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Out of the Crucible

or, the Epilogue to Crisis

Eurasiatique

Out of the Crucible: Or, the Epilogue to Crisis

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Savannah Ribeiro

A crucible is a severe test or a situation in which forces cause or influence a change. Throughout history, we have seen such situations catalyze later events: revolutions, wars, civil uprising, shifting political regimes, and pandemics. Today, people are far more aware of these events and are able to see the changes and developments in real-time more than ever before. 2020 is arguably one of the most challenging years the world has faced within recent memory – with much of the observation of the events taking place online. Life for many moved to the digital. But what happens after the crisis "ends"?

This year's edition of *Eurasiatique* seeks to answer questions such as: what will change following crisis look like, and from where does it come? Can we link other historical events to a time or moment of crisis? Do our interpretations of these events change? Contributors were asked to submit work on the subject of change or development following a crisis. This volume contains work with great geographic and temporal breadth, demonstrating not only the variability of change, but also the variety of perspective and knowledge from our contributors.

Laura Cousineau opens *Eurasiatique Volume IX* with their comparative literary analysis of works within the magical realism genre, and examines the genre's efficacy at depicting the tragedy of the Holocaust. Next, Arina Dmitrenko examines the relationship between capital cities, power, and national identity; she examines Albania's attempts to construct the new nation-state's identity within Tirana's urban fabric. Dasara Gashi addresses the response of the Yugoslav Army to the 1981 Kosovo riots, and the role it played in Yugoslavia's breakdown. Jessi Gilchrist's work focuses on Belgium and Italy, and compares each state's official response to their fascist pasts and how this shaped the trajectories of their major populist radical right parties. Asya Kvashnina's article sheds light on the phenomenon of nostalgia in post-communist Russia and how this nostalgia is a part of how Russians make sense of the changes of the 1990s.

A Tale of Three Countries by Frédérick Maranda-Bouchard sheds light on the impact of the United Nations Human Rights Commission and its successor, the Human Rights Council, on human rights governance in Central Asia. In *Illiberalism and the Lives of Polish Women,* Robin Martin analyzes the recent abortion ban in Poland, and argues that the ban and subsequent protests are examples of the impact of global neoliberal and illiberal trends in Poland. Cory Osmond's work on the German Democratic Republic's *Stasi* untangles the complex relationship between the secret police, their vast network of informers, and East Germans citizens. My article, *Manufactured Phantoms,* deconstructs the "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative prevalent in contemporary Hungarian politics, and examines its instrumentalization by the Orbán regime in its illiberal efforts. Michael Shirley questions why the Chechen independence movement in the 1990s and early 2000s failed to create a sovereign Chechnya.

Jessica Simpson asks *Is Spain Really an Exception* to the populism surge, and discusses why a right-wing populist party did not emerge with the initial wave of populism in Europe. Grace van Vliet's article provides an analysis of the Strugatsky brothers, who wrote science fiction behind the Iron Curtain. Sara-Jane Vigneault's article focuses on Élisabeth Gille's "dreamed memories" (*mémoires rêvés*) of her mother, Irène Némirovsky. Her piece analyses Gille's literary works using a multidisciplinary approach, and illuminates her path in recollecting and working-through trauma, both as a survivor of the Holocaust and as the child of a victim. John Weston's article examines the stories, experiences, and testimonies of Armenian Genocide refugees via an investigation of literature and memoires produced by survivors. Alexandra Yao's work examines a particularly contemporaneous event – the COVID-19 pandemic – and argues that the Orbán government used the pandemic to expand their domestic powers and to undermine EU rule of law efforts.

The Tragedy of Tragedy: Examining the Efficacy of Magical Realism and Tragedy in Literary Representations of the Holocaust

Laura Cousineau

Laura Cousineau is a scholar from rural Ontario. In their undergrad Laura focused primarily on trying to build an ethnomusicology background without being in the program. This led them to take History of Eastern Europe, Diaspora, and Music History, dipping their toes into Jewish studies, Slavic studies, and a smattering of others. In their graduate studies Laura has been looking at prejudice reduction via education on Jewish and Romani cultural musics. Laura hopes that they may one day work in minority rights activism with the ADL or SPLC. Their current research program researching how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Jewish musical communities in Germany.

To say that the Holocaust was one of the greatest tragedies in the past 100 years would be an understatement. Yet to find the Holocaust within the genre of tragedy, one might not even believe it happened. In the 80 years that have followed the Holocaust, there have been few attempts strictly within the genre of tragedy to depict the tragedy of the events themselves at any length. One genre of literature that has been particularly successful in the depiction of these events is, however, magical realism. In no novel is this more evident than Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated,* which follows a fictional family history through the pre- and post-war experience. The efficacy of its depiction will be compared against Peter Weiss' *The Investigation,* a play which directly recounts, sometimes word for word, descriptions of Nazi crimes committed against Jewish prisoners at Auschwitz.

Jonathan Safran Foer is a critically acclaimed novelist within the magical realism genre known for *Everything is Illuminated* and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. He was born in Washington, D.C., the child of first-generation Polish Jewish Holocaust Survivors. *Everything is Illuminated* originally started as part of his undergraduate thesis which he completed at Princeton University.[1] The novel was published in 2002 and has since earned such accolades as the National Jewish Book Award, Guardian First book Award, PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize, Amazon.com Best Books Award, as well as having the honour of being adapted into a feature-length film.

The events of *Everything is Illuminated* are meant to take place in the present as the novel's protagonist, Jonathan, travels to Ukraine to try and find a woman who supposedly saved his grandfather from

[1] Deborah Solomon, "The Rescue Artist," *New York Times*, February 27, 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/27/magazine/the-rescue-artist.html.

the Nazis during the Holocaust. The chapters frequently jump back and forth between stories from Jonathan's family history and the current adventure taking place. This is meant to demonstrate the difference between the rich bustling lives of the Jewish people who lived in the town he is trying to locate and their lack of presence in the present. Unlike *The Investigation*, *Everything is Illuminated* does not cover the events of the Holocaust at all, instead choosing to describe life leading up to and following it. The writing style, aesthetic presentation of the writing, as well as the absurdity of some of the events described within the book with the non-fictional elements ground *Everything is Illuminated* firmly within the genre of magical realism.

By contrast, Peter Weiss was born into a mixed faith, but primarily Lutheran, family in Nowawes, Germany in 1916, with his father being Jewish and his mother being a Lutheran. His family was solidly middle class with his father being a textile merchant as well as a military veteran and his mother being a retired actress. Unlike Foer, Weiss not only lived through World War II but his family was directly impacted by it as well. In 1936, his family had moved to Czechoslovakia where Weiss attended the Prague Art Academy, but they were forced to move in 1938 when Germany occupied the Czech Sudetenland. His family moved to Sweden, where he remained for the rest of his life, and he became a Swedish citizen in 1946.[2]

The Investigation was written and first staged in 1965. The play presents itself as a reconstruction of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (colloquially known as the Second Auschwitz trial) which occurred from 1963-65. The trials took place as part of ongoing legal justice in the face of Nazi atrocities and were successful in the conviction of 750 former SS officers and other Nazi personnel who actively participated in the activities that took place at the Auschwitz concentration and death camp.[3] The actual contents of the play widely concern the testimonies given by survivors as part of the criminalizing evidence. Weiss is able to depict these events both from his own writing as well as taking witness testimony directly from the trials. The efficacy of the recounting of these events, however, come across as less emotionally accessible to an audience due to the lack of emotion as a device of conveyance. In addition to this, given the scope of the trial and work more generally, there is little content that comments on how these events affected the Jewish people and their culture more broadly.

The issue of tragedy, if it is looked at from a strictly Aristotelian perspective, is that tragedy requires certain qualities. Those qualities are often listed as plot, thought, diction, music/song, visual aspects/artfulness, and character. Plot is the main story of the play or piece of writing, the events that form the body of the piece. The plot should be able to be identified as a tragedy even if removed from its setting and recounted to someone

[2] "Peter Weiss," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, November 4, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Peter-Weiss.
[3] Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: A New History* (New York: MJF Books, 2009), 295–96.

who has no knowledge of it.[4] The thought or setting is more abstract; it is the appropriateness of the given events in the tragedy at any given time. For example, should a beloved character meet an unfortunate fate, it is only appropriate that the story continues in a way that reflects that loss. Diction refers to the tone in which speech is conveyed between characters.[5] This of course feeds into thought and the overall tone of the piece but individually it is the words (in combination with the plot) that will move forward with the tragic meaning. Song is a slightly more outdated element of tragedy that used to be found in many live performances of tragedies. Song refers to two specific elements propelled by music: songs or music within the plot performed by the chorus which often sang their parts to convey plot to the audience, and satyr songs that were traditionally at the end of the work.[6] The visual aspects/artfulness lie within the realm of live performance of the work at hand since they relate to how the work is depicted visually.[7] Aristotle argued this was one of the least important portions of tragedy. Some will also extend this to the way that drama is used to attract the reader or audience. The last characteristic of tragedy that is deemed important, which has been saved for last intentionally because it may be the most important, is the characters. The characters are the people or animals in the piece in which the plot acts upon, but they are more than that within the realm of tragedy. Characters, at least the protagonist, must be tragic within a tragedy. This means that whenever an unfortunate occurrence happens to the protagonist in course of the work, the audience must feel some amount of sadness over it happening to them.[8] Should something bad happen to a bad character it would not be considered tragic because it might be seen as justice. For the purposes of this paper, plot, character, and tone will be the aspects primarily examined in the discussion of tragedy.

Separate from those is the generation of catharsis. Catharsis translated from Greek means purification or purgation.[9] As previously explained, tragedy requires something bad to happen to an otherwise sympathetic character in order for piece of work to be considered a tragedy. In tragedy, catharsis is a mixture of negative emotions, usually pity, sadness, and fear derived from the tragic actions that happen to the protagonist.[10] It is from these events that tragic pleasure arises. In essence, tragedy is meant to brew feeling of displeasure in its audience as a means of releasing the negative emotions from themselves and projecting them onto the characters, thus purifying or purging the audience of those emotions.[11]

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[4] Stephen Halliwell, "Plato and Aristotle on the Denial of Tragedy", in *Oxford Readings in Ancient Literary Criticism,* ed. Andrew Laird (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 115-141.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Joe Sachs, "Aristotle: Poetics*," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed December 17, 2020, https://iep.utm.edu/aris-poe/.
[10] Stephen Halliwell, "Plato and Aristotle on the Denial of Tragedy," 115-141.
[11]Sachs, "Aristotle: Poetics."

Following these guidelines, Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* is not strictly a tragedy but effectively harnesses enough tragic characteristics to still achieve a similar effect to that of the tragic catharsis while still conveying the tragedy of the Holocaust overall. To begin, *Everything is Illuminated*, being a piece of magical realism, has a nonstandard plot. The elements jump between fantastical happenings such as a stone statue tip-toing away from its pedestal, to very real elements such as the suicide of a character or the Nazi bombing of a town. That being said, there are still discernable plot lines that run throughout the book. The novel's chapters are written from various perspectives: those from the far past in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the 1940s, in the mid-to-late 1990s when Jonathan makes his pilgrimage to Ukraine, and then years after his journey as correspondence between Alex and Jonathan. For the purposes of this paper the ones that will be examined are primarily the letters between Jonathan and Alex as well as the narrative of Jonathan on the journey.

The story begins with Alex receiving a letter from Jonathan. This chapter, as well as the rest of the chapters that happen in the present, is written in the style of Alex's narration. His tone is mostly jovial as he tries to describe himself in unpolished colloquial English. He describes himself a stereotypical young man who is into hip-hop, partying, women, etc. Alex is an amateur translator who works with his grandfather in the conduction of tours of Holocaust sites in Poland and Ukraine.[12] His grandfather, who simply goes by "Grandfather" for the majority of the novel, suffers greatly from the things he witnessed(and was a part of) during the Nazi *Aktions* in the area that he lived. He is still apparently antisemitic, referring to Jonathan derogatorily as "the Jew" for most of the first three-quarters of the novel. Though hesitant, they take on Jonathan's request to take him to the town where his grandfather was from, hoping to find the woman that saved him during the Holocaust. When they finally reach the town of Trachimbrod, they discover only one woman whom they believe is the one Jonathan is looking for. It is later revealed that she is not the one the group is looking for, but someone who once dated Jonathan's grandfather in her youth.[13] It becomes apparent that Grandfather is uncomfortable, becoming even more irritable whenever he and this woman must interact. It is revealed that Grandfather lived in the adjacent village that was also destroyed and that he was/is also Jewish. He rejects this part of himself, however, because he was forced to kill his good friend Herschel, who was also Jewish, in order to keep himself and his pregnant wife from being killed by the Nazis.[14] At the end of the novel, the grandfather chooses to end his life after writing a letter to Jonathan telling him that he is killing himself as a sort of further protection to both Alex and Alex's younger brother, to keep them from becoming

[12] Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated* (London: Penguin, 2002), 1-7.
[13] Ibid., 153.
[14] Ibid., 228.

too embroiled in what it means to be Jewish.[15] Alex follows up this letter begging a forgiveness for the past actions of his grandfather but Jonathan makes no reply. [16]

The tragedy in this novel, then, comes from the shared story between Jonathan and Grandfather but is accentuated especially through the grandfather as a character. Though it is hard to sympathize with him from the beginning of the novel, it is because the audience is seeing him only after he has committed the terrible act that causes him to become a tragic character. This does not become apparent until much later in the novel where he is recounting his experiences with the friend that he killed before the war started. Grandfather started out as a happy individual with a wife and a child who lived in this small village. Grandfather shared everything with Herschel, including the raising of his son. He almost even shared the love of his wife with this man.[17] Thus, the decision to kill Herschel was not an easy one.

The murder came about through a common method of Nazi identification of Jewish peoples in Eastern Europe. Nazi violence in Eastern Europe was less methodological and organized as it was portrayed to be in the West. Killings often took place near ravines or in forests as opposed to killing centres, such as the incident at Babi Yar where roughly 20,000 Jewish citizens were individually shot and killed before having their bodies pushed into a ravine near the town of Babi Yar.[18] These attacks, or *Aktions*, were often carried out by mobile killing squads known as the Einsatzgruppen.[19] In the case of *Everything is Illuminated,* the method was a synagogue burning in which Nazis asked for all the Jewish people in town to be identified. Once someone identified themselves or someone else as Jewish, the Nazis then rounded them up, locked them in the synagogue, and burned it to the ground.[20] Grandfather made the decision to out Herschel to the Nazis under pain of death himself and his family. In his mind, this betrayal stripped him of his identity as Jewish as the synagogue burned to the ground that night. Sympathy is then built around the mindset that the reader must construct in order to understand the decision Grandfather has made. This sympathy also grows as Grandfather's attitude towards Jonathan softens throughout the novel. He goes from despising him and only referring to him (derogatorily) as Jewish, to openly referring to him as a "good boy" and defending him from a waitress who also derogatorily tries to refer to him as "Jew," thus bringing the audience closer to Grandfather.[21]

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[15] Menachem Feuer, "Almost Friends: Post-Holocaust Comedy, Tragedy, and Friendship in Jonathan Safran Foer's "Everything is Illuminated," *Shofar* 25, no. 2 (2007): 24-48, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42944234.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Foer, Everything is Illuminated, 250.
[18] USHMM, "Kiev and Baby Yar." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,* accessed December 18, 2020, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kiev-and-babi-yar.
[19] USHMM, "Einsatzgruppen: An Overview," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed December 18, 2020, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/einsatzgruppen.
[20] Foer, Everything is Illuminated, 250.
[21] Ibid, 219.

But how does tragedy still function in relation to tone? The description of Alex in the first half of the plot does not necessarily fit that of a tragedy being intentionally written as comical. While it is true that the tone of the first half of the novel points itself more to the comedic, the tone shifts as the "rigid journey" progresses. Since comedy does not typically fit within the realms of tragedy, it is necessary to understand why and how it is here and if it affects the overall standing of the story as a tragedy. The tone and use of comedy shift throughout the novel as more about the characters is revealed. The pivotal moment in the shift of how humour is used is in a conversation between Alex and Jonathan when Jonathan is discussing his interactions with his grandmother. He says that his grandmother used to call him funny but when Alex tries to confirm that yes, Jonathan is funny Jonathan reacts by explaining: "I used to think that humour was the only way to appreciate how wonderful and terrible the world is, to celebrate how big life is… But now I think it's the opposite. Humour is a way of shrinking from that wonderful and terrible world."[22]

This flip in the way comedy is viewed then calls into question the humour in the first half of the book. The humour of Alex describing himself and the humour of Grandfather being supposedly blind but being their driver causes the audience to go back and think about how that humour was used. This brings up an important part of the Jewish experience altogether which is the use of humour as a defense/coping mechanism.[23] Humour in general can help people coping with trauma in reducing the negative aftereffects of the experience by creating a comfort space in which they can maintain a suitable distance from the trauma while still letting themselves acknowledge that it happened.[24] In the case of Jewish people living in the shadow of one of the most traumatic events to ever occur within their history, already being a population that commonly uses humour as a defense/coping mechanism, this method of dealing with the trauma persisted after the Holocaust in full force.[25] When Foer asserts that humour is meant as a way to distance themselves from the world, the humour then becomes less an element of comedy and more an element of anxiety which feeds the tragedy. The rest of the tone of the novel accurately reflects the heaviness necessary to propel the tragedy forward.

In opposition we must talk about Peter Weiss's *The Investigation*. Since *The Investigation* is a reconstruction of an event that actually happened, it does not follow the same sort of structure as *Everything is Illuminated*. As such it also does not necessarily follow standard narrative structure, at least not one as pervasive as that in *Everything is Illuminated.* Though there is a clear beginning, the play ends without giving the verdict of the trial, leaving the victim narrative suspended. Furthermore, as opposed to standard narrative

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[22] Ibid., 158.
[23] Mark Horowitz, "Why Are Jews Funny?" *New York Times,* December 1, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/books/review/jewish-comedy-serious-history-jeremy-dauber.html.
[24] Liat Steir-Livny. "Holocaust Humor, Satire, and Parody on Israeli Television," *Jewish Film & New Media* 3, no. 2 (2015): 193-219, doi:10.13110/jewifilmnewmedi.3.2.0193.
[25] Ibid.

which functions around the thoughts and actions of identifiable characters such as a protagonist and antagonist, the structure is looser. This makes both the protagonists and antagonists groups: the victims giving their testimonies, and the Nazis who are being accused. Characters are not often identified by name, instead being referred to by positionality to one another. For example, there are two Nazis who do express some guilt over what they have done but they are merely referred to as Witness 1 and 2. The purpose is not to fictionalize or dramatize the impacts of the Holocaust to illicit sympathy in the same way as *Everything is Illuminated,* but to present the Holocaust through factualization and demonstrate the absurdity of the task of factualizing one of the greatest tragedies to befall the Jewish people.[26]

Another major way in which these two works differ themselves is in their approach to depiction of the event. In the case of *Everything is Illuminated,* Foer takes the approach of examining the before and after in order to show the devastation that the Holocaust has caused. Weiss chooses to pull quotes directly from the trial which give vivid descriptions of the acts of horror committed by Nazis, forcing the audience to be directly exposed to it. This has been accentuated in certain productions of the play where the victims gave their testimony on a podium located just in front of the audience, compelling the audience to insert themselves into the play into the role of jurors. With this more direct approach it may come as a surprise to know that *The Investigation* may not be as effective in conveying the sense of loss, personal and communal, as *Everything is Illuminated*.

One of the major reasons that this might be the case is because there is no declaration of Jewishness throughout *The Investigation*. This lack of identity then calls into question who the people being represented by the victim narrative actually are. In fact, it shifts so much so that for some critics it questions whether or not the intention was to depict the Holocaust or Weiss's own struggle within it. The argument comes from the idea that although Weiss is half Jewish, he has never seen himself as Jewish.[27] Through this assertion it is assumed that Weiss is thus rejecting his own Jewishness by refusing to name the victims within the play. On the contrary, however, Weiss's own essays and comments on his Jewishness would seem to suggest otherwise. Regardless of the motive for naming the victims in the play, however, it does create a layer of abstraction which does not lend itself to the illation of empathy for the Holocaust.

This lack of illation of the Holocaust specifically can be further seen in the play's adoption by Rwandan theater troupes. Since Weiss insisted that no attempt be made to recreate the courtroom in which the trial was staged, the narrative can be relatively easily transposed from one genocide to another. This is precisely what

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[26] Christopher Bigsby, "Peter Weiss: The Investigation," in *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust: The Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 149–75, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511486098.004.
[27] Robert Cohen, "The Political Aesthetics of Holocaust Literature: Peter Weiss's The Investigation and Its Critics," *History and Memory* 10, no. 2 (1998): 43-67, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25681027.

happened in January of 2009 when director Dorcy Rugamba's abridgement of the play was performed at Chicago's Shakespeare Theater. Rugamba furthers this disassociation of *The Investigation* with the Holocaust by saying:

> It's a play about two versions of history: the victims' and the executioners'. The Frankfurt trials were the first time that Germans confronted and judged Germans in the aftermath of a national trauma; Rwanda is now deep in the same process with our Gacaca village tribunals. *The Investigation* takes a long, hard look at another genocide and asks: what exactly was going on here? So, watching as a Rwandan, it doesn't matter if you're the son of a killer or of a victim, because the play doesn't say: I accuse my neighbor's father. The values are more universal.[28]

Another aspect of the play which causes it to stumble in reproduction of the trial and illation of empathy towards the Holocaust is the complete lack of emotion in the delivery of the lines. Weiss specifically notes in the introduction that this is entirely intentional.[29] There is some debate as to the purpose of this and its effect on the audience. Where some critics say it detracts from the overall experience of the play because it disallows the audience from feeling the catharsis one might expect to feel after witnessing it, others argue that there is intentionality in that. Those who claim intentionality of this argue that this lack of emotion (and thus catharsis) takes a sharp turn from the usual implication that "Holocaust literature should convey the reassuring notion that the human spirit triumphed even in the concentrationary universe."[30] Seeing as how there already exists a lack of resolve in the play by not giving the court's final verdict towards the Nazi perpetrators, pulling any chance of catharsis away from not being able to relate to the character's then further draws the audience away being able to fully understand the position of the victims.

The Investigation is then further pushed away from being an adequate depiction of the Holocaust by the choices Weiss made of which facts to include in the plot and which to leave out. Weiss argued that the play was entirely based on the testimonies of witnessed and the accused the spoke during the trials, whittling down pieces that were not necessary to include, asserting that he was careful to not damage the reality of the situation.[31] There is some evidence to suggest, however, Weiss's intention may have been to depict a Marxian scene of the nameless worker and how they struggle under the grips of capitalism, owing to Weiss's own propensity towards socialism.[32] This comes from Weiss's supposed use of accounts by journalists "embroiled

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[28] Kenneth Jones, "Holocaust Drama, The Investigation, Presented by Rwandan Troupe in Chicago," *Playbill,* January 22, 2009, https://www.playbill.com/article/Holocaust-drama-the-investigation-presented-by-rwandan-troupe-in-chicago-com-157230.
[29] Cohen, "The Political Aesthetics of Holocaust Literature," 43-67.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Grzegorz Niziolek, *Polish Theatre of the Holocaust* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2020), 208.
[32] Ibid., 209.

in the 'bourgeois media's naturalization off such facts'" which would ultimately be unable to lead the audience to a "credible source of historical truth."[33]

This is not all to say that *The Investigation* is a total failure in delivering factual reality of the Frankfurt trials. To understand this, it is pertinent to remember the time period in which Weiss is writing. The Frankfurt trials had been preceded famously by the Nuremburg Trials by almost 20 years. Unlike the Frankfurt trials, the Nuremburg trials had relied on mostly record kept by the camps of how many prisoners were filtered and in what ways they were used around the camps, as well as how many were executed and when. This is because victim testimonies were deemed as "distrusted as partial, both in the sense of prejudiced and in the sense of having a limited perspective."[34] What Weiss did in writing a stage play focussing on a trial which specifically relied on victim testimony was make sure those voices were heard not only by the judge which presided over the case, but by countless others who had not or would not have been exposed up to that point. Given that he is writing this play soon after the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials had taken place, *The Investigation* can almost be seen as a method of broadcasting some of the content and events of the trial.

The scope of the play also likely has to do with its unsuccessfulness in the depiction of the Holocaust. Though it is hard to put an exact date on the start of the Holocaust due to the various eugenic sterilization laws that existed before the start of the war, as well as the invention of killing methods, the destruction of Jewish life in an official capacity started in 1941 with the deployment of operation Barbarossa and ended with the end of the war in 1945.[35] Over the course of the Holocaust, it is known that six million Jewish people, as well as countless other Roma, homosexuals, and people of differing ethnic minorities, were intentionally killed.[36] Because of the sheer volume of people killed and the terror that was employed in doing so, the trauma sustained by the surviving Jewish populations both inside and outside Europe was immense. This trauma still exists within the third and now fourth generations of survivors as evidenced by the manifestation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in literature still being produced by these generations.[37] To try and distill this trauma into the emotionally flat delivery of one trial from one camp was an interesting attempt but simply could not conceptualize the magnitude of the scale of events it was trying to depict. In this way Weiss still managed to succeed in his agenda of presenting the Holocaust through factualization (however biased that factualization may be) and demonstrating the absurdity of the task of factualizing the Holocaust, but his work still fell short in its overall impact of depicting the effects of the Holocaust on the global Jewish population.

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[33] Ibid., 208.
[34] Christopher Bigsby, "Peter Weiss: The Investigation," 152.
[35] USHMM, "Introduction to the Holocaust," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed December 19, 2020, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-Holocaust.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Gerd Bayer, "After Postmemory: Holocaust Cinema and the Third Generation," *Shofar* 28, no. 4 (2010): 116-32.

It is the use of tragedy, and the scope which has been encapsulated using magical realism which makes *Everything is Illuminated* a more effective depiction of the effects of the Holocaust. The use of tragedy first and foremost draws the audience in, forcing them to directly empathize with the characters involved. By allowing the audience to become empathetic and invested in the journey of the characters, it creates a space where they experience a sense of devastation, loss, and trauma, which functions as a periscope into the ongoing feeling that Jewish populations experience in relation to the events of the Holocaust. The use of Grandfather's tragedy, as well as the other generational lenses, allows the audience to experience the sense of panic and decline into the devastation that was the Holocaust without having to look directly at the events that caused that trauma, potentially drawing in an audience that might not be able to mentally or physically deal with learning about some of the more horrific details of the destruction of the six million.

Though the scope of *Everything is Illuminated* is much larger than that of *The Investigations*, it manages to capture the feelings of devastation brought on by the Holocaust better than *The Investigation* because of it. It does this by giving the audience a timeline showing what life was once like in those small Jewish villages generations before that devastation. When the destruction hits, the scope of the devastation is immediately apparent by the sudden, violent end to all the character narratives that came before. This destruction is then reinforced by the characters' journey back to the remains of the villages that were destroyed. If the audience still has any hope that there were other survivors, it is immediately quelled. Knowing that there were only four survivors of the villages that were mentioned lets the audience slowly come to the unfortunate conclusion that every other character they have come to know has perished. This effectively not only shows scale of destruction but also gives the audience a sense of the isolation inflicted on survivors. If these points were not enough, Grandfather killing himself, and the explanation that he gives in his letter about doing it to keep his grandchildren safe, shows the lasting trauma he endured not only as one of the only survivors of his town but the trauma he has associated with his Jewish identity.

