-border challenges ranging from climate change to global health, this Harvard professor explained how power might be more complex than a country's military arsenal or gross domestic product.[57] Soft power, Nye says, means "getting others to want what you want" when it comes to foreign policy.[58] Whereas hard power involves the use of strong-arm tools such as military might in order to achieve a foreign policy goal, soft power relies on attraction and/or non-coercive persuasion.[59] Using soft power resources including culture, political values, and foreign policies, states can influence foreign opinions in order to make their own foreign policy objectives attractive to strategic targets.[60] This allows states to work towards their goals in a more legitimate and less contested manner.[61] It is essential to note, however, that soft power is dependent on the perception of qualities including competence as well as beauty. Beauty refers to the credibility and legitimacy that an actor is granted as a result of living up to its self-proclaimed values and ideals.[62]

While the US has evidently led the world in terms of hard power resources since the second half of the 21st century, it has also been an effective utilizer of soft power. It is important to note that historic national identity has played a major role in this area. Many Americans have viewed their country as an effective democratic experiment, "city on a hill," champion of individual liberty, and symbol of progress around the world.[63] This was especially important during the Cold War, when the promotion of American culture and political values helped support the strategic goal of increasing the attractiveness of the US system vis à vis the communist Soviet Union. Through radio broadcasts, touring jazz groups, the promotion of human rights, academic exchanges, and other public diplomacy tools, American soft power contributed to destabilization of the Soviet Union, and to ultimate victory in the Cold War.[64]

In more recent decades, the US has continued to use soft power in order to facilitate its international agenda and to legitimize its position as the world's major superpower. For example, in speeches aiming to reach out to the 'Muslim world,' President Obama stated that US interests are "essential to peoples' hopes," and that the country "has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the

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57   See, Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "Soft Power," Foreign Policy, No. 80, Twentieth Anniversary (Autumn, 1990), 153 – 171.
58   Nye, "Soft Power," 167.
59   Ibid.
60   Joseph Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," Political Science Quarterly 119:2 (Summer, 2004) 256, 266.
61   Nye, "Soft Power," 167.
62   Alexander L. Vuving, "How Soft Power Works," Paper presented at the panel "Soft Power and Smart Power," (Toronto: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2009), 11.
63   See, for example, President Truman claiming that "the free people of the world" were depending on America to support them in the early Cold War. President Harry S. Truman, "Address before a Joint Session of Congress," (March 12, 1947), quoted in Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, vol. II (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2009), 200 – 202. Also, Ronald Reagan, "Election Eve Address "A Vision for America","" November 3, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=85199.
64   See, for example, James Critchlow, "Public Diplomacy during the Cold War: The Record and Its Implications," Journal of Cold War Studies 6:1 (2004): 75-89; Joseph Nye, "Why military power is no longer enough," The Guardian, March 31, 2002. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/mar/31/1

world has ever known."[65] Framing the US as a champion of freedom and a leader for global stability, Obama aimed to increase the attractiveness of his country in regions where anti-American sentiment threatened national security. More generally, the Obama administration evidently demonstrated the US desire to be viewed as a moral international actor whose leadership is essential for international prosperity and progress. An obvious example was a 2013 speech by Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in Geneva. Asking countries to join the US on "the right side of history," she boldly proclaimed that "gay rights are human rights and human rights are gay rights."[66] Following this logic, the US serves as a model for the world through progressive ideas of human rights. After all, half a century earlier, national security officials argued that the American value of freedom was "the most contagious idea in history."[67] Combining this moral authority with unprecedented economic prosperity, popular culture, and its historical narrative as a former colony that transformed itself into a world power, it is no surprise that American leaders have viewed their country as a noble international leader for others to follow. These leaders have understood the coercive power at their disposal, but have not forgotten their unique attractive power.

The Land of the Free or a Warzone? Gun Control, the NRA, and Endangered Soft Power

This section examines how international perceptions of under regulated and seemingly out of control gun violence in America, threatens the country's attractive power as a safe land of opportunity, respecter of human rights, and symbol of progress. It is essential to note that international coverage of mass shootings plays a primary role in informing foreign publics about American gun issues and therefore in creating negative perceptions of American society. Mass murder of innocent students from Columbine to Parkland has left no shortage of media

"After all, half a century earlier, national security officials argued that the American value of freedom was 'the most contagious idea in history.'"

65   Barack Obama: "Remarks in Cairo," June 4, 2009. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=86221. ; The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa," May 19, 2011. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa
66   Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "Remarks on LGBT Rights," Palais des Nations, Geneva, December 6, 2011, Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva. https://geneva.usmission.gov/2011/12/06/free-and-equal/.

67   United States Department of State Policy Planning Staff, NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (Washington D.C., Executive Office of the President, 1950), 8. http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191

"In a contemporary environment...the issue of minimal gun regulations facilitating mass murder certainly appeals to governments anxious to increase their own attractive power relative to the U.S."

coverage sparking shock, fear, and fierce debates over the normalcy of firearms in American society. This section specifically illustrates how the NRA contributes to problems of legitimacy for American soft power in two ways. First and foremost, in light of negative international perceptions of gun violence, the NRA indirectly contributes to deteriorating American soft power through its role as the primary non-state actor fighting in the anti-gun control arena. Secondly, the international reputation of the NRA itself risks negatively portraying ordinary American citizens as radical gun-lovers and its democracy as compromised by special interests.

Gun Violence and Negative Perceptions of America: Indirect Consequences of the NRA

In 2013, British journalist Jonathan Freeland clearly articulated the potential for gun violence to harm America's international reputation. Writing for The Guardian, he points out that America appears "incapable of protecting the lives of innocent Americans at home," and argues that gun violence "makes the country seem less like a model and more like a basket case."[68] Freeland goes on to claim that every time foreigners hear about Americans killing each other with automatic weapons, "the power of America's example fades a little more."[69] Considering the fact that research has shown foreigners to perceive Americans as violent, Freeland's argument certainly carries weight.[70] Additionally, the fact that gun-related homicide rates are roughly 19 times higher in the US than in 23 other 'high income' countries further illustrates problems for the American reputation as a free and safe society where everyone can pursue opportunity while enjoying fundamental rights.[71] As previously explained, soft power legitimacy depends on beauty, or how well an actor relates to its ideals. When American citizens lose their lives in schools and movie theatres, it undoubtedly becomes harder for America to convincingly champion human rights and the importance of individual freedom to

68   Freeland, "America's gun disease diminishes its soft power."
69   Ibid.
70   See, Jami Fullerton and Alice Kendrick, "Perceptions of Gun Violence in the US as a Moderator of International Tourism Advertising Effectiveness," Place Branding and Public Diplomacy 11:2 (2015), 103.
71   Jones and Stone, "The U.S. Gun-Control Paradox," 167.

pursue one's dreams. By fighting against common-sense gun control measures that would almost certainly reduce deadly shootings (such as increased background checks, banning automatic weapons, and preventing wanted terrorists from purchasing firearms) the NRA is indirectly buttressing the negative unfavorable international perception of American society. In doing so, it makes it harder for America to exercise co-optive influence in the world.

Gun violence risks decreasing the attractive power of the US among foreign publics, even American allies. While there doesn't appear to be significant research on foreign perceptions of gun violence in America, anecdotal evidence from the media provides important insights on the danger concerning soft power erosion. In the United Kingdom, the media has frequently portrayed mass shootings in America as a reflection of "too many guns," an incomprehensible gun culture, and consistent tragedy.[72] Following the Charleston church shooting in 2015, the front page of The Independent tellingly read, "America's Shame."[73] Similarly, a researcher at the University of Sydney has stated that Australians "don't understand America's need for guns," and that the strong pro-gun culture is mystifying for those outside of the country.[74] Following the most recent mass shooting in Parkland, a Canadian columnist and political strategist wrote that Canadians feel a degree of "smugness" when mass shootings expose the horrific violence that differentiates the United States from its northern

neighbor. He even points to a recent poll illustrating that "gun control constitutes one of the biggest differences between Canada and the US," according to roughly 66% of Canadians.[75] Ultimately, the US has a unique pro-gun society and history that few in other countries can understand. News of mass shootings have reached increasingly larger international audiences, especially as the two deadliest incidents in American history have taken place within the past two years.[76] Considering this media landscape, as well as the fact that America has frequently been criticized for hypocrisy regarding human rights, strong potential exists for gun violence to further erode American influence as a safe and prosperous country with a mission of world leadership. In this regard, the NRA's counter intuitive message of less gun control and more armed civilians is likely to hinder America's image in the international arena.

One notable example of academic research on the issue of gun violence and attractive power comes from Australia. Examining American tourist advertisements targeting Australians in 2013, researchers found that numerous respondents mentioned guns in the context of the US, and that the positive tourism commercial could not easily counter perceptions of America as a violent place.[77] The results indicate that views toward gun violence had the potential to negatively impact the success of tourism campaigns, as well as "general attitudes towards the US govern-

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72   Christopher Bodeen, "The world is 'mystified' by America's enduring racism and 'bizarre' gun laws," Business Insider France, June 19, 2015. http://www.businessinsider.fr/us/the-world-is-mystified-by-americas-enduring-racism-and-bizarre-gun-laws-2015-6
73   Ibid.
74   Bodeen, "The world is 'mystified' by America's enduring racism and 'bizarre' gun laws."

75   Peter Donolo, "Canada Shouldn't be Smug When It Comes to Guns," The Globe and Mail, February 22, 2018. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/canada-shouldnt-be-smug-when-it-comes-to-guns/article38064169/
76   CNN Library, "Deadliest Mass Shootings in Modern US."
77   See, Fullerton and Kendrick, "Perceptions of Gun Violence in the US as a Moderator of International Tourism Advertising Effectiveness."

ment."[78] The article concludes by claiming that public diplomacy (a key component of soft power) was one reason to "re-think US gun laws."[79] In other words, regulating firearms to decrease violence could help improve the international image of America. This idea clearly sheds light on the role of the NRA as not simply an opponent of gun control, but also as a voice whose policy agenda undermines America's international status.

The incredulous reaction of other major powers to mass shootings provides further tangible evidence confirming that gun violence undermines US soft power. As the Washington Post reported following a mass shooting at a navy base, the Kremlin intended to take advantage of the incident in order to attack the attractive power of America.[80] A senior Russian foreign affairs official ironically tweeted that the tragedy was "clear confirmation of American exceptionalism."[81] Diplomats at the American Embassy clearly noticed this attempt to attack their country's image, tweeting back "Why use a tragedy to score political points?"[82] Russia isn't the only rival power that has pointed to gun violence in order to challenge the normative power of America. In a 2016 report discussing human rights in the US, China's Foreign Ministry stated that gunshots were "lingering in people's ears behind the Statue of Liberty." The report contends that the US has demonstrated hypocrisy when it comes to human rights, and mentions gun violence in the very first section, titled "Serious Infringements on Right to

Life, Personal Security."[83] This message has also appeared in Chinese media. In 2018, a Global Times article called the US "inhumane," and claimed that there is an "urgent need for the US to impose harsh restrictions on gun purchases." It subsequently argued that the country can "learn from China and genuinely protect human rights."[84] While these statements have not explicitly mentioned the NRA by name, it is practically impossible to discuss gun violence in America without considering the radical non-state actor that advocates absolute gun-rights over any sort of gun reforms aimed at public safety. In a contemporary environment where American leadership appears to be fading, this issue of minimal gun regulations facilitating mass murder certainly appeals to governments anxious to increase their own attractive power relative to the US.

Finally, one should consider the potential for American guns to be used by actors outside of the country. This issue risks exacerbating negative foreign attitudes towards American's lax gun policy and, thus, to a further decline in its soft power. For example, a recent article by Chelsea Parsons of the Centre for American Progress is titled, "American guns are killing our neighbors in Canada and Mexico." Highlighting how 98% of the guns used in Canadian crimes originate from the US (and 70% for Mexico), she argues that America's moral standing may be delegitimized if its own "inaction on gun violence redounds to the detriment of the safety and security of our international

78   Ibid., 107.
79   Ibid., 108.
80   The Washington Post, "Foreigners say they are no longer surprised by gun violence," September 17, 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/foreigners-say-they-are-no-longer-surprised-at-us-gun-violence/2013/09/17/efa00d2e-1f8a-11e3-9ad0-96244100e647_story.html
81   Ibid.
82   Ibid.

83   The State Council: The People's Republic of China, "Human Rights Record of the United States in 2016: State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China," http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2017/03/09/content_281475589785800.htm
84   Yu Ning, "China can offer lessons to US in protecting human rights," Global Times, February 22, 2018. "http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1090293.shtml

community."[85] Additionally, terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda have urged followers to take advantage of America's abundance of "easily obtainable firearms."[86] In this light, not only are Americans killing each other, but their guns risk being used for violent crimes transnationally.

"Can America ever be a safe, secure and attractive country if the terrorists that it strives to defeat can readily purchase assault weapons within the country?"

Can America ever be a safe, secure and attractive country if the terrorists that it strives to defeat can readily purchase assault weapons within the country?[87] Once again, on the surface, the NRA's role in undermining American soft power may appear nebulous. However, the fact is that the NRA's uncompromisingly extreme laissez faire approach to this issue has facilitated the abundance of American guns, and in turn the opportunity for those guns to be obtained by criminals and terrorists in other countries. As described earlier in the paper, the NRA's relentless and multifaceted promotion of pro-gun culture along with its richly funded direct political advocacy, has played an indispensable role in the maintenance of an American society lacking effective and widespread gun control regulations.

Beyond Indirect Consequences: International Perceptions of the NRA

While the paper has emphasized the indirect impact of the NRA on American soft power, it now briefly turns to consider the potential for the organization to have a more direct effect. It is essential to note that the NRA is known outside of America. In addition to general gun violence, the international reputation of the NRA itself risks negatively portraying sensible and effective American governance as hampered by an extremist non-state actor. In a recent video explaining the issue of gun violence in America, Le Monde described the NRA as the primary reason for the lack of gun control in America, and claimed that the group was controlled by "a radical fringe."[88] For the world at large, the US is unlikely to be celebrated as the inspirational democracy that it claims to be if the gun lobby is viewed as having control of a majority of its politicians and in turn the government's ability

85   Chelsea Parsons, "American guns are killing our neighbors in Canada and Mexico," Los Angeles Times, February 6, 2018. http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-parsons-us-guns-abroad-20180206-story.html
86   Dickinson, "How the NRA Paved the Way for Mass Shootings."
87   Ibid. Note Senator Feinstein's gun control proposal regarding the terrorist watch list.

88   Le Monde, "Etats-Unis: la NRA, lobby des armes, dénonce la « politisation honteuse » de la tuerie en Floride," Feburary 22, 2018. http://www.lemonde.fr/donald-trump/article/2018/02/22/etats-unis-la-nra-lobby-des-armes-denonce-la-politisation-honteuse-de-la-tuerie-en-floride_5261092_4853715.html

to implement basic and broadly supported public safety measures. In 2016, the British Broadcasting Corporation turned its attention to the NRA when it published an article exploring its powerful influence on America's gun control debate. By highlighting the group's "disputed interpretation of the Second Amendment," the BBC underlined its skepticism regarding the NRA's political position.[89] In international and US media, the NRA is frequently portrayed as an extreme and non-empathetic group that buys politicians and aggressively promotes an unconstrained, pro-gun culture throughout the country. Outlandish claims and insensitive statements often reinforce this perception. In response to the recent "March for Our Lives" protest, for example, the group claimed that student protestors were "manipulated by gun-hating billionaires and Hollywood elites" in their effort to "destroy the Second Amendment."[90] This type of exaggerated, paranoia-driven claim is likely to further depict the NRA as a radical organization that lowers the quality of political debates regarding gun control. Furthermore, the NRA has been associated with support for President Trump in recent years. This is likely to further damage its international reputation, considering negative views of Trump around the world and the concomitant decline in American attractiveness.[91]

Conclusion

In a political environment where frequent mass shootings spark increasingly strong calls for gun control, the NRA may appear to be an organization on the defensive. However, this paper has illustrated the significant power of the non-state actor in the American political sphere. Not only does it control the gun-control debate by engaging in campaign financing and lobbying, but also by promoting an extreme pro-gun ideology throughout American society.

Ultimately, however, the paper sheds light on the NRA as a domestically focused non-state actor with international implications for the United States. Its ability to limit gun control, combined with the association's generally unfavorable international reputation, represents a troubling obstacle to those policymakers seeking to enhance and legitimize American soft power. If the US wants to use attraction to get others to follow its lead in foreign affairs, then it must address some tough questions: Can you be a champion of human rights if you can't protect the basic safety of children in your schools? Can you be a legitimate and effective representative democracy if the NRA appears more influential than public opinion when it comes to gun control? Can Americans be viewed in a positive light if the rest of the world view them as irrational gun-obsessed fanatics who believe they have a God-given right to own automatic assault weapons?

The NRA is central to these questions and must be recognized as a significant obstacle to America's desire to wield international influence through the power of attraction. Nevertheless, the organization should be viewed within a broader context when considering America's ongoing ability to be a leading and effective actor in

89   BBC, "US gun control: What is the NRA and why is it so powerful?"

90   Brandon Griggs, "Here's what the NRA had to say today about the March for Our Lives," CNN, March 25, 2018. https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/24/us/nra-march-response-trnd/index.html

91   See, Pew Research Center, "U.S. Image Suffers as Publics Around World Question Trump's Leadership," June 26th, 2017. http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/

the application of soft power. For example, there are increasing questions about America's ability to effectively use soft power to influence world affairs as a direct consequence of the election of its current President. Many view the new President as not only unqualified for the office, but disturbingly disengaged in the international arena and openly contemptuous of international organizations, relationships and cooperation.[92] While the NRA may appear to be a single-issue non-state actor in domestic politics, scholars of international relations must assess its role in this broader context in order to fully understand challenges impacting American soft power moving forward.

92 See, for example, Council on Foreign Relations, "Walking Away From World Order: Weighing Trump's First Year of Foreign Policy," February 13th, 2018. https://www.cfr.org/news-releases/walking-away-world-order-weighing-trumps-first-year-foreign-policy

About the Author:

Darcy Taylor is a fourth-year student at the University of Toronto as a Redknee Loran Scholar. He specializes in International Relations with a focus in International Law and Human Rights. A former Intern in United States Congress, Darcy has research interests surrounding American foreign policy and soft power.

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Hannah Chong
National University of Singapore

Reconciliation in Settler-Colonial States:
A Study of the Political Apology

Abstract

Symbolic gestures have been dismissed in current literature as lacking efficacy in addressing historical injustices. This article corrects this misunderstanding by studying the political apology as a form of symbolic reparation. Rather than misconstrue these acts as being less efficacious than their material counterparts, this article understands both as being equally necessary in bringing about a holistic outcome. Analysing the role that the political apology plays in the reconciliation process, this article will rely on interdisciplinary scholarship and empirical examples drawn from Australia and Canada, two settler-colonial states that have employed this symbolic gesture in addressing past injustices. This article will first discuss settler-colonial historical injustices, drawing attention to their twin implications of irreversibility and continuity. Then, it will argue for the normative importance of non-assimilatory reconciliation in settler-colonial states and claim that it is a better alternative as compared to the complete decolonization proposed by post-colonial scholars. It then conceptualises the political apology in terms of its goals and the relevant yardsticks for appraising its efficacy. Arguing that the political apology opens dialogue through the three notions of acknowledgement, symbolic breaking, and inclusion, this article will demonstrate how it addresses settler-colonial implications through creating symbolic equity and representing a commitment to an end of injustice. The political apology is future-oriented; while it does not result in the immediate discontinuation of dominance, it symbolizes the guarantee that such circumstances are temporal. Building on that premise, it encourages other settler-colonial governments to utilise the political apology among other forms of symbolic reparations in bringing about non-assimilatory reconciliation between settler and indigenous communities.