Magical realism helps in conveying both the tragedy and the scope in similar ways. Magical realism aids in the establishment and the execution of tragedy in that it helps to make the tragedy more apparent. The exaggeration of the life before the war within the realms of magical realism creates a fantastical picture of the possibilities of what might have been. This not only makes the contrast between the past, the Holocaust, and the present very apparent but also reflects the mindset of someone who has been traumatized by those events. The person may remember the good times of their youth, blocking out the trauma with comedy or by completely changing their identity in relation to it, only to be consumed by it when they are reminded of what they went through. This is the case that we see exaggerated through magical realism along Grandfather's storyline. Similarly, magical realism helps in developing the scope of destruction via exaggeration. The

Holocaust destroyed approximately 63 percent of the entire Jewish population of Europe, around 35 percent of the world's total population of Jewish people. That scale of destruction is unfathomable to anyone who has not lived through the change in the community. In immersing the audience in that change, it helps them to better understand what survivors and the community are still going through overall in the loss of both the large swaths of their history, as well as their community.

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Locating Identity: An analysis of Tirana as a Capital City

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Arina received her BA from the University of Toronto, where she specialized in Political Science and minored in European Studies. Currently, she is interested in researching urban development and its implications in politics, policy and identity in the post-Soviet space. Arina also has an interest in the ebb and flow of political regimes in the post-Soviet space. Specifically, she is focused on researching Russia and Ukraine.

This paper is concerned with examining the relationship between capital cities, power and national identity. Specifically, the decisions surrounding the relocation of capital cities as a mechanism of power. This relationship between capital city and power has been used to promote modernity. I will explore how this concept of 'modernity' shapes and shifts in transition from empire to nation-state by examining Tirana – an uncanny choice of capital city for the newly-established Albanian nation-state. The concept of 'modernity' was framed by European colonial efforts.[1] The civilizing mission undertaken by the Europeans "stood at the centre of an Eurocentric vision of social development and history," acting as a connective mechanism for 'civilization', 'Europe' and 'modernity'.[2] By creating these imagined communities, as Benedict Anderson defines, the Europeans created a tool by which to classify both particular cosmopolitan communities as well as generalized imperial ones.[3] The global transition from imperialism to the nation-state challenged the existing concept of 'modernity'. This challenge is modeled by the puzzle presented in Tirana: a formerly small, rural city, assigned capital status in the wake of the Albanian independence from the Ottoman Empire.

I explore this puzzle by asking the following questions: what factors influenced the decision to make Tirana the capital of Albania? What modes of urban planning created the capital? What relationship does the capital bear to Albanian identity? I will argue that the decision to appoint Tirana as the capital city of Albania signifies a break from empire, and a stride towards a 'modern' nation-state. Yet, the break is not clean. Due to the absence of a strong institutionalized national identity, Albanians were prompted to rely on Italian urban planners to actualize the newfound Albanian identity, resulting in an Albanian city veiled in Italian ambition. Understanding the case of Tirana will enrich the literature by providing insight into the decision making process concerning capital city creation. Furthermore, capital city creation is often a key mechanism for state

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[1] Gavin Murray-Miller, "Civilization, Modernity and Europe: The Making and Unmaking of a Conceptual Unity," *The Journal of Historical Association* 102, no. 356 (2018): 425.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 432.

development, thus, by understanding the decision-making process, this paper will provide insight for future city creation.

This paper utilizes secondary sources to explore the development and meaning assigned to capital city creation in Tirana, Albania. By drawing on various secondary sources, I attempt to stitch together scholarly literature to frame the concept of 'modernity' and identify how power in transition crafted and molded a new capital city. The frameworks of 'the dual city', centre-periphery relations and their role in preserving and shaping identity, as well as power as a physical manifestation, are important for the purpose of this paper. The 'dual city' refers to a symbolic duality which can be formed in a city via physical abstractions to separate the old from the new. The centre-periphery relations and their role in identity is a framework drawn from Timothy Mitchell's literature. Power as a physical object is an important concept which explores the assigned power in objects and the cityscape to analyse its effects on the surroundings. By utilizing these concepts and frameworks, I am able to frame and explore the case of 'seeking modernity in Tirana'.

This paper will unfold in three parts in an attempt to view Tirana diachronically. In this paper, I will study the period from 1912 to 1939, however, the majority of the work will focus on the 1920s, as that is when Tirana underwent the most significant developments. First, I will establish the framework for this paper and situate the analysis in its historical context. Second, I will analyse the factors that led to the relocation of the Albanian capital to Tirana and the debates surrounding the decision. Third, I will examine the Italian influence on Tirana's urban fabric and evaluate the role that the concept of modernity played in shaping the new nation-state. Finally, I will offer concluding thoughts. To properly analyse the evolution of Tirana's urban fabric in conjunction with its power, it is vital to situate it in the following framework.

Framework & Context

A capital city is a political, cultural and economic centre which serves to actualize an identity, foster political participation and support the security and prosperity of the state through economic and geographic means.[4] The various dimensions and their importance attribute degrees of power to the capital city, and consequently, the state. This relationship between capital city and state means that the capital city often reflects the status of the state inasmuch as it has a role in constructing it. As empires chased modernity, their capital cities reflected this idea in their urban fabric. In European empires, modernity was connected to civilization and Europeanization, and the concepts became intertwined in order to show that being modern was being European.[5] European cities were modernized by wide boulevards, symmetrical grids and straight city lines that

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[4] Vadim Rossman, *Capital Cities: Varieties and Patterns of Development and Relocation* (London: Routledge, 2018), 66.
[5] Murray-Miller, "Civilization, Modernity and Europe," 425.

were deemed rational.[6] Modernity became a mechanism of power when it was exported to European colonies as a civilizing mission. Modernizing the 'other' was conducted through rhetoric and the modification of their surroundings. The characterization of the indigenous spaces of the colony and its population as the 'other' served to reinforce the European notion of modernity and civility. This 'othering' gave rise to the 'Islamic city paradigm', often used to classify the cities of the Ottoman Empire. The 'Islamic city paradigm' reduced cities in the Muslim world to the "physical manifestations of sacred laws," "governed by a single religious reference system".[7] This reduction, as Jens Hanssen notes, is not simply a "concept of Muslim identity, it has to do with assertion of power."[8] Instead, Hanssen argues, "Muslim cities need to be understood as material manifestations of social change and political power in their particular settings."[9]

Prior to Albania's declaration of independence following the Balkan Wars (1912-13), Tirana was a rural town within the greater territory of the Ottoman Empire. Geographically surrounded by agricultural land, Tirana was approximately 40 kilometres from the nearest port city, Durrës. At the time, neighboring cities of Shkodër and Vlorë were the central economic and population hubs.[10] The onset of Ottoman modernization reforms in 1865 promoted Tirana to be the centre within a sub-prefecture.[11] Meaning, Tirana was now developing elements of "a more democratic municipal experience" comparable to Istanbul.[12] Isa Blumi notes that the "heavy handed application of policies [by the Ottomans] were meant to streamline the modernization process while securing the empire border".[13] Instead, they "opened doors for the external intervention and internal chaos that made the defeat in Balkan Wars possible."[14] The rise of nationalism during this period was rooted in ethnic and cultural distinctions which fostered the emergence of a new force under the guise of an "old latent dormant" one – nationalism.[15]

Albanian nationalism emerged "as a product of circles of intellectual emigres" within the Ottoman Empire.[16] This sparked interest amongst the Italian intelligentsia who quickly identified their own stake in the

[6] Göran Therborn, *Cities of Power: the Urban, the National, the Popular, the Global* (London: Verso, 2017), 69.
[7] Jens Hanssen, "History, heritage and modernity: cities in the Muslim world between destruction and reconstruction," in *New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), 523.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 522.
[10] M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi, "Impacts of the Balkan Wars," in *War and Nationalism: the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913, and Their Sociopolitical Implications*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013), 544.
[11] Gentiana Kera, "Tirana," in *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeastern Europe*, eds. Emily Gunzburger Makaš and Tanja Damljanovic Conley (London: Routledge, 2015), 110.
[12] Hanssen, "History, heritage and modernity," 544.
[13] Yavuz and Blumi, "Impacts of the Balkan Wars," 537.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Rossman, *Capital Cities*, 78; Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (London: Routledge, 2014), 60.
[16] Francesco Strazzari, "Trans-Albanian vs. Pan-Albanian Spaces: The Urban Dimension of the 'Albanian Question'," *Southeastern Europe* 33, no. 1 (2009): 80.

independence debates: the Adriatic Coast.[17] As newfound Albanian nationalism tried to reconcile its various cleavages, early-twentieth-century-Tirana:

> reflected both in urban structure and architecture the main characteristics of a typical Ottoman city in southeastern Europe: a concentration of social life around religious buildings, the rigid separation of dwelling and economic activity spaces, neighborhoods divided according to religious affiliation, an irregular street system, and houses surrounded by garden walls.[18]

The next section seeks to understand the decisions surrounding Tirana's promotion to a capital city, its relationship to Albanian identity, and the subsequent debates which arose.

Relocation

In 1920 the decision was made at the Congress of Lushnjë to declare Tirana the temporary capital for the newly independent Albania. Coming eight years after the declaration of Albanian independence, this decision served to facilitate the construction of the Albanian nation-state. The decision can be examined using four dimensions outlined by Vadim Rossman: geographic, military, cultural, and political.[19] The first addresses the geographic characteristics which contribute to the decision to locate the capital in Tirana. The geographic features also serve as a *tabula rasa* for the new symbolism attributed to the urban fabric by the regime.[20] The military dimension explains the geopolitical features of the location of the city, especially the former military significance of the space, as well as the perceived security of the area. The cultural dimension notes the role a capital city has in being a neutral territory for the integration of various people, their identities, and religions. Finally, the political dimension informs the criteria of power for the capital city and its state.

Tirana is geographically situated in an extended diameter of land, giving it a more central character than that of a port-city in the context of modern Albanian borders. As Rossman outlines, centrality was prescribed by theorists such as Alexandre le Maître in his *La Métropolitée* and Thomas More in *Utopia*.[21] Centrality relies on rational economic principles: a centrally located capital can maximize tax revenue as well as its governance.[22] More simply, "centrally located spaces relate to market economy."[23] Tirana's centrality is complimented by convenient access to the port-city of Duress – a prominent city on the Adriatic coast.[24] This

[17] Borut Klabjan, "Erecting Fascism: Nation, Identity, and Space in Trieste in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 6 (2018): 959.
[18] Kera, "Tirana," 110.
[19] Rossman, *Capital Cities*, 54.
[20] Ibid., 53.
[21] Ibid., 51.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Dorina Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power: Use of the Central Square in Tirana during One Century of Political Transformations," *Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2014): 68.
[24] Kera, "Tirana," 108.

accessibility permitted Tirana to be "close to the outside world although not immediately on the border".[25] These open plains "could meet the government's need in terms of space for new administrative and governmental buildings and residences for officials".[26] As a result, Tirana's central geography yielded an efficient settlement where "little resources would be needed to make the capital".[27] This geographic 'rationalism' would facilitate the construction of a new nation-state for Albanians where the self-sufficiency of their capital would mirror their statehood. Additionally, geography presented a canvas for new symbolism which could serve to connect the geography of Tirana to the national identity of Albania.

Geography and security are intimately connected, thus, a military dimension to the decision was also vital. Tirana offered an advantage that other, more populous cities in the Albanian territory did not: it was one of the few Albanian cities that did not have foreign armies stationed there.[28] Shkodër and Korçë were controlled by French troops and Vlorë was under Italian control in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars.[29] During this time, Albanian identity was threatened by south-Slavic groups. It follows that their decision to create a capital in a space free from foreign military occupation can be viewed as an attempt to assert national identity freely, without foreign prohibition. As Gentiana Kera notes, "armies caused a delay in the development of Albania as a centralized independent state."[30] Furthermore, Tirana's centrality distanced it from coastal invasion, increasing its security by eliminating possible modes of attack. The foreseen security would promote unity between the Tosks and Gegs; the former being southern Albanians, who had a history of tense relations with Ottoman authorities, and the latter being their northern counterpart.[31]

The two major subgroups of Albanian identity, Tosks and Gegs, required a neutral integration space. Since new nationalism is more ethnic and cultural than civic in nature, civic life presented a common neutrality.[32] The fabric of the capital would have to translate the ethnic and cultural dimensions to a civil nature. This poses a challenge since Albanian identity by virtue of being young has no history of institutionalization. Additionally, the two subgroups of Albanian identity developed under different circumstances for an extended period of time. Tosks were governed by the Ottoman Empire, and Gegs were largely outside the empire's scope. The two subgroups formed a religious cleavage, the Tosks being majority Muslim while the Gegs were majority Christian.[33] The compromise to this cleavage will be exemplified in

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid, 110.
[31] Strazzari, "Trans-Albanian vs. Pan-Albanian Spaces," 84.
[32] Rossman, *Capital Cities*, 78.
[33] Monika Shehi, "When East Meets West: Examining Classroom Discourse at the Albanian Socio-Political Intersection," (PhD thesis, University of South Carolina, 2007), 43.

discussing the transformation of Tirana's 'old town'. This puzzle fell to the hands of the new leadership who had to "cope with the problem of defining what the national culture can be while seeking assurance that this definition will serve those in power".[34]

This brings forth the final dimension of capital city location: political power. Capital cities often serve as a political seat of power for the state, and the "establishment of [a] new seat of power was often a critical element in the identity formation of…new nations".[35] Since "those nationalities without a city [experience] difficulty in developing their nationalism beyond the cultural stage into a political blueprint," it follows that the newly independent Albanian state sought to formalize itself through a capital city.[36] Furthermore, the selection of a capital city is "often aimed at the fundamental political reconstruction of the country," which typically refers to seeking a way to integrate various parts of the state and establish a relationship with them.[37] Rossman notes that "through relocation and iconography," capital cities bind the constituencies of the state.[38] Hence the Albanian nation-state required the actualization of their identity in a 'political blueprint'. This blueprint is the manifestation of power in Tirana's urban fabric. As Timothy Mitchell notes in *Colonizing Egypt*, a "clearly determined relationship between model and reality was strengthened by a common centre."[39] But the creation of a common centre sparked debates around its planning.

The main actors in the urban planning debate were the regime of the new state, and its municipal institutions.[40] However, it is vital to note that Italy held a privileged position in independent Albania since 1920.[41] Meaning, although the new regime was Albanian in theory, the absence of an institutionalized national identity promoted a weakness that was not immune to Italian influence. Seeking to showcase Tirana's new role as a capital and its "political, economic and social ambitions," the political elites sought to Europeanize, and subsequently modernize the urban fabric.[42] Modernization required de-Ottomanization – removing the former 'Ottoman character' from the new city fabric to better reflect the identity of the Albanian state. Two main planning perspectives emerged towards the Ottoman city: one which argued that the, "old town could not be modernized" and the new modern town should be built on surrounding land; and one that argued for the reuse of buildings in the old town.[43] The solution was a compromise between the two approaches. The old town would be improved upon, and Tirana would also expand beyond its township borders. In 1923, the

[34] Vale, "National Identity and the Capitol Complex," 61.
[35] Rossman, *Capital Cities*, 78.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 272.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 9.
[40] Kera, "Tirana," 109.
[41] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 68.
[42] Kera, "Tirana," 109.
[43] Ibid., 111.

Albanian regime decided to formalize Tirana's transition from 'rural town' to a Western-style 'modern' capital by planning to "straighten urban roads and rationalize the design of the city".[44] Interestingly, this plan would leave the lively bazaar of the old town-centre intact, perhaps in an attempt to preserve the economic function of it.[45] This preservation of the bazaar would act as a potential anchor for the new nation-state in transition, or as an advantage to Italian interests in the 'city belt' – a pre-national belt of cities in Europe which served an economic function.[46] The next section will explore the manifestations of Italian influence in Tirana's urban fabric and analyse its model of modernity.

Tirana's De-Ottomanization and Modernity

Tirana's modernization, and its subsequent de-Ottomanization, took on a more formal character shortly after Tirana's status as a capital city was formalized in 1925. Nearly simultaneously, the Albanian regime elected military official Ahmed Zog to head the republic. Zog wanted to westernize not just Tirana, but all of Albania. For this project, Tirana's central geography would serve as an anchor point for modernity.[47] Italian architect, Armando Brasini, was invited to create a plan for Tirana.[48] He proposed a wide boulevard – inspired by St. Peter's Square in Rome – lined with government buildings to create a civic centre. [49] As Dorina Pojari notes, Brasini envisioned a "baroque central isle" that extended south from the square, "[dividing] the existing town from its periphery."[50] The boulevard symbolically separated the eastern nucleus and the western peripheries of the city, while being lined with new government buildings acting as symbols of power.[51] As argued by Mitchell, preserving and segregating the centres of Muslim cities stopped their evolution and as a result, reinforced European modernity in the evolving parts of the city.

Additionally, this division created by the boulevard facilitated a sort of 'dual city'.[52] This meant that there would be two distinct parts of the city, which would segregate the old from the new. In a way, the straight, wide axis physically symbolized Albania's break from the empire towards nation-state, in addition to symbolizing Italian ambition. Romeo Kodra refers to the boulevard and its monumentalizing as a stalemate of power.[53] He states that, since its construction, the boulevard has been monumentalized for the purpose of power, transforming it into an urban transitional object. In the Fascist era, the boulevard was a 'zipper axis',

[44] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 68-70.
[45] Ibid., 68.
[46] Therborn, *Cities of Power*, 38-39.
[47] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 72.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.; Kera, "Tirana," 112.
[51] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 73.
[52] Hanssen, "History, heritage and modernity," 531.
[53] Romeo Kodra, "Architectural Monumentalism in Transitional Albania," *Studia Ethnologica Croatica* 29, no. 1 (2017): 194.

synthesizing Albanian and Italian identity.[54] Adding to the symbolic dimension, the boulevard was named *Viale del Impero,* inspired by Rome's *cardo maximus,* signifying a rhetorical dimension to Italian influence and symbolism.[55] Brasini's plan was not approved in whole, due to him not accounting for the historically significant Mosque of Haxhi Ethem and Clock Tower.[56] Yet, his proposed boulevard and square were modified to accommodate the historic sites and implemented, indicating at least a partial reluctance on behalf of the Albanians to fully erase Ottoman presence in the urban fabric. Albanian reliance on Italian planning can be attributed to the new-ness of the Albanian state which carried with it a shortage of Albanian urban planners and Albanian economic dependence on Italy. While the regime was seeking collaborative assistance for Europeanization it is important to consider Italian ambitions.

Italian interests along the Adriatic coast were intensified by Benito Mussolini's rise to power in 1922. Mussolini relied on the idea of a 'Third Rome'; this constituted an organic succession from the Roman Empire as a justification mechanism for land that was of Italian interest.[57] This evoked a historical association in the architectural and urban treatment of land under Italian influence evident in Brasini's proposed boulevard, which remained central to all future Tirana plans.[58] Italian pre-occupation with avant-garde rationalism was rooted in Mussolini's belief that it would "liberate people from the bonds of their traditional past".[59] For Mussolini, architecture was not only a tool for governance, but "an education medium" which would aid the "process of totalitarization of society".[60] It would foster the masses into a "single, colossal and homogenous human" via symbols.[61] As a result, avant-garde rationalism focused on "symmetry, austerity and monumentality […] to intimidate discipline and authority".[62] Since Tirana "had no pre-Ottoman past that could serve as inspiration for new architectural and urban design," it followed naturally that "Italy, on which Albania was economically dependent," became a model.[63] Italian focus on symmetry shows in the modification of the Square connected to the boulevard. Changing the Square's shape from oval to hexagonal promoted symmetry and aligned it close to the Italian model of 'modernity'.[64] The necessity for symbolism went so far as to endow building materials with symbolism. This is evident in newly erected government buildings around the boulevard and the new parliament building situated in the Square.

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[54] Ibid., 202.
[55] Ibid., 203.
[56] Kera, "Tirana," 116.
[57] Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 2-5.
[58] Vale, "National Identity and the Capitol Complex," 56.
[59] Dorina Pojani, "Cities as Story: Redevelopment Projects in Authoritarian and Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 40, no. 5 (2017): 706.
[60] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 74.
[61] Pojani, "Cities as Story," 706.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Kera, "Tirana," 120.
[64] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 73.

The civic buildings which lined the boulevard were typically constructed from a mixture of concrete and brickwork, symbolically harking back to the Italian renaissance, and reinforced Italian rationalism.[65] Among these, a new parliament building was constructed. But, as Lawrence Vale remarks, "the construction of a new capital city or a new parliament building – a decision that often implied the budget straining commitment of a poor country to pay for it – is made by a regime, not by a nation."[66] Meaning that the Albanian regime under Zog– not the Albanians – in conjunction with the Italian government, stood behind the creative decision of the civic centre. This rendered its attempt to integrate various Albanian sub-identities into a unified civic character not entirely effective.

Moreover, Zog's consolidation of power created a monarchy in 1928 (from now on King Zog I) and marked a significant turn in Tirana's urban development.[67] As Kera notes, "the concentration of power, the reduced competences of the parliament, and the absence of any guarantee for the protection of civil rights clearly revealed that the proclamations description did not reflect the real character of the monarchy."[68] Instead, the monarchy took on a more dictatorial character, "[attaching] a great degree of ideological significance to the built environment."[69] King Zog I turned his focus to constructing "public facilities to ensure political stability".[70] This increased emphasis on public facilities and the creation of a 'civic character' which can be observed in the construction of Tirana's City Hall from 1929 to 1931.[71] Since the existing "legal framework for urban administration was inadequate for the challenges Tirana was facing [...] the importance given to the urban development of the Albanian capital was reinforced through the comprehensive municipal legislation," designed collaboratively by King Zog I and the Italians.[72] Evidently, Italian avant-garde rationalism and its emphasis on power aligned with King Zog I's visions of Albania, collectively shaping Tirana.

Another Italian architect, Florestano De Fausto, added a flower garden in the middle of the four ministry buildings.[73] The public flower garden was to serve as a replacement for the former Mosque yards, transitioning the citizens' identity from a religious identity to a new 'civic' one – one that was clean and modern. De Fausto also experimented with building height.[74] He added one to two floors to the buildings surrounding the Square and dug the garden into the ground.[75] As a result, he elevated Tirana above its former

[65] Kera, "Tirana," 117.
[66] Vale, "National Identity and the Capitol Complex," 56.
[67] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 73.
[68] Kera, "Tirana," 113.
[69] Pojani, "Cities as Story," 706.
[70] Patrizia Capolino, "Tirana: a Capital City Transformed by the Italians," *Planning Perspectives* 26, no. 4 (2011): 595.
[71] Kera, "Tirana," 114.
[72] Ibid., 112, 114.
[73] Ibid., 117.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

'Ottomanness' which was exemplified by the older buildings beyond the Square, especially the bazaar which was still intact at the old town centre. The new City Hall was constructed in place of the Karapici Mosque.[76] The symbolism of the replacement of the Karapici Mosque by a civic building signified further de-Ottomanization, and an assertion of power on behalf of King Zog I and the Italians. Notably, Vale remarks that, "any new parliament building should…be [viewed] in the context of that which preceded it, especially in relation to past capitol buildings and past capital cities."[77] This is because the capital symbolizes the regime, the architect's long-term priorities, and the governments interests in pursuing identity through architecture "which may be tied to economic development".[78]

The remainder of the 1930s continued in a similar vein. Construction was aided by the tax-free importing of materials from Durres to Tirana between 1929-37.[79] Italian planners, Gherardo Bosio and Fernando Poggi created another master plan. Bosio previously worked on modifying Italian East Africa and had a "reputation for [his] awareness of local folklore and attention to the landscape within the ambit of the civilizing role".[80] Most significantly, the plan extended the existing boulevard axis northward, mimicking the symmetry of the south extension and extending the divisive nature of the boulevard by cutting through the small, windy streets of the former Ottoman space.[81] Symbolically, the boulevard could be interpreted as a road to modernity, with the southern end beginning at the Ottoman Empire, and the northern end leading towards Europe. The north end connected the boulevard to a train station, promoting the development of transportation. Infrastructure to support city electrification was proposed, although not fully implemented – much like the city transportation system. Italian made 'New Tirana' featured a district designed to accommodate European-style single family villas – a contrast to Ottoman housing which was designed to accommodate multiple generations under one roof.[82]

The development of the 'civic city' promoted the creation of political associations for Albanians, through which their national identity could be institutionalized.[83] As the political associations evolved, and King Zog I's power destabilized, his abdication in 1939 created a power vacuum which was swiftly utilized by the Italians. Italian occupation sought to "establish a stronger and more authoritative government, [one that is] more responsive to the soul of the people and a more direct interpreter of their aspirations," for the purpose

[76] Ibid., 114.
[77] Vale, "National Identity and the Capitol Complex," 56.
[78] Ibid., 53.
[79] Pojani, "Urban Design, Ideology, and Power," 74.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Kera, "Tirana," 112.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Giovanni Villari, "A Failed Experiment: The Exportation of Fascism to Albania," *Modern Italy* 12, no. 2 (2007): 158.

of preserving their own status quo and exploiting Albanian resources.[84] Giovanni Villari notes that, "Albanians adapted easily to Italian domination," likely as a result of the presence of long-term Italian influence which shaped their capital's urban fabric, and consequently, their perceptions of power and civic life.[85] Prolonged exposure to Italian influence, and the lack of institutionalization of Albanian identity, weakened Albania's attempt to project its own identity onto Tirana's urban fabric.

Conclusion

The relationship between a capital city and the state is coloured by power which manifests in the urban fabric of the city. What is evident in the case of Tirana is that its location signaled Albanian desire to construct a nation-state and break from its Ottoman past. Tirana's central geography, military security, potential for cultural integration and political insignificance amounted to a clean start for Albania. However, the young nature of Albanian nationalism, its various cleavages, and the lack of its institutionalization, weakened Albanian ability to project a unified vision upon the urban fabric of Tirana. Additionally, in an attempt to de-Ottomanize, Albanians found no pre-Ottoman urban history to rely on. While Albanian national weakness ushered in Italian influence, Italian presence was solidified by their ability to draw on the past glory of the Roman Empire and its urban fabric. As a result, Albania was 'modernized' according to Italian visions of power, creating a Tirana which is *de facto* riddled with Italian symbols, muddying the actualization of Albanian national identity for years to come.

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[84] Ibid., 166, 160.
[85] Ibid., 166.

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How the Reaction of the Yugoslav Authorities to the 1981 Riots in Kosovo Led to An Increase in Albanian Nationalism

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Dasara is a current second year student at CERES. Dasara attended Trinity College at the University of Toronto for her undergraduate degree, where she graduated in 2019 with an HBA, double majoring in Political Science and European Studies, with a minor in History. Currently, Dasara's research interests are focused on the Balkans, with an emphasis on politics and culture in Kosovo. As such, for her MRP, she is looking at how music and oral tradition played an instrumental role in helping forge and cement a new Kosovar Albanian identity.

With the death of Tito came the death of Yugoslavia. Or that is what one might assert from reading history backwards. Yugoslavia, a state for the Slavs, may have seemed like a fantastic idea, but its downfall was the treatment of its minorities which resulted in countless bloody civil wars that were unforeseen at the time. However, upon closer examination of Yugoslav history, one wonders if these wars in the 1990s really occurred out of nowhere. The answer to this is no. By focusing on the case of Kosovo, it can be argued that it was the treatment of the Albanians by the Yugoslav authorities in 1981 (in particular those of Serb origin) which explains why nationalism was heightened, and why Yugoslavia eventually crumbled. Thus, the research question that this essay will endeavour to answer is: does state repression have an effect on nationalism? This question will be analysed by looking at Kosovo, and focusing on how it was the reaction of the Yugoslav forces to the 1981 riots in Kosovo that resulted in an increased sense of nationalism amongst Kosovar Albanians.

In order to fully answer this question, it is important to define the key terms of nationalism, ethnicity, and riots. Nationalism in this context follows Ernest Gellner's theory, which states that the "political and the national unit should be congruent."[1] In this case, it also means the fight for self-determination from Yugoslavia by the Kosovar Albanians. In terms of ethnicity, the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs have been categorized as ethnic groups by following the criteria outlined by Johann Gottfried Herder, who defines ethnicity as a group that shares a common language, culture, and identity.[2] For the Albanians especially, there was no subscription to a second Yugoslav identity because these conditions were not met. Albanians shared nothing in common with their Slavic counterparts, who for the most part could buy into this second ethnic identity because of their

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[1] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

[2] Egor Lazarev, class presentation, "Lecture 2: Theories of Ethnicity and Nationalism," Pol339H1, University of Toronto, September 17, 2018.

similar language, identity and culture. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish that the riots of 1981 were in fact peaceful student demonstrations, and not violent riots as declared by the Yugoslav army.