Introduction

In a 2016 speech in Hiroshima, former United States President Obama brought a message of peace and a call for a "moral awakening" for humanity. [1] However, for a trip laden with symbolic gestures, such as the laying of a wreath memorializing Japanese nuclear bomb victims, a political apology was conspic-

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1   Gardiner Harris, "At Hiroshima Memorial, Obama says Nuclear Arms Require 'Moral Revolution'," The New York Times, May 27, 2016.

uously missing; prior to the trip, it was made clear that Obama would not be apologising for his country dropping an atomic bomb on the city.[2] The stubborn maintenance of a non-apologetic stance despite demands from Japanese nuclear survivors hints at the significance attached to this symbolic gesture.[3]

Despite a well-deserved reputation for being stingy with apologies, the U.S. congress did issue one in 2009. Buried in a 67-page defence appropriation spending bill was an "apology" towards particular American indigenous communities "for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted" on them.[4] Understandaby, members of the Navajo Nation were unimpressed with the "apology," citing its lack of publicity and open acknowledgement.[5] This episode further illustrates the importance of not only an apology, but also a proper apology to indigenous victims of settler-colonial violence. The Obama administration eventually ended in January 2017 without any significant mention of this "apology."[6]

Cynics decry the political apology as "mere ritual," citing its impracticality in mending intergroup relations, since it often lacks a material dimension.[7] Stories like this remind us otherwise: in politics, symbolic gestures matter. Hence, rather than accept the principle that political apologies are ineffective, this piece questions the role that political apologies

> "Cynics decry the political apology as 'mere ritual,' citing its impracticality in mending intergroup relations, since it often lacks a material dimension. Stories like this remind us otherwise: in politics, symbolic gestures matter."

play in the reconciliation process in settler-colonial states. With this as my primary research question, I demonstrate the symbolic contributions of the political apology towards achieving holistic reconciliation.

The Argument

I will first make the case for the

2   Ibid.
3   Ibid.
4   Robert Longley, "Did You Know the US Apologized to Native Americans?," ThoughtCo., April 26, 2017, https://www.thoughtco.com/the-us-apologized-to-native-americans-3974561.
5   Ibid.
6   In other words, one that fulfils the non-assimilatory cri-

terion. This criterion will be expounded on in Chapter 4.
7   Danielle Celermajer, "Mere Ritual? Displacing the Myth of Sincerity in Transitional Rituals," The International Journal of Transitional Justice 7, (2013): 286-305, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijt003.

normative importance of reconciliation in settler-colonial states. To redress settler-colonial injustices, scholars have proposed different approaches. Some argue for decolonization, claiming that reconciliation acts as a façade for assimilation, as indigenous communities are forcibly co-opted into the existing status quo.[8] However, by adopting a conceptualisation of reconciliation as a state of "mutual respect,"[9] I will illustrate how assimilation is not an inevitable outcome of this process.

The second part of my argument details how the political apology acts as a reconciliatory tool. Through acts of acknowledgement, symbolic breaking, and inclusion, I argue that the political apology contributes symbolically to the reconciliation process between settler and indigenous communities. While I do not dispute that material reparations are important in addressing settler-colonial injustices, I assert that such symbolic reparations are equally necessary for a holistic outcome. I argue that the political apology creates symbolic equity and represents a commitment to ending injustice, thus addressing the implications of settler-colonialism in part and facilitating non-assimilatory reconciliation.

Methods

Through conducting a detailed textual analysis of theoretical and empirical studies, this paper will identify some of the broad disagreements in the field to propose empirically-grounded conceptualisations of reconciliation and the political apology. Focusing on settler-colonial states, this paper will draw heavily on examples from Australia and Canada as both governments have successfully made non-assimilatory apologies to their indigenous communities for similar cultural policies. I will examine these apologies and study indigenous reactions found in secondary scholarship to ascertain their symbolic contributions to the reconciliation process.

Definitions

To make sense of my argument, it is first necessary to define some of the key terms. Settler-colonial states, the universe within which my argument operates, refer to countries where white settlers historically displaced and eliminated indigenous communities to ensure their own survival and reproduction.[10] In response to the historical legacy of the injustices committed against the indigenous people, I propose that reconciliation is a desirable approach.

While some define it as complete intergroup harmony, this article will use a third-way approach where reconciliation is conceived as a state of "mutual respect."[11] This conceptualisation acknowledges that while disagreements might remain, there can still be space for dialogue between former adversaries as long as reconciliation takes place on mutually agreed terms. The political apology is thus useful in facilitating this process. This paper conceives of the political apology as a ritual:[12] while it does not strictly take a textual format, it does not include actions such as monetary compensation. This definition allows us to capture the symbolic value of the political apology independent of other material di-

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8   Penelope Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation: Frontier Violence, Affective Performances, and Imaginative Refoundings (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 11.
9   Ernesto Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," International Political Science Review 38, no.2 (2017): 227-241, 228.

10   Lorenzo Veracini, Settler-Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 8-9.
11   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 228.
12   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?", 286-305.

mensions.[13]

Structure

The second chapter will begin with a critical examination of existing literature to understand what other scholars have said about settler-colonialism, the normative importance of reconciliation, and the use of the political apology in this process. As current scholarship has largely ignored the normative importance of reconciliation in favour of post-colonial theories that support decolonization,[14] this paper will attempt to correct this misunderstanding. Beyond that, I will also assert the claim that the political apology is valuable even if it does not lead to material outcomes as scholars tend to overlook its symbolic contributions.[15]

The third chapter will then set the context of settler-colonialism by going over the type of policies instituted by settler governments and the grievances faced by indigenous peoples under settler colonialism. It will explain why reconciliation is not only an appropriate, but also a desirable response to these injustices. Having established reconciliation's normative importance in settler-colonial states, the fourth chapter will delve deeper into the definition and characteristics of the political apology. This chapter will synthesise varied findings into a coherent framework and illustrate the differences between intergroup and interpersonal apologies, which I argue are key to understanding the symbolic utility of the political apology. The fifth chapter will further expound on this insight and tie the preceding chapters together by demonstrating how political apologies facilitate reconciliation

through addressing settler-colonial implications.

Literature Review

The scholarship that informs my argument can be broadly categorised into three themes. Constituting the context of my paper, the first section will discuss the characteristics of settler-colonialism and the type of policies that have been implemented by settler governments on the indigenous community. The second section will elaborate on the different reconciliation theories posited by scholars in addressing indigenous grievances and discuss the disagreements in the field on the need for settler governments to adopt such an approach. Lastly, the third section will illustrate some of the common arguments used both in support and opposition of the political apology, critique the disparate definitions employed by various scholars, and from there distil an appropriate understanding of it.

On Settler-Colonialism

Contemporary scholarship describes settler-colonialism as an institution that was built on a policy of dispossession;[16] settlers dispossessed the indigenous people of their land through violent tactics that have been described as "genocidal,"[17] and they have replaced them with their own colonies. LeFevre differentiates settler-colonialism from colonialism, arguing that the former is "premised on occupation," while the latter is about "conquest."[18] Wolfe terms this process as the "elimination of the native,"[19] but goes deeper by

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13   Ibid.
14   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 227-241.
15   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?", 287.

16   Tate A. LeFevre, Settler Colonialism (Oxford University Press, 2015), doi:10.1093/obo/9780199766567-0125.
17   Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production, and Resistance," Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies 17, no.1 (2017): 3-13, 6.
18   LeFevre, Settler Colonialism.
19   Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimina-

"I argue that the political apology creates symbolic equity and represents a commitment to ending injustice, thus addressing implications of settler-colonialism and facilitating non-assimilatory reconciliation."

expounding on the "positive" dimensions of this elimination:[20] it does not merely destroy indigenous societies, it also builds "a new colonial society on expropriated land base."[21] Such settler-colonial policies are culturally consistent,[22] and they include, but are not limited, to territorial removal and religious conversion.

Additionally, some scholars have noted the enduring nature of settler-colonialism as an institution. Bonds and Inwood argue that settler colonialism is an "ongoing historicized process rather than an historical fact,"[23] suggesting that the con-

sequences of such policies continue to be experienced today. Altogether, these studies provide a greater understanding of the policies employed by settler governments and the ongoing nature of settler colonialism.

On Reconciliation

The scholarship on reconciliation is divided. Critics claim that reconciliation does not better the conditions of indigenous communities but perpetuates the domination of settlers under the guise of promoting indigenous welfare. Edmonds terms this the "cunning of reconciliation,"[24] drawing upon the example of Australia where she claims indigenous people were coerced into reconciling with the settlers despite not receiving "substantial land rights" among other demands.[25] Moses acknowledges this post-colonial critique where reconciliation is viewed as a "sinister attempt to integrate Aborigines into the broader national community."[26]

While indeed reconciliation can be used for hegemonic purposes, these critiques often fail to acknowledge that reconciliation is desirable for two groups that must share a political space,[27] par-

tion of the Native," Journal of Genocide Research 8, no.4 (2006): 387-409.
20   Through the use of the term "positive", Wolfe demonstrates that settler-colonialism did not only remove indigenous foundations, but also built new structures in place of them.
21   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
22   Patrick Wolfe, "Race and the Trace of History for Henry Reynolds," in Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture, ed. Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 272-296.
23   Anne Bonds and Joshua Inwood, "Beyond White Privilege: Geographies of White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism," Progress in Human Geography 40, no.6 (2016): 715-733, 722.

24   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation, 11.
25   Ibid., 15.
26   A. Dirk Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism: Australian Indigenous Alterity and Political Agency," Citizenship Studies 15, no.2 (2011): 145-159, 146.
27   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Set-

"While indeed reconciliation can be used for hegemonic purposes, these critiques often fail to acknowledge that reconciliation is desirable for two groups that must share a political space."

ticularly in settler-colonial states where cultures have hybridized and produced new shared identities. Verdeja begins with this normative premise and identifies the various theories on reconciliation as promoting a "morally acceptable coexistence" among perpetrator and victim groups.[28] He highlights communitarian and agonist approaches: the former conceives of reconciliation as an apolitical socially harmonious order where former adversaries agree on shared values,[29] while the latter is more pessimistic about complete social harmony but argues that conflictual relations can be transformed through a reconciliation process that is not based on consensus, but instead on "contestation" over shared discourses and identities.[30]

Verdeja puts forth his own third-way approach to reconciliation as a state of mutual respect "that does not simply reinforce the values"[31] of the majority culture. He acknowledges the scepticism of ago-

nists towards communitarian reconciliation but also disagrees with their overt emphasis on power relations, which he claims reduces "norms and values to expressions of power" and "risks undermining the possibility of defending any normative criteria for political reconciliation."[32] Thus, Verdeja proposes "mutual respect" as a criterion to "distinguish between normatively defensible versions of reconciliation that advance the claims of indigenous groups versus those that privilege state power and majority culture."[33] My argument for reconciliation derives from Verdeja's measured approach, as he considers both the normative importance of reconciliation and its practical limits.

On Political Apologies

Some scholars argue that the political apology, a symbolic reparation, can be instrumental in facilitating reconciliation between settlers and indigenous people. For example, Murphy insists on the utility of the apology in mending the divide between different communities and providing an opportunity for reconciliation.[34] Similarly, Andrieu also posits that an apology that is followed by forgiveness will lead to reconciliation.[35]

tler Societies," 228.
28   Ibid.
29   Ibid, 229.
30   Ibid.
31   Ibid., 237.

32   Ibid.
33   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 231.
34   Michael Murphy, "Apology, Recognition, and Reconciliation," Human Rights Review 12, no.1 (2011): 47-69.
35   Kora Andrieu, "'Sorry for the Genocide': How Public

However, some disagree. One common accusation is that the political apology is a "mere ritual"[36] that does not address the true concerns of indigenous people which are material in nature, such as the return of their territory.[37] Another concern similar to the criticisms levelled against the notion of reconciliation claims that the apology is a "monologue"[38] that does not consider indigenous desires and coerces forgiveness.[39] Importantly, these disagreements take place at the theoretical level. Empirically, most studies concur on the utility of the political apology in facilitating reconciliation. For instance, Mellor et al. found, through conducting interviews with indigenous people, that an apology was important to them as the first step of reconciliation,[40] giving us ground to believe that the political apology contributes positively to this process despite the lack of a material dimension.

Secondly, scholars also disagree on what constitutes the political apology. For some, especially those with a linguistics background, the apology is merely a speech act.[41] Hence, to determine the effectiveness of an apology in facilitating reconciliation, one only needs to look at its content, such as whether the transgressor has acknowledged the wrong committed.[42] Others argue that the apology includes acts of material reparations that follow, since it is only these actions that can "render the words" of an apology "meaningful."[43] Both definitions are flawed; the latter conflates symbolic and material reparations, making it difficult to distil the apology's symbolic contribution to reconciliation, while the former excludes the performative aspects of the apology by only considering its textual content.[44] Furthermore, it has the potential to be too unwieldy, with more criteria added to determine its effectiveness.[45] Hence, I will employ Celermajer's definition of the apology as a "ritual performance,"[46] since it captures its symbolic essence but does not reduce it to its textual content.

Settler-Colonialism and the Normative Desirability of Reconciliation

This chapter will explore the settler-colonial conceptual universe within which my argument operates. Using Wolfe's conception of this institution as one built on the "elimination of the native,"[47] core settler-colonial policies will be categorized broadly into physical and cultural elimination. Drawing examples from Australia and Canada, I posit that the two key implications of these policies are the irreversibility of past grievances and the continuation of the domination of the indigenous community. Then, building on the premise that decolonization is an

Apologies can Help Promote National Reconciliation," Millennium – Journal of International Studies 38, no.1 (2009): 3-23.

36   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?", 286-305.

37   Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 149.

38   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation, 15.

39   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation, 15.

40   David Mellor, Di Bretherton, and Lucy Firth, "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australia: The Dilemma of Apologies: Forgiveness, and Reconciliation," Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology 13, no.1 (2007): 11-36.

41   For an example, refer to Adina Abida, "The Speech Act of Apology in Political Life," Journal of Pragmatics 14, no.3 (1990): 467-471.

42   Michael R. Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," Journal of Human Rights 6, no.1

(2007): 75-105.

43   Janna Thompson, "Is Political Apology a Sorry Affair?," Social & Legal Affairs 21, no.2 (2012): 215-225, 220.

44   The dramatized side of the political apology. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.

45   Renee Jeffery, "When is an Apology Not an Apology? Contrition Chic and Japan's (Un)Apologetic Politics," Australian Journal of International Affairs 65, no.5 (2011): 607-617, 615.

46   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 288.

47   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 387-409.

inappropriate response, I will demonstrate reconciliation's normative importance by considering cultural factors. Finally, I will also illustrate how this process does not necessarily lead to assimilation.

Settler-Colonialism

One might ask what differentiates settler-colonialism from colonialism since both involve an "exogenous domination"[48] of the indigenous community. There are two ways to perceive their differences. The first conceptualisation of settler-colonialism highlights its "territorial"[49] nature. LeFevre describes settler-colonialism as a "distinct imperial formation"[50] that has the goal of finding new territories for its colonies to take root. Colonialism, on the other hand, relies largely on labour to maintain extractive industries for the purposes of the home colony.[51] Although both engage in some form of indigenous domination, their dependence on territory and labour, respectively, results in different relationships being formed with indigenous peoples; while colonialism exploits indigenous people for their labour, settler-colonialism actively seeks to eliminate them for their land.[52] Domination is hence manifested in vastly differently policies under both institutions. This will be elaborated on in following paragraphs.

Another way of studying settler-colonialism is to perceive it as a combination of migration and colonialism;[53] unlike colonisers, settlers permanently migrate to these lands without any intention of returning to their home countries. This

permanent migration not only results in different forms of subjugation due to its pursuit of territory rather than labour, but also means that is an ongoing process.[54] In Wolfe's terms, for the indigenous people who live in settler-colonial states, their colonizers "never went home."[55] in pursued policies is that decolonisation never occurred for settler-colonial states and is unlikely to occur in the future. The indigenous people in places such as Australia and Canada continue to live together with, or rather, under them. This complicates the redress of settler-colonial injustices since it is not merely a historical injustice, but also an ongoing part of the indigenous community's present reality.

Settler-Colonial Policies: Physical and Cultural Elimination

As opposed to colonialism, which required the maintenance and reproduction of the indigenous community,[56] the territorial character of settler-colonialism resulted in a project of replacement rather than exploitation. Physical elimination in the form of frontier violence thus followed as the indigenous people were displaced and, in many cases, murdered for their land. These acts can even be described as tantamount to genocide;[57] for instance, Bain and Rogers claim that the violence that occurred in Tasmania, Australia in the Nineteenth century was genocidal, pointing to evidence that showed the rapid decline of the local aboriginal community with the emergence of a settler policy that aimed to remove these indigenous people

48   LeFevre, Settler Colonialism.
49   Wolfe, "Race and the Trace of History for Henry Reynolds," 272.
50   LeFevre, Settler Colonialism.
51   Veracini, Settler-Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, 3.
52   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 387-409.
53   Veracini, Settler-Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, 3.

54   Bonds and Inwood, "Beyond White Privilege," 718.
55   Wolfe, "Race and the Trace of History for Henry Reynolds," 272.
56   Veracini, Settler-Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, 8-9.
57   Thomas James Rogers and Stephen Bain, "Genocide and Frontier Violence in Australia," Journal of Genocide Research 18, no.1 (2016): 83-100, DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2016.1120466.

from their land.[58] Additionally, a study by the University of Newcastle provides details on the 150 massacres that occurred,[59] showing the extent of frontier violence in Australia.[60] Researchers found that these were often planned events as the settlers intended to "destroy or eradicate the victims or force them into submission."[61] This lends weight to the description of settler-colonial policies as genocidal.

Some skeptics raise doubts on these statistics presented, claiming that it would be mistaken to characterise it as an act of elimination as some of these conflicts were two-sided or even initiated by the indigenous communities themselves.[62]

However, this claim fails to consider that there would be no cause for conflict if the settlers did not first invade the indigenous land and force them to change their traditional modes of living.[63] Furthermore, it would be wrong to depict these conflicts as an equal war on both fronts as the Europeans possessed weaponry far superior to those owned by the indigenous people,[64] resulting in greater causalities suffered by the aborigines. This can be seen from how over 20,000 indigenous people in Australia died in these frontier conflicts, while settler deaths only comprise 10 percent of that number.[65][66]

Even after frontier violence ended, elimination continued

"Another concern similar to the criticisms levelled against the notion of reconciliation claims that the apology is a 'monologue' that does not consider indigenous desires and coerces forgiveness."

58   Ibid, p.86
59   A rough estimate.
60   "Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia 1788-1872," The University of Newcastle, Australia, accessed March 20, 2018, https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php.
61   Ibid.
62   For example, former Australian Prime Minister John Howard denies that genocide took place. For reference, read Helen Davidson, "John Howard: there was no genocide against indigenous Australians," The Guardian, September 22, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/22/john-howard-there-was-no-genocide-against-indigenous-australians.
63   "Lest we forget, wars undeclared," The Sydney Morning Herald, April 25, 2014, https://www.smh.com.au/national/lest-we-forget-wars-undeclared-20140424-376r3.html.
64   Francis Firebrace Jones, June E. Barker, and Pauline E. Mcleod, Gadi Mirrabooka: Australian Aboriginal Tales from the Dreaming (World Folklore Series) (Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 2001), 30.
65   A conservative estimate.
66   Paul Daley, "Why the number of Indigenous deaths in the frontier wars matters," The Guardian, July 15, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/15/why-the-number-of-indigenous-deaths-in-the-frontier-wars-matters.

insidiously. Beyond physically invading the indigenous territories, there was a cultural affront, too. As the settlers eventually gained more territories, there was an attempt to culturally "eliminate the native"[67] and create a good citizen in its place through implementing assimilationist policies. The most notorious cases took place in Australia and Canada where indigenous children were removed from their families against their will and placed in settler households. In Australia, these aboriginal children are referred to as the "stolen generation," the term reflecting not merely the act of removal from their families, but also the theft of their indigenous heritage. Under this policy that aimed to "breed out the black,"[68] these children had their names changed and were not allowed to speak their indigenous languages.[69] Furthermore, they were forbidden from contacting their families,[70] and instead had to learn what was to be their new normal as a part of the settler community.

"It is impossible to restore lost lives, and for the stolen generation, a nearly unattainable task of returning the heritage that they lost...a whole generation of indigenous people have already lost touch with their families and heritage."

Demonstrating the cross-cultural consistency of these policies, Canada also practised cultural elimination. To abolish indigenous traditions and force indigenous children to adopt settler practices, Canada had a policy of "where an estimated 150,000 indigenous children were forced to attend the residential school system where they were taught English and learnt about Christianity.[71] In the same vein as Australia's policy, they were also prevented from using their own traditional languages in a bid to break their connection with their heritage for the purposes of "assimilation" into settler society.[72] Although they were allowed to return to their families during school breaks, most children found themselves unable to speak their indigenous languages, and by

67   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 387-409.
68   "Caught up in a scientific racism designed to breed out the black," The Sydney Morning Herald, February 14, 2008, http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/caught-up-in-a-scientific-racism-designed-to-breed-out-the-black/2008/02/13/1202760399034.html.
69   "The Stolen Generations," Australians Together, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.australianstogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/stolen-generations.
70   Ibid.