The theoretical approach that this paper employs is that of Primordialism. Although Primordialism may be heavily criticized in favour of Kanchan Chandra's Constructivist approach, it is important to note why this theory does not apply in this context. Primordialism treats ethnicity as everyone having the same language, race, religion, and the belief that their ethnic group is ancient, which holds true when dividing Albanians and Serbs into their own groups.[3] On the other hand, Constructivism interprets ethnicity in a more fluid way; people can have more than one ethnicity that changes over time.[4] Thus, the Constructivist approach implies that under Yugoslavia, everyone could identify in two ways: as being both X and Yugoslav. Nevertheless, although a Serb or Montenegrin could easily also identify as a Yugoslav, the same does not hold true for Albanians. This, is primarily due to how the Albanian ethnic identity was treated under the Yugoslav constitution, where a distinction was made between "nations" and "nationalities."[5] Nations consisted of the founding Slavic nations of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims, while the non-Slav ethnic groups, such as Albanians, were categorized as nationalities because they had an ethnic state outside of Yugoslavia.[6] Hence, due to the fact that the constitution of Yugoslavia itself separated those who were and were not considered as a nation in Yugoslavia, this paper will follow the same guidelines.

Thus, why are the Kosovo riots of 1981 important to study when looking at how state repression affected nationalism in Kosovo during the Yugoslavia era? The answer is simple – the events that followed played an important role in the trajectory of the future of both Kosovo and Yugoslavia. As such, the research question posed is important to answer because it helps explain why the demands for secession from the Albanians in Kosovo ramped up after the death of former Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980. Moreover, the fact that the other nationalities within Yugoslavia (who were given more rights than Kosovar Albanians under the constitution) also wanted to leave, proves that the plight of the Albanians was not done in vain but out of necessity. Furthermore, when it comes to relevancy, this question can be applied to multiple different cases. For instance, parallels can easily be made to the breakup of the Soviet Union, self-determination movements in Cyprus, and the end of colonialism.

Therefore, the hypothesis that I propose in response to the question posed is the following: the response of the Yugoslav authorities to the 1981 riots in Kosovo is what cemented Albanian Kosovar

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[3] Lazarev, class presentation, "Lecture 2: Theories of Ethnicity and Nationalism."
[4] Kanchan Chandra, *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-5, Oxford Scholarship Online, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199893157.003.0001.
[5] Tibor Varady, "Collective Minority Rights and Problems in Their Legal Protection: the Example of Yugoslavia," *East European Politics and Societies* 6, vol. 3, (1992): 265, https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1177%2F0888325492006003004.
[6] Ibid.

nationalism, and subsequently the desire for secession from Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, a plausible alternative argument to the proposed thesis is that the 1981 riots in Kosovo, and the handling of the situation by the Yugoslav police, had nothing to do with the increased desire for secession, as this desire was always there. This perspective is plausible because there were sentiments of independence expressed by the Albanian Kosovars prior to 1981. However, these demands were quashed when Tito agreed to elevate the position of Kosovo to an autonomous province, which placated the Albanians because the outcome, although not independence, was peaceful. Therefore, by taking the above into consideration, this essay will try to prove that state repression by the Serbian Yugoslav forces, the independent variable, is what led to the heightened sense of nationalism, the dependent variable, following the aftermath of the peaceful 1981 demonstrations.

To begin with, it is important to describe the events that led to the build-up of the 1981 student protests. The relationship between the Albanians and the Serbs of Kosovo has always been hostile.[7] This is because both ethnic groups view Kosovo as theirs for different reasons. For the Serbs, Kosovo is the birthplace of their national myth, it is the home of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, and the place where their glorious defeat to the Ottomans in 1389, during the battle of Kosovo took place.[8] For the Albanians, Kosovo holds a different significance. It is the homeland of their Illyrian ancestors, who inhabited what is now known as Kosovo since at least the 3rd Century BC.[9] It is also where the League of Prizren was created to combat the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin in 1878, which would have seen all Albanian lands go to Serbia and Turkey.[10] Nevertheless, to the dismay of the Albanian majority in Kosovo, Kosovo became part of Serbia in 1913, and subsequently, of Yugoslavia as well.[11]

Thus, it is during the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 where the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians would begin. To explain, after Serbia gained Kosovo from the Ottomans, what followed was the ethnic cleansing of 25,000 Albanians from Kosovo; Alex. J Bellamy asserts that this action of population transfer would once again be repeated in 1999.[12] With this, not only were the Albanians of Kosovo forced into a pan-Slavic country, deported, and murdered, but Kosovo also became the poorest region of Yugoslavia with low literacy rates, no political representation, and no infrastructure.[13] In regards to constitutional changes aimed at improving the situation in Kosovo, none would be made until 1963, when Kosovo would finally go from being an

[7]Patrick F. R. Arhsien, and R. A. Howells, "Yugoslavia, Albania and the Kosovo Riots," *The World Today* 37, no. 11 (1981): 422. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395240.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid, 423.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Karin Dyrstad, "After ethnic civil war: Ethno-nationalism in the Western Balkans," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, vol. 6 (2012): 820, DOI: 10.1177/0022343312439202.
[12]Alex. J Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 3 (2000): 106, https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1080/13642980008406895.
[13] Dyrstad "After ethnic civil war: Ethno-nationalism in the Western Balkans," 820.

Autonomous Region, to an Autonomous Province.[14] Nevertheless, even with this new found status, the Albanians in Kosovo were still suffering from repressive actions committed by the Yugoslav Secret Police (UDB).[15] These actions were not exposed, nor halted until 1966 when Tito publicly dismissed the man responsible – Serbian Aleksander Rankovic, from his position, and from the party.[16] The dismissal of Rankovic, Tito's former "right hand man," allowed "the Kosovars [to draw] a breath of relief" and begin to finally voice their discontent towards their treatment.[17] It is important to highlight that with getting rid of his righthand man in such a public way, Tito indicated that there was room for the Albanians, and for Kosovo in Yugoslavia. In a sense, Tito was sticking up for the Albanians against the repressive Serbs when no one else did.

In fact, Tito had learned that the best way to keep the Albanians, and Albanian nationalism at bay, was to include them in Yugoslavia. This is best shown in 1968 when Kosovo was given the "devolution of power, and the augmentation of the self-governing powers of the province."[18] To explain, the year 1968 came with countless milestones in trying to incorporate the Albanians of Kosovo into Yugoslavia, such as: having Metohija[19] removed from the name of Kosovo, legalizing the use of the Albanian flag in Kosovo, having their own university, and giving the Albanian language equal status to Serbo-Croatian.[20] Moreover, in 1969 and 1971, the constitutional status of Kosovo was elevated once again, when Kosovo went from being just a province, to a "territorial unit at the federal level."[21] It would be in 1974 when the biggest changes would be made to the Yugoslav Constitution to the benefit of the Kosovar Albanians. The 1974 constitution "provided each republic and province in Yugoslavia with theoretical statehood" which meant that decision-making now needed to include both the provinces, and republics."[22] Essentially, Kosovo now had a seat at the table, having been granted equal voting rights in the central government.[23]

Accordingly, with the 1974 constitution, the Albanians in Kosovo were finally given a place in Yugoslavia. All the suffering that had taken place decades before, seemed to have been fixed by this new

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[14] Arhsien and Howells, "Yugoslavia, Albania and the Kosovo Riots," 423.
[15] Besnick Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992," *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 32, no. 4 (2004): 800, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0090599042000296131?casa_token=WryIzYoaStwAAAAA:igEjs8bBuugr0Ggu3gxaewRnGQ2SatvXWEKxg6He7PrYKDqeTU9j9LIWCV0QBBNbM7D_kw9dpQuj.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Arshi Pipa, "The Political Situation of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, With Particular Attention to the Kosovo Problem: A Critical Approach," *East European Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1989): 162, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1297311364?pq-origsite=gscholar.
[18] Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992," 800.
[19] The removal of the Serbian way of referring to Kosovo signified the transition of not only removing a Serbian toponym, but also an attempt to halt Serbian influence, and claim over Kosovo.
[20] Pipa, "The Political Situation of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, With Particular Attention to the Kosovo Problem: A Critical Approach," 162; Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992," 800-801.
[21] Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992," 801.
[22] Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," 106
[23] Ibid, 107.

constitution, which according to author Gazmend Zajmi, "had a calming effect on Serb-Albanian relations by producing equilibrium between the demands of the two groups."[24] Therefore, it can be said that the atmosphere in Kosovo was calm. The Albanians now had a province that under Tito, was given equal status. Albanians no longer had to be subjected to repressive Yugoslav Serbs such as Rankovic. Tito was able to stop Albanian nationalism from rising because he realized that there would be no need for nationalistic sentiments, nor calls for separation, if the Albanians simply felt included. Fundamentally, Tito's logic was the following: why would an ethnic group want to secede if there was no reason to? Tito was right, with newfound equal status, the rising sentiment of self-determination amongst Kosovar Albanians was suppressed. However, the death of Tito in 1980 signalled the death of the conciliatory, and non-repressive actions towards Kosovar Albanians initiated under his leadership, and instead came police brutality.

So, what happened in 1981? The riots of 1981 were student led protests that broke out on March 11th in Prishtina.[25] It is important to note that these demonstrations were not anti-Yugoslavia or pro-secession at all. In fact, not only were they isolated events that took place on the campus of the University of Prishtina, but they began as student complaints about their living and food accommodations.[26] In actuality, during the first few days, the chants made by the protestors were "we want bread, we want conditions" and nothing else.[27] By March 26th, the movement began to grow, and the protests went from being solely on campus, to moving onto the streets of Prishtina, where the university students were now joined by local high school students.[28] However, by now, the chants began to change from being focused solely on the living conditions of the students, to chants of: "Long live the working class," "We are Albanians and not Yugoslavs," and "Below the bourgeoisie."[29] By April, the number of Albanians demonstrating reached thousands.[30] During this time, the Yugoslav authorities were waiting for an excuse to intervene. This justification would come when some factions of the student protesters began chanting "Kosovo Republic," which gave the Yugoslav army its excuse to end the demonstrations using violence because "the riots [were] motivated by nationalism and [were] 'counter-revolutionary' to the ideals of Yugoslav socialism."[31] Even though these chants were not representative of the ethos of the demonstrations, but of a small minority, they nevertheless "unleashed a wave

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Sabit Syla, "Albania's Attitude Towards the 1981 Demonstrations in Kosovo, *"European Journal of Social Science Studies* 2, no. 8 (2017): 171, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1001787.
[26] Arhsien and Howells, "Yugoslavia, Albania and the Kosovo Riots," 419.
[27] Syla, "Albania's Attitude Towards the 1981 Demonstrations in Kosovo," 171.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Pula, "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992," 802.

of hysteria in the party circles of post-Tito Yugoslavia and brought about a level of systematic repression unseen in postwar Yugoslavia."[32]

What followed was the unusual and unnecessary use of brute force by the Yugoslav police against the peaceful Albanian demonstrators. In fact, author Sabit Syla asserts that it was the use of firearms and tanks that "revealed to the world that the democratic façade of Yugoslavia was false."[33] It is important to highlight that these demonstrations were just that, demonstrations. It is the reaction of the Yugoslav authorities that is reprehensible, and the reason why the 1981 riots, which were harmless in nature, turned into a national awakening. It is safe to assume that these demonstrations would have ended fairly soon because these students would have graduated and moved on. Nevertheless, the unnecessary force exerted by the police is what undoubtedly unleashed the increased nationalism amongst the Albanians, which had been placated previously under Tito. To explain, the Albanians were fine with their increased status within Yugoslavia; in fact, most of the chants had to do with the economic, and not the political dissatisfaction of the Albanians in Kosovo. Therefore, by looking at the following ways the riots were mishandled, it will come as no surprise as to why these demonstrations led to the rise of nationalism amongst the Albanians of Kosovo, when a widespread desire for independence was not there before.

Firstly, the ethnic configuration of the forces is important to breakdown. The Yugoslav army had always been over-represented by Serbs and Montenegrins, and the breakdown of the army in 1981 was no different.[34] In fact, when comparing the number of Serbs, Montenegrins, and Albanians in the army, the disparity is astounding. For example, the Serbs who were 39.7% of the population comprised 60% of the army and had 77 Generals, the Montenegrins who were only 2.5% of the population held 6.2% of the army and had 19 Generals, while the Albanians who were 6.4 % of the population made up only 0.6% of the army and had a sole General.[35] Looking at these numbers alone, it is clear that the response of the Yugoslav army to the 1981 riots in Kosovo were made almost entirely by the ethnic Serb members. It comes as no surprise, then, that the acts carried out by the Yugoslav army would be blamed on the Serbians by the Albanians. For example, some of the atrocities committed by the army as a result of the 1981 riots include: the closing of borders, a strictly enforced curfew, and the criminalisation of gatherings that were comprised of more than five people.[36] Although the protests were spontaneous and not organized, Belgrade, according to Bellamy, justified their

[32] Ibid.
[33] Syla, "Albania's Attitude Towards the 1981 Demonstrations in Kosovo," 172.
[34] Dimitar Mercev, "Ethnocentrism and Strife among Political Elites: The End of Yugoslavia," *International Journal of Policy and Administration* 6, no. 3 (1993): 383, https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1468-0491.1993.tb00153.x.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Arhsien and Howells, "Yugoslavia, Albania and the Kosovo Riots," 419.

response to the riots because "they were the result of anti-Yugoslav secessionist movements."[37] Even though scholars agree that the 1981 protests were not a secessionist movement, and that the number of advocates for independence were small, it is clear that the riots were taken out of context by the army in order to assert their control over Kosovo once again.[38]

Furthermore, the response from the police following the protests were so violent, that their brutality did not stop at the protests themselves. According to the protesters interviewed by Julie Mertus, there were countless reports of the police "break[ing] into houses, and physically attack[ing] those suspected of participating."[39] As a result, it is not shocking that Amnesty International reports that as many as 300 Albanians were killed following the demonstrations; a number which Yugoslav authorities claimed was only 11.[40] A newspaper article written in 1981 by Louise Lief, illustrates just how badly the police had cracked down on Prishtina when she writes that "Officers walk in pairs, guns slung over their shoulders and walkie-talkies clipped to their belts."[41] A common sight that Lief claims had sprouted "a fear here, particularly among young people, of the security services."[42] This fear was so great, that she highlights that when asking questions to Albanians, they were always looking over their shoulders, because as one unnamed source claimed: "If I tell you something, and its wrong, I can go to jail" for Albanians, he said, have "long [been] discriminated against."[43] It becomes clear that the response of the Yugoslav army to the riots was self-serving. What the army wanted was to take away the concessions given to Kosovo under Tito, and the best way to do this was to claim that Kosovar Albanians wanted secession from Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, this was not true until the army reacted the way it did. For fear of the state and repression, are the best ways to stir sentiments of nationalism.

In the years following the 1981 riots, Kosovar Albanians accounted for 41.8% of those convicted of political crimes.[44] Between 1981-1983, 688 Albanians were arrested for "hostile slogans," where anything including the words "Kosovo" or "Republic," automatically resulted in the perpetrators being arrested, and sentenced to five years in jail.[45] Scholars point out that none of the people arrested during those three years had been so because of committing violent acts, or carrying weapons; they were arrested simply because they

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[37] Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," 109.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," 110.
[40] Ibid; Amnesty International, *Yugoslavia Prisoners of Conscious* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1985), 12, https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/200000/eur480201985en.pdf.
[41] Louise, Lief, "Kosovo: Surface Calm Masks Old Troubles." *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 04, 1983, http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/1037991938?accountid=14771.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," 110.
[45] Ibid.

"planned actions."[46] Moreover, during the next five years, over 150,000 Albanians would be interrogated by the police, with 50,000 being punished, and 7,000 of them jailed.[47] Even more disconcerting is the fact that 1,000 of those jailed were minors, while over 1,200 of those jailed received sentences of 20 years or more.[48] Furthermore, another form of repression imposed upon Albanians in Kosovo post 1981 is what author Haki Kabashi refers to as "isolation."[49] Kabashi claims that after the 1981 riots, 253 Albanians were taken to Serbian prisons in secret, and that things got so bad that the families of the prisoners would have no clue where they were for months.[50] He also highlights the example of a women from Prishtina, who enlisted the help of Croatian lawyer Rajko Danilovic, after her husband had been missing for over a month.[51] When confronted with her request, Danilovic was "dumbfounded, shocked and asked what isolation was."[52] These sentiments were echoed by fellow lawyer Danko Spoljaric, who claimed that he "didn't feel like a lawyer, but rather as a detective looking for a missing person."[53] Thus, it can be concluded that the reaction of the Yugoslav forces went above and beyond what could have possibly been necessary to quell the peaceful protests of 1981. The 1981 student led protests were just that, student led and nothing more. However, the Yugoslav authorities used the very few voices who advocated for independence as an excuse to exert brutal force to their liking. As such, it comes as no surprise that the Albanians' sense of nationalism grew exponentially following the 1981 riots. For the response of the Yugoslav army was in no way appropriate, nor can it ever be reasoned as such.

In conclusion, by looking at the history of Kosovo in Yugoslavia, and the reaction of the Yugoslav army to the 1981 riots, it is clear that state repression affects nationalism. This essay set forward to prove that it was the response of the Yugoslav army to the 1981 riots in Kosovo that led to an increased sense of nationalism amongst the Kosovar Albanians. Although the alternative hypothesis claims that the violence played no role because the want for secession was always there, this essay proves that that was not the case. While there were sentiments of Albanian nationalism before 1981, Tito was smart enough to realize that those feelings could be squashed if concessions were made. As such, the more concessions made by Tito, the more Albanians felt like they belonged, and the less they felt they needed to leave. Consequently, when the student protests began in 1981, they were done more so as demonstrations, and not as separatist rallies as claimed by the Yugoslav authorities. Instead, it was as a result of the force exerted by Yugoslavia, both during and long

[46] Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosovo: 1974-99," 110.
[47] Pipa, "The Political Situation of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, With Particular Attention to the Kosovo Problem: A Critical Approach,"166.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Haki Kabashi, "Isolation—Sanction without a Trial for Kosovo's Albanians 1981-1989," *European Journal of Sustainable Development* 5, no. 2 (2016): 42, Doi: 10.14207/ejsd.2016.v5n2p41.
[50] Ibid, 43.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

after these protests, that forced the Albanians to conjure up their nationalist ambitions – essentially being cornered into them. Therefore, there was no widespread nationalist tendency in Kosovo amongst the Albanians until the army started: imposing curfews, beating people up in their homes, interrogating thousands, making people feel unsafe on the street, and essentially kidnapping people they deemed enemies of the state. Thus, it is clear here that the secession demands by the Albanians were founded upon fear and violence that were initiated purposefully by the Yugoslav army. In fact, in can be asserted that the reason Yugoslavia eventually broke up, and did so violently, was for the same reason – the violent stance taken by the army.

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Diverging Trajectories: Explaining the Impact of the Fascist Past on the Italian and Belgian Party Systems

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The Belgian Vlaams Belang and the Italian Lega Nord have received substantial scholarly attention as Europe's two most long-lasting populist radical right parties founded on separatist and nationalist agendas. The Vlaams Belang (formerly known as Vlaams Blok) demands separation from Wallonia and independence for an ethnically, linguistically, and culturally unique Flanders.[1] Similarly, the Lega Nord (currently known as the Lega) initially advocated for the independence of the so-called Padania nation of northern Italy.[2] In 1996, Umberto Bossi, leader of Lega Nord, even went so far as to declare independence for northern Italy to free Padania from the "colonial oppression, economic exploitation, and moral violence" of the government in Rome.[3] Ideologically, Vlaams Belang and Lega Nord have much in common. Yet, the two parties have had surprisingly different trajectories. For three decades, the Vlaams Belang has been isolated from the party system and reduced to a permanent pariah opposition party. The Lega Nord has had a strikingly different experience of participating in four coalition governments over the past 30 years. Unlike the Vlaams Belang, the Lega's platform has shifted away from its regional focus and mainstreamed into a national party. While scholars view both parties as electorally successful, it is clear that the opportunities available to each have varied considerably with respect to coalition-building, holding office, and policymaking.

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[1] Paul Lucardie, Tjitske Akkerman, and Teun Pauwels, "It is still a long way from Madou Square to Law Street: The Evolution of the Flemish Bloc," in *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the Mainstream?* Eds. Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 210.
[2] See Albertazzi Daniele, "'Back to our Roots' or self-confessed manipulation? The uses of the past in the Lega Nord's Positing of Padania." *National Identities* 8, no. 1 (2006), 21-39.
[3] See Umberto Bossi, "1996 Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza della Padania," YouTube, accessed 25 November 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHnSa2buvmw.

This article explains why the Vlaams Belang and the Lega have had such different experiences in the parliamentary arena by examining how political opportunity structures have shaped party trajectories and responses to the challenges that they confronted. On the basis of Cas Mudde's framework, this paper defines political opportunity structure as the institutional, political, and cultural environments that shape available opportunities and limitations and that facilitate expectations for success or failure.[4] Many studies have focused solely on institutional structures and put forward the argument that proportional electoral systems are more conducive to the electoral success of the populist radical right. This article goes beyond a narrow analysis of institutional and electoral structures, and highlights the cultural and political environments that shape party trajectories. This analysis places party development into a broader context in order to understand the ways in which cultural attitudes towards the populist radical right inform party success, failure, and visibility within the party system.

I argue that the ways in which the political establishment constructed narratives about the Fascist past has deeply shaped the opportunities available to each party within the party system and parliamentary arena. The Vlaams Belang has been limited by its association with Flanders' Nazi past due to the widespread anti-Fascist consensus within the Belgian party system on the atrocities of Nazi collaboration. The Lega, however, has not faced the same obstacles because the anti-Fascist consensus in Italy has broken down since the collapse of the so-called First Republic in the 1990s. This favourable cultural environment has allowed the Lega to both cooperate with other parties and transform its platform from a regional separatist party to a broad-based nativist party. This article first examines the cultural environment within which each party operates before turning to explore how this has shaped electoral breakthrough and interactions with other parties, as well as later attempts at mainstreaming their respective party platforms.

The Fascist Past and Party Origins: The Cultural Environment

While both Italy and Belgium have histories deeply connected to the Fascist Period, the two countries have dealt with these legacies in strikingly different ways. In his comparative analysis of the populist radical right in Germany and Austria, David Art shows that how societies have confronted the fascist past facilitates or limits the success of the populist radical right.[5] While the culture of contrition towards the Nazi past in Germany has alienated and stigmatized the populist radical right, the revisionism and politicization of the Nazi past in Austria has provided a cultural environment conducive to its rise. This pattern is also apparent in Belgium and Italy. Similar to Germany, a culture of condemnation has isolated the Vlaams Blok within the

[4] Cas Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 232.
[5] David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9-10.

Belgium political system whereas the narrative of collective victimhood under Fascism has created a favourable environment for the populist radical right in Italy as in Austria. These cultural environments have shaped the perceived legitimacy of each party and the opportunities for cooperation within each party system.

The anti-Fascist narrative embraced by the Belgian political establishment has created an unfavourable environment for the Vlaams Blok to establish its legitimacy in the party system. In the decades after the Second World War, the Belgian political establishment made serious efforts to deal with the Flemish Movement's dark history of Nazi collaboration in a meaningful way. The Flemish Movement had first emerged in the late nineteenth century in critique of the artificial union between the Dutch-speaking Flemish community and the French-speaking Walloon community that made up the Belgian state. During the interwar years, the major party representing the Flemish Movement, the Vlaams Nationaal Verbond (VNV), adopted a separatist nationalist agenda, embraced aspects of Nazi ideology, and opted to collaborate with Nazi Germany upon occupation during the war.[6] After the war, the Belgian government widely condemned Flemish collaboration with the Nazis, banned the VNV from political participation, and incorporated transitional justice mechanisms to punish war criminals.[7] In the following decades, Belgium built a widespread consensus vilifying the atrocities of the Flemish Movement's Nazi collaboration and has since discredited efforts to revise this narrative. Yet, the ethno-linguistic cleavages that continue to divide Belgian society provide the political space for extreme nationalism within the party system.

The Vlaams Blok has a direct lineage to Flemish Nazi collaborators and has emerged as a key challenger to Belgium's anti-Fascist narrative. In 1977, Flemish war criminal Lode Claes and Nazi-sympathizer Karel Dillen led a split from the nationalist right-wing Volksunie (VU) to form the Vlaams Blok (VB) after the party opted to support the Egmont Pact of 1977, which transformed Belgium into a consociational democracy.[8] Claes and Dillen fundamentally rejected this new power-sharing arrangement between Flanders and Wallonia. Ideologically, the Vlaams Blok began as an extreme nationalist champion of the *Volk* that advocated for Flemish independence and promoted amnesty for Flemish Nazi collaborators.[9] In the late 1980s, the VB began to expand its party platform to include an anti-immigration stance and became increasingly critical of the

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[6] Cas Mudde, "One against All, All against One!: A Portrait of the Vlaams Blok." *Patterns of Prejudice* 29, no. 1 (1995), 6-7; Kris Deschouwer, "The Rise and Fall of the Belgian Regionalist Parties," *Regional and Federal Studies* 19, no. 4 (2009), 563.
[7] Helen Grevers, "Re-Education in Times of Transitional Judice: The Case of the Dutch and Belgian Collaborators after the Second World War." *European Review of History* 22, no. 5 (2015), 771-790; Bram Mertens, "'An Explosion of Vitality and Creativity'? Memory and Historiography of the Second World War in Belgium and the Netherlands." *Journal of Low Countries Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013), 45-46; 48-50.
[8] Mudde, "A Portrait of the Vlaams Blok," 8-9; Martens, "An Explosion of Vitality or Creativity?"46.
[9] Emmanuel Dalle Mulle, *The Nationalism of the Rich: Discourses and Strategies of Separatist Parties in Catalonia, Flanders, Northern Italy, and Scotland.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 60; Tjitske Akkerman and Matthijs Rooduijn, "Pariahs or Partners? Inclusion and Exclusion of Radical Right Parties and the Effects on their Policy Positions." *Political Studies* 63 (2015): 1149.

European Union (EU).[10] Flemish nativism and ethnonationalism have remained at the core of the party platform. The VB's stance on the EU and immigration is also couched in nativist terms. The current platform claims that the EU has become a "European superstate," that immigration is "reaching unsustainable levels," and the Flemish must be able to "feel at home in their own country again."[11] The Vlaams Blok has never been shy about drawing comparisons between its party platform and the Fascist past with Karel Dillen, going so far as to claim that he finds the labels "racist and fascist" honourable titles of which he is proud.[12]

The Lega Nord has emerged in a considerably different political-cultural environment. While interwar Italy endured more than 20 years of Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime, the country's dark past has not experienced the same degree of stigmatization as Flanders' history of Nazi collaboration. After the Second World War, the major political parties in Italy adopted an anti-Fascist position by default, since Mussolini's regime had been defeated during the war. The 1947 Constitution outlawed the re-emergence of a Fascist party, but the party system has been critiqued for its lack of judicial regulation which has allowed neo-Fascist parties to emerge with little pushback.[13] While relatively unsuccessful electorally, the neo-Fascist party Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), stacked with former members of the Fascist regime, persisted for more than 40 years after the war and exerted varying degrees of influence on the centrist right.[14] The breakdown of the First Republic in the 1990s provided a favourable environment for the political right-wing to dismantle the already waning anti-Fascist norm, reinforce revisionist narratives of the Fascist experience, and extend legitimacy to the political heirs of Fascism.[15] Today, Italian collective memory holds the broad sentiment that the period of Italian Fascism was an "ellipses" in Italy's otherwise democratic trajectory.[16] There is also a widely held sense of collective victimhood based on the narrative that Italy was coerced and subsequently occupied by Nazi Germany. In contrast to Belgium, the legacy of Fascism has not become stigmatized within the Italian political establishment.