71   "A history of residential schools in Canada," CBC-news, May 16, 2008, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280.
72   Ibid.

extension, unable to communicate with their families.[73] Cultural elimination was, thus, brought to its completion as the indigenous person lost their connection to indigeneity.

Implications: Irreversibility and Continuation

Acts of physical and cultural elimination are largely irreversible.[74] It is impossible to restore lost lives, and for the stolen generation, a nearly unattainable task of returning the heritage that they lost; even as cultural assimilation policies have been discontinued, a whole generation of indigenous people have already lost touch with their families and heritage. Alfred Calma, who was part of the stolen generation, describes himself as "neither white nor black,"[75] which is emblematic of the cultural confusion experienced by those who were torn from their indigenous heritage but had problems integrating into settler society. As these policies were relatively recent,[76] several organizations have determined that many members of the stolen generation still suffer from some form of mental stress today.[77] Furthermore, as many did not receive proper education and were treated as menial labour by the white households that adopted them,[78] they are also trapped in a limbo between both communities since they are unable to fully integrate with the settlers even if they chose to do so. Settler-colonialism

appears to have permanently placed the indigenous community in a subjugated position.

Besides its irreversibility, this historical legacy of mistreatment continues to have a profound negative impact on present indigenous communities in both material and symbolic ways. For example,[79] 60 percent of indigenous children in Canada live in poverty, a figure that is double that of their non-indigenous counterparts.[80] Continued land expropriation destroyed traditional indigenous "modes of production."[81] With European encroachment, the indigenous people had less land to support their subsistence-based economy.[82] Over the years, this created a situation where settler economies flourished at the expense of indigenous ones as they had access to their land and resources. Coupled with poor access to education,[83] indigenous people also found themselves unable to integrate into more modern forms of production propagated by the settlers.[84] As a result, unemployment among Aboriginal Australians is approximately two times greater than among the non-indigenous community.[85] Beyond these material issues, less obvious is the intangible continuation of settler-colonialism. National narratives have been white-washed of settler violence, ignoring

73   Ibid.
74   Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," 93.
75   Evelyn Nieves, "Australia's 'Stolen Generations' Tell Their Stories," The New York Times, May 24, 2017.
76   The policy that led to the stolen generation was only discontinued in 1970, while the Canadian residential school programme only ended in 1996.
77   "Mental Health and Aboriginal People," Creative Spirits, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/health/mental-health-and-aboriginal-people.
78   "The Stolen Generations," Australians Together.

79   "Indigenous disadvantage in Australia," Australians Together, accessed March 20, 2018.
80   Kristy Kirkup, "60% of First Nations children on reserve live in poverty, institute says," CBC news, May 17, 2016.
81   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism", 395.
82   Jon C. Altman, "The Aboriginal Economy," in Northern Australia: Options and Implications, ed. Rhys Jones (Australia: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1980), 87-107,
83   As of 2014, only 59% of Aboriginal children managed to complete their twelfth year of compulsory education as compared to 84% of non-indigenous children "Aboriginal education," Creative Spirits, accessed March 22, 2018.
84   Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism", 395.
85   "Indigenous disadvantage in Australia," Australians Together.

indigenous grievances and suffering over the years. The lack of historical records on the number of indigenous deaths in frontier wars affirm this symbolic continuation of settler-colonial domination by relegating this community to the side-lines of official memory.[86] Even as eliminatory policies have been discontinued, indigenous people remain dominated in both tangible and intangible ways.

The Normative Importance of Reconciliation

Decolonization: An Appropriate Response?

Scholars, governments, and activists alike have proposed two contrasting approaches in addressing indigenous grievances, the first of which is decolonization. In its most complete form, decolonization, referring to a return of sovereignty to the indigenous community,[87] has been suggested as a possible response to settler-colonial atrocities. The Native American scholar Taiaiake Alfred even claims that it is the only option that sufficiently addresses the excesses of settler-colonialism as "reconciliation would permanently enshrine colonial injustices."[88] While decolonization could be a possible response to addressing past injustices, two overlapping factors prevent this option from being an appropriate response for settler-colonial states.

The first reason is feasibility. The language of decolonization has already been widely used in government policies: the Australian Government issued a statement indicating that they acknowledge

the importance of "self-determination" in helping Aboriginals "meet their social, cultural and economic needs."[89] However, that pronouncement came with a caveat: "it is not about creating a separate indigenous 'state.'"[90] Although pro-decolonization activists perceive this as the only option that allows for a clean "from the historical legacy of settler-colonialism, they face government reluctance in its materialization.

Behind this issue of feasibility lies a more deep-seated cultural factor that better explains government reluctance in pursuing decolonization. As an institution that combines colonialism and migration,[91] the need to distinguish itself as a sovereign entity separate from the home colony led original settler governments to incorporate indigenous motifs in building a new distinct identity. For instance, these states often privilege narratives that emphasise the indigenous character of their territories to "express its difference from the home colony."[92] Common traits shared by such narratives include depictions of "wild, untamed frontiers, and rugged white individualism,"[93] and representations of their new territories as "hard-won through the taming of savages."[94] This appropriation of indigeneity for identity-building purposes continue today; Qantas, the national carrier of Australia, continues to use indigenous symbols as

86   "Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia 1788-1872," The University of Newcastle, Australia, accessed March 20, 2018.
87   Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 157.
88   Ibid, 149.

89   "Right to self-determination," Australian Human Rights Commission, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.humanrights.gov.au/right-self-determination.
90   Ibid.
91   Veracini, Settler-Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, 3.
92   Lorenzo Veracini, "Telling the End of the Settler Colonial Story," in Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture, ed. Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 204-218, 215.
93   Bonds and Inwood, "Beyond White Privilege," 723.
94   Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies," 6.

"In this light, reconciliation is seen to possess a coercive flavour as it takes place on the government's terms – indigenous communities are left with no choice but to participate."

part of their airplane livery.[95]

However, there is reason to believe that what began as selfish appropriation on the part of the settlers has unwittingly produced a hybrid of the two cultures, upon which the national identity of a settler-colonial state is premised. Through the intermix of cultures over the years, evidence suggests that the indigenous community has also bought into this notion of a shared national identity.[96] For instance, interviews conducted with Australian aboriginal people demonstrated implicit support for a common Australian citizenship, regardless of one's settler or indigenous background.[97] Given these strong feelings of national consciousness, a decolonization policy that results in the formation of a sovereign indigenous entity would be overlooking these factors. Hence, I am keen to concur with Moses'

argument that it is "no longer evident"[98] that redressing settler-colonial injustices requires complete decolonization where sovereignty is returned to the indigenous people.

Reconciliation

Given that decolonization might not be an appropriate approach towards addressing settler-colonial injustices, I argue that reconciliation should instead be viewed as a viable alternative. In this section, I will address concerns that postcolonial scholars have towards this approach and demonstrate how reconciliation can allow for both communities to learn to live together in a shared political space. I will be using Verdeja's conceptualisation of reconciliation as a state of mutual respect to make a case for its normative importance.

A State of Mutual Respect

The debate on reconciliation occurs most frequently over its definition. As studied in the literature review, reconciliation theories can be broadly categorised into communitarian and agonist approaches. Although both make an argument for the desirability of reconciliation in post-conflict states, the former makes a "non-political account of co-existence" that emphasises ultimate "social harmony."[99] The lat-

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95   "Flying Art," Qantas, accessed March 23, 2018, https://www.qantas.com/travel/airlines/flyingart/global/en.
96   In interviews conducted with Australian indigenous people, Moses found that many of them referred to themselves as part of a larder Australian national community. Refer to Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 145-159.
97   Ibid, 152.

98   Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 157.
99   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Set-

"The result is not consensus, but an ongoing project that continuously debates political identities and narratives."

ter conceptualises reconciliation thinly by perceiving it as a state where divisions between former adversaries do not hamper but instead encourage vibrant debate in which conflict is handled through the democratic process.[100] Verdeja critiques both and puts forth his own notion of reconciliation as a state of mutual respect.[101] He describes it as the acknowledgement of the "equal moral status"[102] of others and built on reciprocity; while we can provide justifications for our own actions, we also have to accept the claims of others to "judge, respond, and act."[103] This means that our truth-claims are subjected to the critical examination of others; in other words, adopting mutual respect means that "we cannot assume, a priori, that our values are universal, or our practices justified."[104] This section will show that by adopting this notion of mutual respect, the pitfall of assimilation can be avoided.

Reconciliation: Assimilatory?

Reconciliation has drawn flak for its assimilatory potential. Some claim that such a policy only legitimizes "the primary structures of the settler state" and perpetuates "colonial patterns of dominance."[105] In this light, reconciliation is seen to possess a coercive flavour as it takes place on the government's terms – indigenous communities are left with no choice but to participate. While I do not dispute that reconciliation is a top-down initiative, I disagree that it is inherently assimilatory. However, this comes with a caveat: for reconciliation to be non-assimilatory, it should not "simply reinforce the values and self-understanding of the majority culture."[106] Verdeja side-steps the assimilatory potential of reconciliation though emphasising mutual respect. As mentioned earlier, this strong emphasis on the moral equality of others provides us a framework within which indigenous truth-claims are not merely glossed over but taken seriously in the reconciliation process. The result is not consensus, but an ongoing project that continuously debates political identities and narratives. Arguing that an "inter-subjective recognition of the moral worth of other"[107] is important for non-assimilatory reconciliation, Verdeja identifies three elements as critical to ensuring that it does not merely reflect the wishes of the settler majority.

What Constitutes Non-Assimilatory Reconciliation?

Firstly, he argues for a critical reflection of the past that is not aimed at

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tler Societies," 229.
100   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 229.
101   Ibid, 231.
102   Ibid.
103   Ibid.
104   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation, 15.
105   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation, 15.

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106   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 237.
107   Ibid., 231.

achieving consensus but at "exposing violent histories and their impact today to further mutual respect."[108] Through this reflection, "past injustices" and their "present legacies" should be thoroughly investigated. In other words, the irreversibility and the continuation of settler-colonialism's physical and cultural elimination policies should be clearly examined. This has the function of acting as a truth claim, exposing discarded elements of history that do not fit into the settler's narrative. The second step is tightly linked to the first, and Verdeja terms it as "symbolic and material recognition."[109] After examining these grievances, this stage involves acknowledging them. Through acknowledgment, one recognizes the moral worth of the indigenous community as their truth-claims are accepted into a narrative that was previously dominated by the settler community. This avoids the pitfalls of assimilation that still sees the indigenous community as inferior and in-need of forcible reintegration into wider society. The third stage of reconciliation is then allowing for previously-subjugated groups to participate meaningfully in the political process. He argues that such actions are necessary to move beyond "politically palatable"[110] expressions of remorse that do not substantially redistribute power in favour of the subjugated group.

Symbolic Reparations: Studying the Political Apology

As a reconciliatory tool, the political apology symbolically addresses the irreversibility and continuation of settler-colonialism in part. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship and empirical research, I first conceptualise the goal

and yardstick for appraising the political apology before discussing how such a conceptualisation allows us to observe its symbolic contributions to the reconciliation process. The first section will discuss the significance of symbolic reparations in addressing settler-colonial injustices and how it can facilitate reconciliation in a non-assimilatory manner. Then, I will assert that the political apology should be conceptualised as an intergroup act as it partakes in the transformation of collectives, not individuals. Building on that premise, I will argue that its goal is not forgiveness but opening dialogue and that we should assess its efficacy through using the non-assimilatory principle detailed in Verdeja's theory of reconciliation.

Symbolic Reparations: Significance in Settler-Colonialism

Reparations have gained international recognition as a legal response to past wrongs. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) codified specific guidelines on what entails a reparative act, under what circumstances it should be used, and how it should be appropriately executed.[111] The document discusses reparations as a way to address "gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian laws."[112] Such definitions emphasise the magnitude of the injustice that reparations attempt to correct. Additionally, Ferstman's definition of the reparation as a potential "vehicle for reconciliation"[113] also proves useful for our purposes. In response to large-scale settler-colonial injustices, this

108   Ibid., 232.
109   Ibid.
110   Ibid., 236.

111   "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission, accessed March 20, 2018
112   Ibid.
113   Carla Ferstman, Reparations (Oxford University Press, 2012), doi:10.1093/obo/9780199796953-0003.

section will study how symbolic reparations can play a role in repairing relations between settlers and indigenous communities. I will first address some of the criticisms of symbolic reparations in relation to material reparations before discussing how they contribute to the reconciliation process as theorised by Verdeja.

Symbolic Reparations: No Independent Value?

Broadly speaking, reparations can be either material or symbolic in nature. Wolfe describes the reparation as a form of material-symbolic compensation, "for that which could not be returned, such as human life, a flourishing culture, a strong economy, and cultural identity."[114] The main difference between the two lies in the type of redress it provides: the former is tangible while the latter is not. Examples of material reparations include monetary compensation and the return of territory, while symbolic reparations could refer to truth commissions and political apologies, the latter of which are the subject of inquiry for this piece. While many scholars have acknowledged that both perform different functions and are necessary in addressing grievances, disputes remain over the effectiveness of symbolic reparations. Most commonly, critics lambast its inefficacy in improving the material conditions of the victim, justifying their argument that material reparations more substantially address the needs and desires of the injured party.[115]

By making a claim for symbolic reparations I am not disregarding the utility and normative desirability of material reparations in responding to grave injustices. While I acknowledge the impor-

tance of offering "something concrete to repair a specific harm or to compensate for the damage or loss associated with that harm,"[116] this often comes hand in hand with symbolic reparations; both types of reparations are necessary in redressing grievances holistically. While material reparations provide some form of tangible response such as the return of territory, symbolic reparations directly address the "wrongness"[117] of the injustice committed. Sharpe describes its function as "enabling a victim to recover from the effects of a crime."[118] Thus, it would be a mistake to measure its efficacy through judging whether it is able to improve the material conditions of the victim since it plays a more psychological role in the reparation process.

Victim concerns should not be distilled to material needs alone as they also encompass a "need for recognition, respect, dignity, and hope for a safe future."[119] Corroborating this, some empirical studies have even shown that such symbolic reparations are more important to victims than material reparations.[120] For instance, Australian indigenous peoples have been outspoken about their demand for an apology despite it lacking a material dimension.[121] Speaking about how much the apology would mean to her, aboriginal activist Rhonda Dixon-Grovernor said,

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114   Stephanie Wolfe, The Politics of Reparations and Apologies (New York: Springer, 2014), 5.
115   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?", 286-305.
116   Susan Sharpe, "The idea of reparation," in Handbook of Restorative Justice, eds. Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Van Ness (United Kingdom: Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2006), 24-40, 27.
117   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 234.
118   Sharpe, "The idea of reparation," 27.
119   Ron Dudai, "Closing the Gap: Symbolic Reparations and Armed Groups," International Review of the Red Cross 93, no.883 (2011): 783-808, 788.
120   Sharpe, "The idea of reparation," 28.
121   Robert Manne, "The sorry history of Australia's apology," The Guardian, May 26, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/26/sorry-history-australia-apology-indigenous.

"When violence has occurred on such a large scale, symbolic reparations return some of the power lost when the offense was committed through admissions of guilt."

"Sorry heals the heart, and it goes deep."[122]

Another example that shows the importance of symbolic reparations to these communities was the indigenous outrage that followed when former Australian Prime Minister John Howard refused to issue an apology, choosing to focus on the more "practical" aspect of "reconciliation" such as reducing "indigenous disadvantage" in "employment, health, education, and housing."[123] As a result of this political miscalculation, Ogla Havnen, an aboriginal activist, even named Howard as the person "who effectively derailed reconciliation."[124] Howard criticised the insufficiency of "symbolic gestures" in addressing the "practical needs"[125] of the indigenous community but failed to recognise that they had an equally important psychological role to play. When Kevin Rudd apologised in the capacity of Prime Minister several years later, there was an outpouring of support from indigenous communities.[126] In Sydney, hundreds of aboriginal people braved the rain to watch the broadcast of Rudd's parliamentary speech and were reported to have "cheered each of the three times Rudd said 'sorry.'"[127] These examples remind us that material reparations alone are insufficient in holistically addressing injustices and that symbolic acts should not be overlooked.

Providing Grounds for Non-Assimilatory Reconciliation

Moving beyond a general argument for the significance of symbolic reparations in addressing past injustices, it is also important to discuss its potential to facilitate reconciliation. As mentioned previously, Verdeja's emphasis on mutual respect provides a way in which reconciliation can avoid being assimilatory.[128] Here, I have identified two broad ways in which symbolic reparations can aid the repair of relations between former adversaries as aligned with this theory; through symbolically reducing inequity and acknowledg-

122   James Grubel, "Australia says sorry to Stolen Generations," Reuters, February 13, 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-politics-aborigines/australia-says-sorry-to-stolen-generations-idUSSYD9123020080213.

123   Andrew Richard Gunstone, "The failure of the Howard Government's 'practical' reconciliation policy," in The Complexities of Racism: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on 'Racisms in the New World Order, eds. Hurriyet Babacan and Narayan Gopalkrishan (Caloundra Old Australia: University of the Sunshine Coast, 2008), 48-57, 49.

124   Nakari Thorpe, "7 legacies of John Howard's government," NITV, March 3, 2016, https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/the-point-with-stan-grant/article/2016/03/03/7-legacies-john-howards-government.

125   Gunstone, "The failure of the Howard Government's 'practical' reconciliation policy," 50.

126   Grubel, "Australia says sorry to Stolen Generations,"

127   Ibid.

128   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 228.

ing past injustices, such forms of repara-
tions fulfil the condition of mutual respect
by including the indigenous community
as partners rather than subjects in the rec-
onciliation process.

Reducing Inequity

Firstly, symbolic reparations provide
a redress mechanism that can "reduce the
inequity"[129] between settler and indige-
nous communities. When violence has
occurred on such a large scale, symbolic
reparations return some of the power lost
when the offense was committed through
admissions of guilt.[130] Fault is clearly de-
lineated, pushing the burden of guilt from
the indigenous community to the settler
community. In this, through admitting
past mistakes, the offender "assumes a
position of vulnerability"[131] that was pre-
viously occupied by the victim, thus sym-
bolically reducing the power differentials
between both groups. The argument here
is not that symbolic reparations alone are
enough in address-
ing power inequal-
ity, but that it has
value independent
of other material
actions such as the
return of lost terri-
tory. Drawing this
back to Verdeja's
theory, through
reducing power
inequity, symbolic
reparations provide
the groundwork
for non-assimila-
tory reconciliation
to take place on
more equal terms

between settlers and indigenous commu-
nities.

Acknowledging Past Injustices

Secondly, such reparations also em-
phasise the symbolic act of acknowledge-
ment, the second stage of Verdeja's theory,
by rewriting old historical narratives that
have privileged the settler's perception of
reality.[132] Through recognising the griev-
ances suffered by the indigenous commu-
nity, this sets the groundwork for future
reconciliatory work by first including the
indigenous person's narrative in the pro-
cess. Furthermore, this directly addresses
the assimilatory concern that many cri-
tiques hold: the acknowledgement of the
victim's understanding of reality includes
them as partners rather than subjects in
the reconciliation process. Aligned with
Verdeja's theory of reconciliation that calls
for mutual respect, the moral worth of
the indigenous community is recognised
as their grievances are validated through

"Through recognising the grievances suffered by the indigenous community, this sets the groundwork for future reconciliatory work by first including the indigenous person's narrative in the process."

129   Sharpe, "The idea of reparation," 26.
130   Ibid., 29.
131   Ibid.

132   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Set-
tler Societies," 234.

such symbolic acts.[133] Old narratives are replaced with new ones, proceeding on the terms of both the settlers and the indigenous community.

Conceptualising the Political Apology

Celermajer describes the political apology as the "purest" form of a symbolic reparation as it does not include a material dimension.[134] In recent years, it has gained traction among governments in addressing historical injustices, particularly in settler-colonial states such as Australia and Canada.[135] However, there remains much needed clarification over how it should be conceptualised. By using Celermajer's definition of the political apology as a "pure or unmixed form of ritual performance,"[136] this section will delve into its characteristics and goals, and follow that discussion with an argument about the relevant standards in identifying an effective apology.

Definitions and Characteristics

Definition

Describing the political apology as a ritual, Celermajer means to emphasise its "dramatic"[137] and ceremonial nature; it is a grand gesture that requires a "memorable public display."[138] By providing a supplementary definition that describes it as a "symbolic action that 'alludes to more than it says,'"[139] she pushes us to think be-

yond the textual content of the political apology in considering its symbolic contributions to the reconciliation process. Furthermore, Celermajer's definition is aligned with the importance that this article has placed on acknowledging the significance of symbolism in politics; meaning does not only lie in words, and rather, it can be found in gestures, too.