The Lega Nord emerged in a cultural environment relatively favourable to populist radical right platforms in light of Italy's transition towards what Anna Cento Bull has termed, the "post-anti-Fascist context."[17] At the same time, the Lega Nord has enjoyed a certain degree of distance from the crimes of the

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[10] Lucardie et. al., "The Evolution of the Flemish Bloc," 209-212; Kevin Adamson and Robert Johns, "The Vlaams Blok, Its electoral and the ideological articulation of 'Europe.'" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 2 (2008): 137-140.
[11] "Programma," Vlaams Belang, accessed 23 November 2020, https://www.vlaamsbelang.org/programma/
[12] Jan Erk, "From Vlaams Blok to Vlaams Belang: The Belgian Far-Right Renames Itself." *West European Politics* 28, no. 3 (2005): 495.
[13] Francesco Clementi, "The Italian constitution after seventy years between referenda, electoral laws, and constitutional reform: a past that does not pass?" *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 24, no. 3 (2019): 417.
[14] Patrick Finney, *Remembering the Road to World War Two: International History, National Identity, Collective Memory.* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 113.
[15] Anna Cento Bull. "The Role of memory in Populist Discourse: The case of the Italian Second Republic." *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 3 (2016): 223-226.
[16] Finney, *Remembering the Road to WWII,* 115.
[17] Bull, "The Role of memory," 220.

Fascist Period because there is little direct connection between the historic Fascist Party and the founding members of the Lega Nord. Instead, the party grew out of a disorderly grassroots movement when Umberto Bossi brought together a range of autonomist movements and founded the Lega Nord in the 1990s as a populist regional party with a mandate to secure autonomy for northern Italy.[18] The North-South divide has its origins in the unification of Italy which was later reinforced by the Fascist experience. The perception that the North was "paying for" the South mobilized this regional divide once again in the postwar years.[19] The Lega Nord harnessed these long-standing sentiments that many felt were neglected by the postwar governments and attempted to bolster them with the creation of a northern Padania national identity. Unlike the Vlaams Blok case, in which the party promotes a historically-rooted nationalism, the LN invented a new Padanian nationalism in an effort to wed historical economic grievances with a particular national identity in opposition to the corrupt Italian political elites in Rome.[20] During the later years of Bossi's leadership, the party began to adopt increasingly radical positions on anti-immigration, Euroskepticism, and Islamophobia, shifting the party farther to the right from its founding populist separatist platform. While both parties managed to carve out a separatist niche, the ways in which the political establishment has dealt with the fascist past has shaped the VB's and LN's ability to establish themselves as legitimate parties within the party system.

Electoral Breakthroughs and the Party System: The Impact of Fascist Legacies

Both Belgium and Italy have institutional structures conducive to the rise of the populist radical right, but the cultural environment of the political establishment has informed how each party's electoral support translates within the parliamentary arena. Belgium is a federal consociational democracy that favours power-sharing between regional parties, whereas Italy is a constitutional republic that is more conducive to broad-based national parties. In Belgium, the current Constitution recognizes three territorially based regions in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels, and three language communities of Dutch, French, and German. Each region/community has a proportional representation electoral system for a directly elected parliamentary-style legislature and executive body, and all communities share power at the federal level through an elected bicameral parliament.[21] While Italy does have a regional council that holds some legislative and administrative power, it is a considerably less open structure than Belgium. Similarly, Italy has little institutional framework

[18] Daniele Albertazzi, Arianna Giovannini and Antonella Seddone, "No regionalism please, we are Leghisti!" The Transformation of the Italian Lega Nord under the Leadership of Matteo Salvini." *Regional & Federal Studies* 28, no. 5 (2018): 647.
[19] Mulle, *The Nationalism of the Rich,* 108.
[20] Albertazzi, "'Back to our roots,'" 23.
[21] Robert H. Mnookin, "Ethnic Conflicts: Flemings & Walloons, Palestinians & Israelis," *Daedalus* 136, no. 1 (2007): 108; Deschouwer, "The Rise and Fall of the Belgian Regionalist Parties," 574.

for representing "the North" at the national level in a meaningful way.[22] Italy has also oscillated between a proportional representation system and mixed-majoritarian system that encourages small parties to form electoral coalitions with larger parties.[23] In many ways, Belgium's institutional structure is more conducive to the rise of the populist radical right than Italy because its proportional representation electoral system and federalist structures provide relatively open formal access to participate in the political system.[24]

The institutional opportunity structure and shifts within the party systems facilitated the electoral breakthroughs of the Vlaams Blok and the Lega Nord in the 1990s. For more than a decade after its foundation, the Vlaams Blok plateaued electorally at the federal level, receiving less than 2% of the vote until 1991. Political space began to open up in the party system as the Volksunie entered a period of electoral decline because many moderate voters viewed the VU as obsolete after the Egmont Pact, while radical voters desired a firmer stance on Flanders.[25] The Vlaams Blok achieved its electoral breakthrough in 1991 as the only party openly advocating for Flemish independence. The Lega Nord achieved its electoral breakthrough the following year in the midst of the *mani pulite* (clean hands) enquiry, which exposed widespread corruption of the political elite resulting in the collapse of the First Republic in 1994.[26] In 1992, there was space for the Lega Nord to emerge as a formidable force within Italian politics because it spoke to both northern autonomy and the salient issue of anti-corruption, on which the established parties now had little legitimacy to speak. [27]

While institutional opportunity structures explain each party's electoral breakthrough, they do not explain the opportunities available to each party once it entered the parliamentary arena. The culture of condemnation stigmatized the Vlaams Blok and limited its opportunities within both the Flemish and Belgian party system. The mainstream political parties in Flanders viewed the Vlaams Blok's 1991 electoral breakthrough as a "revival of fascism," and committed to uphold the *cordon sanitaire* imposed on the VB after the previous regional election in 1989.[28] In response to the VB's relative success in the regional elections, the five largest Flemish parties formally committed that they would not cooperate with the Vlaams Blok in a coalition or negotiate with the Vlaams Blok at either the regional or federal level.[29] Since its electoral

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[22] See Matthijs Bogaards, "The Italian First Republic: 'Degenerated Consociationalism' in a Polarised Party System," *West European Politics* 28, no. 3 (2005): 503-520.
[23] Sarah L. de Lange, "New Alliances: Why Mainstream Parties Govern with Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties." *Political Studies* 60 (2012): 911-912.
[24] Hanspeter Kriesi, "Political Context and Opportunity, " in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements,* eds. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi,. (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 69-70; Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, 233-234.
[25] Teun Pauwels, "Explaining the Strange Decline of the Populist Radical Right Vlaams Belang in Belgium: The Impact of Permanent Opposition," *Atca Politica* 46, no. 1 (2011): 69.
[26] Crainz, "Italy's Political System Since 1989," 179.
[27] Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right in Europe*, 238.
[28] Teun Pauwels, *Populism in Western Europe: Comparing Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands*. (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 101.
[29] Mudde, "A Portrait of the Vlaams Blok," 12.

breakthrough, the Vlaams Blok has had a strong electoral performance particularly at the regional level, becoming the largest party in Antwerp from 1995-2004, and the second largest party in Flanders in 2004. The ongoing *cordon sanitaire*, however, has limited the Vlaams Blok from participating in governing coalitions and from contributing to the policy-making process. The *cordon sanitaire* denies the Vlaams Blok legitimacy by refusing to acknowledge it as a credible governing partner reducing the party to pariah status.[30] This long-term formal isolation demonstrates that the anti-fascist consensus among the political establishment has provided an unfavourable cultural environment for the Vlaams Blok to seek office or cooperate with other parties, forcing the VB to pursue a vote-seeking strategy and exert influence through the "whip" function.[31]

Unlike the Vlaams Blok, a stigmatized Fascist legacy has not limited the Lega Nord from participating in the Italian party system. Since its founding, the Lega Nord has encountered a favourable cultural environment for both its vote-seeking and office-seeking ambitions. In fact, cultural narratives about Italy's past have become increasingly sympathetic towards the Fascist regime since the fall of the First Republic. Media tycoon and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi solicited journalists and historians to expose the "evils" of the communist resistance during the Italian Civil War and the corruption of the postwar governments in the First Republic.[32] The Lega Nord first entered government in 1994 as a junior partner to a coalition with Berlusconi's populist right Forza Italia and the post-neo-Fascist Alleanza Nationale. The LN left the coalition after only eight months, claiming that the Berlusconi government was not doing enough to respect the LN's northern agenda. Since then, the Lega Nord has served in two more coalitions with Berlusconi in 2001-2005 and 2008-2011. Within these coalitions, the Lega Nord has been described as the "opposition within government."[33] It has pushed for harsher policies on devolution, immigration, European integration, and globalization.[34] The LN has had a considerable amount of leverage as its coalition partners have viewed its support as indispensable to the government's survival.[35]

Despite relatively favourable institutional opportunity structures, the cultural environment of the party system has shaped how each party is able to make use of its electoral weight in the parliamentary arena. Electorally, both the VB and LN have been "successful" in that both parties have received more than 5% of the

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[30] Akkerman and Rooduijn, "Pariahs or Partners?" 1140; Lucardie et al., "The Evolution of the Flemish Bloc,"209.
[31] Lucardie et al, "The Evolution of the Flemish Bloc," 216.
[32] Bull, "The Role of memory," 225-226.
[33] Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, "The Lega Nord in the Second Berlusconi Government: In a League of Its Own," *West European Politics* 28, no. 5 (2005): 953.
[34] Phil Edwards, "The Berlusconi Anomaly: Populism and Patrimony in Italy's Long Transition," *South European Society & Politics* 10, no. 2 (2005): 230; Bertjan Verbeek and Andrej Zaslove, "The Impact of Populist Radical Right Parties on Foreign Policy: The Northern League as a Junior Coalition Partner in the Berlusconi Governments," *European Political Science Review* 7, no. 4 (2015): 525-546.
[35] Daniele Albertazzi, "Amici Fragili: The Alliance between the Lega Nord and the Popolo della Liberta as seen by their representatives and members," *Modern Italy* 18, no. 1 (2013): 5.

vote in three successive national elections.[36] Yet, the two parties have had strikingly different experiences when it has come to cooperating with other parties. The Vlaams Blok has been ostracized because of its fascist lineage and pariah status which has only reinforced its radical position.[37] Conversely, the Lega Nord's participation in coalition governments has increased its legitimacy as a political party capable of holding office, but the party's separatist platform has limited its electoral support to the North.

Mainstreaming: Opportunities and Limits

Both the Vlaams Blok and the Lega Nord attempted to mainstream after their proximity to political crises that shook their respective party systems. In 2004, the Court of Appeal of Ghent found three affiliate organizations of the Vlaams Blok guilty of violating the Moureaux law banning racism and xenophobia.[38] While the Court's decision did not require the Vlaams Blok to alter its party program, it prompted the party to make an effort to distance itself from its Fascist lineage. The Lega Nord was also tainted by political scandal. By 2011, corruption allegations had piled up against Silvio Berlusconi. After stepping down later that year, the Italian Supreme Court found Berlusconi guilty of tax fraud and banned him from holding public office.[39] A year later, the Lega Nord was embroiled in its own corruption scandal when party leader Umberto Bossi was accused of appropriating party funding, leading to his resignation. For a party that had secured its electoral breakthrough on an anti-corruption campaign, the Lega Nord's internal corruption scandal and long-standing association with Berlusconi was not a good look.[40] While both parties attempted to mainstream in the aftermath of these scandals, they had varying degrees of success as a result of their capacity to capitalize on the political space available within the party system as a legitimate party.

Despite efforts to reform its image, the *cordon sanitaire* has continued to limit the Vlaams Blok's opportunities within the parliamentary arena. In response to the court's ruling, the Vlaams Blok opted to disband and re-establish itself under the new name Vlaams Belang with a new party platform. While the Vlaams Belang continues to call for Flemish independence and amnesty for Nazi collaborators, it has introduced two notable changes pertaining to immigration and economy. It slightly softened its xenophobia towards immigration and shifted its economic platform from a solidarity model mimicking Italian Fascism to an open commitment to neo-liberalism.[41] In many ways, the Vlaams Belang's new platform reflects the so-called

[36] David Art, *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.
[37] Lucardie et al., "The Evolution of the Flemish Bloc," 218.
[38] Erk, "From Vlaams Blok to Vlaams Belang," 494.
[39] Darragh McNally, "Norms, Corruption, and Voting for Berlusconi." *Politics & Policy* 44 no. 5 (2016): 981.
[40] Marco Tarchi, "Voters without a Party The Long Decade of the Italian Centre Right and its Uncertain Future." *South European Society and Politics* 23, no. 1 (2018): 153-154.
[41] Erk,"From Vlaams Blok to Vlaams Belang," 495.

"winning formula" combining xenophobia and neo-liberalism.[42] Some observers have argued that this change in platform should have been enough for Flanders' mainstream parties to lift the *cordon sanitaire.*[43] Yet, this mainstreaming effort has done little to distance the party's image from its fascist lineage and the *cordon sanitaire* remains upheld.

The ongoing isolation of the Vlaams Belang has caused the party to lose issue ownership of its key priorities as voters turn to support new parties untainted by a fascist legacy who do not suffer from isolation within the party system. After the 2004 racism scandal, two major alternative parties began to gain traction: the Nieuw-Vlaams Alliantie (N-VA) and Libertair, Direct, Democratisch (LDD). In 2001, the N-VA emerged out of the disintegrating Volksunie as a nationalist and separatist alternative to the VB that opposed the VB's brand of ethnic nationalism.[44] The N-VA secured its major electoral breakthroughs in the regional election of 2004 and the federal election of 2007 in an alliance with the centre right Christian Democrat Party (CD&V). The N-VA gained experience serving in the governing coalition, earning it the legitimacy that the VB lacks. The N-VA also revamped its image as an anti-establishment party after leaving the alliance in 2009, claiming that the CD&V was not ambitious enough in defending Flemish autonomy.[45] The PARTIREP voter survey has shown that the N-VA has been able to steal a significant share of voters who hold Flemish nationalist and anti-establishment views from the Vlaams Belang (See Figure 1).

The LDD has also managed to gain traction among Vlaams Belang voters with its anti-immigration and populist platform. Since the late 1980s, the VB has been the only major party to champion anti-immigration. The emergence of the LDD in 2007 challenged this long-standing monopoly on anti-immigration. LDD party leader Lijst Dedcker has called for a "common sense" approach to immigration by recognizing the inherent "radical tendencies" of Islam and the increasing Islamization of Belgian society that has pushed "Flemish society in the direction of apartheid."[46] The LDD managed to carve out a small niche for itself within the Flemish party system at the expense of the VB and serve as an opposition party within Parliament after the 2007 and 2010 federal elections and the 2009 regional election before largely losing its relevance after its dismal performance in the 2014 election.[47] With the emergence of the LDD and N-VA, the Vlaams Belang has been forced to compete for issue ownership on Flemish independence, anti-immigration, and anti-establishment

[42] Sarah L. de Lange, "A new Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Righ," *Party Politics* 13, no. 4 (2007): 411-435.
[43] Art, *Inside the Radical Right*, 144.
[44] "Ideology and Purpose," N-VA, accessed 1 December 2020, https://english.n-va.be/frequently-asked-questions#ideology.
[45] Pauwels, "Explaining the Strange Decline of the Vlaams Belang," 69-70.
[46] "9/11 Lijst Dedecker Calls for Common Sense," LDD, last modified 7 September 2007.
https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.ldd.be/&prev=search&pto=aue; "Swimming hour for immigrant women," LDD, last modified 15 August 2007.
https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.ldd.be/&prev=search&pto=aue
[47] Pauwels, "Explaining the Strange Decline of the Vlaams Belang," 75-76.

views. Despite efforts to mainstream, the VB has continued to be ostracized by the *cordon sanitaire* at both the regional and federal level, which has allowed the political space for other seemingly more legitimate parties to co-opt its key issues along with its electorate. While the VB's strong electoral performance in the 2019 regional and federal elections may restore the party's "whip" function in parliament, the VB remains isolated from cooperating with other parties.

The Lega Nord has had considerably more success with mainstreaming than the Vlaams Belang. The 2013 national election following the Berlusconi and Bossi scandals saw great party volatility and seemed to confirm that right-wing Italian politics were in flux. In the midst of the Berlusconi scandal, fractures had begun to emerge within the Popolo della Liberta (PdL) alliance between the former populist Forza Italia (FI) and neo-Fascist Alleanzea National (AN), which culminated with its dissolution in the months leading up to the 2013 national election. In 2012, vocal critic of Berlusconi, Giorgia Meloni, split from the Popolo della Liberta alliance and founded the Fratelli d'Italia (FdL) party with the intention of building on the neo-Fascist legacy of the MSI and AN.[48] Meloni built the party around opposing immigration and protecting Italian culture, history, and identity from "Islamization."[49] While the party has attracted members from the neo-Fascist movement, it has struggled to secure electoral support. Meanwhile, Silvio Berlusconi had attempted to resurrect the populist right-wing Forza Italia as the successor of the disintegrating Popolo della Liberta alliance, while working to reform his image as a moderate and trustworthy leader. Despite these efforts, Berlusconi's party has been in electoral decline since 2011. Furthermore, the electoral victory of the new populist Movimento Cinque Stelle in the 2013 election challenged the centre-right coalition's traditional issue ownership over anti-establishment messaging which pushed the Lega Nord to diversify its platform and carve out a new niche within the party system.

The disintegration of the Popolo della Liberta alliance has created space in the party system for a national populist radical right party to enter the picture. After the disappointing 2013 election, the Lega Nord underwent a leadership change that transformed the party platform. Matteo Salvini won the party leadership race in December 2013 and dramatically shifted the focus of the Lega Nord from a regional secessionist party to a national nativist party. The party dropped "Nord" from its name and focused its platform on anti-immigration, law and order, and Euroskeptism. Salvini refashioned the Lega into a protector of Italy's national culture and has embraced the rejection of "foreign elements."[50] The Lega replaced its anti-South and anti-Rome

[48] Elisabetta De Giorgi and Filippo Tronconi, "The Centre-Right in a search for unity and the re-emergence of the neo-fascist right," *Contemporary Italian Politics* 10, no. 4 (2018): 336.
[49] See "Il Voto Che Unisce l'Italia: Il Programma le Prioritia in 15 Punti," FdI, accessed 3 December 2020. https://www.fratelli-italia.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/PROGRAMMA_A4_REV2.pdf.
[50] Albertazzi et al., "No Regionalism," 660.

rhetoric with anti-Brussels messaging. In his first national election as party leader, Salvini campaigned to stop the "invasion" of immigrants and regain Italian "sovereignty" from the EU to defend Italian interests.[51] Salvini's reconstruction of the Lega Nord has positioned the party to more effectively take advantage of Italy's electoral opportunity structure, which favours broad-based national parties. By expanding the Lega's voter base beyond the North, the party can increase both its vote-seeking and office-seeking potential.

The Lega's mainstreaming efforts appeared to pay off in the 2018 national election as the party formed a coalition government for the first time without the support of its traditional populist and neo-Fascist coalition partners (Figure 2). Leading up to the election, Matteo Salvini framed himself as a young and trustworthy alternative to Berlusconi's personal parties. Unlike the Belgian case, where the loss of issue ownership damaged the Vlaams Belang's legitimacy, the volatility of Italy's party system created space for the established Lega to co-opt the nativist and anti-immigration position traditionally held by the neo-Fascist right, and combine it with populism. While the Fratelli d'Italia attempted to position itself as the successor of the neo-Fascist movement, it has had little electoral success. As an established party with governing experience, the Lega persuaded voters that it was better suited to represent the issues typically embraced by the neo-Fascist right. In the 2015 and 2016 regional elections and the 2018 national election, the Lega obtained support far beyond its historic northern base, particularly in electoral districts that had traditionally voted for the Fratelli d'Italia's predecessors, the MSI and AN.[52] While the Vlaams Belang's fascist legacy has limited the success of its mainstreaming efforts, the Lega's cooptation of issues traditionally represented by the neo-Fascist right has actually contributed to the success of its mainstreaming initiatives. The Lega's mainstreaming efforts have refashioned the party as a legitimate potential leader of a national right-wing coalition.

Conclusion

While the Vlaams Belang has continued to champion its founding nationalist and separatist agenda, the Lega has fundamentally transformed into a broad-based national party able to take advantage of Italy's institutional opportunity structure. Despite its isolation, David Art has argued that the Vlaams Belang is far from a "social pariah" because its stance on Flemish nationalism has historic legitimacy in the electorate.[53] Yet, the durability of the *cordon sanitaire* suggests that the VB's fascist lineage has stigmatized the party at the parliamentary level, preventing it from cooperating with other parties. This article demonstrates that the

[51] Matteo Salivini, Facebook, 24 January 2018. https://www.facebook.com/salviniofficial/posts/10155477582528155.
[52] This trend can be observed at the municipal, regional, and national levels. See Mancosu, Moreno and Riccardo Ladini. "The Red and the Black: Neo-Fascist inheritance in the electoral success of the Lega in Tuscany, Umbria, and Marche," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 25, no. 2 (2020), 197-216.
[53] Art, *Inside the Radical Right*, 146.

Vlaams Blok's lineage to Nazi collaboration in a political culture where the fascist past has been largely condemned has caused great challenges for the party in asserting its legitimacy, despite a substantial electorate for Flemish nationalism. Even when the party attempted to become more mainstream, it failed to distance itself from the fascist past and the *cordon sanitaire* remained in place. The Lega Nord, however, has not been limited by a culture that reviles its Fascist past and its emergence actually has coincided with the shift away from anti-Fascism. The rehabilitation of the Fascist past under the Second Republic has accorded a new legitimacy to populist radical right ideology, facilitating the Lega's shift from a regional nationalist party to a broad-based national party with a populist radical right platform.[54]

Many scholars have focused on the role that political opportunity structures play in the electoral breakthrough stage and have downplayed its impact on party persistence because of the perceived static nature of these broader structures.[55] The Vlaams Belang and Lega cases, however, highlight the role that political opportunity structures play on the trajectory of each party. In both cases, the trends within the cultural environment of the political establishment toward the fascist past have remained relatively consistent. Yet episodes of party volatility and shifts in issue ownership have opened or closed the space available within each country's party system. While the decline of the Volksunie provided space for the Vlaams Blok to rise electorally in the 1990s, the party's ongoing isolation has allowed the LDD and N-VA to co-opt elements of the VB's platform, causing the party to lose portions of its electorate.[56] In Italy, the disintegration of the Popolo della Liberta after the Berlusconi corruption scandals opened up space within the party system for the Lega Nord to combine broad-based populism with a radical right platform that co-opted issues typically represented by the former neo-Fascist right. The Vlaams Belang and Lega's capacity to position themselves as legitimate parties in the parliamentary arena has shaped each party's ability to capitalize on the political space in the system and maintain issue ownership.

The Belgian and Italian cases reinforce David Art's contention that the ways in which political elites deal with the fascist past profoundly shape the opportunities available to the populist radical right within the electoral and political systems.[57] Yet, it is also important to recognize that these narratives are not fixed in place. The breakdown of the anti-Fascist consensus in Italy along with the First Republic created a cultural environment conducive to the populist radical right and accorded a new legitimacy to the neo-Fascist right.

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[54] Bull, "The Role of memory," 219.
[55] Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right in Europe,* 253; Akkerman et. al., *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe,* 18; Kriesi Hanspeter, "Contexts of Party Mobilization," in *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*, eds. Kriesi Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, Timotheos Frey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23-47.
[56] Pauwels, "Explaining the Strange Decline of the Vlaams Belang," 75-79.
[57] See Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right in Europe*, 245; Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria,* 196.

Similar to Italy in the 1990s, some observers have suggested that the anti-fascist consensus within the political establishment has begun to break down in Belgium.[58] In fact, fractures emerged in the *cordon sanitaire* after Belgium's most recent federal election as the N-VA entered into ultimately futile negotiations with the VB.[59] Only time will tell how durable the *cordon sanitaire,* and the anti-Fascist consensus along with it, will remain.

[58] Art, *Inside the Radical Right,* 146.
[59] Jean Benoit Pilet, "Hard Times for Governing Parties: The 2019 Federal elections in Belgium," *Western European Politics* 44, no. 2 (2021): 446-449.

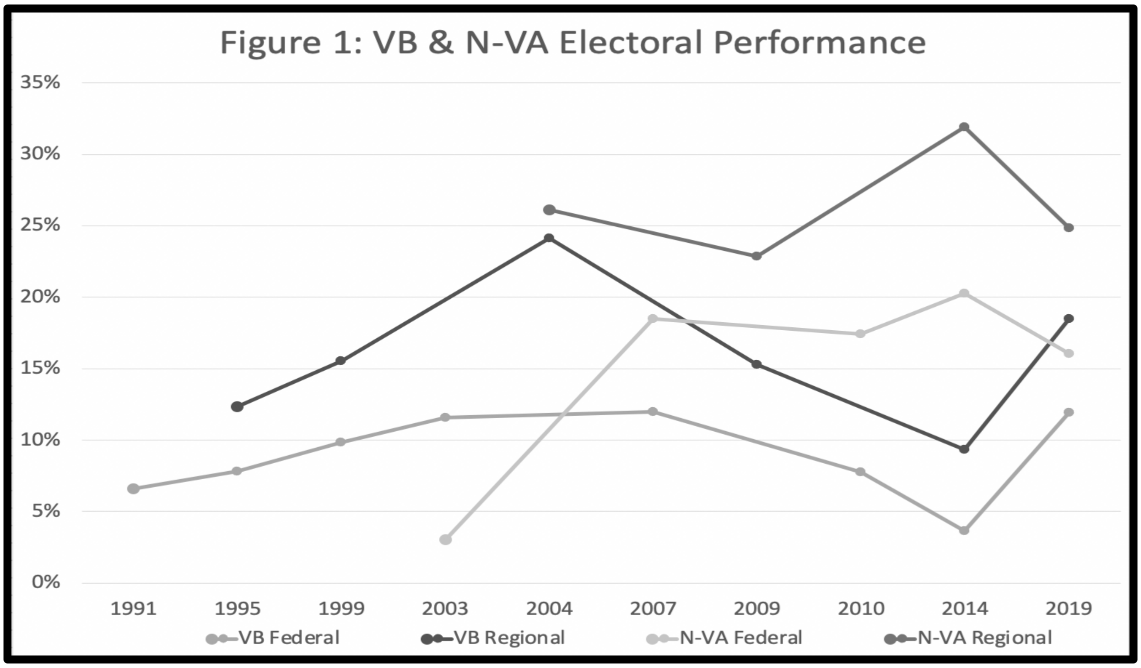
Figure 1: VB & N-VA Electoral Performance
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
1991
1995
1999
2003
2004
2007
2009
2010
2014
2019
VB Federal
VB Regional
N-VA Federal
N-VA Regional

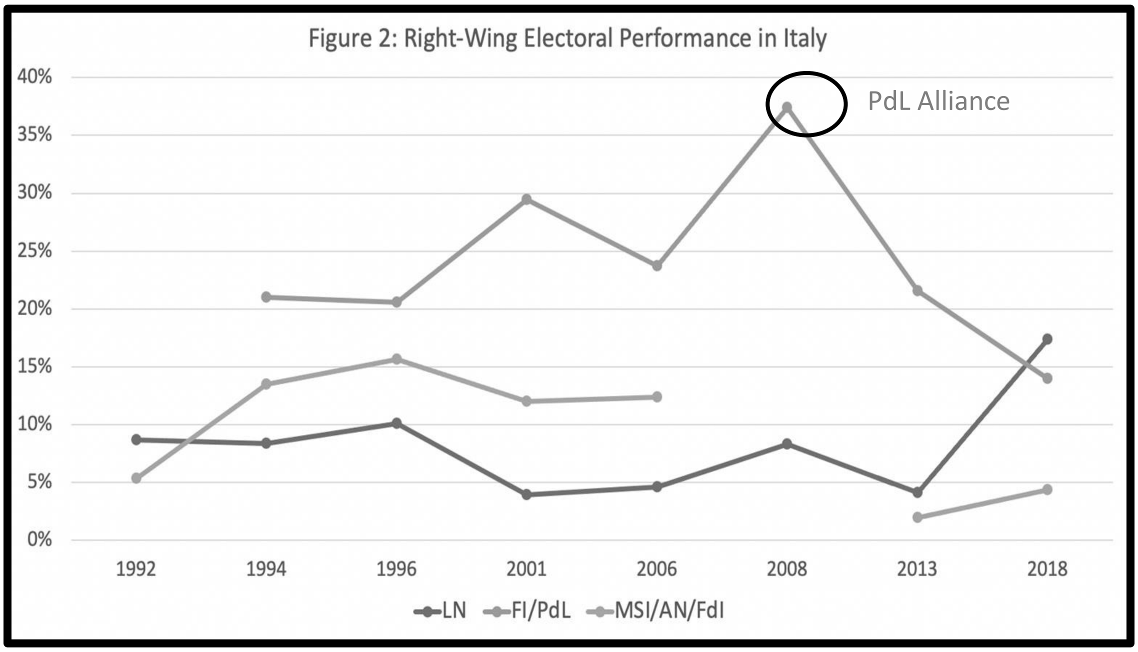
Figure 2: Right-Wing Electoral Performance in Italy
PdL Alliance
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
1992
1994
1996
2001
2006
2008
2013
2018
LN
FI/PdL
MSI/AN/FdI

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Nostalgia and the Post-Communist Russian-Speaking Community

Asya Kvashnina

In her undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto, Asya majored in European Studies and minored in French language and History of Art. Asya's current research interests include Russian and Soviet history and culture with a focus on the issues of estrangement, belonging, memory and nostalgia among contemporary émigré communities.