Hence, this article cautions one from utilising a narrow definition of the apology by reducing it to its spoken or written content, as that neglects the potential performative aspects that also contribute to facilitating reconciliation.[140] For instance, by restricting the definition to its content, arguably one of the most famous apologetic performances where Willy Brandt, then-Chancellor of Germany, knelt in front of the Holocaust memorial would scarcely be considered an apology since it did not have any textual content.[141]

On the other end of the spectrum, there are scholars that eschew narrow definitions for an expansive one that encompasses material reparations, such as monetary compensation, that come after.[142] However, such an expansive definition not only dilutes our understanding of the symbolic contributions of the apology, but it also suggests that the apology is per se inefficacious and requires material reparations for it to be useful in addressing past injustices.[143] Thus, I propose that we should go beyond a textual focus of the apology but limit ourselves from studying the material actions that follow. Conceptualising it as a ritual captures both the

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133 Ibid.
134 Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 288.
135 The Canadian and Australian examples were chosen as they were not only widely reported on but also considered breakthrough moments in each of their respective countries.
136 Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 288.
137 Ibid., 292.
138 Michael Tager, "Apologies to Indigenous Peoples in Comparative Perspective," The International Indigenous Policy Journal 5, no.4 (2014):1-18, 6.
139 Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 292.

140 Or in other words, dramatized aspects.
141 Wolfe, The Politics of Reparations and Apologies, 137.
142 For an example, refer to Thompson, "Is Political Apology a Sorry Affair?," 220. She claims that the political apology itself is insufficient, and more concrete political and social processes are needed to render the apology meaningful.
143 Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 287.

content and the dramatized nature of the political apology.[144]

Intergroup Apologies

The key characteristic that distinguishes political apologies from interpersonal ones is that it takes place between collectives and not individuals.[145] Firstly, the political apology is usually offered by a representative on behalf of a wider community and does not take place between the perpetrator and victim directly. For example, when former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the stolen generation for the injustice that was committed against them, he was representing the settler community, and the apology was directed towards the indigenous community. The language of his apology made that clear:

"Mr Speaker, I move: That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history."[146]

Rudd directed the apology at the "indigenous peoples," not specific individuals, and used collective rather than singular pronouns, showing that he was apologising as a representative of a wider community. Beyond these linguistic specificities, the notion of apologising for past injustices that were not actually committed by the apologiser only makes theoretical sense if it takes place between collectives rather than individuals. The apologiser would then be representing

past and present generations of his or her community in apologising to the victim group. This representative capacity of the apologiser derives from his or her public office.[147] For instance, Kevin Rudd was authorized to apologise "on behalf of a nation"[148] only because he was the prime minister at that time. This is particularly relevant to settler-colonialism as the institution spans several centuries and members of the present-day settler generation are not the actual perpetrators of those injustices. Furthermore, it also acknowledges the government's complicity in allowing, and even facilitating, the occurrence of these atrocities.

Some critics might then use this as a reason to argue against the need for an apology since it does not make sense to apologise for something that one did not commit.[149] However, settler-colonialism is embedded in a wider social context. For instance, while the current settler generation did not perpetrate those injustices, they continue to benefit from the land that has been taken away from the aboriginal community.[150] In the same vein, the indigenous community experiences a continuation of those policies as they remain disadvantaged in both tangible and intangible ways.[151]

Goals and Yardsticks

An understanding of the political apology as occurring between communities suggests that we should also conceptualise its goals and the yardsticks used to assess its efficacy in relation to this intergroup nature. Hence, instead of concepts

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144   Ibid, 292.
145   Ibid, 288.
146   "Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples," Australia Government, accessed March 22, 2018, https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples.

147   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 293.
148   Ibid.
149   "Nothing to say sorry for: Howard," The Sydney Morning Herald, March 12, 2008.
150   Mellor et al., "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australia," 19.
151   Refer to Chapter 3 for examples of indigenous disadvantage.

such as forgiveness and sincerity, one should look at the notions of opening dialogue and non-assimilation to study the political apology. Furthermore, this would also be more relevant to our understanding of reconciliation as a state of mutual respect rather than the socially harmonious outcome proposed by communitarian theorists.

Goal: Opening Dialogue

Andrieu is not alone in arguing that the "primary object of an apology is forgiveness."[152] Other scholars have made similar claims, romanticising the notion of the apology and disregarding the inherent differences between political apologies and interpersonal apologies. Even on the topic of reconciliation, some argue that forgiveness is essential to achieving a reconciled state.[153] Mellor et al., for example, assert the importance of both the apology and forgiveness in achieving reconciliation.[154] Communitarian theories of reconciliation emphasise forgiveness as an integral component of this process; this perspective suggests that apologies result in "healing and reciprocal acceptance"[155] that generate a socially harmonious order between former adversaries. However, I argue that the link between a political apology and forgiveness is tenuous at best

> "While the notion of an apology featured strongly in many of these interviews and how it could possibly 'help' victims, forgiveness was scarcely mentioned."

and is a misconception of what non-assimilatory reconciliation entails.

Firstly, several empirical studies have proven that the idea of forgiveness does not weigh significantly on the minds of victims. Qualitative interviews conducted with Aboriginal Australians found that "forgiveness was not a topic that participants engaged with or discussed when thinking of the potential benefits of an apology."[156] An interviewee whose father was part of the stolen generation remarked [the interview has been edited for clarity]: "I am closest with my dad – he's been stolen. He told me his stories and how they affected him. And, also, how sorry would help him in a way."[157]

While the notion of an apology featured strongly in many of these interviews and how it could possibly "help" victims, forgiveness was scarcely mentioned. This suggests that victims themselves do not relate their desire for an apology to forgiveness as an outcome. Secondly, it remains suspect whether forgiveness can be realized in the first place. Another study found that even when prompted, victims

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152   Andrieu, "'Sorry for the Genocide'," 5.
153   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 228.
154   Mellor et al., "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australia," 11.
155   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 229.

156   Michael Wenzel, Tyler G. Okimoto, Matthew J. Hornsey, Ellie Lawrence-Wood, and Anne-Marie Coughlin, "The Mandate of the Collective: Apology Representativeness Determines Perceived Sincerity and Forgiveness in Intergroup Contexts," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 43, no. 6 (2017): 758-771, 759.
157   Mellor et al., "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australia," 25.

" As a type of symbolic reparation, through reducing inequity between the injurer and the injured, it has the goal of opening dialogue."

of past injustices and even the general population do not believe that forgiveness could be achieved through political apologies.[158] Such empirical evidence corroborates my claim that forgiveness is a peculiar goal for an intergroup apology. Furthermore, this mistaken emphasis on forgiveness also runs the risk of being assimilatory;[159] by misconstruing it as an integral component of reconciliation, the onus is placed on the indigenous community to forgive even when they have no desire to do so. In a process that is tantamount to existing forms of settler domination, indigenous agency is brushed off in a hasty pursuit of "harmony" and consensus.

One might ask what should the goal of the political apology be then? As a type of symbolic reparation, through reducing inequity between the injurer and the injured, it has the goal of opening dialogue. Aligning this with Verdeja's theory of reconciliation that emphasises mutual respect,[160] this mutuality means that both parties should be involved in this process. The goal of the political apology is then to create a means for dialogue; it first acknowledges the grievances held by the indigenous community, so that they might agree to join the reconciliation process. Unlike forgiveness, the goal of opening dialogue takes seriously indigenous perspectives and agency and does not perceive reconciliation as a one-off event but rather as an ongoing project. This way, reconciliation is no longer a monologue by the settler community,[161] but instead includes indigenous peoples in a mutual exchange. A comment made by a member of the indigenous community supports this claim: "Before this reconciliation thing comes about, there's an apology. It's as simple as that and if they can't see it, well I don't know what they're doing then."[162]

The apology acts as a precursor to reconciliation, and through acknowledging past injustices, opens the opportunity for the indigenous community to join the larger reconciliation debate as their grievances are recognised.

Yardstick: Non-Assimilatory

Using efficacy to gauge how well something can achieve its aim, tied together with the goal of forgiveness is the notion of "sincerity" as a benchmark in assessing the effectiveness of an apology. Although there is no consensus as to what

158   Manuel Cárdenas, Darío Páez, Bernard Rimé, and Maitane Arnoso, "How Transitional Justice Processes and Official Apologies Influence Reconciliation: The Case of the Chilean 'Truth and Reconciliation' and 'Political Imprisonment and Torture' Commissions: Transitional Justice and Apologies in Chile," Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology 25, no. 6 (2015): 515-530, 525.
159   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 229.
160   Ibid, 228.
161   Espindola, "An Apology for Public Apologies?," 328.
162   Mellor et al., "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australia," 27.

constitutes "sincerity," popular definitions emphasise the need for genuineness and the lack of hypocrisy.[163] While I do not dispute the common logic that a sincere apology makes victims more willing to accept it (and perhaps even forgive), I posit that we should not view an apology that is seemingly insincere as an ineffective one. The political apology takes place between collectives and not individuals; since forgiveness, while very much noble, is not the goal of an intergroup apology, then similarly, "sincerity," although certainly a valuable addition, should not be used as the main yardstick in assessing its effectiveness.

Firstly, "sincerity" is a personal quality that is attached to the apologiser and not the apology itself. Building on that premise, the notion that a person can sincerely apologise in his or her public capacity as a representative of a community makes the problematic assumption that a public role can have "feelings."[164] Referencing Rudd's apology to the stolen generations, it was only made significant because he held public office at that point of time and was representing the government and the settler community in apologising to the indigenous people. In other words, the significance of the apology was not a result of Rudd's personal qualities. Thus, the use of sincerity as a yardstick for assessing the efficacy of a political apology fails to "distinguish the conditions appropriate to the transformation of individuals from those appropriate to the transformation of collectives."[165]

In response to this criticism, Thaler proposes another way of assessing the sincerity of a political apology. He argues that the type of "sincerity" that one should be concerned about is not whether the "words spoken" match with the "speaker's inner intention,"[166] but whether subsequent policy actions match the "semantic content" of the apology. In this way, Thaler appears to avoid making the problematic assumption that public roles can have feelings and resurrects the viability of using "sincerity" as a criterion in appraising efficacy. However, this train of thought invites another incorrect assumption as it recouples the apology, a symbolic gesture, with material policy actions, thus wrongly suggesting that the symbolic nature of the apology itself has no value independent of concrete action.[167]

If the political apology, which is intergroup in nature, is to open dialogue to facilitate reconciliation, then its efficacy should be appraised by how well it is able to achieve this goal. According to Verdeja's theory, mutual respect is key to ensuring that the indigenous people are not perceived as subjects that are about to be forcibly conciliated.[168] [169] Only by establishing their status as equal to the settlers, then would they be more willing to join the reconciliation dialogue. Hence, the political apology first and foremost needs to be non-assimilatory; it needs to take seriously indigenous concerns, and perhaps even include them in the process of crafting the apology. A good example would be Rudd's apology to the stolen generation as the indigenous community was actively consulted before the apology was delivered, ensuring that it proceeded on their terms.[170] Therefore, I argue that this

163   "Sincerity," Merriam-Webster, accessed March 22, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sincerity.
164   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?," 293.
165   Ibid, 288.

166   Ibid., 293.
167   Ibid.
168   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 228.
169   Edmonds, Settler Colonialism and (Re)Conciliation.
170   "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Policies, accessed March 29, 2018.

is a more relevant yardstick than sincerity in assessing whether a political apology is efficacious or not.

An example of an apology that failed the assimilatory measure was introduced earlier in Chapter 1. Unceremoniously attached as part of an unrelated defence spending bill,[171] the United States Congress showed little regard for indigenous concerns in the deliverance of their "apology." The lack of fanfare was a direct contradiction of the indigenous community's understandable desire for widespread acknowledgement. One indigenous person commented: "There were no public announcements, there were no press conferences, there was no national attention (…) what kind of an apology is it when they don't tell the people they are apologizing to?"[172]

This apology took place on the terms of the settler without considering the needs of the indigenous community, thus violating the principle of non-assimilation and was inevitably unsuccessful in opening dialogue.

The Political Apology: Facilitating Reconciliation in Settler-Colonial States

Having established the context of settler-colonialism and conceptualised the political apology, this section will synthesise these two discussions and explore how the political apology can address the irreversibility and continuation of settler-colonialism. I will be studying two apologies that fulfil Verdeja's non-assimilatory criterion: former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the

stolen generation, and former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology to members of the residential school programme.[173]

Through this, I will first develop a framework that details how the political apology acknowledges injustices, symbolically breaks from the past, and includes the indigenous people in new conversations. Importantly, to adhere to the non-assimilatory principle, I will also include indigenous responses to show how these apologies did not merely proceed on the settler's terms. Then, I will explain how this framework symbolically creates a state of equity and commits to ending domination, thus addressing the twin implications of settler-colonialism in part. As former adversaries become more equal partners, this social transformation allows for the move towards a reconciliation based on mutual respect.

An Apologetic Framework for Reconciliation

Acknowledging the Past

As studied previously, various scholars have indicated the acknowledgement of past injustices as an integral feature of any political apology.[174] By recognizing the "moral wrongness"[175] of the acts committed, the apologiser validates an indigenous perception of reality. In his apology,

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171   Longley, "Did You Know the US Apologized to Native Americans?"
172   Tager, "Apologies to Indigenous Peoples in Comparative Perspective," 6.

173   Studied earlier in Chapter 3, these apologies are made to the victims of cultural eliminatory policies: the stolen generation refers to indigenous children (in Australia) who were forcibly removed from their families and subsequently adopted by white settler families. The residential school programme (in Canada) was conducted in a similar vein as in indigenous children were removed from their families and placed in boarding schools where they were taught mainstream Canadian culture in a bit to cut them off from their indigenous heritage.
174   Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," 79.
175   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 234.

Rudd acknowledged the injustices experienced by the indigenous community through eliminatory policies, specifically addressing the stolen generation and the suffering they endured through their forced removal from the aboriginal community:

"There were no public announcements, there were no press conferences, there was no national attention ... what kind of an apology is it when they don't tell the people they are apologizing to?"

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.[176]

Indigenous reactions were largely supportive of Rudd's apology.[177] Ernie Dingo, an aboriginal actor, commented: "(It is) a chance to rejoice, rebirth (…) knowing that what has happened over the last 80 years has not been swept under the carpet."[178]

Dingo's emphasis on how the truth was revealed highlights how acknowledgement allows the apology to proceed on the terms of the indigenous community as it does not simply "reinforce" the "self-understanding of the majority culture."[179] It creates an opportunity for long-neglected indigenous suffering to appear publicly before both communities.[180] The apology performed by Harper towards the First Nations similarly acknowledged indigenous suffering:

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language.[181]

Significantly, both apologies did not merely scrape the surface of past injustices but exposed in detail the atrocities that were committed against the indigenous community. Beyond this excerpt, Harper confronted the specifics of the residential school programme by openly addressing

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176 "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," Australian Government.
177 Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 145-159.
178 Ibid, 154.

179 Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 237.
180 Here, one can refer to the American example in the introductory paragraph. While the "apology" acknowledged indigenous suffering, the lack of publicity was equivalent to a continuation of having the truth being "swept under the carpet", thus understandably drawing the ire of indigenous communities.
181 "Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, accessed March 22, 2018, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649.

the number of indigenous people that were affected and making clear its continued negative impact on the community. This acknowledgement of indigenous grievances is not merely an act of recognition, but an endorsement of the historical truth of these claims.[182] Eliminatory policies that have been glossed over or forgotten as once part of the settler-colonial state's history are now brought to the forefront. By doing so, the political apology sets the stage for a wider dialogue

end of one chapter, referring to the legacy of settler-colonialism: the political apology itself is a symbolic turning point in a history dominated by settler-colonial injustices.[185] In the latter half of Rudd's apology, he states: "We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history."[186]

Similarly, in former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology to the First Nations, this symbolic break was echoed in his assertion that such injustices will no longer "prevail" in Canada: "There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again."[187]

"By recognizing the "moral wrongness" of the acts committed, the apologiser validates an indigenous perception of reality."

that includes both groups as history is no longer "sanitized" of settler-colonial injustices.[183]

Symbolic Break from the Past

Political apologies also perform a symbolic break from the past by "ritualising closure."[184] To open dialogue, there is first the need to distance oneself from a past dominated by the settler's monologue – one which neglected indigenous grievances. This symbolic act of breaking is often reflected in these apologies as the

Such themes were also mentioned in interviews that were conducted with indigenous people, validating this function played by the political apology. Christine Fejo-King, an Australian aborigine, claimed: "It was a proud moment when we, as a country, were mature enough to recognise a dark chapter of our history, face it, and look towards a better future for all."[188]

Demonstrating cross-cultural consistency, a member of the First Nations in

182   Darío Páez, "Official Or Political Apologies and Improvement of Intergroup Relations: A Neo-Durkheimian Approach to Official Apologies as Rituals." Revista De Psicología Social 25, no. 1 (2010): 101-115, 109.
183   Bonds and Inwood, "Beyond White Privilege," 723.
184   Kris Brown, "Commemoration as Symbolic Reparation: New Narratives Or Spaces of Conflict?" Human Rights Review 14, no. 3 (2013): 273-289, 275.

185   Murphy, "Apology, Recognition, and Reconciliation," 50.
186   "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," Australian Government.
187   "Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.
188   Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 153.

Canada similarly remarked: "I am also filled with optimism that this action by the government of Canada and the generosity in the words chosen to convey this apology will help us all mark the end of this dark period in the collective history as a nation."[189]

For many indigenous people, the political apology symbolically guaranteed the eventual end of settler-colonial injustices. Even though their material conditions remained temporarily unchanged, the apology was a promise that settler-colonial injustices would not dictate the future chapters of their shared political history.

Inclusion in a New Dialogue

After making a symbolic break with the past, this part of the political apology looks to the future and discusses a post settler-colonial "new chapter" in history where the indigenous community finds itself as having more equal stakes in determining the outcome of their shared political space. Rudd's apology concluded: "A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."[190]

Harper's apology for the residential school programme similarly proclaimed a new future with new alliances formed between the two communities:

> It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a de-

> sire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.[191]

Indigenous reactions to the apology support the claim that it plays an inclusive function. Brian Butler, a member of the aboriginal community, stated that with the apology, "we can feel that we part of Australia. We are part of society."[192] Another comment made by Noel Tovey, who was forcibly removed from his family under cultural eliminatory policies, shares this sentiment: "It wasn't just saying sorry for what happened, but I'm sorry for 200 years, and now we are all part of Australia."[193]

By including dominated narratives into dominant ones, the political apology opens opportunities for reconciliation to occur in a non-assimilatory manner. The dialogue takes place as both parties reconstruct history together in a way that not only acknowledges the domination of the indigenous community but also discusses how best to move forward.

Addressing Settler-Colonial Implications

The three notions of acknowledgement, symbolic break, and inclusion satisfy the non-assimilatory principle and lead to the opening of dialogue between the settler and indigenous communities, thus facilitating a reconciliation based on mutual respect. This section will demonstrate how these three notions represent a commitment to ending settler-colonial domination and the creation of a state of

189   "Aboriginal leaders look to future after historic apology," CBC News, June 11, 2008, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/aboriginal-leaders-look-to-future-after-historic-apology-1.700098.
190   "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," Australian Government.

191   "Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.
192   Moses, "Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism," 153.
193   Ibid.

equity, thus symbolically addressing the irreversibility and continuation of settler-colonialism.

Commitment to Ending Domination

Despite the termination of eliminatory policies, the effects of settler-colonialism continue to be experienced by the indigenous community. While these effects can also be material in nature,[194] this piece focuses on the immaterial impact of settler-colonialism as seen in the indigenous community's symbolic exclusion from national narratives and conversations. In addressing this, the political apology commits to an end of this exclusion. The political apology not only ritualises the closure of a period marked by settler-colonial injustices,[195] it also promises to end a settler-dominated soliloquy.

The political apology is future-oriented; it commits the nation to a trajectory where the indigenous community is no longer subjugated. While it might not be an immediate discontinuation of settler dominance, it looks towards the future through pronouncing the start of a "new chapter" – a theme that was present in both the apologies that we studied earlier. Furthermore, the political apology can also lead to more tangible conclusions and address the material backwardness of the indigenous community.[196] As a public statement, the political apology enshrines the commitment made by the government to improve the material conditions of the indigenous community in national memory. For instance, the apology made by Harper to the First Nations empha-

sised the Canadian government's continued commitment to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement which provides monetary compensation to survivors of the residential school programme.[197]

Creating A State of Equity

Eliminatory policies employed by the settler government led to the loss of culture and life – both for which restitution is impossible.[198] The political apology addresses this irreversibility by firstly recognising the impossibility of restoring a person or a community to a pre-settler-colonial state.[199] It then focuses on the social relations between settlers and indigenous communities; through acknowledgement, the performance of a symbolic break, and inclusion, the political apology restores social relations "to what they might have been if the injustice had not taken place."[200] For our purposes, this means that it symbolically creates relative equity between the two communities, such that it approaches a state where it is as if they have not been subjected to settler domination. By "redirecting blame towards perpetrators and relieving the moral ambiguity"[201] experienced by the victims, the political apology allows the indigenous community to gain power symbolically together with the validation of their truth-claims.

Beyond acknowledgement, the political apology also distances itself from

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194   Such as high poverty rates and low education levels. Refer to "Indigenous disadvantage in Australia," https://www.australianstogether.org.au/discover/the-wound/indigenous-disadvantage-in-australia/ for more examples.
195   Brown, "Commemoration as Symbolic Reparation," 275.
196   Murphy, "Apology, Recognition, and Reconciliation," 63.

197   "Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.
198   Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," 93.
199   Wolfe, The Politics of Reparations and Apologies, 5.
200   Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," 93.
201   Brown, "Commemoration as Symbolic Reparation," 275.

settler-colonial inequality and commits to a "new chapter" where both communities are seen as having equal stakes in the nation. While previously indigenous concerns have been ignored in favour of an overwhelming settler voice, the political apology creates a space for the indigenous community in the wider national fabric by giving weight to their grievances. Looking at the indigenous responses that we have studied previously, this aspect is captured in repeated claims of how with the apology, they are no longer subjects but an official "part" of their country.

Social Transformation?

Critics of my argument might point to the lacklustre results in both Australia and Canada, where despite the apology, efforts to improve the material conditions of the indigenous community have stagnated.[202] Indeed, the lack of empirical examples appear antithetical to my conclusion. However, these critiques address the material dimension of reconciliation. As asserted in the previous chapter, I do not dispute that material reparations are important in providing redress for settler-colonial injustices, but rather, emphasise the importance of the symbolic dimension in achieving a holistic outcome. Hence, the lack of material change, while disappointing, does not subtract from the utility of the political apology in facilitating reconciliation.

Settler-colonial injustices are addressed in part as inequity is symbolically reduced between the two communities. Thus, the political apology itself is valuable independent of material actions. Although alone it is unable to achieve complete social transformation in terms of constructing complete equity, judging from the overwhelming demands for an apology in both Australia and Canada, its importance in the reconciliation process should not be understated. Drawing back to previous chapter, it plays a specific function by directly responding to the "moral wrongness"[203] of the acts committed, thus contributing to the process of addressing settler-colonial implications holistically.

Even though the scale of power is still tipped in favour of the settlers, both communities are officially and publicly recognised as having equal ownership over a shared historical narrative through the political apology. This dialogue then can result in more material changes; as suggested by

> "Eliminatory policies that have been glossed over or forgotten as once part of the settler-colonial state's history are now brought to the forefront."

202   Calla Wahlquist, "Rudd's apology, 10 years on: the elusive hope of a 'breakthrough moment'," The Guardian, Feb 12, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/feb/12/looking-back-at-rudds-apology-the-shining-hope-of-a-breakthrough-moment.

203   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 234.

Verdeja as the third step of reconciliation, the dialogue opened by the political apology can lead to further inclusion of the indigenous community in the decision-making institutions of the country.[204] Succinctly capturing the symbolic contributions of the political apology and the ongoing nature of reconciliation, Ti Hannah, a member of the Gunditjmara indigenous community in Australia commented: "We're not going to stop suffering just because of what was said today but, we still are suffering. It's just good to know that the Government and the nation have seen what has gone wrong and are trying to move forward and rectify that."[205]

" Even though their material conditions remained temporarily unchanged, the apology was a promise that settler-colonial injustices would not dictate the future chapters of their shared political history."

Conclusion

Reconciliation does not necessarily have to be assimilatory; considering practical and cultural factors, it even appears to be a more viable response than decolonization to settler-colonial ills. Its normative importance rests in its transformation of social relations between both settler and indigenous communities as they continue to occupy the same political space and share a similar national identity. While scholars have focused mostly on the role of material reparations in realizing successful reconciliation, they have largely ignored the importance of symbolism in achieving a holistic outcome. By studying the political apology, this article demonstrated how such reparations can be valuable despite the lack of a material dimension.[206]

Through developing a conceptualisation of the political apology as intergroup in nature, I further asserted that it can facilitate a reconciliation of "mutual respect" that does not violate the non-assimilatory principle. Anchoring these theoretical ideas in real examples, the official apologies made by the Australian and Canadian government illustrated how the three themes of acknowledgement, symbolic breaking, and inclusion

204   Verdeja, "Political Reconciliation in Postcolonial Settler Societies," 236.
205   "Thousands greet Stolen Generations apology," ABC, February 13, 2008.

206   Celermajer, "Mere Ritual?", 286-305.

facilitated a reconciliatory process that took into account indigenous concerns. Synthesizing these different discussions, we also discussed how it represents a commitment to ending domination and creates symbolic equity, thus closing the circle and addressing settler-colonial implications.

Nevertheless, complete social transformation remains elusive for both Australia and Canada despite these apologies. Indigenous communities remain disadvantaged as compared to their settler counterparts; true mutuality and equality have yet to been achieved. However, rather than see this as a contradiction to earlier claims, this merely suggests that the political apology itself is insufficient for complete reconciliation. As emphasised both in my work and by Verdeja, for reconciliation to occur holistically, both material and symbolic change is needed. The political apology has provided for the latter, and the next step for these governments is to ensure the former.

Politics is more than a culmination of material factors; the importance that these indigenous communities place on receiving an official apology demonstrate how symbolic gestures are integral to any human society. From dramatic rituals that celebrate life and death, to the practice of singing the national anthem, politics is also symbolic in nature. In addressing injustices, the political apology is but one option in a larger symbolic toolkit that includes truth commissions, memorials, and even seemingly cosmetic gestures such as moments of silence. Governments should take care in giving symbolism its due attention. Returning to the half-hearted "apology" offered by the United States government to the indigenous community, perhaps they should take a leaf from the Australian and Canadian examples in moving towards reconciliation.

About the Author:

Hannah Chong reads Political Science at the National University of Singapore. Her academic interests lie in political philosophy and labor politics. She enjoys learning and reading about migration issues and spends her time offline advocating for marginalized migrant workers in Singapore.

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Kamila Potočárová
Comenius University, Bratislava

Slovak Anxiety and Europeanization:
Ontological (In)security in Slovak Foreign Policy

Abstract

The thesis focuses on the Europeanisation and insecurity in Slovakia's foreign policy discourse in between the 2015 and 2017. Using ontological (in)security as a theoretical framework, I contextualized Slovak history and society to recent political developments. In the thesis I argue that the foreign policy is driven by the double insecurity: the fear of the other and the fear of being left behind. The fear of the other illustrates how and why the refugees were securitized in Slovakia during the parliamentary elections in 2016 and how, in context of the Visegrad Group (V4), the anti-migration populist narrative contributed to the negative perception of the Central Europe as an opposing bloc to Brussels. Nevertheless, following Brexit and the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), the V4 countries had diverse perceptions about the future of the EU. Accordingly, the fear of being left behind shows why Slovakia abandoned its regional rhetoric, as the country wanted to belong to the core of the EU decision-making process. The thesis concludes that while European migration policy drove identity insecurity during the migration crisis, the EU and Europeanisation remain to be the core of security of Slovak foreign policy.

Preface

Threat or a great opportunity — that is how globalization has been presented to us.

Today, globalization and responses to processes connected with it are dividing the people and their perspectives on our future. Strong voices of nationalism, anti-liberalism and other simplistic explanations driven by identity are heard all over the world. Given the inter-dependence of all actors, these narratives in the hands of the populist parties are threatening international peace and security. Wanting to make sense of the world that surrounds me, I decided to research the motives and reasons of Slovak foreign policy concerning Europeanisation.

I got interested in Slovak foreign policy because this case showed how identity could be challenged by globalisation and even cause anxiety. This close connection of globalisation with insecurity was apparent in 2015 when the migration crisis emerged (Kern, 2017). Populist parties securitised migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees across Visegrad Group countries. Meaning that migrants became politicized matters of security. Although they did not necessarily pose an existential threat to the objective survival of a state, the political discourse was constructed as

if they did (Buzan et al.,1998). Migrants were represented as a threat to our economic and social systems as well as to the culture what contributed to the image of illiberal Central Europe. In this sense, illiberalism is regarded as democratic backsliding and deliberation or restricting of the liberal democratic institutions by – centralization of power, control of the electoral process, state capture, and limiting civil society (Sitter, 2018). In addition, this also shows how former foreign policy agenda became domesticated and anti-immigration rhetoric became a norm

"Slovak foreign policy discourse encompasses two fears: the fear of the other and the fear of being left behind."

with an aim of voter mobilisation (Balfour, 2016). Although populists did not succeed everywhere in winning elections, their strategy of fear and dividing society to "us" and "them" challenged our thinking about ourselves and our identity.

As the trend of identity politics is likely to continue, I find it essential to contribute to better understanding of identity, insecurity and globalisation processes because as Timothy Snyder put it: "People who assure you that you can only gain security at the price of liberty usually want to deny you both" (Snyder, 2017).

Introduction

Europeans today are living at a moment

when paralyzing uncertainty captures a society's imagination.
(Krastev, 2017, p. 5)

Despite the negative position of Slovakia towards the European Union's migration policy during the migration crisis, in 2016 Slovakia suddenly aligned its foreign policy strategy to the core of the EU. Wanting to make sense of this turn in Slovak foreign policy I posed a question: what drives the discourse of Slovak foreign policy? By contextualizing Slovak history and society to recent political developments, in my thesis, I deconstruct Slovak foreign policy discourse in between 2015 and 2017. For the discourse analysis, I used Jutta Weldes' intertextuality, which illustrates how cultural meanings are produced and understood (Weldes, 2006). Using ontological (in)security as the main theoretical framework, I argue that Slovak foreign policy discourse encompasses two fears: the fear of the other and the fear of being left behind. This, what I call the double insecurity of Slovak foreign policy, should help us to better understand the relationship between Slovakia's identity and (in)security in today's globalized world, which result in states that are more prone to anxieties.

The migration crisis has completely changed the political ambience in Europe. The populists gained momentum and the question of (cultural) identity became of the highest importance. In 2016 after the Brexit referendum, Donald Trump winning elections in the US and the up-

coming French election involving Marine Le Pen's National Front, plagued doubts about the future of the EU (Krastev, 2017). It created the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety meaning that something is changing, but not knowing what is going to change and how it is going to change. However, the interpretation of current crises varies across Europe as it had been heavily influenced by different historical experience. While the Western European countries believed that everything would work out well, Eastern Europeans often felt anxious and neglected (Krastev, 2017). The feeling of anxiety was strongly present in Slovakia and it reflected itself in foreign policy. In 2016, Slovakia had been closely cooperating with the Visegrad Group states on the migration issue. The V4 strongly opposed the controversial compulsory quota system proposed by the EC. The aim of the proposal was to re-allocate incoming migrants based on the corrective allocation mechanism to take the pressure off the frontier countries. Thanks to the anti-immigration foreign policy of the regions' leaders, the narrative of populist Central Europe emerged. It was mainly Hungarian Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, who often spoke on behalf of the whole group, imagining the Visegrad Group to become an opposing block against the EU (Nič, 2017). Nevertheless, to Slovakia, the Visegrad Group was acting only as an amplifier reinforcing regional positions within the EU where they had already existed (Nič, 2016). Then, after Brexit and as the Slovak presidency of the Council of EU was approaching, discrepancies within the V4 started to appear. And while Hungary and Poland created an illiberal axis, Slovakia together with the Czech Republic took more of a pragmatic attitude towards the EU (Nič, 2016). Gradually abandoning the regional

politics and distancing from the anti-EU rhetoric, Slovakia's prime minister, Robert Fico, accented that Slovakia wants to belong to the core of the EU. The term core of the EU and what it means began to crystallize only after the French presidential elections and after the White paper was published by the European Commission. Yet, the sudden shift from regional anti-EU politics to the European politics was rather unexpected.

The paper begins with examination of ontological security as a theoretical framework for looking at relations between insecurity and Slovakia's foreign policy outcomes. Within this framework, I focus particularly on the role of critical situations and narratives in ontological security seeking. Then, I focused on the globalisation as one of the drivers of insecurity and connected it with Europeanisation. Lastly, I examined criticism towards the ontological security and its implications for this paper.

Following the methodological part, I begin with the empirical analysis. The fear of the other illustrates how and why migrants were securitized by the mainstream political parties during Slovak parliamentary elections and how arguments about national security were used to legitimize the actions in foreign policy. Consequently, highlighting the role of domestic policy in foreign policy shaping, I look at the Visegrad Group as a tool for foreign policy enforcement of Bratislava for fighting some aspects of Europeanisation.

In the last chapter, I focus on the empirical analysis of fear of being left behind. This part puts more light on the firm stance of Slovakia to belong to the core of the EU. For that,

I reconstructed the broader cultural and historical context to demonstrate how the fear of being left behind influenced

the Slovak foreign policy, which needs to articulate its identity as a part of a bigger entity. Finally, I looked at the economic and political aspects of Europeanisation in foreign policy discourse in 2016 and onwards.

Theoretical Framework: Ontological (In)security

Ontological (in)security and Anxiety

Ontological security is a relatively new theory in international relations. It has been developed in the past decades by various scholars from sociology and psychoanalysis before it got adopted to international relations. Among scholars that significantly contributed to the development of the theory in international relations belong Brent J. Steele, Catherina Kinnvall and Jennifer Mitzen and other scholars who have found this theory to be "productive lens for thinking about relationship between security and identity, and between identity and important outcomes in world politics" (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017). So how does this theory help us to understand this relationship?

When thinking about security in international relations, the concept of survival plays a central role. All major realist scholars accentuate the importance of the physical survival of a state. John Mearsheimer's offensive realism even highlights the need for states to gain power at the expense of others if they want to survive in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2001). Thus, the realist security dilemma is rather concerned with "security of survival" while ontological security refers to "security of being" (Giddens, 1991). Meaning, actors are not only interested in the physical security of a state but more importantly, in continuation of their "self" representing their own subjectivity that allows and stipulates actions and choices

(Steele, 2008; Mitzen, 2006).

Drawing on the work of Giddens (1991), ontological security is defined as "person's fundamental sense of safety in the world and includes a basic trust of other people. Obtaining such trust becomes necessary in order for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety" (Giddens, 1991). The definition that was also used by Steele (2008) refers to ontological security as a "sense of continuity and order in events" (Giddens, 1991). Here Giddens stressed social actors' need for "predictability of routine" and biographical continuity, especially during "critical situations" that disrupt the routine as well as the system of trust. Forming his theory, Giddens based his theory on Erik Erikson's perception of identity (Erikson, 1950 in Giddens, 1991). In his work, identity represented "anxiety-controlling mechanism reinforcing a sense of trust, predictability, and control in reaction to disruptive change by re-establishing a previous identity or formulating a new one" (Kinnvall, 2004). Furthermore, the concept of self-identity, for both Erikson and Giddens, referred to the biographical continuity and the ability to maintain continuous narrative about the self (Kinnvall, 2004). Only actors who have a sense of biographical continuity and completeness recognized via relations with others feel ontologically secure. However, when ontological security becomes endangered due to a rupture in established relations and routines, then this situation may result in anxiety, paralysis or violence (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017).

Despite the fact that there is no direct link between insecurity and violence, having a stable self-identity is important for two reasons. Firstly, it enables states to maintain long-term social relations through which the ontological security is

"Narratives are the foundation of self-identity's sustainability. They are used to legitimise and give meaning to state actions."

established. Secondly, the destabilisation of previously established routines and relations may result in violence or conflict. For these reasons, the aspect of anxiety is essential as it proposes that even relations that may be perceived as durable are always feeble to some extent (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017).

Ontological (in)security and critical situations

A crisis is a substantial component in ontological security presenting a challenge to state's identity. Defining crisis, I will not understand crisis as an "objective fact". Instead, I will be using Jutta Weldes's conception of understanding crisis as a social construct formed by the state officials for the purposes of production and reproduction of states' identity. Thereupon, constructed crises forged in respect to specific identities will be manifested as a different crisis, if at all as a crisis, by different actors in spite of the crisis's apparent similarity for states with various identities (Weldes, 1999). Corresponding self-identity threats happen when an unpredictable event influencing a vast number of individuals takes place and is recognised as a threat to the state's or group's identity (Steele, 2008).

Crisis disrupts established routines causing insecurity, which then leads to anxiety. Subsequently, states then use their biographical narrative and established routines in order to reduce anxiety and produce the feeling of biographical continuity (Mitzen, 2006). As Dmitri Chernobrov (2016) specified in his research, in order to rehabilitate, the ontological security events ought to be interpreted in a manner in which the self-identity of a state is reinforced. Accordingly, unanticipated international events need to be (re)imagined into something predictable and familiar, so the biographical continuity of a state is maintained. Chernobrov identified this to be important especially in relation to identity and boundary security as this process may motivate the political leaders to misinterpret critical events (Chernobrov, 2016).

Nevertheless, during the times of crisis as the situation is developing and new information arrives, we observe how narratives and our comprehension of what drives the critical situation alter. Recalling the definition of critical situation, these critical events are unpredictable; states cannot prepare for them. Therefore, when an actor faces an unpredictable situation, it must clarify what a situation may mean, how did the situation emerge, and what to do in the future in order to prevent this situation from happening again. However, if it is impossible to eliminate the reoccurrence of that situation, then such a situation would no longer be considered as critical because nation-states do not see

it as falling within the competence of their agency. This shows how security interests change within the course of events (Steele, 2008).

Role of Narratives in Ontological Security-seeking

Narratives are the foundation of self-identity's sustainability. They are used to legitimise and give meaning to state actions. Via narratives, states are capable of connecting their behaviour with the comprehension of the self (Steele, 2008). Biographical narrative "constructs a reality as perceived by an actor…" so that "… State agents relate their identity to their actions and place the self in the context of a(n)(international) community" (Steele, 2008). Therefore, in consideration of stable public self-identity, biographical narratives are employed in political discourses (Marlow, 2002). Political leaders create narratives that give meaning to events and connect them, so they correspond with one another in a certain way: "narratives bind temporal events together such that meaning can be ascribed to a pattern. The organization of time itself endows meaning to events" (Bach, 1999 in Steele, 2008).

Our attention to ontological insecurity highlights the input to the narratives or stories we internally communicate about

> **"I consider Europeanisation to be a contested concept with two meanings. First, represented by the EU integration containing benefits such as four freedoms…. Second, which considers the Europeanisation to be a threat to state's sovereignty and identity."**

ourselves as well as the outside world. It makes us question the reasons behind our insecurity and existential anxieties as well as examine emotional responses to those feelings (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017). In this way, ontological security comprehension of identity and security distinguishes itself from constructivist or post-structural understanding. Individuals are not connected only via structure, but it is their reason, understanding of ideas, a way of communications and arrangements, heuristics and last but not least, emotional inter-subjectivity. Emotional inter-subjectivity enables individuals to continuously and frequently unconsciously obtain and deliver emotional messages. (Craib, 1989; Craib, 1994; Vogler, 2000 in Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017). For that reason, the stress is given to the discursive construction of subject positions adopted by a certain so-

cial agent with the assistance of "choice and fantasy identification/emotional 'investments'" (Barker, 1999; Hall, 1992; Kinnvall, 2012; Zarakol, 2010 in Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017).

Globalisation as an Insecurity

Globalisation is a phenomenon mostly described in terms of elimination of trade barriers, communication and cultural exchange that are being felt by ordinary citizens all over the world (Robertson, 1992). As a result, globalisation compresses geography, turning the world into a more unified and singular place (Waters, 2001). Hence, Giddens defined globalisation as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1991). Due to this increased interconnectivity and interdependence, we have less control over our own surroundings. And as events happening elsewhere in the world become localised, globalisation became for many a source of security and certainty as much as a source of insecurity for the others (Kinnvall, 2004). Thus, globalisation divides people on those who benefit from globalisation and those who have been left behind.