The phenomenon of nostalgia is studied in the context of multiple scholarly disciplines including history, psychology, philosophy, literary and cultural studies, sociology, political science, and economics. Although in recent years nostalgia acquired a prominent place in scholarly literature, the meaning of this concept remains elusive and uneasy to define. The term 'nostalgia' comes from medicine: in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries doctors understood nostalgia as a medical condition that manifested itself in a yearning of displaced people for a lost home. The medical condition, medical practitioners believed, could be cured by means of different procedures and remedies, such as a trip back home, opium, and leeches.[1] Nostalgia went a long way from the medical sphere into the realm of writers and poets and then gradually entered a wide spectrum of scholarly disciplines. Nostalgia has since become a universal condition of modernity; a "disease of the modern age, a mal du siècle" as argued by the literary scholar Svetlana Boym.[2] Nostalgia is a very human emotion shared by all people. It lies at the core of the modern condition and in many ways shapes our past, present, and future.

In some societies, however, nostalgia tends to be more visible than in others. As recent scholarly studies make clear, post-communist countries are experiencing a wave of nostalgia. Referencing Winston Churchill's famous speech about the Iron Curtain, Mitja Velikonja summarized how post-communist nostalgia is experienced throughout the region: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic what has descended is…nostalgia."[3] This paper will explore the phenomenon of nostalgia in post-communist Russia. The overarching questions that this paper attempts to answer are the following: what is nostalgia? What is the meaning of nostalgia in post-communist Russia? Why did it emerge in Russia, and what are its particular spatial and temporal boundaries? How do Russian-speaking immigrants experience nostalgia? How does nostalgia

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[1] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiv.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Maria Todorova, "Introduction. From Utopia to Propaganda and Back," in *Post-Communist* Nostalgia, eds. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 1.

manifest itself? I will start with a discussion of existing approaches to the understanding of nostalgia in its general meaning. I will then examine nostalgia in post-communist Russia and in Russian-speaking communities abroad. Finally, I will analyze specific manifestations of post-communist nostalgia in Russia.

Nostalgia is a Greek term coined by a Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer in 1688. The roots of the word, *nostos* and *algos*, can be translated as "return home" and "longing or painful condition" respectively.[4] In fact, nostalgia's 'Greek roots' and the meaning implied by Hofer are misleading in that they suggest that nostalgia is primarily a negative emotion related to a lost home. My initial understanding was that nostalgia is a passive longing for a place in the past, a longing for its own sake. This is not to say that this understanding is wrong, rather it is far from the full picture. In my search of a convincing definition, I would like to continue with Svetlana Boym's insight as it provides a comprehensive framework for further discussion and analysis. Boym interprets nostalgia as a "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed", "a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams", and a longing for "unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that became obsolete".[5] Boym suggests that nostalgia is the negative yet inevitable consequence of progress. It is the dark side of modernity. Nostalgia and modernity are inseparable, and one is complementary to the other.[6]

Painting nostalgia in black-and-white, however, is an oversimplification of the story; nostalgia is, in Boym's words, a "defense mechanism" against the increasing speed of modern life.[7] Although progress promised to 'cure' all problematic conditions of humanity, it seems to have failed to do so and instead it has given rise to mass nostalgia. Nostalgia is a natural reaction of humankind to failed promises and unfulfilled desires. Thus, in Boym's interpretation nostalgia is primarily a longing for a time, but for a mythologized time, for a "time out of time".[8] It is a rebellion against the modern understanding of time and progress. Nostalgia and modernity, therefore, provide critical perspectives of one another.[9]

Boym also highlights the complexity of nostalgia: it can be retrospective as well as prospective; it concerns the minds of collectives and individuals; it is universal and divisive; it seems to be apolitical, yet it often serves political interests.[10] These juxtapositions deserve brief discussion. Boym introduces the term "off-modern" to demonstrate the ambiguous nature of nostalgia, as often it is not directed at the past or the future,

4 Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, xiii.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.

but rather "sideways".[11] This term suggests that nostalgia should not be placed in the framework of progress-regress, as nostalgia is more complex and requires a framework of its own. Nostalgia seems to be directed at the past, which can sometimes be as unpredictable as the future. In other words, nostalgia triggers various interpretations and reinterpretations of the past that eventually shape our present and future. Some historians evaluate nostalgia as "history without guilt" that implies rewriting of history and idealization of the past.[12] While I agree with this perspective, I would nevertheless argue that the phenomenon of nostalgia is more complex: in some cases, an idealization of the past, or rather acceptance of the past, is what helps people overcome traumas. This is not to say that the past should not be analyzed and studied from a critical perspective. In fact, I would argue that emergence of nostalgia is evidence of the impossibility and unwillingness of return to the past. However, it also seems that when the past is viewed solely in dark colours, nostalgia becomes more bitter and persistent among certain groups and individuals, as people feel that their identities and values are under threat.

Collectivity lies at the heart of nostalgia, as diverse groups of people share similar nostalgic feelings towards a common past. But collective nostalgia does not cure loneliness, as individuals might long for different aspects of the past and different ideals. I have previously considered nostalgia a universal condition of modernity, yet it is not the same as universal human values such as love, happiness or non-violence – nostalgia can be highly divisive. Nostalgia has the potential of becoming a universal emotion that unites rather than separates, but there are currently many societies that have either gone through or are going through serious turmoil. Recent abrupt ruptures with the past catalyze mass nostalgia for specific historical periods, in which case nostalgia will most likely be divisive. Nevertheless, divisive manifestations of nostalgia are, in my opinion, concealing universal nostalgic feelings for an ideal, mythologized, and almost heaven-like past that never existed. Nostalgia is often used as a political tool that can lead to dangerous consequences, such as unrealistic expectations. Uncritical nostalgia can be highly detrimental and regressive.

Boym distinguishes between two types of nostalgia: the restorative and the reflective.[13] This division between the two types is not absolute as restorative and reflective nostalgias can overlap. Although both types of nostalgia can use the same triggers – such as places, objects, smells, etc. – their manifestations are different. Restorative nostalgia is more tangible, and it lies at the core of recent national and religious revivals, while reflective nostalgia is more elusive and passive as it focuses on the aspect of longing and loss. As Boym states: "[r]estorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt."[14] Restorative

[11] Ibid, xvi-xvii.
[12] Ibid, xiv.
[13] Ibid, xviii.
[14] Ibid.

nostalgia does not see itself as such, and manifests itself in phenomena that are central for constructing national memory and identity such as the return to origins and the exposure of conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia lacks a critical perspective, it is "dead serious" as it aims to restore the ideal national homeland.[15] Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, accepts irony, humor, and ambivalences of human memory. It does not aim to restore the past, but rather seeks to meditate on history and acknowledge the complexity of people's often contradictory perceptions of the past. Reflective nostalgia allows individual truths to be heard. Therefore, restorative and reflective types of nostalgia put national and individual memories into dialogue.

Boym's analysis of nostalgia suggests that it is a distinctively modern condition that emerged and developed primarily in Europe. At the same time, Alastair Bonnet expands the notion of nostalgia and argues that nostalgia should be understood as a less "modern-centric" development.[16] He further argues that nostalgia was not "made in the West" and that nostalgia is a world-wide phenomenon.[17] The central point of Bonnet's interpretation of nostalgia is that it is a universal human condition that is experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, by all people throughout history. Bonnet suggests that nostalgia "transgresses and exceeds the modern world", as it is a backdrop against which things are judged as modern or non-modern, authentic or inauthentic.[18] Modernity 'sharpens' and illuminates emotions and actions associated with nostalgia; however, nostalgia was not born out of modernity but has existed throughout history (although perhaps in different forms). Bonnet does not try to deny the strong connection between nostalgia and modernity, rather he attempts to introduce a broader and more complex understanding of nostalgia. Finally, he draws attention to the positive aspects of nostalgia that "humanize, learn from and colonize the past" as well as successfully fight with "modern alienation".[19] I find that Bonnet's argument is similar to Boym's concept of "off-modern" that challenges the progress-regress framework and complicates the sense of direction in understanding nostalgia. It cannot be denied that nostalgia is universal in the sense that it is experienced by all people in one form or another at some point in their life. Furthermore, acknowledging this universality is crucial for combatting arrogance and the superiority complex that often accompany societies and countries that are under the impression that they are going through unique experiences. Of course, manifestations of and proneness to nostalgia are different across cultures.

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Alastair Bonnett, The Geography of Nostalgia: Global and Local Perspectives on Modernity and Loss (New York: Routledge, 2016), 6.
[17] Ibid., 11.
[18] Ibid., 6-7.
[19] Ibid.

My analysis of post-communist nostalgia will rely on two classifications of nostalgic experiences. First is the classification offered by William J. Havlena and Susan L. Holak that consists of four components: personal nostalgia (direct individual experience); interpersonal nostalgia (indirect individual experience); cultural nostalgia (direct collective experience); and virtual nostalgia (indirect collective experience).[20] Personal nostalgia is based on direct past experiences of an individual, interpersonal nostalgia emerges in response to memories and experiences of other individuals, cultural nostalgia refers to similar nostalgic feelings experienced by a group and contributes to creating a cultural identity, and virtual nostalgia refers to common values and well-known historical events that were never directly experienced by any individuals or groups (often used in marketing strategies).[21] Second is the classification provided by Mitja Velikonja that deals specifically with post-communist countries. Velikonja distinguishes four ways in which East Europeans (including Russians) currently deal with the communist past: antinostalgia (painting the past solely in black colours); amnesia (pretending that the past never happened); historical revisionism (a reinterpretation of the Soviet past); and nostalgia (viewing the Soviet past in rose-coloured glasses). Furthermore, Velikonja draws a line between "firsthand nostalgia" and "secondhand nostalgia", wherein the former implies feeling nostalgic for an era and its attributes by someone who lived in that era, while the latter is nostalgia "stolen from nostalgic narratives of others".[22] Finally, Velikonja distinguishes between the "culture of nostalgia", a top-down process aimed at achieving certain goals, and the "nostalgic culture", a bottom-up process reflective of nostalgic moods in the society.[23]

As Boym points out, maladies of mass nostalgia follow societal upheavals and revolutions.[24] While nostalgic feelings are universal, they become more evident and 'active' in societies that are going through uneasy transformations. Luidmila Mazur introduces the notion of "nostalgia of catastrophes" that describes societal reactions to traumatic experiences, such as wars and revolutions.[25] The memory of the people who live through the catastrophe becomes sharply divided in 'before and after' periods where the past is seen solely in bright colours and the present in dark colours. The "nostalgia of catastrophes" tends to mythologize the past and turn it into an image of a "golden age".[26]

[20] S. L. Holak, A.V. Matveev, and W. J. Havlena, "Nostalgia in Post-Socialist Russia: Exploring Applications to Advertising Strategy," *Journal of Business Research* 61, no. 2 (2008): 173.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Transition: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-Socialist Countries," *East European Politics and Societies* 23, no. 4 (2009): 538-539.
[23] Ibid., 539.
[24] Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, 44.
[25] Liudmila Mazur, "Golden Age Mythology and the Nostalgia of Catastrophes in Post-Soviet Russia," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 57, no. 3–4 (2015): 217-218.
[26] Ibid.

This is the case of post-communist Russia, as contemporary Russian society is dominated by nostalgic moods despite a decent amount of time having passed since the fall of the Soviet Union. It can be argued that the collapse of the Union was not a revolution in the full meaning of the word; nevertheless, the break with the past has been highly traumatic for many Russians. The fall of the Union is recent history, and the memory of Soviet life is alive in the minds of the older generation of Russians who act as one of the main transmitters of socialist values and nostalgic memories. In the case of Russia, it becomes difficult to separate the universal nostalgia for a slower rhythm of time and the nostalgia for the 'good old days' of Soviet life – nostalgia for the USSR seems to be the dominating public narrative as it is connected with a recent event. In Velikonja's classification, Russia belongs to the group of countries that often sees the past through rose-coloured glasses. It seems that all types of nostalgias and all of the term's ambiguities can be found in contemporary Russian society: restorative and reflective; personal, interpersonal, cultural, and virtual nostalgia; firsthand and second-hand nostalgia; and the engagement of both the general public and powerful actors in this nostalgic boom. Indeed, Russia provides rich material for studying nostalgia.

While I will not provide a definitive answer to why Russian society is currently in such nostalgic turmoil (and do not think it is possible to provide one), I will explore the context of nostalgia in Russia and the consequences of nostalgic moods. In many ways the current epidemic of nostalgia in Russia has to do with the future-oriented ideology of the Soviet Union. Boym mentions that the way the Soviet Union came into being was "radically antinostalgic".[27] This is understandable, given that the main rhetoric of the totalitarian regime at the time of its establishment was that of building a better future. This rhetoric was dominant throughout the rest of the Soviet Union's history. Ideology was the main 'mass-product' of the USSR. People grew accustomed to waiting for something better to come in the future, while the present was full of disappointments. There was always, however, something to look forward to: a just society, the conquering of outer space, a world-wide communist revolution, etc.

The early 1990s was another moment of great expectations. Some scholars argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union was hardly a revolution but rather an evolution.[28] There was no mass movement to overthrow the USSR; on the contrary, the majority voted for keeping a reformed Soviet Union.[29] Top authorities were the main initiators of reforms, as the changes were stemming from the top rather than from the general public. There were different elite approaches to the changes that needed to take place – nationalist, communist, and reformist approaches in Ian McAllister and Stephen White's interpretation – but all of them

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[27] Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, 60.
[28] Stephen White, "Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Politics," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 2.
[29] Ibid., 2-4.

were similar in their willingness to keep the Soviet Union and all agreed that its demise was a great disaster for Russia.[30] However, the attempts to reform the USSR from within failed, while the former Soviet nomenklatura was able to preserve many of its governing positions.[31] In my opinion this is only part of the truth, as there was a genuine desire for change among the public, but the revolution/evolution failed to respond to the demand for freedom, protection of human rights, market economy, and other liberal values. The Soviet Union fell apart, but a Soviet mentality in the government persisted. Thus, "[t]he lost potential of political transformation of the country ceded the way to mass nostalgia".[32] I would add that there was a sense of betrayal and deceit among the public. In a time of dramatic political and socio-economical change people turned to the Soviet past in search of stability. Suddenly people felt as if they were immigrants inside their own country.[33]

The stability that the Russians are attracted to is embodied in a certain set of characteristics as revealed by such scholars as Stephen White, Ian McAllister, and Luidmila Mazur. White analyses a survey conducted in 1993, 2001, 2005, and 2008 that encompasses questions about best and worst features of communist rule in Russia.[34] The results show that job security, interethnic peace, and economic stability along with law, order, and equality are seen as the most positive features of the Soviet regime. The most disliked features include excessive bureaucracy, economic stagnation, violation of human rights, corruption, and pollution.[35] This data reveals that Russians are not nostalgic for the Communist regime, but for certain aspects of their life; they judge the past from the perspective of personal convenience. In another survey conducted in 2014 by Mazur, respondents were asked about their attitudes to the changes that took place after the fall of the USSR. Some of the most highly appreciated changes included the ability to travel abroad and the opportunities for personal and professional growth, while the state of the social safety net (education, health care, social security, pension funds) and the implementation of political rights and freedoms evoked the greatest concern.[36]

The image of the past in the minds of the respondents is contradictory, as most respondents acknowledge both the positive and negative aspects of Soviet life. The simplicity or complexity of a respondent's outlook depends on factors such as their socio-economic status and level of education. This acknowledgement, however, co-exists with noticeably high and stable levels of nostalgia. Surveys analyzed by McAllister and White show that a vast majority of respondents answered positively when asked if the demise

[30] Ian McAllister and Stephen White, "Nostalgia for the Demise of the USSR in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine," *Russian Politics* 1, no. 2 (2016): 119.
[31] White, "Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Politics," 2.
[32] Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, 63.
[33] Elena Pourtova, "Nostalgia and Lost Identity," *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 58, no. 1 (2013): 36.
[34] White, "Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Politics," 5.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Mazur, "Golden Age Mythology and the Nostalgia of Catastrophes in Post-Soviet Russia," 222-223.

of the Soviet Union was a disaster.[37] While nostalgic moods are common for Russian society, surveys generally show a reluctance to return to the USSR.[38] Therefore, nostalgia in Russia does not stem from the desire of an actual return to the past. Mazur offers a convincing explanation for the main reasons of nostalgia: nostalgia for one's youth, prevalent among the older generations that have firsthand experience of living in the Soviet Union and dissatisfaction with the present and absence of desired opportunities – attitudes found in all societal groups.[39]

A trend evident in these and other surveys is the spread of nostalgic feelings for the Soviet past among the Russian youth. The excessively pessimistic outlook on the present results in an overly positive image of the Soviet past. Various surveys conducted among the youth demonstrate a generally positive view of the Soviet period. In their study, Valeria Kasamara and Anna Sorokina conducted interviews with Russian university students in three top Moscow universities (Moscow State University, Higher School of Economcs, and Moscow State Institute of International Relations. All respondents were born after the fall of the Soviet Union and thus have no direct experience of Soviet life. The results revealed a striking contrast between the ways students view Soviet life and life in modern Russia. Most students did judge their knowledge of Soviet history as very superficial; nevertheless, in their minds the Soviet Union is associated with everything good and present-day Russia – with everything bad.[40] This is a vivid example of second-hand nostalgia.

The analysis of the interviews allowed the researchers to detect five dichotomies upon which the students based their comparisons of the USSR and Russia. First is the "friendly atmosphere, reciprocal help vs. lack of mutual trust, feelings of hatred, hostility".[41] Students tend to see the Soviet Union as a fairy-tale place where everyone is happy, friendly, and smiling; where there is no hatred between people and, most importantly, no national hatred. Second is the dichotomy of "Soviet unifying idea vs. lack of national idea".[42] Students believe that the unifying ideology of the USSR and its future-oriented nature gave people hope for the future and something worth living for, whereas modern Russia lacks cohesion and societal orientation. Third, Soviet cultural accomplishments were contrasted with the lack of authenticity and pro-Western domination in contemporary Russian culture.[43] Students highly value Soviet cinema, ballet, and literature while they think of modern trends in Russian culture as inauthentic and similar to those of the West. Fourth,

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[37] McAllister and White, "Nostalgia for the Demise of the USSR in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine," 121.
[38] Mazur, "Golden Age Mythology and the Nostalgia of Catastrophes in Post-Soviet Russia," 235.
[39] Ibid., 224.
[40] Valeria Kasamara and Anna Sorokina, "Post-Soviet Collective Memory: Russian Youths about Soviet Past," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 48, no. 2–3 (2015): 140.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 141.
[43] Ibid.

students associated the Soviet Union with social security and present-day Russia with the lack of a social safety net.[44] Students paid special attention to the guaranteed work placement, free education, and free medical care that were available in the past. They also expressed the view that the contemporary Russian state does not take any responsibility for its citizens and as a result, people do not have confidence in their future. Finally, from the perspective of the students the Soviet Union was a great world power while contemporary Russia is seen as weak and corrupt.[45] The state of present-day Russia and its future are clearly painted in dark colours.[46] Thus, Russian youth are turning to the recent past in search of security, stability, as well as an identity rooted in the former might of the USSR. Soviet life thus becomes mythologized and that leads to an unrealistic and highly idealized image of the USSR and an overly pessimistic image of modern Russia.

Mazur interprets the idealization of the Soviet past coupled with the "nostalgia of catastrophes" as a "Soviet golden age myth", which is a term that successfully describes public attitudes found in analyzed surveys.[47] The essence of the "Soviet golden age myth", and of any myth, is that it creates a one-dimensional and oversimplified image of the past when the 'happy' past is perceived in opposition to the 'unhappy' present. As Mazur suggests, golden age myths emerge in response to the "nostalgia of catastrophes".[48] The golden age myth has several variations one of which is the "myth of prosperity (paradise myth)".[49] Mazur traces the roots of this myth back to Ovid's poem that describes the times of the dawn of human civilization when everyone was "healthy, happy, and well fed".[50] This myth entered the sphere of psychology and became an archetype of consciousness. The myth of prosperity dominates the respondents' perception of the USSR that is treated nearly as heaven on earth where everyone felt safe, stable, protected, and confident. Another variation is the "myth of achievement" that stems from the period of Renaissance when a happy life meant a rich intellectual life. The respondents, including the youth, think of the Soviet period as the golden age of scientific, cultural, artistic, economic, and athletic achievements. While there were certainly such achievements, the respondents tend to take them out of their historical context. The final variation is the "myth of power" that implies the perception of the USSR as a great power with a strong leadership and a mighty military, as a unified nation with a grand mission. This myth has a long history and dates back to the Roman Empire where the state and heroic history were raised to the level of worship. Mazur contends that in the case of contemporary Russia all

[44] Ibid., 142-143.
[45] Ibid., 143-144.
[46] Ibid., 140-144.
[47] Mazur, "Golden Age Mythology and the Nostalgia of Catastrophes in Post-Soviet Russia," 231.
[48] Ibid., 232.
[49] Ibid., 233.
[50] Ibid.

three variations of the myth of the golden age (prosperity, achievement, and power) are in place which indicates that a super-myth is born.[51]

From my perspective, Mazur's study is very successful in investigating the nature of nostalgic moods in Russia. She demonstrates how the universal nostalgia for a 'lost paradise' overlaps with the nostalgia for a recent historical period. The "Soviet golden age myth" embodied in its three variations – the myths of prosperity, achievement, and power – conceals universal longing for a 'lost paradise', a longing that existed throughout history and is not unique for contemporary Russia, although in present-day Russia this myth is remarkably persistent. Most surveys show a general reluctance to return to the USSR, but the mythologization of the Soviet past and the absence of critical narratives have led to the intensification of collective nostalgic moods. The youth is the age group that has no direct experience of Soviet life but, nevertheless, transmits the "Soviet myth of the golden age". When the witnesses of the events all pass away, the Russian cultural environment might become dominated by this second-hand nostalgia of the current Russian youth.

While post-communist nostalgia has serious negative implications, nostalgia arguably also has important positive aspects that are especially evident on the level of individual lived experiences. Post-communist nostalgia is a natural defense mechanism that emerged in response to the traumatic collapse of the Soviet Union and the turbulent times of transition. The emergence of nostalgia means that the return to the past is neither possible nor desired. As Boym notes, "[n]ostalgia relies on temporal and spatial distance".[52] Once there is a feeling that the resurrection of the past is possible, nostalgia fades away. Boym provides the example of the accident with the Russian nuclear submarine "Kursk". When the public realized that the cover-up of the accident was done in a "Soviet-style" that made people feel helpless, post-communist nostalgia experienced a serious setback.[53] Nostalgia co-exists with the acknowledgment that the return to the past is impossible. However, nostalgia provides a link with the past that often helps people move on in their lives. I agree with Elena Pourtova's argument that the emergence of nostalgia (at the level of an individual) happens after the past traumas are already lived through. Thus, nostalgia is a sign of development of a new identity that allows the individual to accept the past and the present without contrasting them.[54] This statement conflicts with the "Soviet golden age myth" that is based on the opposition of the past and the present; however this should not be treated as a contradiction, but rather as a reflection of the ambiguity of nostalgia. In my opinion, the "Soviet golden age myth" and building one's new identity with the help of nostalgia indicate the distinction between national and individual nostalgia as well as between restorative and reflective nostalgia. I will explore these

[51] Ibid, 234.
[52] Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, 72.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Pourtova, "Nostalgia and Lost Identity," 48-49.

positive effects of nostalgia through the example of Russian-speaking immigrants in the United States and Israel.

In her 2014 study of Soviet-era folk song festivals in the midwestern United States, Amy Garey investigated the way a distinct identity of Russian-speaking immigrants emerged out of the way they discussed Americans, Russians, and Soviets. The immigrants revived the tradition of the KSP (*Klub Samodeiatel'noi Pesni,* or Club of Amateur Song) that began in the Soviet Union. Through discourse analysis of the participants' interviews, Garey demonstrates that post-communist nostalgia acts as a unifying power for the participants of the festival. Although the composition of the festivals is multiethnic as there are many Russian Jews and Ukrainians as well as native Russians, they tend to call themselves 'Russian' in the context of the festival. 'Russian' becomes associated with "public", "authentic", and sincere; while 'American' is linked to "private", "inauthentic", and insincere.[55] This type of 'Russianness' is thus created in the context of a three-term contrast: American, Russian, and Communist. Post-communist nostalgia in the Russian-speaking immigrant community served as a means of building a new identity that emerged in the American context. While the festival is a nostalgic undertaking, it is also a way of reproducing tradition, dealing with the past, and interpreting the present.[56]

Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport explore nostalgia among Russian-Jewish students who immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s. Interviewed students were those who felt a need to visit their former home after spending some time in Israel. Authors suggest that the nostalgic feelings that led the students to make a trip to their old home contributed to building their new identities in their new home. The emergence of the new identity is linked with the separation from the native home that happens in three steps: linking up with the familiar, distancing from the old home, and appraising personal growth in the new home.[57] Under influence of nostalgic feelings, interviewed students decided to visit their homeland because they wanted to go back to familiar experiences and see their family and friends. However, once they were back in Russia, they felt that they do not see themselves living there anymore. Russia had changed since the time they had lived there. This acknowledgement led the students to see how much they themselves have changed, and as such gained psychological and professional growth and experienced identity expansion (through appreciation of their Jewish origins).[58] This study supports my argument that nostalgia fades away once the resurrection of the past seems possible. During their visits home, the students were confronted with

[55] Amy Garey, "Soviet Reflections: Music, Nostalgia and Personhood among (Post-)Soviet Immigrants in America," *Hagar* 12, no. 1 (2014): 58.
[56] Ibid., 66-67.
[57] Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport, "Visit, Separation, and Deconstructing Nostalgia: Russian Students Travel to Their Old Home," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 29, no. 1 (2000): 40.
[58] Ibid., 51.

a familiar reality, but they did not associate themselves with their former home anymore. In this case, nostalgia serves as a healing mechanism that allows the students to build new lives in Israel.