Globalisation's impact on politics, economics as well as human affairs has enormous social and economic consequences (Manners, 2000 in Kinvall, 2004). Rather undesirable consequences are feelings of alienation, loss of resistance to capitalist development, media overabundance, unemployment, forced immigration, and other transformational forces. Here, Kinnvall (2004) highlights the role of the neoliberal ideology in the globalisation process. The departure from Keynesian economics in 1970s aimed for

greater liberalisation of markets. Thus, the adoption of monetarist macroeconomic policies and later structural adjustments programs in 1980s and 1990s, promoted privatisation and increased global competitiveness (Hurrell & Woods, 1999). The goal of these changes was to establish strong civil societies and stability. However, instead of creating a strong civil society, they have provoked social tension over job security among middle and lower-middle class people (Calhoun, 1994; Hoogvelt, 2001; Hurrell, 1999; Kolodner, 1995 in Kinnvall, 2004). Consequently, this situation of anxiety and uncertainty gave space to leaders who challenge the state with nationalist and anti-globalist claims (Kinnvall, 2004).

Moreover, globalisation and spread of democratic values strongly influenced social dislocation in many parts of the world. New democratic norms of equality and egalitarianism disapproved of the former hierarchical structures in many societies and impaired old patterns of behaviour as conventional power relations (Kolodner, 1995 in Kinnvall, 2004). Accordingly, Kinnvall (2004) recognises two aftereffects of these processes: (1) Globalisation altered the way things were done, which created the feeling of uncertainty; as well as (2) it altered the structures and bounds identifying communities, which has a disintegrative effect.

Europeanisation as an Insecurity

Having connected globalisation with insecurity, I want to make further clarification in regard to globalisation. For the purposes of my thesis, I will not speak only of globalisation, but also Europeanisation because Europeanisation and globalisation are tightly interwoven. They stand on the values of neo-liberalism, representative democracy and open market econo-

my (Ladi, 2006). Moreover, this step will be effective as in my thesis I will focus on the foreign policy of Slovakia in relation to the EU. The logic goes that alike the economic crisis in 2009; the recent migration crisis reinitiated a forceful political debate on notions of "EU solidarity" and "EU values" putting political and cultural differences into the spotlight (Moisio, 2012). Hence, the process of Europeanisation will refer to the social and political processes of European integration.

It is essential to note that European integration is understood differently across different geographical contexts in which "Europe" figures as a "differentially articulated concept, vision and project within self-defining national narratives" (Moisio, 2012). Meaning that European integration is perceived, legitimised, articulated as well as conducted in different ways. Therefore, Europe and European integration should be understood as a "travelling idea" which needs to be adapted to the historical and social context of national circumstances (Fleischmann, 2013). National political cultures comprise of specific concepts, framings of ideas as well as speeches. They shape our imagination and expression of European integration and Europe that in turn influence our experience and expectations (Antonsich, 2008; Manners, 2010; P., et al., 2005 in Moisio, 2012). From this perspective, constructing a certain image of European integration and globalisation plays an essential causal role in shaping policy discourses (Smith & Hay, 2008 in Moisio, 2012). As result of this, the EU and Europe are constantly challenged and open to reformulation in several national contexts. In return, the diversity of these concepts is beneficial to divergent political interests, whether national or international (Moisio, 2012). In this sense Europeanisation can

be understood as a political unification project (Olsen, 2002). For instance, after the fall of Soviet Union, EU membership supplied certain identity-political needs in Central and Eastern Europe (Kuus, 2004; Kuus, 2005; Kuus, 2007; Dittmer, 2005 in Moisio, 2012). This goal stimulated the creation of the Visegrad Group in Central Europe shortly after the fall of Communism in 1991. Or as Rupnik noted about the V4: "forged with democratic ideals, aspirations and leadership... It also represented a strong opposition to nationalism... in the region. And thirdly, there was a European dimension—the common goal was to join Europe, to create a new Central Europe while simultaneously integrating it with the broader European project" (Rupnik, 2016). Moreover, in the context of the current Central European discourse, I consider Europeanisation to be a contested concept with two meanings. First, represented by the EU integration containing benefits such as four freedoms – free movement of goods, capital, services, and labour – and constitute a basis for the Single European Market. Second, which considers the Europeanisation to be a threat to state's sovereignty and identity (Kazharski & Makarychev, 2018).

What is more, the processes of Europeanisation had an impact on political movements, parties, and how they legitimise or reject their European integration. For example, nowadays, we may observe a rise in the radical populist parties that often define themselves as Eurosceptic. As a rule, these parties always attain more attention in the times of crisis. Interestingly, these parties are many times capable of existing only because of the "Europeanised" political processes against which they situate themselves (Triandafyllidou & Wodak R and Krzyźanowski, 2009 in

Moisio, 2012). This kind of behaviour was prominent during the economic crisis in 2009 as well as during the migration crisis. They usually put together the European integration with the "migration threat" and present it as a "national issue" (Triandafyllidou & Wodak R and Krzyźanowski, 2009 in Moisio, 2012). An excellent example of this kind of mobilisation was Nigel Farage's political party UK Independence Party (UKIP) that mobilised people to vote for Brexit.

Overall, national traditions greatly influence our approach to European institutions, narratives and practices. Therefore, an understanding of the interplay among the national, the European and the global is highly essential to the understanding of my research (Moisio, 2012).

Homesteading

As a result of the predisposition of individuals and groups to insecurities and anxieties in times of crisis, attachment to any "collective identity" to reduce the anxiety and insecurity became essential in maintaining identity. One of the most effective reactions is the combination of religion and nationalism that act as "identity signifier" arising in the times of on-tological insecurity as a result of dramatic change and uncertain future. Nationalism and religion work well together because of their particularly persuasive narratives and beliefs conveying simple messages that give us a solid ground when constituting a "true" world with a "meaning". They can easily provide us with the image of security, stability and meaningfulness (Kinnvall, 2004).

As Kinnvall argues, the comeback of religious nationalism is a reaction to anxiety and discontinuity caused by globalisation that is making us feel "homeless". On the contrary to that, religious nationalism is perceived as "home", something we are already familiar with (Kinnvall, 2004). In this sense, the category of "home" possesses the qualities of security and certainty creating a foundation for identity construction (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998 in Kinnvall, 2004). For that reason, "homesteading" is a strategy of ontological security seeking that is "making and shaping a political space for oneself in order to surpass the life of contradictions and anxieties of homelessness" (Kinnvall, 2004). Homesteading calls for "simple definitions of who we are" in order to maintain a sense of continuity in our social and economic environment (Kinnvall, 2004). However, when our sense of security vanishes in response to social and economic changes, new identity – new home has to be established for the purposes of maintenance of ontological security (Kinnvall, 2004). Consequently,

> **"Homesteading calls for 'simple definitions of who we are' in order to maintain a sense of continuity in our social and economic environment."**

"The picture of immigrants and refugees as a potential danger became accepted in everyday life and public institutions, such as among police, politicians and bureaucrats."

this process of identity affirmation always happens in relation to the "other". This means that the "self" is not a static object but heavily depends on the greater process of identity construction and that the self/other nexus is reactive to new relations (Ogilvie & Ashmore, 1991 in Kinnvall, 2004). Nonetheless, this process of reaffirmation of identity is being misused by political leaders that use the power of emotions in order to advance their political goals. This close connection of Europeanisation with insecurity was also apparent in 2015 in Europe when the migration crisis emerged. Migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees were and still are securitized by populists in many European countries including Slovakia, as threats to our economic and social systems as well as to our culture, for political goals. Kinnvall (2004), also demonstrated this in an example when after 9/11 national governments increased security and closed borders for immigrants in response to their citizen's fears. Subsequently, this policy and anti-immigration rhetoric became the norm and were used for mass mobilisation of voters (Kinnvall, 2004).

Challenges of Theory

The challenges of this theory come from its diversity. The scholarship of ontological security varies greatly and has no coherent research agenda. It focuses on the different level of analysis (individual, society, group, state). Furthermore, it focuses on diverse political outcomes (cooperation, conflict, violence; stability or change) and different methods (quantitative, qualitative and discursive). While this at first could seem very problematic, scholars found these disparities to be highly productive, even leading to cross-fertilisation, collaborations and better understanding of our own approaches. Hence, the scholars do not perceive the lack of coherent research agenda of ontological security negatively. On the contrary, the pluralistic agenda of this theory enables us to explore possibilities of this concept's application in world politics, thus avoiding early conclusions (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2017). Even though, I have focused on the discursive foreign policy analysis of Slovakia, the paper is not only focused on the structural understanding of identity and insecurity. I also combine the societal comprehension of changes, their way of communication and interpretation. In general, my research relates to the bigger debate about globalisation/Europeanisation and the understanding of (in)security in the world politics.

Methodological Approach

This research adopts qualitative foreign policy discourse analysis as the main analytical tool, which helps us to understand discourse practices in Slovakia's foreign policy in between 2015 and 2017. My object of analysis is discourse practices – speeches, actions as well as material objects – that help us to understand how cultural meanings are produced and understood. To my research, it was not important to collect all data available, but enough data to reveal positive patterns and answers. I have finished gathering new data when the collected information had not generated any new knowledge or substantial information altering research conclusions. Gathering data, I used Jutta Weldes' (2006) method of intertextuality distinguishing between official (high-data) and semi-official discourse (low-data). Intertextuality emphasizes that text and concepts are never understood in isolation. This method enables us to demonstrate and explain notice-worthy resemblances in the fashion of how world politics are narrated officially in contrast to how the media tells stories. Thus, connected via multifaced interactions, high and low data create intertextual knowledge or so-called "image banks" that we have and influence the way we produce meanings in a certain way, rather than other (Fiske 1987 cited in Weldes, 2006).

The official discourse consists of discursive practices conducted by individuals who directly and officially participate in the exercise of power. Since foreign policy is the main domain of the prime minister, the president and the minister of foreign and international relations as well as diplomats, I consider their speech-acts to be the primary source of my data (Weldes, 2006). Moreover, I analyse policy documents and other policy statements, White Papers, reports from government ministries, departments, and agencies because they exhibit well-prepared representations of narratives offered by the elites. Additionally, I examine academic literature and magazines such as Visegrad Insight, and The Economist, that usually articulate the official neoliberal visions.

Semi-official discourse is important for my research because the intertextuality or the base for the understanding of concepts in the discourse is settled in as the low data. Here, I focus on actors who are not directly involved in the power structures yet are connected with it. Those are non-governmental organisations or think tanks (Weldes, 2006). Moreover, for my secondary sources, I also relied on the interpretations of discourse by other researchers. Finally, I analyse newspapers that are fundamental for the reproduction and contestation of official discourses. My sources are predominantly from EurActive, Politico and Reuters.

Looking mostly at Slovakia's relations with the EU, I have identified several key events that had an impact on shaping the course of Slovak foreign policy. Collecting data, I have been following timeline starting with the migration crisis in 2015, which acted as a catalyst that incentivised the discursive disagreement between the EU institutions and Western European member states on one hand and Eastern European states on the other (Kazharski, 2017). Accordingly, over the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU, Slovakia had to balance its interests on a diplomatic level as former close cooperation with other V4 became contested. Then, in the aftermath of Brexit, when Juncker's White paper and the results of French elections saw the possibility of a multi-speed Europe put on the agenda, Slovakia took more pragmatic orientation towards the

EU causing an internal split within the V4. This shift confirmed the opportunistic foreign policy, which is not driven by the normative agenda. In the end, I highlight actions undertaken which demonstrate the Bratislava's orientation on the core of the EU, such as Posted workers directive or an agreement on Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO.

Empirical Analysis

Fear of the other

In this chapter, I focus on the migration crisis in 2015 and insecurity it caused across Europe. By looking at securitisation as a discursive action, I explain how the fear of migrants was constructed in Slovakia. This emphasizes the role of populist domestic policy in shaping foreign policy. Consequently, I focus on the East-West divide and the foreign policy of the Visegrad Group as a whole, which shaped the image of Central Europe highlighting how Slovakia used the Visegrad Group as a tool to fight some aspects of Europeanisation in relation to migration policies.

Migration crisis as the source of Anxiety

The refugee crisis caused a whirlwind of emotions, arguments, votes and political identities across Europe (Krastev, 2017). As Ivan Krastev named it: "The refugee crisis turned out to be Europe's 9/11" (Krastev, 2017). Meaning that the migration crisis was a test of survival for the EU because, while the crisis bolstered national sentiments, it also weakened the likelihood of constitutional patriotism in the EU. In this time people called for the protection of their own political communities in referendums, opting for exclusion rather than inclusion (Krastev, 2017). In this regard, the migration crisis caused a "moral combat" in politics, emptying moral distinctions between us and them

– people and the elite (Radnóti, 2017). The response to refugees varied greatly. The initial acts of openness towards war refugees in Austria and Germany is now generally dominated by anxiety, fear of foreigners and Islamic culture (Krastev, 2017). Many people who call for national sovereignty fear that by letting the refugees in, their national welfare system will suffer and that the refugees will devastate our culture together with our liberal societies. These people are anxious and at the sources of their moral panic are Islamisation, terrorism and generic fear of the unknown (Krastev, 2017). However, even this anxiety connected to refugees and multiculturalism is partially in conflict with our liberal values such as respect for democracy, civil and human rights and internationalism, which we say we want to protect. On one hand, liberalism advocates for mutual respect and multiculturalism, but on the other, it is crucial to note that migrants often share attitudes contrary to these. Nonetheless, the moral problems of whether to help refugees or generalisations that all of them are Islamic terrorists are incompatible with liberal society's excuses concerning the protection of identity or national culture. Because such visions about society and its future image are not morally acceptable and compatible with the political liberal values guaranteeing freedom of an individual and equality. In such cases when a state accepts people from various backgrounds, it is to strongly stand by its values and liberal principles and to demand them (Cíbik, 2017).

Yet the discussion, which tinged many European states, including Slovakia, went totally in the opposite direction. Before the refugee crisis in 2015, migration was not an issue in Slovakia. Therefore, it was highly interesting to observe how the migration topic quickly standardised

in Slovakia when it was not the destination country nor the transit country. The discourse about refugees interpreting migration as a security threat was normalised by the opposition parties as well as by the highest government officials apart from the President Andrej Kiska. As a result, their perception of migration as a threat dominated not only the political life, but it also entered the legal framework of the country. In December 2016, the National Parliament passed a constitutional anti-terrorist act which enabled the police to hold a person suspected of committing terrorist offenses in custody for 96 hours instead of former 48 hours (Ministerstvo vnútra SR, 2016). The enemy-building strategy against refugees was an essential part of creating anxiety and moral panic. The picture of immigrants and refugees as a potential danger became accepted in everyday life and public institutions such as police, politicians and bureaucrats (Androvičová, 2016). Here, I find it essential to mind the sequence of events which had an impact on the discourse about migrants and subsequent shaping of the foreign policy agenda. The refugee crisis started less than a year before the parliamentary election in March 2016. Hence, it was not only the unexpected migration crisis which stimulated the debate about the migration in Slovakia, but it was also the agenda-setting by politicians, media and political analysts in the pre-election period. Eventually, this topic completely dominated every aspect of the elections campaign. During this period, migrants were discriminated against based on their religion, culture and ethnicity by many state officials who delivered emotional messages to people that Islam and Islamic culture are a danger to our society (Androvičová, 2016). At the celebration of the 71st an-

"It was not only the unexpected migration crisis which stimulated the debate about the migration in Slovakia, but it was also the agenda-setting by politicians, media and political analysts in the pre-election period."

niversary of the Slovak National Uprising in August 2015, Robert Fico had a more than thirty-minute-long speech about the negative aspects and impacts of "influx of migrants" on national culture and values (TASR, 2016). He noted that people must not underestimate or ignore this problem. Overall, the prime minister Robert Fico whose socially democratic party SMER-SD had the majority in the parliament before the elections was probably the most

active when commenting on migration. Others who very actively contributed to the discourse were Richard Sulík, leader of the liberal opposition party (SaS) and a member of the European Parliament, then Andrej Danko, leader of the Slovak Nationalist Party (SNS) and leader of the extreme far-right party Marián Kotleba - People's Party Our Slovakia (ĽSNS) and others. Also, during that time Slovak celebrity businessman with controversial background and now populist politician, bought a political party which he renamed to Boris Kollár-We are Family and ran on the migration issue too. This implies that the anti-immigration discourse dominated the political discourse across the whole political spectrum and there was no real opposition among political parties which would confront the ideas of the ruling party. However, in my analysis, I focus predominantly on the government's position as they were shaping the official state's foreign policy.

Having shown the migration discourse caused anxiety in Europe as well as Slovakia, consequently, I present how the securitization of migrants played an important role on the domestic level in ontological-security seeking. In this analysis, I have stressed the usage of "homesteading" strategy by the populist politicians in the context of the parliamentary elections to invoke the collective identity that eventually lead to the enforcement of the anxiety triggered by the migration crisis.

The securitisation of refugees polarised societies

into "us" and "them" which is also known as "othering" (Neumann, 1999). In this political discourse, "us" represented the national, cultural, religious and ethnic attributes connected to Slovaks, which were not compatible with the Muslim religion and their cultural heritage. While "the others" – migrants – were labelled as a danger to Slovak citizens because of their other unfamiliar culture and rather violent religion (Androvičová, 2016). Thus, refugees and immigrants were excluded based on their culture, religion and ethnicity in order to surpass the anxiety caused by the migration crisis. Analysing the securitisation of migration, the most important assertion was that Slovaks would not give up any of their comfort or safety. Politicians advocating against migration wanted to keep the status quo and acted as if the migrants were just a problem they have to cope with. People were presented with simple messages carrying definitions of who they are and what Slovakia as our "home" is like - Christian, traditional and nationalistic in order to overcome the anxiety and contradictions. While refugees were portrayed as, "economic migrants" who only want the "social benefits" and did not need help at all because most of them were just "young men" looking for a

"Thus, refugees and immigrants were excluded based on their culture, religion and ethnicity in order to surpass the anxiety caused by the migration crisis."

job. This nationalistic rhetoric was continuously coupled with the religious aspect (Androvičová, 2016). Islam was perceived as a violent religion and any Muslim could be a potential terrorist. Connecting November terrorist attacks in Paris and the 2017 New Year's attack in Cologne together with migration and Islam, Robert Fico many times repeated that "Muslims are impossible to integrate" (Baribazzi, 2016). Therefore, later Fico together with Robert Kaliňák, Minister of Interior, claimed that Slovakia is willing to accept only Christian migrants. Defending their statement, they explained that this step would not be discriminatory against religion because only Christian migrants can be "integrated transparently" (Smith-Spark, 2015). Speaking of transparency, Fico also publicly stated, "We are monitoring every single Muslim" (Buchanan, 2015). This statement has attained broader attention to Fico's anti-migration policy and the V4 in the world. It highlighted the securitised aspect of migration and put him in a position of a police officer or an agent protecting Slovakia from migrants.

Proceeding to the analysis of securitisation and its impact on the foreign policy, I emphasize how Fico's approach to the EU depended on the audience. When in Brussels, he mostly tried to stay in line with the EU official whereas at the domestic level he was using the anti-EU rhetoric to advance his position. In his statements, he often referred to Slovakia as a "small" nation (Androvičová, 2016). This category had two meanings. First, one was used in terms of resources saying that Slovakia has enough problems of its own and is not able to integrate refugees. The second meaning referred to the strength of Slovakia's voice in the EU. Fico often blamed the bigger states in the EU for not taking the opinions of smaller

states seriously. He expressed that: "The problem of migrants has escalated because the big countries solve it at the expense of the small ones" (Androvičová, 2016). Henceforth, constructing the EU as an external other exposed how the Central European states felt about the migration crisis. It is best described by Ivan Korčok's personal online blog in which he explains: "Exaggerating a little, it shows experience from the Union: if one state in the Union - or a group of member states like the V4 - expresses its opinion or even disagreement, it is perceived as breaking of the unity of the Union, while if the opinion expresses another other state or a group, it is seen as a demonstration of an attitude or leadership" (Korčok, 2017). Accordingly, this discourse uncovers another element of inclusion and exclusion. On the domestic level, Europeanism was constructed as an external other – "Bad Brussels"– undermining national state sovereignty and misusing the principle of subsidiarity. Whereas on different occasions, when talking about the Schengen area and guarding of external borders in Brussels, the EU was considered as an in-group (Androvičová, 2016). Such double standards show us how on one level Slovakia tried to reason its negative attitude towards the EU on the basis of their comprehension of the self, while on the other hand, abroad Slovakia tried to sustain its self-identity as a pro-EU country.

Nonetheless, the situation concerning the refugee crisis escalated to the conflict with the EC over the contentious EU quota plan reallocating 120 thousand migrants. The quota plan was based on the idea that refugees coming to the frontier states, such as Italy or Greece would be reallocated to other European states. The proposal was controversial due to a potential measure, which would fee a country

for €250,000 per migrant if it refuses to take in the asylum-seekers allocated by the quota system. However, the quota system met with strong opposition from Visegrad and some other eastern states opening the East-West divide. "As long as I am prime minister, mandatory quotas will not be implemented on Slovak territory," (Nielsen & Eszter, 2015) Fico said, arguing that he wants to prevent "the emergence of a compact Muslim community in Slovakia" (Gabrižova, 2016). The founding member states and EU representatives heavily criticized this stance. For instance, Frans Timmermans commented: "There is no à la carte solidarity in the European Union. You cannot pick and choose when to show solidarity or not" (Winneker, 2015). Preceding the actual official voting on the quota system in the European Council, long negotiations were held which tried to reach a unanimous decision. However, the countries never managed to find a common ground. For that reason, the voting took place on the ministerial level based on simple majority voting instead of the Council, which requires unanimous approval. In the end, the EU interior ministers approved the quota plan by a large majority opposing the central and eastern European states (Baribazzi & De La Baume, 2015). Later, Slovakia together with Hungary took the reallocation scheme to the Court of Justice (The Slovak Spectator, 2017). These actions too echoed abroad and greatly contributed to the image of illiberal Central Europe as the Visegrad Group, which was blamed for not being solidary and tagged as "The Big Bad Visegrad" (The Economist, 2016). However, such an image of Slovakia in the world was contrary to how it wanted to present itself, which endangered Bratislava's biographical continuity.

Owing to the conflict over the quota system, the focus shifted to Slovakia's foreign policy actions. Slovak Minister of Foreign and International Affairs, Miroslav Lajčák , in an interview for German media Deutsche Welle, explained why the accusations against Slovakia discriminating against migrants based on religion are not true. In the interview, he expressed that the government's party, SMER's, anti-migration strategy was only aimed at the domestic audience to maximise the voter potential during parliamentary elections and how Europeanisation is perceived in Slovakia. Therefore, the transcript of his interview is worth quoting here at some length:

> *The fact that we turned to the court is not an unprecedented thing, it is a normal instrument of European politics. Let's have the court decide. And I see absolutely no contradiction and absolutely no problem in that.*
>
> *Everyone who has ever asked for asylum in Slovakia was granted asylum if that person met the conditions. There was never any discrimination based on religion. (…) You should see these statements in the context of the electoral campaign. People felt I would say, under pressure from the EU institutions that were pushing them into something which was new to them. They were not used to it, so they reacted with fear. And you have to understand the fact that there are countries which have been open to other cultures for centuries, and there are countries for whom this is a new experience. And this cannot be ordered overnight. It has to be a process. You have to explain it to people. They have to get used to it (…). And we have an excellent model in Slovakia where we are hosting migrants who applied for a settlement in Austria, but they stay in Slovakia, we take care*

of them...1200...this is the reality, and this is what helps our people to get used to them.

Our people have not been exposed to Muslims and they are frightened. It's a new phenomenon for them (…). Hundreds of Muslims mean nothing in Belgium or London, but it does mean something in Slovakia (…) People are afraid of what they don't know (Lajčák, 2016).

The interview gives us the grasp of what was the goal of SMER-SD's anti-immigration pre-election campaign, in which the main slogan was "We protect Slovakia" (Cunningham, 2016). It shows the understanding of Slovakia as very conservative, closed or even xenophobic society. SMER-SD, as well as other political parties, took take advantage of this during their campaign. Nonetheless, it was expected that after the elections strong anti-immigration discourse would disappear. However, Fico kept his rhetoric for a bit longer. "It may look strange but sorry... Islam has no place in Slovakia," (The Slovak Spectator, 2016) Fico opined against the quota on the 25th of May, arguing that multiculturalism would threaten Slovakia's Cyrilo-Methodian traditions. "I talked about it several times with the Maltese prime minister and he said the problem was not in migrants coming in, but rather in them changing the face of the country" (The Slovak Spectator, 2016).

Further, he alleged that it was his obligation to protect Slovakia from negative experiences, which had already been seen in other European states. He was referring to such events as in Cologne, Germany during the New Year's celebration, when around 80 women reported sexual assaults and muggings by men of "Arab or North African appearance" (BBC News, 2016). Putting himself into the role of protector of Slovak nation and traditional values, he again confirmed the anti-immigration line of Slovak foreign policy, acting contrary to the EU. This line of continued campaign mode suggests that, if not for Brexit, which opened the question of Europe's future, Fico's nationalistic and anti-immigrant strategy would continue. Nevertheless, this empirical analysis of the securitisation of migration was essential because it highlighted how the state officials and other political parties constructed the critical situation. The migration crisis was interpreted as a critical situation, which challenged Slovakia's identity. And as the relationship between Slovakia and the EU was hampered by the anti-immigrant line of Slovak foreign policy, the system of trust between them lowered. These developments caused the feeling of anxiety, especially after Brexit when the discussions about the future of the EU set off. As a result, Slovakia's biographical continuity was damaged due to the rupture in routine that endangered the Slovak ontological security.

To conclude, during the parliamentary elections in Slovakia 2016, the migration agenda was heavily politicised and

"These actions too echoed abroad and greatly contributed to the image of illiberal Central Europe."

used in the campaign by the mainstream political parties, which adopted the rhetoric of far-right parties. The anti-globalist tendency can be seen through the nationalistic narrative, that dominated the whole political spectrum. Populist politicians have "othered" migrants by claiming that their cultural values and lifestyle are incompatible with our Christian heritage and European values. As migrants became defined as a threat, many people felt as if their well-being was endangered – they were trapped in a moral panic. So, it was relatively easy for the populist political parties to make use of this critical situation and used the strategy of "homesteading" to convince people that they knew best how to protect a nation from a potential danger. It created the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety challenging ontological security. The securitisation of migrants on the domestic level consequently shaped Slovakia's foreign policy and negatively challenged Slovakia's identity abroad. By presenting the migration crisis as a national security issue, Europeanisation with regards to EU migration policy was constructed as a negative phenomenon threatening Slovakia's national sovereignty.

(The Economist, 2016). Nationalism, illiberalism and conservativism tinged the dominant political discourse. As Rupnik (2016) noted referring to Kundera's (1989) "Tragedy of Central Europe": "what was once referred to as the 'kidnapped West' now seems to imitate its

"Slovakia's biographical continuity was damaged due to the rupture in routine that endangered the Slovak ontological security."

former captor". Over the year 2016, the Visegrad Group worked together in Brussels as a united block on issues concerning migration (Nič, 2016). Their behaviour and actions were perceived negatively and were blamed for not being solidary enough. Some expected that the Visegrad countries could create an opposition block within the EU that arguably had a negative impact on Slovakia's foreign policy actions concerning migration policies. However, from Slovakia's position, such assumptions were false and misunderstood their cooperation. The role of the alliance is to "act as an amplifier, an ad hoc coalition, reinforcing regional positions where they exist" (Nič, 2016). Diplomat R. Káčer and State Secretary I. Korčok confirmed this perception in interviews many times. Especially, R. Káčer noted that "I am very much interested in regional cooperation within the Visegrad Four, but Slovakia's

Visegrad Group as Pragmatic Instrument and Political Burden

As the discourse around the migration crisis gave "an unsettling new direction to an old alliance", many started to question the Central European identity

vital interest is the EU" (Káčer, 2017). Here it is important to mention that apart from Visegrad Fund, the block is not formally institutionalised and mainly works through diplomatic structures and that their positions are steered by domestic politics and state leaders. Despite the fact that Visegrad state leaders may have seemed close during the refugee crisis, there has been a radical shift in their relations following Brexit. The divisions have arisen over the divergent ideas of country leaders about the future of the EU and role of the EU institutions. Dividing Central Europe, Slovakia together with Czech government, kept a more pragmatic attitude towards the EU while Hungary formed an illiberal axis with Poland (Nič, 2016). So, we see that the Visegrad Group is not a unified regional cooperation working systematically together and each state minds its own national interests (Marušiak, 2017).

In the aftermath of Brexit which changed the international environment as the EU states started to initiate discussions about the future of Europe, Fico stated that Bratislava should be part of a deeply integrated EU "core" driven by Germany and France (Jancarikova, 2017) Hence, as the situation changed, Bratislava altered its interests. Though, the unfavourable image of Visegrad had an impact on the recognition of Bratislava foreign policy actions. Wanting to re-establish the trust and previous relations with the EU, Slovakia introduced the concept of "flexible solidarity" which should have had been a replacement for the quota system. "Flexible solidarity" was based on the principle that the distribution mechanism of refugees should be voluntary, and that it should be up to countries to decide how they want to contribute in emergency situations. The heads of governments of the V4 countries supported the idea of "flexible solidarity" on migration policy. In September 2016 in Bratislava, they even signed a Joint Statement before the non-formal Bratislava summit organized within the framework of Slovak presidency (Végh, 2017). But this proposal was not affirmed by the Western member states. It was not recognized positively which also contributed to ontological insecurity. Later, in mid-November Slovakia presented a renewed, but less known concept for managing migration flows called "effective solidarity". It was a plan based on "tailored solidarity contribution mechanism" which would provide a state with more opportunities for how to ease the critical situation. Apart from the reallocation of refugees, it enabled states to give financial contributions to the frontier states; to a fund dedicated to migration or raise funds either to the European Asylum Support Office or to the European Border and Coast Guard. Though, it was noted that the concept of the "effective solidarity" is not much different from the Commission's proposed reform of the Dublin agreement about asylum-seekers. Nevertheless, both proposals were not acknowledged. Arguably, it was mainly due to the negative perception of Visegrad countries abroad as the proposals were seen only as a PR action to improve the image of Visegrad countries (Végh, 2017). By interpreting the role of the Visegrad group in the migration crisis, I wanted to underline that to Slovakia, the V4 served only as a pragmatic political instrument for enforcing the voice of Slovakia abroad. Yet, as the Slovak interest changed, the V4 became a political burden damaging Bratislava's image and relations. Moreover, the sequence of events only confirms the pragmatic and opportunistic line of Bratislava's foreign policy in regard to the Europeanisation.

Gradually, Bratislava started to back away from regional politics more visibly. In spring 2017 Fico clearly proclaimed that he wanted Slovakia to belong to the core of Europe and that the Visegrad "cannot be an alternative to European integration" (SFPA, 2017). The shift towards the EU core in foreign policy made Slovakia a "pro-European island" within the region (Reuters, 2017). However, the detour from the V4 does not mean that Bratislava will give up on the V4 as a power instrument in the future in spite of the bad image of the V4, nor that Bratislava will become critical of the domestic situation in Poland or Hungary (Káčer, 2017). As Fico said, he would never dare to comment on the domestic situation in either of the mentioned states, he is only "glad that Slovakia has become a pro-European island in this region" (Euractiv; Reuters, 2017). This positive image of Slovakia abroad even reinforced its previous identity as a pro-EU country also gaining positive reception of its politics from Brussels even though Bratislava did not get better, just the others (V4) got worse. And Bratislava's identity as a pro-EU country was finally recognised by other EU states and secured Slovakia ontologically. The inability of Slovakia to re-establish the routine would probably lead to even bigger anxiety or paralysis.

In sum, due to the construction of the refugee crisis as a threat to national security and identity, the biographical continuity of Slovakia was disrupted. The general feeling of anxiety and insecurity over this critical situation connected the Visegrad countries. Although each of them had a different motivation for cooperation, together they opposed the Western member states and EU positions in regard to migration. After Brexit, however, the European "mood" changed and Bratislava wanting to avoid anxiety, reflected on the international situation by abandoning regional cooperation and warming towards the EU. This shift of Slovakia towards the EU was a response to the changing environment in the EU after the Brexit. Thus, Bratislava wanting to secure itself changed its interest. Yet, this turn also reinforced the identity of Slovakia as a pro-EU country. Thanks to this, Slovakia was perceived as "pro-EU island" or the "bridge" in between the EU and illiberal Polish-Hungarian axis (Gabrižova, 2017). Nevertheless, on domestic grounds, the government sells pro-Europeanism in rather social and economic terms while European values remain more or less on the periphery (Gabrižova, 2017).

The Fear of Being Left Behind

In the second part of my argument, I explain that Slovak foreign policy orientation on the core of the EU was driven by the fear of being left behind. In order to grasp the full meaning of this argument, I reconstruct the broader cultural context of Slovakia's history going as far back as 1848. This emphasizes the political dimension of the argument about how Slovakia, perceiving itself as a small state, needs to articulate its identity as a part of a bigger entity. Subsequently, I proceed to the 20th Century emphasizing Slovakia's independence and events following the year 1998 when Slovak foreign policy goal was to join the EU and NATO in order to catch up with the West that pinpoints the economic dimension of the argument. Then, following the crucial year 2004 as Slovakia enters the EU and 2008 when the global economic crisis emerges, I analyse how our foreign policy decisions in 2016 and onwards revolve around catching up with the West. In the end, despite seeming consensus on the foreign

policy strategy, I point at the inconsistency on the domestic level among the state leaders.

Slovakia's "Identity of smallness" and the idea of Pan-Slavism

History and connected historical memory are sources of significant events and stereotypical thinking that are subjective, selective, changeable and influence foreign policy thinking. Therefore, when analysing the impact of Slovak history on foreign policy discourse, it is not important to know how things really were, but how we remember, imagine and explain concrete events (Gniazdowski in Maručiak et al., 2015). Historically, Slovakia lacks the experience of being a small independent state (Reiter, 2006). The modern state was established only in 1993, while apart from that, Slovakia has always been part of some other bigger state formation. This contributed to Slovakia's self-perception as a small state. Thus, identifying Slovakia as a small state, Szalai (2017) argued that the "identity of smallness" reflects actor's image of its size and weaknesses in the international arena that in turn influence the foreign policy (Szalai, 2017). He noted, that these states are geographically limited to their location and have the tendency to adjoin themselves to some bigger entity that would guarantee their security. Slovakia's integration to the Euro-Atlantic structures was also a result of the lack of possibilities concluded from smallness. Though this orientation provided Slovakia with operational space for the application of national needs and broader autonomy for foreign policy decisions. Rejecting the East and its communist past, the foreign policy interest was aimed at balancing between politico-security alliance with the USA and the EU integration process, which later transformed into the EU and NATO membership and "made Slovakia an equal partner among modern democracies" (SIIS 2003; SFPA 2005 in Szalai, 2017). Hence, Slovakia's self-perception as a small state accentuates the necessity of a sense of wider community which they can hinge on while the integration to the Euro-Atlantic structures demonstrates the importance of these structures to Slovak foreign policy self-identity: "The Slovak Republic has transformed from a country striving to strengthen its identity and prove itself, building administrative capacities and its position in international relations almost from zero – to a country which is firmly anchored in reliable and se-

"Despite the fact that Visegrad state leaders may have seemed close during the refugee crisis, there has been a radical shift in their relations following Brexit."

cure integration structures of the world" (SFPA 2004; SFPA 2008 in Szalai, 2017).

This need for a sense of wider community probably stems from the Slovak revolutionary period in 1848/1849 when Slovak nationalism sparked. Attempting to emancipate from the control of Hungarian empire or later Habsburg monarchy, Slovak identity was formed in opposition to the West represented by the Monarchy and other sub-ordinated nations (Marušiak, 2016). Hence, Slovak revolutionaries and intellectual elites turned over to Russia, as it was the only independent Slavic nation and for Slovaks represented a way to a liberalisation. The concept of "Slavic unity" or so-called Pan-Slavism represented this worldview (Marušiak, 2016). Whether this concept was aimed at the ultimate rejection of the West due to cultural reasons (Bombík, 1993 in Marušiak, 2016), or pragmatic reasons to receive Russia's support to emancipate Central European nations (Matula in Marušiak, 2016), this worldview influenced Slovak foreign policy orientation to a great extent in how it articulates its identity as a part of bigger entity for security reasons. For instance, when the Slovak republic was established, this legacy challenged a discussion regarding Slovak geopolitical orientation to the West (Marušiak, 2016).

Altogether, this short historical over-view has shown us how Slovakia's short history as a small independent state and the idea of Pan-Slavism influenced Slovakia's self-identity, which needs to articulate its identity as a part of a bigger entity. Subsequently, I focus on the incentives of Slovakia to adjoin the EU while highlighting how Slovakia fought for its recognition as a democratic and Western country.

Slovak Identity Formation after 1990s

The fundamental democratic and in-

"Nevertheless, on domestic grounds, the government sells pro-Europeanism in rather social and economic terms while European values remain more or less on the periphery."

tellectual discussions about the nature of Slovak identity could be established only following the democratization and independence after the fall of communism in the 1990s (Hamberger, 2002 in Szalai, 2017). This process was extremely hard as the nation-state building and democratization many times contradicted themselves and the question of Slovak national identity polarised society on many levels (Szomolányi, 2003). As a result, Slovakia's identity is not stabilised and fixed, but rather flexible and often contradicting (Szalai, 2017).

After Slovakia gained independence, the leading political parties agreed on foreign policy orientation and priority: "achieving early membership of the decisive institutions and integrating structures of the Western world" represented by the EU and NATO (Duleba, Lukác, Wlachovsky, 1998 in Szalai, 2017). Accordingly, Slovakia together with other post-communist Central European states started a regional cooperation by establishing the Visegrad Group that "tried to distance their countries from Russia and the geopolitical legacy of Soviet dominance" as well as to settle the differences among the V4 states (Nič, 2016). However, due to the semi-authoritarian government of Vladimír Mečiar's (1993–1997) which officially complied with the Euro-Atlantic orientation and integration, but unofficially was "building up [the country's] own political and economic power" by keeping a large state control (Duleba, Lukác, and Wlachovsky 1998 in Szalai, 2017) caused Slovakia to lag behind (Bátora, 2013). Eventhough, Slovakia was still a democracy, the democratic institutions were extremely fragile, and Slovakia became known as illiberal democracy (Szomolányi, 2003).

This form of behaviour excluded Slovakia from being part of a group of candidate states aspiring to join EU and NATO. In 1997 at the Madrid Summit, Slovakia was eliminated from the first wave of NATO enlargement due to the failure to fulfil the political criteria. At the summit, the NATO membership invitation was sent out to all other V4 member states, which presented a vital challenge to Slovakia's government and general population (Bátora, 2013). The act of omission of Slovakia from integration to NATO structures, put Slovakia in a position with a high risk of staying at the political and economic periphery, isolated from the rest of the democratising states and integration process. In the words of NATO Secretary General Solana: "The foreign policy orientation of Slovakia has become hard to understand (…) concrete measures towards the accession process" both to the EU and NATO "have disappeared" (Necej 2005 in Bátora, 2013). The exclusion from democratising group earned Slovakia a nickname "black hole of Europe" which was first used by Madeleine Albright in 1997 (Bátora, 2013). This perception was contradictory to how Slovak population and government wanted to see themselves, which reflected itself in breakthrough elections in 1998.

The Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) formed a new government with Mikuláš Dzurinda as the new Prime Minister (1998 – 2006). Consolidating democracy, he introduced extensive political and economic reforms. Dzurinda presented Slovakia as a country that respects human rights, adheres to the rule of law and can be considered as a reliable partner that was supposed to lead Slovakia to the EU and NATO (Inter Press Service, 2007 in Bátora, 2013). At the beginning Slovakia was labelled as a "late comer" what was caused by Mečiar's policies, but this has changed. Dzurinda's government received a new label symbolising growth and transformation – "Tatra Tiger" (Pisárová, 2004). Already in December 1999, Slovakia's efforts were rewarded by receiving an invitation to start the EU negotiations on full-membership and by joining the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the year 2000 (Mesežnikov, 2001 in Marušiak & Poláčiková, 2013). Seeking recognition, Slovakia even opened up its airspace and territory for NATO's operation in Kosovo, which was a very delicate decision of the Slovak National Council but showed

a great willingness to belong the West (Bátora, 2013). Emphasizing the role of EU conditionality in the Slovak consolidation process and how Slovakia fought for its recognition, I have shown how Dzurinda's government demonstrated the willingness to comply with the EU values and standards (the Europeanisation). The adoption of EU's acquis communautaire completely transformed the socio-political and economic situation and Slovakia became a promising candidate for 2004 enlargement of the EU. By 2003, international position and perception of Slovakia improved to a great extent. Democracy reached an early stage of consolidation and managed to catch up with the other V4 and other European states. While in 1997 Slovakia's Freedom House democracy rating was 3.80 alongside Russia, Moldavia and Macedonia, in 2003 Slovakia was on the same level as Hungary receiving – 1.81 which was the third best result following Poland and Slovenia (Szomolányi, 2003).