I now move to an examination of three specific manifestations of post-communist nostalgia. First is an internet group on VKontakte (the Russian analogue of Facebook) called "Nostalgia for the USSR" (*Nostal'giya po SSSR*) (see fig. 1). The image chosen for the group's cover shows happy and smiling working people. The description states: "Those who do not remember their past and cannot find things to be proud of do not have a future." Further information about the group mentions that it does not touch upon politics or 'negative' materials, rather the group is dedicated to the best and warmest memories of Soviet time. This group is a common and straightforward example of virtual nostalgia, and it confirms all elements of the "Soviet golden age myth" discussed above, with less attention to the "myth of power" as it attempts to be apolitical. The "myth of paradise" is embodied in various images displaying either laughing or smiling students, workers, chess players, etc., with inscriptions such as "How much fun was it back then!". Much attention is paid to posts featuring Soviet actors as well as Soviet movies and cartoons – a reflection of the "myth of achievement". It would not be an exaggeration to say that people of all ages grew up watching Soviet cinema, so these kinds of images evoke personal rather than virtual nostalgia.

There are a few posts featuring Soviet leaders such as Lenin, Stalin, and Brezhnev, with the Brezhnev period treated as a period of calmness and confidence. Many posts are dedicated to Soviet interiors that look very colourful and cozy and to Soviet accessories and food such as radios, watches, sugar, and gum (see fig. 2). Interestingly, posts displaying long lines in grocery stores are also a prominent part of the group. This is related to a nostalgia for 'sociality' and interpersonal connections that were common for Soviet life. While it is hard to remain apolitical in the context of such a group, the title of the group ("Nostalgia for the USSR") speaks for itself: viewers should not be expecting an attempt at an objective interpretation, but rather a compilation of carefully selected representations of the Soviet past.

Fig. 1. VKontakte group "Nostalgia for the USSR", cover page.

Fig. 2. VKontakte group "Nostalgia for the USSR", Soviet interiors.

Another example of virtual nostalgia is the trademark *Prostokvashino* that uses imagery from a famous Soviet children's cartoon series to evoke nostalgia. *Prostokvashino* operates under the Russian branch of Danone and produces dairy products such as milk, sour cream, cottage cheese, yogurt, etc. The title of the trademark features the name of the village *Prostokvashino* where the action of the cartoon takes place and uses one of the main characters – the cat Matroskin – as its symbol on packaging (see fig. 3). Research shows that using nostalgia is a highly successful marketing solution that significantly increases the volume of sales.[59] Both the title "*Prostokvashino*" and the image of the cat are familiar to an overwhelming majority of Russians and work extremely well in evoking an emotional response. *Prostokvashino*, therefore, reaches a very broad spectrum of consumers, including youth. *Prostokvashino* products trigger two overlapping nostalgic narratives: the first associated with nostalgia for one's (post-)Soviet childhood, and the second – with nostalgia for an era when food was produced in the countryside and thus was of better quality. These two narratives work in tandem as Soviet food is associated with 'natural' food and care of the state for the health of its citizens.

Fig. 3. *Prostokvashino* milk and cottage cheese.

[59] S. L. Holak, A.V. Matveev, and W. J. Havlena, "Nostalgia in Post-Socialist Russia," 173-174.

Finally, I discuss one of the most popular instances of virtual nostalgia in present-day Russia: the works of Anton Lapenko, an actor who is primarily famous for creating YouTube and Instagram content. He started by creating short videos featuring different 'Soviet types' of people such as the Engineer, the Journalist hosting a tv-show called "The Mystery of the Hole", the Leader of a gang called "Iron Sleeves", and the (fictional) Singer Vsevolod Starozubov among others (see fig. 4). In 2019 Lapenko co-created a web-series "Inside Lapenko" that 'exploded' the internet and became popular across the country. The series featured the previous characters as well as some new ones. Lapenko himself is the only actor performing all the characters (with some minor assistance). The genre of the content that he creates is difficult to define, but generally it is a sketch of the 1980-1990s in a humorous manner.

The main 'ingredient' of his videos and the reason for their tremendous popularity is nostalgia for a simple and sincere life. The main feature of the short videos and the web-series is the atmosphere of the Soviet era. Lapenko pays careful attention to various details of Soviet life including furniture, dishes, and clothing. He succeeds in keeping a balance between love of his characters and funny and absurd conversations and situations that they experience. Lapenko's works are full of warmth and kindness and thus offer viewers an escape from current realities into their past. Thus, Lapenko is successful in evoking a 'healing' nostalgia that allows one to move forward through the acknowledgment of the past. His characters are very naïve and they say and do absurd things, making it clear that these characters would never fit in the present. Moreover, his works, while remaining a form of entertainment, offer an image of the past that is far from ideal. The Engineer constantly makes mistakes while working in his laboratory, the Journalist is clearly exaggerating some events so that they seem more mysterious, and the song that the Singer performs consists of one phrase that he enthusiastically repeats ("Lala-hey"). There is no attempt to glorify the past. Lapenko explores the lives of ordinary Soviet citizens and some invented Soviet celebrities while remaining apolitical. At the same time, Lapenko encourages viewers to accept these characters despite the silly and often stupid things they say and do. This acceptance, which should ideally come along with the wide acknowledgement of negative and positive aspects of the past, is a step towards overcoming the traumas of transition.

Fig. 4. Characters of the web-series "Inside Lapenko", from left to right: the Engineer, the Journalist, the Leader of the gang "Iron Sleeves", the Singer (Vsevolod Starozubov).

In conclusion, nostalgia is a universal condition that has accompanied people throughout history and that has become more visible in the era of modernity. As I have demonstrated in this paper, nostalgia has multiple faces that make it difficult to grasp yet important to acknowledge. While nostalgia relates to the past, it has a profound influence on the present. In some instances, nostalgia pushes individuals to change their lives for the better. Nostalgic feelings force people to look back at their past and deal with the traumas that they have experienced. Nostalgia invites people to reflect on their lives and ask questions about their identity. On the other hand, an epidemic of nostalgia – a natural response to societal calamities – leads to the creation of myths about the past and often becomes a tool for political manipulation. Nostalgia has left a deep imprint on post-Soviet Russia by penetrating all spheres of society. People are trying to make sense of the traumatic changes that took place in the 1990s. The desire for democratization and liberalization did not yield expected results, neither did the attempts to deal with the past, such as the failed attempt to prosecute the Communist Party. Modern Russia is a curious case of coexistence of genuine nostalgia for one's Soviet life and manufactured nostalgic narratives. Russian-speaking immigrants experience similar moods. Their nostalgia, however, often serves primarily as an actor of positive change and of building a sense community far from home.

Manifestations of post-communist nostalgia reveal a high interest of the public in the Soviet past and various attempts to understand it. Some examples of such manifestations are problematic and demonstrate a lack of historical knowledge, while others are more successful in bringing forward the complexities of the past. Nostalgic motifs are widely used for marketing purposes, a trend that is rather indicative of the rapid development of market economy. Overall, nostalgia emerges when the past is impossible to return to and when people have parted with the past but are not yet ready to accept the new reality. Nostalgia provides a safe ground and continuity. Nostalgia, in its good and bad forms, will always be a part of our lives. Bonnet suggests that one day, when the universe becomes cold and lifeless, there will be no more life anywhere, and consequently there will be nostalgia for existence on Earth.[60] Hypothetically speaking, will this kind of nostalgia perhaps be the most non-divisive type of nostalgia that will finally fully reconcile humankind? This is a matter requiring further thought.

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[60] Bonnett, The Geography of Nostalgia, 11.

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A Tale of Three Countries: Did the UN Human Rights Council do anything for Central Asia?

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Introduction

Human rights are a relatively recent concept, especially when talking about international human rights. The diffusion of these concepts has, however, been unequal. A region that fails to produce human rights that meet international standards is Central Asia. This region is isolated between powers that do not have a history of respecting these norms, such as Russia, China, and Iran. Many of these states still score, in most cases, near rock bottom on their freedom scores.[1] The international system has been trying to address this problem, most notably within the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which replaced the UN Human Rights Commission in the hope that it would result in improvement on a global scale.[2]

It seems that the Council is failing to have an effect over the region of Central Asia, but is this, in fact, the case? Furthermore, how did the replacement of the UN Commission on Human Rights by the UNHRC affect the situation of human rights in Central Asia? I will argue that the changes, or lack thereof, in the region can be attributed to three types of actors: those who are not interested in change, those working actively against change, and those who want the changes, but are ill-equipped to go through with them. The two former actors are working against the third one, which is the UNHRC. Finally, I will argue that the third actor does not produce exclusively positive effects.

In order to argue this position, I will start by making a case selection which will allow the paper to cover as much of the region as possible, while keeping a reasonable length. This will be followed by a literature review consisting of three sections, which will respectively address the relation human rights governance has

[1] "Freedom in the World 2018," Freedom House. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2018-table-country-scores

[2] Paul Gordon Lauren, "'To Preserve and Build on Its Achievements and to Redress Its Shortcomigs': The Journey from the Commission on Human Rights to the Human Rights Council" *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2007): 307-345.

with strategic interests, institutional strength, and the 'naming and shaming' method. This will be followed by a process tracing of the states previously selected.

Case Selection

Performing a comprehensive process tracing of all five countries in the region would be too overwhelming for this paper. In order to make a case selection within the region that is representative of the situation, reports from Freedom House will be used to quantify the general trends of political and civil rights in Central Asia.[3] Political and civil rights will be treated separately, not only because Freedom House provides the information to easily do so, but because a change in one of the two categories can be dwarfed by an inverse shift in the other, and thus go unnoticed if the categories are aggregated. Once these trends are apparent, a selection of relevant cases will be made. Such selection will be aimed at representing the main trends in Central Asia and possible deviations. This allows for the analysis to cover the most ground possible while respecting restrictions by reducing any repetitions that are to be expected in countries following the same trend. Appendices 1 and 2 show political and civil liberties ranking in Central Asia according to Freedom House since 2000.[4] The timeframe of the study will range from 2000 to 2017. This will allow the analysis to start at the period where Central Asian states stabilized their authority following the collapse of the Soviet Union,[5] and end with the first peaceful transition of power between two elected leaders in the region when Sooronbay

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[3] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: the Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York and Washington, 2009), 382; 398; 704; 739; 772; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2010: Global Data," *Wayback Machine*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://web.archive.org/web/20100215035840/http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw10/FIW_2010_Tables_and_Graphs.pdf ; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011: Table of Independent Countries," *Wayback Machine*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://web.archive.org/web/20111008223800/http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/Tables%2C%20Graphs%2C%20etc%2C%20FIW%202011_Revised%201_11_11.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2012: The Arab Uprisings and their Global Repercussions – selected data from Freedom House's annual survey of political rights and civil liberties," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/FIW%202012%20Booklet--Final.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2013: Democratic Breakthroughts in the Balance – selected data from Freedom House's annual survey of political rights and civil liberties," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW%202013%20Booklet_0.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2014," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW2014%20Booklet.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2015," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/01152015_FIW_2015_final.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2016," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2016.pdf; "Freedom in the World 2017," *Freedom House*. Accessed on October 21, 2018. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FIW_2017_Report_Final.pdf; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2018".

[4] Ibid.

[5] Henry E. Hale, "25 Years After The USSR: What's Gone Wrong?" *Journal of Democracy* 27, no.3 (July 2016): 26-27.

Jeenbekov took over from Almazbek Atambayev in the flawed but competitive 2017 Kyrgyz presidential election.[6]

Following this, it is then possible to see three main trends in the region. The first trend is constantly having the worst grades that Freedom House can give, which represents the cases of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The second case is constantly low grades with a worsening of the situation as time goes on, which is the case of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The third trend is Kyrgyzstan where their scores vary slightly with the democratic revolutions that take place in the country. Uzbekistan will be analyzed instead of Turkmenistan since information is more accessible. Tajikistan will represent the second category since it also saw a dip in civil liberties which Kazakhstan did not. Kyrgyzstan will be analyzed as being the sole representative of its trend (see appendices 1 and 2).

Strategic Effects

According to Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink's spiral model, which uses a constructivist approach to international relations, better monitoring should lead to the diffusion of human rights norms. If this were the case, increased monitoring would mean that human rights infringing countries would not be able to stop the monitoring from reporting the violations going on in the country. These countries would be shamed by other actors. If the shaming was to be challenged by the country, it would lead to more repression, which, in turn, would lead to partner states coercing the country to enact a change in policy.[7] The reason why current monitoring efforts are not efficient is because the level of repression prevents groups from bringing the situation to the attention of the international community.[8] This hurdle should, however, be cleared by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is supposed to do thorough evaluations in such countries on a periodic basis.[9] Krishna Chaitanya Vadlamannati, Nicole Janz, and Øyvind Isachsen Berntsen go ever further saying that the shaming used by the Council is, on its own, able to start the 'spiral model'.[10]

However, there are several reasons why this could not happen. Amongst the most obvious ones are the strategic interests linked to the human rights-infringing state which may be too high for its diplomatic

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[6] "Competitive Kyrgyzstan presidential election provides for orderly transfer of power, although cases of misuse of public resources, pressure and vote buying remain a concern, international observers say," *OSCE*. Last modified October 16, 2017. https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/350016.

[7] Thomas Risse, and Kathryn Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Practices," in *The Power of Human Rights: Internaitonal Norms and Domestic Politics*, eds. Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Popp, and Kathryn Sikkink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20.

[8] Ibid, 22.

[9] Hilary Charlesworth, and Emma Larking, *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review: Rituals and Ritualism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 2015), 2-4.

[10] Krishna Chaitanya Vadlamannati, Nicole Janz, and Øyvind Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI: Effects of the UN Human Rights Commission and Council," *World Development* 104 (2018), 224.

partners to intervene. Even if we accept that there is a cost for democratic regimes to keep close ties with countries that infringe on human rights, this cost might still be lower than the advantages of keeping that relationship. These benefits range from trade benefits, to security assistance, or to stabilization. All these elements could possibly outweigh any costs of continued alliance with a human rights-infringing country[11].

During the early twenty-first century, the "War on Terror" took a central role in security relations between states. Therefore, it is logical to assume that countries who are willing to help or who face a similar threat receive some leniency for their own repression. This would be especially the case for countries like the United States, based on the same mechanism it used during the Cold War with allied regimes. However, the idea that countries facing terrorism have more leeway for human rights abuses is disputed. Victor Asal, Kathleen Deloughery, and Amanda Murdie instead claim that more terrorist activities will lead to more shaming from the international community; this is even more likely if the targets of the attack were 'Westerners' and even more if they are American.[12]

Strength of Other Institutions

While the 'spiral model' assumes that the reaction of international institutions will be to shame human rights offenders, this is not necessarily the case.[13] In fact, institutions can work against the effects that another institution produces. International institutions are not by nature pro-human rights. If an organization works to promote human rights and brings more public awareness to a problem, another institution could undermine these efforts by actively working to hide infringements or to discredit human rights proponents. It could also be supportive of the regime which creates a situation of international sponsoring where the human rights abusing state is, at worst, a contested regime, or at best, a regime that flourishes.[14] This would cause regimes to be less afraid of potential international sanctions since they could always fall back on other actors who support their actions. Meanwhile, from an economic point of view, the losses that could be encountered by the actions of the Council could possibly be absorbed by mechanisms from other institutions who could provide with investments themselves.[15]

[11] Oisín Tansey, *The International Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.
[12] Victor Asal, Kathleen Deloughery, and Amanda Murdie, "Responding to Terrorism? Human Rights Organization Shaming and Terrorist Attacks," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, no. 3 (2016), 247-251.
[13] Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Practices," 20.
[14] Tansey, The International Politics of Authoritarian Rule, 61.
[15] Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI," 225-226.

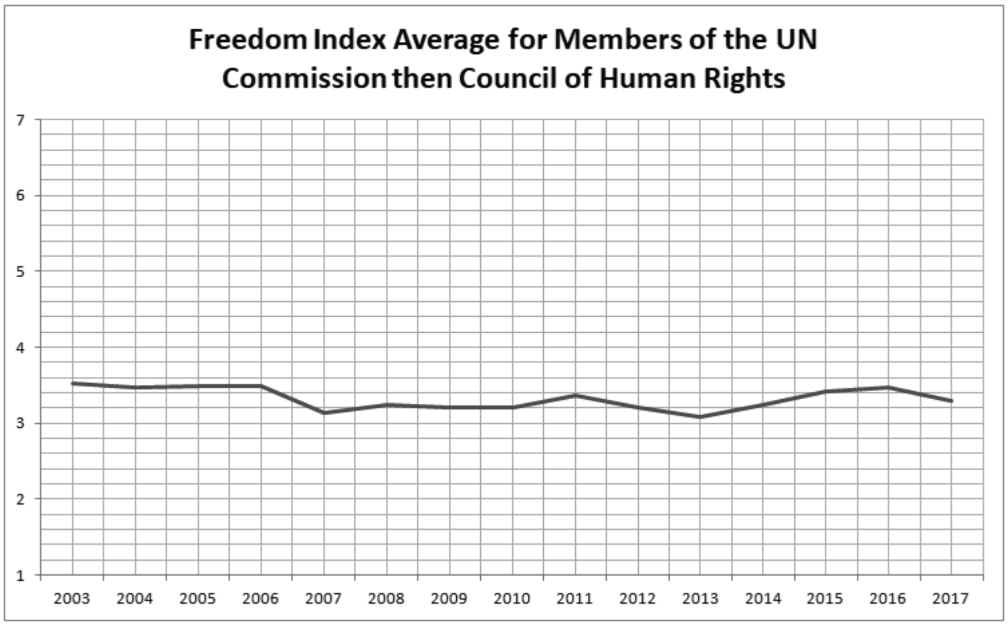
Strength of Shaming and Monitoring

While the two previous elements are important, as they are elements that can prevent the Council from being effective, the main element for change in the Central Asian case at the adoption of the Council is the strength of the Council itself. The reason for this is quite simple: the strategic concerns that were present during the period of the Commission stayed present and arguably unchanged with the Council. Other institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are in a similar situation. They existed before the Council and survived its creation. The Council, and therefore its power to monitor and to shame actors, is the main element that varied during those two periods. Taking that into consideration, lack of change during this period could be caused by many elements, but the presence of changes has a higher probability of being caused by the creation of the Council. It is therefore important to develop a stronger theoretical framework.

However, to understand the real effect of the change from the Commission to the Council, it is important to understand whether the change accomplished its aim, at least mechanically. That is, to prevent human rights-infringing countries from having a seat in the institution, in order to shield themselves from sanctions and prevent the institution from being effective.[16] In order to do so, a data set was built to synthesize the average respect of human rights by members of the institution for a given year, and then this information was used to further compare the institutions (Graphic 1). In order to do so, the proxy for the respect of human rights will be the score given to a state in Freedom House's reports for the years in which a state was sitting on the Commission or the Council.[17] This information is available on the website of the institution.[18] If a change is perceptible between the two institutions, then the reform had the intended effect on the membership composition, and, at least theoretically, on human rights enforcement.

[16] Gordon Lauren, "'To Preserve and Build on Its Achievements and to Redress Its Shortcomings'," 329-336.
[17] Freedom House, *Freedom of the World*; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2010"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2012"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2013"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2014"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2015"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2016"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2017"; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2018".
[18] "CHR Membership and Bureau," *OHCHR*. Accessed on November 25, 2018. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/PastMembers.aspx; "List of past members of the Human Rights Council," *OHCHR*. Accessed on November 25, 2018. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/PastMembers.aspx.

Graphic 1.



A linear regression (Table 1) was then made in order to assess the effect of the change. In order to do so, an independent variable where the Commission was coded as '1' and the Council as '0' was added and put in relation to the average human rights records of sitting members during their mandate. The bivariate analysis of the model showed a strong and statistically significant relationship, with 99% certainty that the result was not due to chance. The constant was at 3.26 and the Commission had an average score that was higher by 0.23. The standard error did not cross 0; we can therefore be confident of the direction of the relationship. It is important to note that a lower score is associated with greater respect of human rights.

Therefore, we can see that the change did cause a variation in the results that is statistically significant in the expected direction. However, instead of bolstering the counter-argument, it actually hinders it. Indeed, this result should mean that countries would not be able to shield themselves, but the human rights situation still got worse. Therefore, there must be another reason for why that monitoring did not lead to changes.

Table 1.

Model Summary

Model	*R*	*R Square*	*Adjusted R Square*	*Std. Error of the Estimate*	*Durbin-Watson*
	.733[a]	.537	.501	.10268	1.340

a. Predictors: (Constant), VAR00003

b. Dependent Variable: VAR00002

Coefficients

Model		*Unstandardized Coefficients*		*Standardized Coefficients*		
		B	*Std. Error*	*Beta*	*t*	*Sig.*
1	(Constant)	3.260	.031		105.306	.000
	VAR00003	.233	.060	.733	3.883	.002

a. Dependent Variable: VAR00002

As said earlier, the UPR was supposed to bring more thorough monitoring of human rights around the globe. This new regulation was also supposed to directly improve the situation overall by providing the population with the means to improve the conditions within the country by bolstering the power of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[19] This method also directly cited that it would lead to "'norm infiltration' and 'norm cascade'."[20] The technique of "naming and shaming"[21] is especially popular in that view on the effect of monitoring on human rights situation. However, the effects of such a technique are disputed.

Emilie Hafner-Burton identified three possible outcomes. The first one is 'cheap talk,' where shaming is inefficient due to the reduced power of the media and NGOs, and the lack of legitimacy of the UN.[22] While the article considers the Commission illegitimate, and points to statistically significant improvement for human rights respect by members of the Council, the substantive significance of that relation can be established by whether the change provided the new institution with the new legitimacy, and therefore enforcement capacity.[23] The second outcome is 'unintended consequences' where human rights-infringing governments pre-emptively cracked down on opposition to prevent instability. This case is specified to be more probabilistic if violent means are used by the opposition. The third outcome is that the international pressure will lead the regime to abandon those crackdown mechanisms. Hafner-Burton's findings claim that repression is harsher in countries after being shamed.[24] However, elements such as democratic regimes can be a factor which increases the efficiency of shaming methods.[25] This relation between the respect of human rights has been upheld several times.[26] Sara E. Lahti goes in a similar direction when she says that campaigns, if they catch global instead of domestic attention, can backfire by allowing rulers to depict any improvement of the situation of human rights as a weakness in front of foreign actors.[27] Taking that into consideration, it can be hypothesized that the spotlight that the Council brought over countries like the ones of Central Asia should increase human rights abuses. This is because, except for arguably Kyrgyzstan at very specific periods, the regimes of the region are not democratic.

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[19] Charlesworth and Larking, *Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review*, 13.
[20] Ibid, 16-19.
[21] Emilie Hafner-Burton, "Stick and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem," *International Organization* 62 (2008): 689-716.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Gordon Lauren, "'To Preserve and Build on Its Achievements and to Redress Its Shortcomings'," 332-336.
[24] Hafner-Burton, "Stick and Stones," 692-701.
[25] Ibid, 703.
[26] Daniel W. Hill Jr., and Zachary M. Jones, "An Empirical Evaluation of Explanations for State Repression," *American Political Science Review* 108, no.3 (2014): 663; Todd Landman, "Democracy and Human Rights: Concepts, Measures, and Relationship," *Politics and Governance* 6, no.1 (2018): 54.
[27] Sara E. Lahti, "The Limits of Shock and Shame: An Ethnographic Case Analysis of the Naming and Shaming Technique to Promote Human Rights for the *Taalibe* Qu'ranic School Students of Senegal," *Human Rights Quarterly* 40, no.3 (2018): 608.

Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen propose five hypotheses linking shaming and foreign direct investments (FDI). These hypotheses are that the shaming will reduce these investments, that shaming by the Council will have a stronger correlation than one by NGOs, that stronger Council sanctions will have more effect than milder ones, that those effects will only take effect if reported by the media, and that human rights abuse in general reduces those investments, but in a weaker measure than actions from the Council.[28] They find that most of these hypotheses are correct, but that milder Council actions and NGO condemnations are insignificant for FDI.[29]

Process Tracings

In order to conduct a chronological process tracing of the situation in these countries, Human Rights Watch reports, which began to publish more detailed, country-specific entries for the events in 2004, will be used. This allows us to get a glimpse of the situation shortly before the implementation of the Council, and therefore to view what were the changes since then and the potential causes of them.

Effectiveness of the Council and Uzbekistan

For Uzbekistan, the starting point is quite straightforward, with the first sentence in the report stating: "Uzbekistan's disastrous human rights record is long-standing and changed little in 2004."[30] It specifies that the government is not responsive to international pressure. It also puts forward the tendency of Uzbekistan to qualify all opposition as Islamic Terrorism and the state's frequent use of torture.[31] This tendency to portray the opposition as fundamentalists will be relevant later.

In 2004, Uzbekistan claimed two terrorist attacks occurred in its territory.[32] While the Commission has imposed strict monitoring on Uzbekistan and has intensely criticized it, the country still received strong military and financial support from the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) since Uzbekistan was an important actor of the War on Terror.[33] The following year was an important one for human rights in Uzbekistan, as the Andijon massacre took place, which was a complex event that cannot be fully explored in this essay. The people of Andijon, in the religious Ferghana Valley, protested the arrests of local businessmen, who had been accused of being members of Akromiya.[34] Akromiya is an alleged terrorist organization, but the

[28] Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI," 225-226.
[29] Ibid, 225-231.
[30] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005: Events of 2004* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2005), 446.
[31] Ibid, 446-448.
[32] Ibid, 446.
[33] Ibid, 450-451.
[34] Fiona Hill and Kevin Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution: The Reaction to Andijon," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2006): 118.

group's involvement in any violent crime is disputed.[35] The protest turned into a bloodbath when security forces arrived in front of an enthusiastic crowd, happy to see President Islom Karimov taking their demands seriously, and then opened fire[36]. This event was thoroughly documented by UN institutions.[37] Furthermore, the Organization for the Security and Cooperation for Europe (OSCE) tried to produce a report of the events but their entry was refused by the regime.[38] Interestingly enough, the American government broke their bilateral relations with Tashkent due to this event.[39]

After Andijon, Uzbekistan became the first country with which the EU broke their Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.[40] This matches Vadlamannati and colleagues' hypothesis that outrage about human rights infringement can have a negative effect on foreign investment.[41] This would normally trigger the 'spiral model,'[42] since it is not only international pressure from a bilateral partner, but pressure from significant ones. Instead, the regime started an authoritarian consolidation campaign like none seen in years.[43] It expelled most NGOs from the country,[44] and entered a campaign of repression not seen since the follow-up to the Namangan uprising of 1992.[45] Not surprisingly, since the events were characterized as Islamic terrorism, religious persecution only worsened after the event.[46] This almost perfectly mirrors the conclusion of Hafner-Burton that following shaming, the regime will engage in more repression instead of less.[47]

Helping that outcome are the actors who actually stuck with Tashkent and Karimov, primarily the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The international organization, led *de facto* by Russia and China, not only stood by Uzbekistan, but also tried to put forward evidence that described their actions as legitimate.[48] This organization therefore worked to both counter the pressure to enact change, and also to provide alternative monitoring that fit the Uzbek narrative, potentially completely neutralizing the UN efforts. This is not the first time the SCO came under fire by the Council. The organization was accused of making agreements

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[35] Sarah Kendzior, "Inventing Akromiya: The Role of Uzbek Propagandists in the Andijon Massacre," *Democratizatsiya* 14, no. 4 (2006): 545-562.
[36] Hill and Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution," 111-112.
[37] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2006: Events of 2007* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2006), 424.
[38] Hill and Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution," 112; Sarah Kendzior, "Poetry of witness: Uzbek identity and the response to Andijon," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no.3 (2007): 317-334.
[39] Aleksandr Pikalov, "Uzbekistan between the great powers: a balancing act or a multi-vectorial approach?" *Central Asian Survey* 33, no.3 (2014): 297.
[40] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 429.
[41] Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI."
[42] Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Practices," 20.
[43] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 426.
[44] Hill and Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution," 112; Kendzior, "Poetry of witness," 320.
[45] Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 117.
[46] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 428.
[47] Hafner-Burton, "Stick and Stones," 700-701.
[48] FIDH, *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: A Vehicule for Human Rights Violations* (Paris: Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme, 2012), 12.

to facilitate and protect its members for actions such as "extraditions, torture, State secrecy, discrimination against at-risk groups, [and] impunity."[49] An organization like the SCO with such goals and such power would be problematic for any organization that is already limited in their possibility to enforce judgment.

It is at this point that the Council was established, just after what some people called the Uzbek version of Tiananmen Square.[50] Uzbekistan was cited as a state that decided not to seek a seat in the new Council, even if they were in the Commission because they had "abysmal human rights records."[51] Logically then, the regime should not be able to shield themselves with the institution as this should produce an improvement in human rights. However, the crackdown still intensified the following year.[52] While both the EU and the US took actions against Tashkent following the massacre, Germany still kept close relations with the country and even refused to arrest one of the main actors of the massacre, Zokirjon Almatov, Minister of the Interior, when he was in Germany for medical treatment. While the US still continued to apply pressure on the country, the situation failed to improve.[53] The refusal of Uzbekistan to take any action or to allow any monitoring following the Andijon Massacre continued into 2007, and the only positive outcome of this year according to Human Rights Watch was the official abolition of the death penalty.[54]

However, despite the shaming that should have reduced foreign investment according to Vadlamannati and colleagues,[55] Uzbekistan saw its FDI increase from 174 million United States Dollars (USD) to 705 million USD that year.[56] In 2007, the sole contact between the UN and Uzbekistan was with the establishment of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia with support of all five Central Asian states. This centre was, however, almost exclusively focused on security threats in the region, bolstering their claim that the region has the legitimacy to say they are facing serious threats that justify their crackdown.[57] This claim could be applied to all states of the region. Meanwhile, the UN somewhat abandoned the idea to make Uzbekistan comply. The Council voted to end the scrutiny, and the reduction of pressure by the international system was demonstrated by the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the country and the EU.[58] This pattern continued in the following years, the US joining Europe in weakening

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[49] Ibid, 23.
[50] Kendzior, "Poetry of witness," 318.
[51] Gordon Lauren, "'To Preserve and Build on Its Achievements and to Redress Its Shortcomings'," 337.
[52] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2007: Events of 2006* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2007), 442-444.
[53] Ibid, 447-448.
[54] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008: Events of 2007* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2008), 452-456.
[55] Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI."
[56] Kobil Ruziev, and Toshtemir Majidov, "Differing Effects of the Global Financial Crisis on the Central Asian Countries: Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no.4 (2013): 689.
[57] FIDH, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, 25.
[58] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008*, 456-457.

sanctions in 2009.[59] One reason for this could be the desire to stabilize the border with neighbouring Afghanistan.[60] The UN pressure remained present but was inefficient, especially without the ability to enter the country to monitor the situation,[61] even arguing that "[their] record of cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms is arguably amongst the worst in the world."[62]

The death of Karimov in September 2016 did not seem to create any change at first. but showed substantial improvement in the situation of human rights in the country as soon as 2017, which allowed the country to receive some praise from the international community.[63] Uzbekistan also allowed UN officials, including staffers from the Human Rights Council, to enter the country for the first time since the Andijon massacre more than ten years earlier.[64] However, the situation of human rights is still below international standards. The effects of the Human Rights Council, or 'naming and shaming' in general, showed to be counterproductive in the case of Uzbekistan. Indeed, the regime, instead of addressing the issues, increased repression, ignoring possible international repercussions. The efforts of the Council proved to be inefficient to the extent that it stopped actively trying to intervene in the country only a few years after the major event took place.

Effectiveness of the Council and Tajikistan

In the case of Tajikistan, the situation before the establishment of the Council can be described as a period of transition following a bloody Civil War. The establishment of the Council coincides with the solidification of power of President Emomalii Rahmon, then Emomali Rakhmonov. However, the exclusion of Kazakhstan in favour of Tajikistan was not to skew the results against the Council since Kazakhstan, following the same trend, was also living within a period of authoritarian stabilization with Nursultan Nazarbayev promoting a new Kazakhstani identity to counter ethnic nationalism in the country.[65] This period

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[59] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2009: Events of 2008* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2009), 440; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010: Events of 2009* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2010), 475-476; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2011: Events of 2010* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2011), 500-502; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012: Events of 2011* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2012), 526-527; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Events of 2014* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2015), 604-605; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2016: Events of 2015* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2016), 629-630.

[60] Vera Axyonova, "When Security Threatens Human Rights: Reviewing the Case of Central Asia," *Security and Human Rights* 24 (2013): 164; Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.

[61] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010*, 475-476; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2011*, 501; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2016*, 628-629.

[62] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015*, 604.

[63] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2017: Events of 2016* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2017), 654.

[64] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018: Events of 2017* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2018), 609-615.

[65] Nurken Aitymbetov, Ermek Toktarov, and Yenlik Ormakhanova, "Nation-Buildin in Kazakhstan: Kazakh and Kazakhstani Identities Controversy," *Bilig* 74 (Summer 2015): 2.

in Tajikistan is already visible in the first detailed report from Human Rights Watch in 2005, concerning the events of the previous year with the arrest and torture of Shamsuddin Shamsuddinov, a powerful politician of the Islamic Renaissance Party who fought the government during the Civil War before joining the coalition government which ended the conflict. There is also a measure of the influence of the then Commission of Tajik's politics, since the government was highly criticized by the UN concerning their election laws—but that condemnation did not engineer any significant reaction.[66] While the human rights situation in the country is increasingly bad, at that starting point, the US, the EU, and, less surprisingly, Russia, have deep military and security connections with the country.[67]

An uprising in Kyrgyzstan, known as the Tulip Revolution, caused increased authoritarian actions in Tajikistan. The government imprisoned opponents that accused it of genocide or just for running for an opposition party.[68] During this year, the US declared that it was concerned about the situation of human rights in Tajikistan, which did not prevent them from sending millions of dollars in foreign aid.[69] This refers back to Vadlamannati and colleagues, and the claim that shaming should reduce the foreign investments.[70] However, we see here that even if shaming comes from the same actor who provides the aid, the funds might not be cut.

Following the implementation of the Council, the situation "continued to worsen in Tajikistan."[71] Following the influence that NGOs possibly had on the Tulip Revolution and the shaming that took place in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan became more repressive toward these organizations.[72] Tajikistan was under great pressure by the UN Commission in 2007, and was found guilty of using torture by UN committees. The EU also started to take some symbolic actions against the regime.[73] The country did take a step forward the following year by taking institutional measures, such as expanding the power of courts and appointing an Ombudsman in charge of human rights, which suggests intentions to comply with some demands.[74] This led to the appointment of a first human rights ombudsman in the country, Zarif Alizoda.[75] The office produced its first report in 2011,[76] which would normally increase the pressure on the country by propagating the information about the situation. However, Tajikistan continued on other aspects to implement laws going against human rights compliance.[77]

[66] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 423-424.
[67] Ibid, 427-428.
[68] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2006*, 399-401.
[69] Ibid, 403.
[70] Vadlamannati, Janz, and Isachsen Berntsen, "Human Rights Shaming and FDI."
[71] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2007*, 420.
[72] Ibid, 421.
[73] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008*, 435.
[74] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2009*, 413.
[75] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010*, 450.
[76] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, 498.
[77] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010*, 453.

Even if the advancements failed to be substantial, the EU resumed its furthering of ties with the country, somewhat unsurprisingly given their hesitation to condemn them in the first place.[78] The previously mentioned ombudsman report of 2011 coincided with the first Council report on Tajikistan. Like they had done some years earlier, the country promised to improve human rights on certain subjects while refusing to do so on others.[79] This pattern of surface improvement on specific issues coupled with fast-growing repression will continue to be the standard of the country in the years to come. Most of the Human Rights Watch reports on the country from then on consist of several complaints about the situation getting worse, but concluding with a single, mostly inconsequential, positive development such as a visit by a UN staffer or the adoption, and not the implementation, of a law.[80]

Similarly to Andijon, but on a lower scale, Tajikistan engaged in violence over security issues in the rebel bastion of Gorno-Badakhshan.[81] This was, however, less publicized than the events in neighbouring Uzbekistan. With Tajikistan being especially vulnerable to terrorist acts, this goes against the theory of Asal and colleagues.[82] However, since the 2017 report, the deterioration accelerated. Furthermore, the positive actions stopped happening. It is interesting to note that while the UN expressed concern over the situation, other actors refrained from commenting on the subject.[83] This could possibly be caused by a Council that is a lesser menace to the country.

Tajikistan showed consistent worsening of the situation of human rights over a full decade and the Council failed to take any effective action against them. While it can be argued that the spotlight given to them produced symbolic advancement, claiming that it had a substantially positive effect would be inaccurate. At best, it can be argued that the Council slowed the process, but there are no clear indicators of that. However, the opposite position that the spotlight accelerated the repression also does not seem to fit the case of Tajikistan, which still cared enough to accept small concessions. Indeed, the authoritarian path taken by the country was already in progress when the Council was created, and therefore could not be caused by it. It instead shows inability of the institution to stop the trend that was developing.

However, the idea developed by Risse and Sikkink[84] and defended by Beth A. Simmons[85] that those concessions should lead to large domestic pressure that will in turn create substantial changes failed to

[78] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2011*, 478.
[79] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, 502.
[80] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2013: Events of 2012* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2016), 481-486; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2014: Events of 2013* (United States: Human Rights Watch, 2014), 494; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015*, 525; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2016*, 557-560.
[81] Axyonova, "When Security Threatens Human Rights," 160.
[82] Asal, Deloughery, and Murdie, "Responding to Terrorism?"
[83] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2017*, 579-584; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018*, 535-539.
[84] Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Practices," 27.
[85] Beth Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 79.

materialize. A more realistic interpretation of the results is that the Council did provide us with more information about the situation, implemented better monitoring over the country, but nonetheless failed to improve the situation of human rights in Tajikistan. However, Tajikistan saw continued support of its security concerns due to a potential terrorist threat. Combined with the lack of pressed call for change, this weakens the claims by Asal and colleagues that countries facing such threats will face increased shaming.[86]

Effectiveness of the Council and Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan was, in 2004, at the end of a period where it became increasingly authoritarian.[87] Torture, while illegal in the country, was still widespread.[88] This practice, used by the police, gives a good indication of how much more important regional stability is to Western states than human rights, since Kyrgyzstan's police are trained extensively by the OSCE.[89] It must come as no surprise, when we consider the situation of the two other cases, that the US had close military ties with Kyrgyzstan, even having an air base in the country. However, the ties with the EU were less significant.[90] In a year marked by some of the worst atrocities that occurred in the region since independence, Kyrgyzstan went in a totally different direction. The authoritarian tendencies of the president Askar Akayev brought the population in the streets and toppled the government, replacing him with another politician who led the uprising, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who appointed a politician and political prisoner, Feliks Kulov as Prime Minister and promised reforms.[91]

The promise of democracy failed to materialize as the new government started to be particularly hostile toward activists and refused to clamp down of practices such as bride kidnapping,[92] a tendency that continued in the following years.[93] Generally, during the reign of Kurmanbek Bakiyev, the US focused their policy on the issue of keeping access to the strategic air base of Manas and not on human rights improvement.[94] In 2010, following the constant depreciation of the situation of ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan, ethnic violence erupted and claimed 500 to 2000 lives, creating several thousand refugees in the process.[95] Following this authoritarian turn, which echoed Akayev's regime combined with support of Uzbeks who feels left behind

[86] Asal, Deloughery, and Murdie, "Responding to Terrorism?"
[87] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 394.
[88] Ibid, 398.
[89] Axyonova, "When Security Threatens Human Rights," 165.
[90] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2005*, 398-399.
[91] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2006*, 375-377.
[92] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2007*, 400-404.
[93] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008*, 408-412; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2009*, 387-392; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010*, 424-428.
[94] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2010*, 428.
[95] Babak Rezvani, "Understanding and Explaining the Kyrgyz-Uzbek Interethnic Conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Anthropology of the Middle East* 8, no.2 (2013): 68-71.

by Bakiyev,[96] and international actors who had issues with how Bakiyev was handling Kyrgyz diplomacy,[97] the opposition united around Roza Otunbayeva, Almazbek Atambayev, Temir Sariyev, and Isa Omurkulov, taking to the streets and toppling Bakiyev to replace him by Otunbayeva.[98] Considering the scale of the violence that took place in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, it is of no surprise that the year was not considered as a success for human rights.[99]

The following years were a mix of improvement of human rights and criticisms over the handling of the aftermath of the 2010 revolution. In 2011, the situation generally improved, but reports show prudence following the quick degradation of the situation after the Tulip Revolution.[100] This was followed by little variation with periods of stagnation.[101] Humanitarian fallbacks became more important in 2014 and 2015.[102] However, the country then saw major accolades on the subject of political rights while acknowledging continued flaws in the country.[103]

This case is a difficult one when assessing the Council. It has faced instability as a result of demands for greater respect of human rights, which could be the result of better monitoring. However, that civic society was not born from the Council and its monitoring, since before independence it was considered an 'island of democracy'[104] in the region, and already saw a democratic uprising right before the Council was put in place. Furthermore, those uprisings were also in concert with the strategic interest of other actors, which arguably played a bigger role in their success than the desires of the population. This pattern was to continue in the future as a third government was overthrown in 2020.[105]

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Council did, at least on some occasions, have an impact on the situation of human rights in Central Asia, but the impact was irregular and inconclusive. In the most notable of the cases, Uzbekistan, the expected effect of the institution backfired and resulted in more human rights abuses. This is partly due to continued support from other international institutions such as the SCO that neutralized any negative effects of the Council, while providing Tashkent with the means to continue the repression.

[96] Ibid, 70
[97] Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 127-129.
[98] McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty*, 106-107.
[99] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2011*, 449.
[100] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, 472-478.
[101] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2013*, 454-459; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2014*, 466-470.
[102] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015*, 341-347; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2016*, 364-370.
[103] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2017*, 390-394; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018*, 329-334.
[104] Dilip Hiro, *Inside Central Asia: A political and cultural history of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran* (New York and London: Overlook Duckworth, 2009), 289-290.
[105] Darya Podolskaya, "President of Kyrgyzstan Resign," *24.kg*. Last modified October 15, 2020. https://24.kg/english/169435_President_of_Kyrgyzstan_resigns/

Meanwhile, the case of Tajikistan seems to be one where the shaming provided by the Council failed to produce any effect. This failure might be caused by the continued support of foreign actors who saw the benefits of having the Afghan border stabilized as higher than the costs of being allied to a human rights abuser state. Kyrgyzstan, finally, is inconclusive since its recent history is marked by instability both before and after the creation of the Council, but has seen positive development in the field of human rights following interventions from the international community. However, strategic interests of foreign actors seem to be more prevalent than the situation of human rights in their interactions with the state.

This suggests that not all countries react the same way to international pressure in the context of human rights. Despite all three countries having a similar strategic position and interacting with the same institutions, they all reacted differently when criticized for their human rights violations. Therefore, further research is needed to understand why such a disparity exists. A possible avenue of research would be to look at domestic factors such as state capacity or the place of clientelism in the security apparatus. Further research could also attempt to look at whether pressures from national, supranational, or non-state actors have the greatest influence on human rights governance, and whether some of them are more likely to cause backlashes while other more likely to force concessions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Political rights rankings of Central Asian states according to Freedom House

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
2000	6	6	6	7	7
2001	6	6	6	7	7
2002	6	6	6	7	7
2003	6	6	6	7	7
2004	6	6	6	7	7
2005	6	5	6	7	7
2006	6	5	6	7	7
2007	6	5	6	7	7
2008	6	5	6	7	7
2009	6	6	6	7	7
2010	6	5	6	7	7
2011	6	5	6	7	7
2012	6	5	6	7	7
2013	6	5	6	7	7
2014	6	5	6	7	7
2015	6	5	7	7	7

2016	7	5	7	7	7
2017	7	5	7	7	7

Appendix 2. Civil Liberties rankings of Central Asian states according to Freedom House

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
2000	5	5	5	7	6
2001	5	5	5	7	6
2002	5	5	5	7	6
2003	5	5	5	7	6
2004	5	5	5	7	6
2005	5	4	5	7	7
2006	5	4	5	7	7
2007	5	4	5	7	7
2008	5	4	5	7	7
2009	5	5	5	7	7
2010	5	5	5	7	7
2011	5	5	5	7	7
2012	5	5	6	7	7
2013	5	5	6	7	7
2014	5	5	6	7	7

2015	5	5	6	7	7
2016	5	5	6	7	7
2017	5	5	6	7	7

Illiberalism and the Lives of Polish Women: An Analysis of the Reproductive Rights Restrictions and Resistance in Poland

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On October 22, 2020, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal voted for a ban on abortion – immediately, thousands of citizens took to the streets.[1] Poland already held some of the tightest restrictions on abortion in the European Union (EU), only allowing legal abortions in cases of fetal defect and dangerous pregnancies.[2] After delays, the ban took effect on January 27, 2021 and was followed by three nights of protests. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Poland is now facing a crisis of rights. On the sixth day of the nationwide protests in October 2020, Polish Law and Justice Party Leader (PiS) Jarosław Kaczyński gave his first broadcast speech addressing the protests. He stated: "This attack [on churches] is intended to destroy Poland, to lead to the triumph of forces [whose] authorities will end the history of the Polish nation as we know it…Let us defend Poland, let us defend patriotism…Only then can we win the war declared directly by our opponents."[3] By casting the thousands of Polish protestors as "opponents" against the "history of the Polish nation," the protestors have been alienated by the government from their fellow citizens.[4] The vast numbers of Polish citizens that are currently engaged in organized resistance to the illiberal reforms of the PiS party show that the trend of illiberalism in Poland cannot merely be explained by perceived cultural or historic undemocratic, conservative traditions. As the Polish protests are still in flux and unfolding, the purpose of this work will not be to predict or theorize the events that might happen, but to disprove the far-right rhetoric that feminism is a "foreign" or "Western" import to Poland, while analyzing the gendered impacts of the global forces affecting Polish political culture. I argue that ongoing restrictions and subsequent feminist protests exemplify how the effects of global neoliberalism and illiberal trends in Poland are magnified in the lives of Polish women. First, a brief overview of the current movement in Poland and related literature review will be provided. Second, I

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[1] "Poland Abortion Ruling Sparks 'Women's Strike,'" *BBC News*, October 28, 2020, sec. Europe.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Daniel Tilles, "Abortion Protests Aim 'to Destroy Poland and End the History of the Polish Nation', Says Kaczyński," *Notes from Poland*, October 27, 2020.
[4] Ibid.

will address the role Poland assumes in its relationship to the West and the notion of conditional whiteness in Polish politics. Third, I will connect the restriction of reproductive rights to the Polish neoliberal backlash. Fourth, I will contextualize the events in Poland in the global populist and illiberal shift. Finally, I will offer some concluding thoughts on the potential found in resistance.

News sources have stated that the recent protests have been the largest demonstrations in Poland since the fall of communism.[5] Estimates say that at one of the peak days in the first two weeks of demonstrations on October 28, approximately 430,000 protestors had gathered in demonstrations across the country.[6] This is not the first time that Polish women have mobilized for reproductive rights. In 2016, an attempt to further restrict existing abortion rights by the PiS party sparked the Black Protests which engaged a new generation of feminist activists in Poland.[7]

The 2020 Constitutional Tribunal decision will exclusively allow abortion in the case of criminal acts resulting in pregnancy or to protect the life of the mother.[8] Those in support of the ruling have argued that it would prevent the abortion of fetuses with Down's Syndrome and would fall more in line with Catholic teachings.[9] Those who oppose this ruling have argued that it puts women at risk of physical and emotional harm if they are forced to carry fetuses that are unlikely to survive the pregnancy.[10] However, opinion polls conducted just over a week after the October 22 Constitutional Tribunal ruling found that most Poles were opposed to the new Tribunal ruling. Polls from SW research poll for Rzeczpospolita, IBRiS for Onet, and Kantar for Gazeta Wyborcza found that between 66-73% of respondents were against this ruling.[11]

Views on abortion in Poland are far from monolithic. Non-governmental organizations and pro-choice groups have estimated that approximately 80,000-190,000 Polish women undergo illegal abortions per year, procedures that entail health risks and economic burden of expensive private surgery.[12] In 2019, 66% of survey respondents in Poland indicated that they believe "human life should be protected from conception to death."[13] The same survey revealed that 38% of Poles identify as pro-life versus 18% who indicated pro-choice.[14] However, in the following exceptions, Poles agree that abortion should be allowed: 84% when a women's life

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[5] Anatol Magdziarz and Marc Santora, "Poland's Abortion Ban Spurs Largest Protests in Decades." *The New York Times*, October 30, 2020.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Bogumila Hall, "Gendering Resistance to Right-Wing Populism: Black Protest and a New Wave of Feminist Activism in Poland?," *American Behavioral Scientist* 63, no. 10 (2019): 1497.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "Poland Abortion Ruling Sparks 'Women's Strike.'" *BBC News*, October 28, 2020, sec. Europe.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Daniel Tilles, "Majority of Poles Support Abortion Protests and Popularity of Ruling Party Has Dropped, Polls Show," *Notes From Poland* (blog), November 1, 2020.
[12] Emilia Paprzycka, Joanna Dec-Pietrowska, and Medard Lech, "The Limits of Compromise: The Range of Perspectives on Women's Reproductive Rights in Poland," *The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Healthcare* 24, no. 2 (2019): 118.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

is threatened 76% when a women's health is threatened, and 73% when the pregnancy is a result of a crime.[15] In these statistics, it is important to avoid generalizing Polish people. Women in Poland hold a wide degree of beliefs which are not all strictly pro-choice, just as there are men in the country who hold a variety of beliefs. The Women's Strike protests have seen participants from a variety of ages and gender including grandmothers, teenaged sons, husbands, and mothers.[16] However, due to the systemic nature of the themes discussed in this paper, Poles are impacted by the abortion restrictions and subsequent protests on a gendered basis regardless of beliefs or political alignments.

Literature Review

As the protests in Poland are recent, there has been little to no academic work published on the events. However, the general topic of reproductive rights restrictions and resistance in Poland has been the subject of study for decades. The main research on this topic focuses on three explanations for the tight abortion restrictions in Poland and subsequent protests. First, the influence of the Catholic Church in Polish politics. Second, the conservative or "backward" culture or governance tradition in Poland. Third, the "newness" of feminism and women's movements in Poland.[17]

The influence of the Catholic Church in Polish politics is commonly emphasized as the cause of stringent restrictions on abortion. In Poland, the vast majority of the population identifies as Catholic, and Catholicism remains culturally influential. The Catholic Church has a powerful connection to Polish nationalism given its role in advocating for Polish civil liberties during communism.[18] Jacqueline Heinen and Stephane Portet argue that the influence of the Church was entrenched in the civic culture of Poland after the fall of communism due to the unstable, competitive political environment where parties on either side of the political spectrum were afraid of losing the support of the Catholic-majority electorate.[19] As a result, in March 1993, legislation was introduced and passed to ban abortion except in the three instances: in cases of risk of severe harm to the fetus, in cases of life-threatening harm to the mother, and in case of rape or incest. There has not been any legitimate political challenge to the ban for fear of losing the support of the Catholic Church.[20] However, focusing solely on the role of the Catholic Church as an explanation for the events at hand misses how the restrictions on abortion are interconnected with other cultural and economic forces.

[15] Ibid.
[16] Magdziarz and Santora, "Poland's Abortion Ban Spurs Largest Protests in Decades " *The New York Times*, October 30, 2020.
[17] Hall, "Gendering Resistance to Right-Wing Populism,"1497.
[18] Jacqueline Heinen and Stephane Portet, "Reproductive Rights in Poland: When Politicians Fear the Wrath of the Church," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 1009.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid, 1012.

There has also been work arguing that the illiberal trends – such as the restriction of abortion rights – in former Soviet-satellite states like Poland can be explained by the fact that certain cultures or national histories are deemed incompatible with democratic or liberal ideals. Jacques Rupnik asked the question: "Are the cultures that proved the most resistant to communism, such as Poland's combination of nationalism and Catholicism, also favourable to the introduction of liberal democracy and the market economy?".[21] While the factors of nationalism and Catholicism are significant to the question of reproductive rights in Poland, they do not account for the thousands of Polish citizens who have engaged in political resistance against these policies for years. Therefore, the question of the role of culture as "incompatible" or "favourable" to liberalism and democracy is reductionist and obscures the agency of those who are engaged in resistance to these policies.

A final common perspective on the resistance to abortion restrictions is viewing the 2016 Black Protests and 2020 Women's Strike as "new" anomalies or the "beginning" of feminism in Poland.[22] Bogumilla Hall warns that this perspective risks erasing the long history of women's political activism under communism and in the transition to democracy, as well as the plurality of feminist goals over time.[23] Most notably, Hall concludes that viewing the recent movements in response to abortion restriction as "new" potentially "leaves unchallenged the process of neoliberal transition, harmful especially for women."[24] Thus, the perspective of explaining the "new resurgence" of feminism in Poland leaves out questions of the economic harm connected to abortion restriction.[25] Therefore, this paper will work to address the broader economic and systemic implications of the ongoing Women's Strike movement.

The Influence of Threatened Nationalism

In order to understand the rhetoric of the PiS government against the Polish women protestors, which distances them from citizenship or Polish national identity, it is necessary to analyze the far-right Polish government's motivations in creating this difference. This is related to the conditionality of whiteness and Europeanness in Poland that is reflected and even magnified in the status of women in Poland. There, whiteness is used as a framework to analyze how European colonial histories inform ideas of nationhood and national legitimacy. This framework aids in understanding Poland as a Central European nation and its relationship to the West.

[21] Jacques Rupnik, "Explaining Eastern Europe: The Crisis of Liberalism," *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (July 2018): 28.
[22] Hall, "Gendering Resistance to Right-Wing Populism,"1499.
[23] Ibid, 1512.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

In Kaczyński's statement, he calls the fate of the Polish nation at risk of an enemy – the enemy being Polish women protestors.[26] This framing of an "end to the history of the Polish nation as we know it" points to an existential threat.[27] The Polish protestors' demands are clear and include reproductive justice and even a call for the resignation of the current government, but they certainly do not call for the end of the Polish nation.[28] While the demonization of protestors by sitting governments is not uncommon in domestic politics, the specific rhetoric asserting a historic Polish nation facing existential threat is significant and points to the fact that these women have come to embody this existential threat to right-wing Polish nationalism.