The empirical analysis of why Slovakia lagged behind in the EU integration process before 2004 was essential for understanding of fear of being left behind. At the beginning of the 1990's it was democracy and restoration of national statehood that drove us forward. Slovakia's membership in the EU was a civilisation option (Marušiak, 2017). We wanted to catch up with the West and our membership in the EU symbolised this goal. Therefore, it was that very experience of being at the periphery, behind other post-communist states and fighting for our place in the West that shaped our identity (Marušiak, 2017). Moreover, building on historical and cultural reasons for integration, the EU was perceived also as a tool for modernisation. The economic convergence with the Western stan-

dards was perceived as one of the benefits of EU membership and as a payoff for burdensome social costs and difficult transformation to a market economy in 1990s (Marušiak, 2013). Unfortunately, the global economic crisis in 2008/2009 together with other consequent crisis held Slovakia up realising that catching up with the West might last for generations if it continues (Marušiak, 2013).

Summing up, this section demonstrated how Slovakia, rejecting its post-communist past fought for its recognition as a Western democracy while founding its security and identity on the membership in the EU and NATO. Additionally, in the following section, I accentuate how Bratislava approaches the process of Europeanisation and how the perception of Europeanisation from the economic as well as political in domestic policy influences foreign policy.

From the periphery to the core. Or still catching up?

Since the establishment of an independent republic, Slovakia managed to establish itself politically and become a valuable member of international society. Slovakia, fighting for its position in the West underwent many political and socio-economic changes. They completely transformed its society in order to get from the political and economic periphery to the centre represented by the West. The 2004 enlargement of the EU was not celebrated only by Slovaks, but the whole of Europe as the reunification of Europe (Rupnik, 2016). However today, Europe may be more divided than before. Meaning that despite Slovakia joined the EU as well as NATO, the sense of inequality towards the West still persists. Whether it concerns the levelling of the living standards, wages or quality of food, the feel-

ing of being treated as colonies remains (Marušiak, 2017). The "feeling of inequality" and the need to catch up could be categorized into two dimensions – economic and political. The citizens in their everyday lives naturally feel the economic dimension more, while the political dimension represents how seriously the voice of Slovakia is taken abroad. By looking at the economic and political dimension respectively in the following section, I demonstrate how from the Slovakia's perspective, Europe is divided to the West and the East. Whereas the West represents the more economically developed part and political centre of the Europe, the East, in comparison to the West is lagging behind.

Looking at the economic aspect, EU membership indeed contributed to the growth of Slovakia's GDP. Until the financial crisis in 2009 emerged, Slovakia was one of the countries, which had a favourable economic perspective to reach the EU's GDP average (Pridham, 2005 in Marušiak, 2013). Hence, after the economic crisis, Slovakia had to count on staying in the economic periphery for a longer time (Marušiak, 2013). Even today Eurostat data shows that the new EU member states GDP per capita is still below the European average. As reported by the European Bank for reconstruction and development (EBDR), the economic crisis struck much hard-

er in Central Europe than in the Western European states. The data demonstrated that in Central Europe around 38 percent of households had to reduce the expenditure on basic food due to the crisis while in Western societies only 11 percent of households did so (EBDR 11; Prita 2011in Marušiak, 2013). So, while the migration crisis opened the West-East divide, the prior economic crisis was rather about the North versus South division with Central Europe belonging to the North despite the hard-economic downturn. At that time, the Central European states endorsed Germany against the Southern states. This move displayed that the geographical thinking in regard to either Central, Eastern or Western Europe are part of mental geography raging about their artificial or imagined identities (Rupnik, 2017).

Yet, as Bershidsky observed "the Eastern Europeans often feel their countries have turned into Western Europe's colonies…" (Bershidsky, 2017). They often see themselves as second-grade citizens who

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"The 2004 enlargement of the EU was not celebrated only by Slovaks, but the whole of Europe as the reunification of Europe. However today, Europe may be more divided than before."

are being ripped off by the more developed Western European states (Bershidsky, 2017). They blame the multinational companies for selling them cheaper and low-quality brand-name food and claim that the EU allocation of structural funds benefits more the Western corporations than poorer countries in Eastern member states (Bershidsky, 2017). For example, in 2017, during one of the repeating work strikes in Slovakia's Volkswagen plant, Bloomberg depicted Slovakia as a "poster child for East European integration into the European Union" which described how the Eastern Europeans often feel and think about themselves (Bershidsky, 2017). People working for Volkswagen demanded higher salaries, reasoning that they do not understand why they earn so little while people from a neighbouring country (Austria) earn twice as much as they do for the same job. Naturally, populist leader Robert Fico supported workers in the strike with following reaction to the conflict: "Our western friends do not understand when we ask them why a worker in Bratislava, in a firm that has the highest quality, high productivity and manufactures the most luxurious cars, has a salary half or maybe two thirds lower than a worker in the same firm 200 km westwards, in any western country, where the work has lower quality, lower productivity and manufactures lower-quality products" (Bershidsky, 2017). And even though this political angle in not uncommon in Slovakia and other Eastern countries, this strike displayed how disunited the EU may be from the Eastern perspective.

Another case representing the West – East division and reflecting on the "colonial" feeling of Slovakia was the matter of the dual quality of products. It was found out that certain products and food have a different composition or are made out of cheaper ingredients in Eastern Europe in comparison to the Western states like Austria or Germany (Reuters, 2017). Although at that time there was no European consumer law, which would prohibit the changing of food recipes or product ingredients as long as the ingredients are correctly stated, this issue was immediately picked up by Robert Fico, highlighting his domestic populist anti-EU strategy. He stated that the double quality standards of products and food is an international scandal and that he cannot allow Slovak citizens to be treated this way (The Spectator, 2017). Consequently, he organised a V4 Consumer summit on a ministerial level to address the issue that also

contributed to the anti-EU sentiment in other Visegrad states. Subsequently, this issue was addressed by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in 2017's State of the Union speech. He noted that there should be "no second-class consumers" in the European single market saying: "Slovaks deserve as much fish in their fish sticks as anyone else, and Czechs deserve as much cocoa in their chocolate as anyone else" (Tamma, 2017). Given the problem with the mandatory quota system in regard to migration crisis when the Visegrad states were outvoted, the fact that this issue was taken seriously by the European Commission was politically important for Slovakia and for Robert Fico who earlier in July 2017 said he wanted Slovakia to be part of the EU core. To what both EU leaders, Juncker and Tusk, emphasized either that Slovakia "wants to be part of", or "will remain within" the core of Europe (Tefer, 2017). Notwithstanding these two cases demonstrated the economic division between the East and the West and its political consequences. By looking at the sentiments of the people and how they perceive Europeanisation, I called attention to how Fico articulates the economic inequality on the domestic level. However, on the foreign policy level, for Slovakia, the lagging behind worked as a driver for further integration, especially in the wake of Brexit.

Moving on to the political dimension of my argument, I want to remark that Slovakia's institutional integration to OECD, UN, NATO, EU as well as to the Monetary Union since 2008, put Slovakia out of the political periphery that it was in before 2004. Yet it is still not in the centre. Considering the centre as a place where strategic decisions are being taken as well as the area that provides the most significant civilisation stimuli and innovations

and has the most advanced level of science and culture, then Slovakia definitely still does not belong to the centre (Marušiak, 2017). When referring to the countries at the centre or core of decision-making process in the EU, it is usually referred to the old member states in charge with France and Germany, which are considered the driver of European integration.

Following the parliamentary elections, which damaged Slovakia's relations with the EU, the Slovak government has done a lot to fix its image abroad in order to distinguish itself from the Polish-Hungarian illiberal axis. In comparison to them, Slovakia has much more to lose by alienating Brussels than Poland and Hungary (Reuters, 2017). Slovakia is the smallest state within the V4, with a small economy highly dependent on car exports to Germany and other EU states, but most importantly, Slovakia is a member of the Monetary Union (Bershidsky, 2017). Given the bad image of Visegrad Group, Brexit and more frequent discussions about the multi-speed Europe in Brussels and overall feeling of insecurity about the future of Europe, it was a pragmatic step for Slovakia to warm towards the EU. Ergo, Robert Fico officially distanced himself from his previous anti-EU rhetoric, which accompanied the parliamentary elections and announced that Slovakia's vital interest is to be in the core of the EU. He argued for an active cooperation with France and Germany: "The fundamentals of my policy are being close to the (EU) core, close to France, to Germany" (Jancarikova, 2017). However, the term core used by Robert Fico was seen as problematic by many politicians, scholars or political analysts. It was unclear what it represented as one could argue that Slovakia already belongs to the European core by being a part of Schengen and the

EU Monetary Union. Following the migration crisis, rather unexpected shift to the core means two things. Firstly, as the international environment changed, Slovakia with its pro-European orientation distanced itself from the Polish-Hungarian illiberal axis and Visegrad group. Secondly, Slovakia wanting to catch up with the West wanted to be taken as a central political partner. Hence, further I focus on the actions Bratislava executed that were supposed to underline the willingness for cooperation.

As mentioned, in the second half of the year 2016, Slovakia held Presidency of the Council of the EU during which Bratislava started to respond to the changing moods in Europe. Bratislava abandoned the regional rhetoric, and the Franco – German cooperation became the vital interest of the Slovak foreign policy (Gabrižová, 2017). Besides, Slovakia had an ambitious challenge to set the presidency agenda since Britain's exit from the EU changed thinking of the European leaders. Berlin, France as well as the EU officials again started to talk about the possibility of multi-speed Europe in regard to the future of the EU. However, at that time such visions were hampered by the anticipated elections in France and Germany. Accordingly, Bratislava tried to contribute to the discussion about the future of the EU. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention the Bratislava Declaration or so-called Bratislava Roadmap (European Council, 2016). The Roadmap was presented at non-formal Summit in Bratislava organised during the very first Slovak presidency of the Council of the EU. It mainly addressed issues regarding the perceived lack of control and people's fears related to migration, terrorism, and economic and social insecurity. The declaration expressed the commitment of the

27 EU member states to unity and principles of the EU and to the fight against simplistic solutions offered by populist and extreme parties. Even though the Declaration tried to find an intersection of common interests on how to continue, it did not bring the wished unity (Gabrižová, 2017). Arguably, the adoption of the Bratislava roadmap was more important than its contents. Though, it undoubtedly confirmed the Slovak foreign policy orientation towards deeper integration more than it represented Slovakia's contribution to debates about the future of the EU.

Almost one year after the Brexit referendum, in March 2017 Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, published a White paper on the Future of Europe called "Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025" (European Commission, 2017). The paper contained five political scenarios for the EU, which were supposed to steer and frame the debate about the future of the block out of which one represented the possibility of multi-speed Europe. Moreover, at the end of March 2017 during celebrations of 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties, a common Rome declaration was signed by of the leaders of 27-member states and the European institutions. The declaration expressed plans for future integration: "We will act together, at different paces and intensity where necessary, while moving in the same direction, as we have done in the past, in line with the Treaties and keeping the door open to those who want to join later" (European Council; the European Parliament; the European Commission, 2017). The First State Secretary, Ivan Korčok, accentuated the outcome of the declaration at public discussions assuring people about the pro-European stance of Slovak government, which was

still hampered after the last parliamentary elections. Additionally, in May 2017 centrist and strongly pro-European Emanuel Macron won the French elections. His victory meant the triumph of the European values and saving of the European project, which could have been destroyed if Marine Le Pen had won the presidential race. The victory certainly signalled to the member states that the EU integration would proceed further. These talks about the future of the EU and incentives about the multi-speed Europe created a political pressure for further integration. Slovakia, not wanting to lag behind, reflected on the change in the political environment and adjusted its foreign policy by shifting towards the core of the EU.

Further, in March at the Evaluation Conference of Foreign and European Policy for 2016, Robert Fico stated that it would it would be a pity if Slovakia had not joined the other countries which want to progress further in integration and do not want to be hindered by others. He argued that the core of the EU should become an unambiguous strategy, not just a formal note. Likewise, the government rhetoric emphasizing that Slovakia is part of the most integrated core of the EU within the Schengen and Eurozone framework came to the forefront (Gabrižova, 2017). Subsequently, Slovak

rhetoric about the EU core became more concrete following the already mentioned White paper on Future of Europe published by the EU Commission, Rome declaration and later presidential elections in France. Thereupon, it was discussed by state officials that the EU core is supposed to represent deeper integration in very sensitive social and economic area as well as defence cooperation (Gabrižova, 2017). The reforms were supposed also touch upon the Eurozone, which R. Fico sees as the cornerstone of EU integration. As Rastislav Káčer, Slovak Ambassador to Hungary quoted him in an interview: "We

"Considering the centre as a place...that provides the most significant civilization stimuli and innovations and has the most advanced lever of science and culture, Slovakia definitely still does not belong to that centre."

have to complete the Eurozone. We have to finish it. We cannot have a common currency for a long period without having a banking union" (Káčer, 2017). Slovakia's willingness for a deeper integration was also expressed by the change of attitude towards the problem of the Posted Workers directive, which was dividing Europe

again. The directive was dealing with low-paid labour and was strongly supported by newly elected French President E. Macron who campaigned on the employment rules in the EU. Taking up his office, Macron was putting pressure on the Visegrad countries, which he criticized for their stance against the migration quota. He warned them that "Europe is not a supermarket" and that the European values and democratic principles must be followed (King, 2017). In order to not be outvoted in the Council, Slovakia started to negotiate on the conditions of the directive. Restoring the Slavkov triangle and eliminating Poland and Hungary from the discussion, Macron met with Robert Fico and his counterparts from Czech Republic and Austria in Salzburg. Together they agreed on the EU Posted Workers directive-regulating salary of workers posted abroad who should earn as much for the work, as workers in the country they are working in. After the meeting in Salzburg, Robert Fico abandoned his rhetoric that the EU wanted to take away our comparative advantage in cheap labour. Instead, he claimed that Slovakia too accepts workers from abroad and he too did not want our workers to be disadvantaged abroad (The Spectator, 2017).

Additionally, Bratislava joined the initiative and actively contributed to Membership of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). PESCO was signed in Novem-

ber 2017 by 23-member states and represents the greatest improvement in European defence industry, which is aimed at creating more coherent European foreign policy. One of the conditions for joining PESCO is to participate in at least one consortium project. Slovakia's contribution will consist of leading a project called Euro Artillery aimed at indirect fire support.

Concluding, the shift of the orientation of Slovak foreign policy on the core of the EU was driven by the external factors such as Brexit and overall change in the attitudes of the European leaders who opted for the multi-speed Europe. Slovakia, not wanting to lag behind, followed suit and changed its behaviour what is justified by Bratislava's actions and compromises in the EU employment rules on the Posted Worker's directive.

Inconsistency in Foreign Policy

Aligning Slovak foreign policy to the core of the EU, it seemed as if consensus was reached across the political scene about the foreign policy strategy. In October 2017 the three highest representatives of Slovakia, President Andrej Kiska, Rob-

"Identity anxiety was strongly represented by the externalisation of the EU, growing nationalism and securitization of migrants, which dominated the whole political spectrum."

ert Fico and Andrej Danko who is a Chair of the Slovak National Council signed a common declaration. Eliminating any alternatives to the Western orientation, the declaration expressed a clear pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientation, which presents a basic framework of our security, stability and prosperity (Kiska, et al., 2017). Though, the common statement stands strongly by the European values and orientation, the practical actions of some state representatives do not reflect the official line of foreign policy. A month after the signature of the declaration, two opposing visions of Slovak foreign policy were presented. In Strasburg on the grounds of the European Parliament Andrej Kiska gave a speech in which he confirmed the pro-European stance of Slovakia while emphasizing the need for more proactive and ambitious in its foreign and security policy and not limiting itself to a "money-raising benefactor once the dust has settled" (Kiska, 2017). In addition, Kiska condemned Russia for its behaviour and called for the active fight against disinformation and dissemination of fake news (Kiska, 2017). In contrast to this speech, almost simultaneously Andrej Danko gave a speech in Moscow. To him, it was a historical moment as up until now, no Slovak politician has ever given a speech in State Duma. Calling for closer cooperation between the Russian State Duma and the Slovak National Council, he communicated his believes about Slavic unity and heritage which binds us. "The Russian Federation still remains one of the most important trade partners of Slovakia outside of the European Union" Andrej Danko said (Gális, 2017). This line is in conflict with the EU foreign policy of sanctions against the Russian Federation for breaching international law in Ukraine. From this perspective, the Slo-

vakia's "Ostpolitik" approach is confusing. Such inconsistencies might also be caused by the growing insecurity in international relations with Brexit, Putin and unpredictable Donald Trump. Nevertheless, alike actions sabotage the official foreign policy of Slovakia towards the West as well as complicate the communication of foreign policy strategy to its citizens.

In sum, despite the efforts of the government representatives to enforce a pro-European orientation at the official level, their actions do not align with the official strategy. By pointing at this inconsistency in the foreign policy, I wanted to draw attention to how this behaviour undermines our foreign policy and weakens our standing in regard to the EU. And in these times of insecurity, it is more important than ever to affirm foreign policy orientation and predictable actions.

Conclusion

Double Insecurity of Slovak Foreign Policy

Contextualising Slovak history and society to recent political developments, I have tried to look at the relations between identity, (in)security and Europeanisation as a part of globalisation. My thesis was aimed at the deconstruction of the foreign policy discourse in between the years 2015 and 2017. I have argued that during this time period Slovak foreign policy discourse was driven by a double insecurity: the fear of the other and the fear of being left behind. In both of these fears, Europeanisation played an important role either as an external or internal factor in shaping the discourse. In regard to the fear of the other, the domestic foreign policy was the most influential. The identity anxiety was strongly represented by the externalisation of the EU, growing nationalism

and securitization of migrants, which dominated the whole political spectrum. Populist political parties and government leaders used the "homesteading" strategy and provided people with simple definitions of who they are. As a result, individuals became attached to any "collective identity" reducing anxiety and insecurity in times of crisis in order to maintain their identity. Moreover, fighting insecurity during 2016, the Slovak government intensively cooperated with the Visegrad Group in opposing the quota system. Unfortunately, the actions of V4 during the refugee crisis contributed to the negative perception of the Visegrad group abroad.

Nevertheless, as the international ambience was changing due to the political developments in Europe, such as Brexit, French elections and the discussions about the multi-speed Europe, the fear of being left behind started to drive the foreign policy discourse in Slovakia. Explaining how the fear of being left behind shaped the political discourse, I reconstructed the Slovak historical experience which emphasized the need of Slovakia to articulate its identity as a part of a bigger entity for security reasons. Consequently, I focused on the formative years after the 1990s when Slovakia fought for its recognition among the Western states as an

"In this context, it is essential to note that it is not enough to focus on the economic aspect and just formally comply with the EU rules...One has to embody the core European values as well as principles across all the government actions."

equal and valuable partner. This historical background provided my research with the necessary information for the understanding of the government position to get into the core of the EU was driven by the fear of being left behind. In this context, I emphasized the economic as well as political dimension of the argument. In economic terms, I have shown how Eastern Europeans perceive themselves as colonies neglected by the West. Then in the political dimension, I highlighted how in order to gain security, Bratislava had to once again build stable relations and routines with the Western partners, by more actively contributing to the discussion about the future of the EU. Though, it was not that difficult because the illiberal axis of Poland and Hungary immediately made Bratislava look like a "pro-European island" that reinforced Slovakia's identity as a pro-EU country and advanced the position of Slovakia within the region. So, while throughout the migration crisis in

2015 the European migration policy was the main cause of Slovak identity insecurity; the EU and the Europeanisations continue to be the core of security in Slovak foreign policy. Even though the shift to the core of the EU was at the domestic level often sold as the second entrance to the EU, in this context, it is essential to note that it is not enough to focus on the economic aspect and just formally comply with the EU rules (Gabrižova, 2017). One has to embody the core European values as well as principles across all the government actions.

About the Author:

Kamila Potočárová is from Senec, Slovakia and a recent graduate of European studies at Comenius University in Bratislava. Kamila is currently studying towards her master's degree in international relations at the Central European University in Budapest. She specializes in security and hopes to pursue a career within an international governmental organization.

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