Anikó Imre used the case of Romani minority representation in Eastern Europe to examine "how whiteness has been called upon to provide legitimacy to the post-socialist nation-state."[29] Imre determined that whiteness in East and Central Europe is "contested and contestable," due to the drastic transition from communism to a Western globalized world.[30] Imre argues that, "the call to save the national culture has often been issued in the name of a resistance to the demonic values conveyed by 'cultural imperialism,' associated with consumerism, global media homogenization, and multiculturalism."[31]

Kaczyński's rhetoric of fearing a threat against the Polish nation is connected to the unsettling of Polish nationhood due to the forces of Western globalization. Imre's analysis is focused on how the conditionality of East European whiteness informs Roma representation, but his observations on the negotiation and process of creating whiteness in the post-socialist region is useful to understand the specific case of Polish protestors and women.[32] This is not to say that the experience of women in Poland is the same as Roma or Muslim women in Central Europe, but this demonstrates that whiteness and the nation are conditional, and a continual process in Poland – one that operates on a gendered basis. Although race and ethnicity are not explicitly invoked in this specific quote from Kaczyński, it remains a constant in Polish nationalism and politics. The exclusion required to continually produce whiteness, and by extension Polishness, is also demonstrated in Kaczyński's remarks alluding to the protestors as a manifestation of foreign threats to the nation. As a result, the Polishness of Polish women specifically is further contested than the whole of Poland itself as they are labelled "foreign threats" by the PiS party leader.[33] The ongoing threats to reproductive rights in Poland are combined and layered with the

[26] Daniel Tilles, "Abortion Protests Aim 'to Destroy Poland and End the History of the Polish Nation', Says Kaczyński," *Notes from Poland,* October 27, 2020.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Maria Wilczek, "Double Healthcare Spending and Create a Secular State: Abortion Protest Leaders Unveil Demands," *Notes From Poland* (blog), November 3, 2020.
[29] Anikó Imre, "Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: The Time of the Gypsies, the End of Race," in *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, ed. Alfred J. López (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 80.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid, 81.
[32] Ibid, 79.
[33] Tilles, "Abortion Protests Aim 'to Destroy Poland and End the History of the Polish Nation,' Says Kaczyński,"

threatening of national identity legitimacy. Therefore, the conditionality of whiteness and by extension national legitimacy in Poland creates further precarity in the lives of Polish women.

Imre's analytical framework of whiteness in East and Central Europe is also applicable to understanding the role of globalization and Poland's relationship to the West. Kaczyński's rhetoric implies that feminism or the demand for reproductive rights is a Western, foreign import and influence in Poland which threatens the nation. Furthermore, the language or rhetoric of gender is highly suspect in the eyes of the PiS party. This has led party leaders to redefine it as a Western, immoral ideology that is against Poland and the Catholicism intrinsic to it.[34] The PiS party has even gone so far as to ban mentions of "gender" in any Polish legislation.[35] Imre argues that faced with a globalized world, where identity grows more flexible and interconnected, the goal of "'preserving the nation' against alien influence" has become a priority for Central and Eastern European political parties to maintain power.[36] Imre stipulates that this should not be understood as a rejection of everything deemed Western, but a "binary logic of nationalism" that has "dictated that the West be split into two: authentic and false."[37] In the case of Poland, the cause for reproductive rights and what has been coined as "gender ideology" is considered the "dangerous false West," which Poland must defend against. Members of the PiS party, including Kaczyński, have regularly warned against Western "social diseases."[38] The conditional and unsettled nature of Polish nationalism requires a constant assertion and reminder of the ongoing resistance to "the triumph of forces [whose] authorities will end the history of the Polish nation as we know it."[39]

The Polish government's rhetoric has effectively othered Polish citizens who have chosen to protest as threats to the Polish nation. The material consequence of this is the risk of violence during the demonstrations. Kaczyński has called for Polish citizens to "defend the churches," which invites confrontation in the streets of Poland.[40] Amnesty International has reported on excessive forces used by Polish authorities, including the use of pepper spray and excessive arrests against peaceful protestors. For those who have participated in the demonstrations, the dangers of Kaczyński's inciting call for citizens to "defend," and the risk of losing their jobs are significant. This demonstrates that Poland's insecure relationship with the West and globalization broadly leaves Polish women in further insecurity due to the government's othering from their

[34] Hall, "Gendering Resistance to Right-Wing Populism," 1498.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Imre, "Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe," 81.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Pawel Sobczak and Pawel Florkiewicz, "Defiant Kaczynski Says Poland Must Avoid EU's 'Social Diseases,'" *Reuters*, September 2, 2018.
[39] "Poland Crackdown on Women's Strike Protests Continues Unabated," *Amnesty International*, November 20, 2020.
[40] Ibid.

own nationality and the risk of violence they face for political activism, especially in the case of reproductive justice.

The Influence of Neoliberalism and Semi-Peripherality

The ongoing Polish Women's Strike movement also faces the realities of backlash to economic systems in their activism and daily lives. The semi-peripheral economic state of Poland is intensified and layered with the attack on reproductive rights in the lives of women in Poland. Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory organizes the global capitalist economy into a division of class and labour with some states action as the core bourgeois, and others as the role of the proletarian periphery.[41] The core zones are generally defined by their "high-profit, high-technology, high-wage diversified production" and the peripheral are distinct for their "low-profit, low-technology, low-wage, less diversified production."[42] However, Wallerstein primarily focuses on the semi-peripheral countries and their dual role as peripheral zones for core countries and core for the more peripheral areas.[43]

Academics such as Monika Bobako have located the Central European states of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Czechia in the semi-peripheral category due to their geographical and economic position between Western and Eastern Europe.[44] Their semi-peripherality is defined by their peripheral role within the European Union to the Western core and their role as core to peripheral Eastern Europe. Wallerstein's framework reveals that Central Europe exists in an uneven economic relationship with Western European states. Jacek Więcławski argues that this uneven relationship has persisted in Poland since the 2004 enlargement by way of the power inequities within the European Union, which risk becoming a permanent dynamic rather than a side-effect of Polish development post-communism.[45] Therefore, Wallerstein and Więcławski demonstrate that Central Europe, including Poland, exists in a semi-peripheral economic relationship to Western Europe.

In connection to the negative economic side effects of Poland's semi-peripheral relationship to Western Europe, right-leaning Polish political parties have taken on a hostility to perceived Western influences. Upon entry to the European Union in 2004, Poland experienced the emigration of approximately two million

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[41] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis," *Theory and Society* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 461.
[42] Ibid: 462.
[43] Ibid: 463.
[44] Monika Bobako, "Semi-Peripheral Islamophobias: The Political Diversity of Anti-Muslim Discourses in Poland," *Patterns of Prejudice* 52, no. 5 (2018): 449.
[45] Jacek Więcławski, "Poland in the European Union – Reaching beyond the Liberal Perspective of Analysis," *Przegląd Strategiczny (Strategic Review)* 9 (2016): 136.

of its citizens, a majority of whom were of working age.[46] Poland's transition also included the implementation of neoliberal economic policies which slashed social services and programs in favour of capital over labour interest.[47] The Polish Law and Justice Party continued this neoliberal economic program in their first coalition government in 2005-2007 by instituting tax cuts for the wealthy and raising the retirement age.[48] In 2015, however, PiS won a majority government – the first majority since Poland's transition from communism – and they began a different socio-economic program of a self-described "'populist' critique of the prevailing 'neoliberal order' with the prioritization of 'family values.'"[49] In order to combat the effects of Poland's transition from communism and then into the European Union, PiS introduced security-focused social policies geared toward families, including universal child benefits.[50]

This was done in tandem with an increasingly nationalist rhetoric associating Poland's economic hardship with Western control of the European Union.[51] Kaczyński has described EU membership as "the shortest way for Poland to achieve parity when it comes to living standards," with its Western allies, "but that doesn't mean we should repeat the mistakes of the West and become infected with social diseases that dominate there."[52] In this statement, Kaczyński frames Western influence as a necessary project for Polish development, but simultaneously as something to be cautious about. Paul Stubbs and Neomi Lendvai-Bainton argue that "the construction of an equivalence between PiS, the Polish Nation, and 'good Poles' come together in an 'othering' of liberal cosmopolitanism and, above all, the Western domination of the EU."[53] This relationship of semi-peripheral Poland to the Western European core and its negative economic legacies has resulted in the Polish government's hostility to forces considered Western, including neoliberalism.

This antagonism to Western influence in PiS party rhetoric has extended to various liberal ideals, including what they call "gender ideology," which affects Polish women's lives through and beyond the reproductive rights attacks. PiS has associated the so-called "gender ideology" – including women's rights, feminism, gender studies, and LGBTQ+ rights – as a Western or foreign threat in Poland. Stubbs and Lendvai-Bainton observe that the government's aversion to the topic of gender equality is evident in the recent attempt to ban abortion as well as their fiscal policy.[54] The industrial sectors (which largely employ men) have received additional government investment since PiS's majority government in 2015, meanwhile social sectors which

[46] Paul Stubbs and Noemi Lendvai-Bainton, "Authoritarian Neoliberalism, Radical Conservatism and Social Policy within the European Union: Croatia, Hungary and Poland," *Development and Change* 51, no. 2 (March 2020): 545.
[47] Ibid, 551.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 552.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid, 553.
[52] Sobczak and Florkiewicz, "Defiant Kaczynski Says Poland Must Avoid EU's 'Social Diseases.'"
[53] Paul Stubbs and Noemi Lendvai-Bainton, "Authoritarian Neoliberalism, Radical Conservatism and Social Policy," 553.
[54] Ibid.

employ a majority of women have received no additional investment.[55] In a study of Polish family policy and its gendered effects, Ania Plomein found that while the family and childcare based benefits have had positive economic impacts for mothers and are "generating positive (if partial) immediate results regarding child poverty… [yet] negative long-term implications for women's economic autonomy [still exist]."[56] Thus, the combination of hostility to the perceived Western gender ideology and neoliberal economics have resulted in an emphasis on family-based social services and a glaring lack of social support for women.

The Polish government's attempts to further restrict abortion and the gender inequities in the Polish economic policy create a layered harm which is evident in the Women's Strike strategies and demands. The demands of the Women's Strike were released on October 27, five days after the initial mobilization of protestors and called for the overturn of the Constitutional Tribunal ruling, increased funds for health protection and entrepreneur assistance, and full women's rights including legal abortion, sex education and contraception. The protestors also demanded the current government's resignation and for the end of the use of the state budget to finance the Catholic Church.[57] These demands illustrate that the Polish Women's Strike organizers have connected their cause of full reproductive rights to the additional gendered economic inequalities that they face. The demand for more funds for health protection and assistance for entrepreneurs in the list exemplifies that reproductive rights are also tied to economic rights.[58] This is further demonstrated in the strategies of the Women's Strike. The protests have not just consisted of presence in the streets of cities like Krakow, Wrocław, Szczecin, Katowice, and beyond, but protestors have also ceased paid and household labour as a political tactic.[59] As women face less government spending in women-dominated industries, less healthcare protection, and the economic risks of lack of access to abortion, they have chosen to withdraw their labour power to demonstrate the value and necessity of their labour to the Polish state. The semi-peripherality of Poland is magnified in the lives of women through unequal government spending and the hostility toward perceived Western gender ideology and neoliberal economics. This is proven and resisted through the demands and strategies of the Polish Women's Strike movement.

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[55] Ibid, 552.
[56] Ania Plomien, "Gender Inequality by Design: Does Successful Implementation of Childcare Policy Deliver Gender-Just Outcomes?," 15.
[57] Derrick Johnson, "The George Floyd Uprising Has Brought Us Hope. Now We Must Turn Protest to Policy," the Guardian, June 30, 2020.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Anatol Magdziarz and Marc Santora, "Poland's Abortion Ban Spurs Largest Protests in Decades," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2020.

Illiberal Trends

Having addressed the specific political and economic forces impacting the movement in Poland, it must be acknowledged that Polish women are not alone in their growing of a political movement during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to avoid the tendency to essentialize and evaluate Central Europe as separate, uninfluenced, and unimpacted by the rest of Europe and the West, the global trend of illiberalism is relevant. In the past decade, the world has seen a global reaching trend toward politics that attack liberal democratic norms and values.[60] Although these illiberal or undemocratic leaders are far from similar in political ideology and leadership style, the former presidency of Donald Trump in the United States, the continued electoral success of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, and PiS's governance in Poland all point to a growth in populist politics and an unsettling of the liberal democratic system. However, this growth of illiberal politics has also seen a resurgence of mass social movements in the year 2020 – from the Women's Strike in Poland to the resurgence of Black Lives Matter following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis which has since grown to an international movement.[61] Poland is not an isolated particularity, as these global illiberal trends are also met with mass movement resistances around the world.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that ongoing restrictions and subsequent feminist protests illustrate how the gendered effects of the conditional and semi-peripheral status of Poland are magnified in the lives of Polish women. The historical overview of feminist and women's movements is inherently connected to Polish nationalism and by extension whiteness and religion. This has been demonstrated first through analyzing the othering of protestors in connection to the conditionality of nationhood in Poland, and by connecting the semi-peripheral economic status to the economic challenges faced by Polish women. Finally, the Women's Strike movement in Poland is part of a global trend of mass social movements that have grown amidst increasing illiberal movements worldwide. These factors show that the ongoing Women's Strike movement is significant for and beyond reproductive rights in Poland, and invite a broader conversation on the gendered effects of illiberal movements. The impact of the movement is evident in the PiS party's significant drop of 10 percentage points in opinion polls throughout the first week of protests. As protests continue bringing more demands despite the ban taking effect, it is clear that the protests are growing into a movement that is reasserting their status as Polish citizens and demanding more for women.

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[60] Péter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi, "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism," *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (July 2018): 41.

[61] Derrick Johnson, "The George Floyd Uprising Has Brought Us Hope. Now We Must Turn Protest to Policy," *the Guardian*, June 30, 2020.

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The Stasi & Their Informants: Creating Blanket Surveillance

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Cory Osmond is a first year Master's student at the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Affairs at the University of Toronto, where he is also the first-year representative of the CERES Graduate Student Union. After completing his undergraduate thesis on the 1980-81 Polish Crisis, Cory graduated with a B.A. in History from Ryerson University. At the moment, his research broadly focuses on German civil society throughout the 20th Century, and his major research paper examines the gendered experience of life in the Hitler Youth. Additionally, he is interested in the legacy of the Holocaust and the Second World War in East and Central Europe, as well as the politics of the European Union.

Who and what was the Stasi? If you lived in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) between 1950 and 1989 the Stasi was everyone and everything. The Stasi could have been your spouse, your brother, sister, colleague, best friend, or your enemy. The Stasi was everywhere, listening in on your most intimate conversations, reading your mail, or watching you sleep. But above all, the Ministry of State Security (MfS) was a system of repression that has come to embody life in the GDR. Over the course of the Stasi's nearly four decades of surveillance, the ministry grew rapidly, especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s. During this period in time, the ministry refocused their security practices to adopt what is now known as 'blanket surveillance.' This was the seemingly unimaginable feat of surveilling a country of seventeen million people, by way of peaking into every apartment, factory shop floor, and bread line, for the purpose of routing out the real and imagined enemies of the state. As the cadre of loyal Stasi officers grew, their apparatus of informants expanded with them. Without the help of ordinary everyday East German citizens, it would have been impossible to surveil the whole nation.

More than thirty years after the collapse of the GDR, the Stasi remains a mysterious entity. As the collapse of communism is a relatively recent event, from a historical point of view, many questions remain as cold war era German historians, and former East Germans are only now beginning to scratch the surface of the inner workings of the East German dictatorship and secret police. By analyzing the research and literature of prominent Stasi scholars and filmmakers such as Jens Gieseke, Barbara Miller, Mike Dennis, Timothy Garton Ash, Gary Bruce, Petra Epperlein, and Mike Tucker, this article aims to shed light on the complicated relationship between the State, Stasi, and citizenry.

In order to understand this intertwined relationship, two simple yet complex questions need to be examined. First, exploring who the typical Stasi officer was, highlighting their support and belief in communism and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), as well as their lack of education which made them ideal candidates for reeducation and indoctrination. And second, analyzing why so many East Germans became Stasi informants. This section will point out how Stasi officers found a willing pool of informants from within SED party circles. More importantly, the article will touch on the ways that the Stasi influenced and encouraged East Germans to inform on each other. As we will see, surprisingly, blackmail was a seldom used tactic; in its place, Stasi officers used an array of tricks such as "bending" informants through various forms of manipulation, fostering positive political conviction and belief in the State, and finally through creating an unbreakable bond of friendship and dependency.

The final section of the article contextualizes the impact and the effect of the Stasi-informer relationship. Although the Stasi was highly effective in recruiting informants, it was inefficient in mobilizing and utilizing the vast security apparatus and the information it collected. This can be seen through the unhealthy work competition that developed, leading to 'tonnage ideology' of recruiting as many informants as possible, regardless of how useful or useless they may be. This in turn led to what Stasi officers called 'card corpses,' informants that provided no operational value or information, but remained on Stasi officers' rosters taking up a considerable amount of time. Nevertheless, even though the Stasi was mismanaged and poorly utilized, the East German citizenry did most of the work for them. By censoring themselves, East Germans took the path of least resistance, conforming to the State's expected behaviour and reinforcing the regime through active and passive participation. Through answering these questions, the article illuminates some of the mysteries surrounding the relationship between the Stasi and their vast network of informers. It also showcases the research that has been done and that is also emerging in the field, while providing insight and direction for future research that can shine light on Germany's last authoritarian state.

The Stasi Through the Decades

Over the course of the Stasi's nearly four decades of surveillance, upwards of two million East German citizens were either full time employees, informants, or provided services to the MfS in one form or another.[1] The year of the MfS's creation in 1950, the 'Firm' was made up of a total of 2,700 employees.[2] Throughout the 1950s, the Stasi would reform and transform itself. Originally created for the purpose of ensuring denazification and successful Stalinization, and through "repelling spies, saboteurs, subversives, terrorists," and external enemies,[3] by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Stasi turned to widespread domestic surveillance.[4] Between

[1] John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police.* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), 34.
[2] Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality.* Trans. Peter Brown (New York: Routledge, 2014), 78.
[3] Ibid., 29.
[4] Ibid.

1959 and September 1961, just under 500,000 East Germans fled to the West.[5] With the future of the GDR in question, Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev gave into GDR First Secretary Walter Ulbricht's appeals to build the Berlin Wall and stop the mass exodus of East German citizens to West Germany.[6]

With the border between the East and West hermetically sealed, foreign threats from the West declined in scope, and in its place the Stasi turned their attention to the domestic situation. A wave of repression followed the building of the wall; without anywhere to go, the Stasi aimed to pacify the population to avoid future rebellion of a life without escape.[7] Between the building of the wall and the end of 1961, "18,297 people were arrested for crimes against the state."[8] However, the GDR's leadership realized that harsh repression weakened the legitimacy and future of the country.[9] From 1962 on, the Stasi was forever changed: the early years of violence and brutal force were phased out as blanketed surveillance ramped up.

It was during the 1960s and 70s that the Stasi was transformed into a security apparatus capable of full blanket surveillance throughout the GDR. During this period, surveillance widely expanded to coincide with Soviet and German foreign policy, such as the period of détente between the Soviet Union and the West which began in 1967, as well as West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's 1969 policy of Ostpolitik that aimed to normalize relations between the two Germanies.[10] These new policies of opening up to the West triggered Minister of State Security Erich Mielke's fears that the West would begin to have influence in the GDR, sparking calls for "democratisations and liberalisation."[11] As a result, between 1967 and 1982, the MfS underwent enormous expansion, growing from nearly 33,000 full time employees to 81,495 by 1982.[12] Throughout the rest of the 1980s, the Stasi grew at a significantly slower rate, peaking in 1989 with 91,015 employees prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall.[13] Over the course of the Stasi's history, over 274,000 full time employees had worked at the 'Firm. To put the sheer size of the Stasi into context, for every one full time Stasi employee, there were 166 citizens. Compared to the Soviet Union's Committee for State Security (KGB), there was one agent for every 5,830 citizens. When factoring in the complete Stasi security apparatus as well as their informers and various networks, for every one person working for the Stasi, there were 6.5 East German citizens.[14] The Stasi achieved an unprecedented level of surveillance, demonstrating how and why they were able to seemingly

[5] Ibid., 30.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Dennis, *The Stasi,* 30.
[9] Ibid., 31.
[10] Ibid., 77.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 78.
[14] Koehler, *Stasi,* 36.

peek into every corner and person's life in the GDR. However, the system needed people to carry out its objectives. Next, we will turn our attention to examining who the Stasi's full time employees were.

The Stasi Employee

Who was the typical full time Stasi employee? Gary Bruce's *The Firm* paints a picture of the typical Stasi agent, stating that the most important traits for any employee working for the MfS was a clear upbringing in Marxist-Leninist teachings and loyalty to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. The majority of candidates came from a working-class family, were usually members of the Free German Youth during their childhood, where they would have learned discipline and leadership qualities, and most importantly for any East German state employee, they had experienced several years working with the proletariat.[15] Although Party loyalty was valued above all else, it was possible to become a Stasi employee without being a member of the SED. Bruce shows that in the district office of Gransee in Potsdam, 17% of all employees were not recruited from members of the SED. However, once a candidate was selected, it was expected that they would become a member of the party almost immediately.[16]

The most significant benefit of being a party member was career advancement. Although nearly all Stasi employees were also party members and likely were loyal communists, there is a good chance that many bought into the system for the privileged position they enjoyed in society. Being a member of the Stasi had many perks. In comparison to a factory worker, for example, the average employee earned nearly double the national average. They could purchase cottages for reduced rates, and all employees were also entitled to vacations as well as access to special Stasi spas across the country. Higher ranking members also received access to the East German specialty shops, and had free choice over confiscated items that were coming into the country from the West.[17]

These perks were especially important as many members of the Stasi were poorly educated, and unlikely to advance very far in society. As Bruce points out, in the Gransee district, very few members achieved a high school education, and in 1988, only 20.9% had the *Arbitur,* the university entrance level of education, and the most common level of education was up to grade 10 (61.6%), with 15.7% having only completed elementary school. In comparison, 72% of all military personnel had achieved the *Arbitur* level.[18] At first glance, it seems counterintuitive to employ some of the most poorly educated members of society, but it was not without reason. It was much easier to train and convince uneducated candidates of the value and importance

[15] Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 36.
[16] Ibid., 36.
[17] Koehler, *Stasi,* 294.
[18] Bruce*, The Firm,* 37.

of spying on their fellow citizens and even family members. In the later decades of the MfS's existence, most district offices also had their own training academy, and as a member moved up further in Stasi ranks, their options for education improved. Once a member showed promise in advancement, they could be sent to the Stasi's main training center, the Potsdam College of Law where they would receive four years of education in:

> Marxism-Leninism, Political Economy, Scientific Communism, problems of Imperialism, History of the German Workers' movement, Psychology, Legal Theory, International Relations, Criminal Law, Criminality, the History of the Imperialist Secret Services, Imperialist Media, Border Controls, special training in operations methods, and Russian Language.[19]

The educational topics available in Potsdam highlight why the Stasi liked to select candidates where they could work from a 'tabula rasa.' In many ways, higher education gave the Stasi four years to deeply indoctrinate their members, which was essential for operational command positions running teams of street level officers or informants.

Furthermore, Stasi candidates were sought out and heavily vetted to ensure their loyalty to the state. If a candidate did volunteer, they were overwhelmingly rejected out of fear of being a counter-agent.[20] The Stasi found a steady pool of recruits by targeting those who already had a family member working for the Firm. By the time the regime collapsed in 1989, "16% of all full-time employees had a parent with the Stasi, between 1968 and 1982, 47% of Stasi personnel had a relative in the secret police."[21] Loyalty to the state and party was the most important factor for expanding the MfS security apparatus. More to this point, the most likely place for the Stasi to find loyal recruits was from the nearly 12,000 member guard regiment that protected all Stasi sites across the country. "In 1988, nearly 40% of Stasi personnel were recruited from the guard regiment, 21% from the National People's Army, and about 3% from the regular police."[22] For the act of spying and deeply penetrating the lives of millions across the country, it was clear that the Stasi could only draw recruits from the most loyal and heavily indoctrinated segments of society in order to avoid insubordination and security breaches.

The Stasi Informer

Erich Mielke said that the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* (IM or Unofficial Collaborator) was the "main weapon in the fight against the enemy... the ability to penetrate the thought process of others can only and

[19] Ibid., 37.
[20] Bruce, *The Firm,* 38.
[21] Ibid., 38.
[22] Ibid., 38.

exclusively be done by humans themselves."[23] Despite the enormous divisions of official Stasi employees, the East German state's repressive regime could not have survived without its sprawling network of unofficial employees. Over the Stasi's four decades of surveillance, nearly 600,000 informers were recruited to assist the Stasi, and when the regime collapsed in 1989, there were 173,000 everyday citizens enlisted as IMs who helped the Stasi carry out their blanket surveillance.[24] Working for the Stasi could take on many forms, and although the term IM is often used to signify an informer in general, there are in fact several subclasses of informers.

The "Controller IM" (Führungs IM – FIM) was a veteran informant who was in charge of running groups of regular IMs, this allowed full time Stasi officers to focus their attention on more important matters. Next, the "Social Collaborator for Security" (*Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit* - GMS) was a sub-group of informants that were loyal to the state. It was well known that they were a party functionary, they worked in positions of authority, and their greatest use was providing information on crucial sectors of the economy. Finally, one of the largest and most significant categories is the unofficial Collaborator for Aiding Conspiracy and Securing Communications (Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter für Konspiration - IMK). These informers did not work specific cases, or necessarily spy on people; instead, IMKs allowed the Stasi to use their place of living for secure and private meeting with other IMs. Although they did not directly work for the Stasi, without having covert places to meet, the Stasi could not carry out widespread surveillance.[25]

As shown, the Stasi did not initially start out by targeting the domestic population, however, following the East German uprising in 1953, the Stasi's informant roster nearly doubled in size. Although the Stasi had already amassed a vast network, estimates show that in 1955, 30-50% of all Stasi operations "originated from anonymous tips."[26] This allowed the Stasi to not have to pressure East Germans citizens to spy on each other. Internal Stasi reports state that 90% of all informers agreed to become IMs because of their belief in the system, and while this number is likely over exaggerated, Mary Fulbrook states that "the overwhelming majority of Stasi informants did not have to be coerced."[27]

Though the level of denunciations may have been initially high in the GDR, this does not equate to IMs being willing participants. Jens Gieseke contextualizes this in his book *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police 1945-1990,* stating that unlike in Nazi Germany where denunciations were out of political motivation and support of the regime, in the GDR, Eastern Bloc, and the Soviet Union, the majority

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[23] Jens Gieseke*, "The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945-1990,"* trans. David Burnett (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 79.
[24] Gary Bruce, "Participatory Repression? Reflections on Popular Involvement With the Stasi," In *The Stasi at Home and Abroad: Domestic order and Foreign Intelligence*, ed. Uwe Spiekermann (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2014), 48.
[25] Ibid., 49.
[26] Bruce, "Participatory Repression?", 51.
[27] Ibid., 51.

of denunciations to the secret police were for apolitical reasons - denunciations were more a reflection of the communist system than they were of the people.[28] People often denounced their neighbours or disliked colleagues in order to obtain a better apartment or better paying employment, denunciations operated as a sort of "black market, second economy."[29]

Furthermore, Gieseke argues that the Stasi's massive expansion and recruitment of informants can be explained through what he calls 'tonnage ideology.' In many ways, the Stasi was no different than a communist planned economy as it too aimed for quantity over quality.[30] As the MfS was undergoing its greatest transformation and expansion throughout the 1960s and 70s, it fostered an unhealthy level of competition. The Stasi's informant ranks had to exponentially grow, as not only were officers in a given district in competition with each other, but neighbouring units were also in competition. Success was not determined by the quality of information or the delivered outcomes - instead the more informants and meetings an agent could hold down, the greater their chance of promotion.[31]

A great example of 'tonnage ideology' is that MfS guidelines stated that SED party members were only to be recruited when it was absolutely necessary, reason being that party members made awful informants, as no one would speak or act candidly in front of them. Nevertheless, by the 1980s, the SED party members made up one third of all Stasi informants.[32] If we are to accept Mary Fulbrook's claim that informants did not need to be coerced, this would be one of the main reasons, as Stasi officers had far more success recruiting from 'the party,'[33] which meant not only career advancement for the Stasi officer, but also potential career opportunities for the party member. Gieseke also notes, although it is true that almost fifty percent of the MfS's tips came anonymously in the early years, they were overwhelmingly from SED party members and those working within the party.[34] This indicates that from 1950 to 1989, a large amount of Stasi information came from its own party and not regular East German citizens.

With roughly a third of informants coming from the state's official party, it should be no surprise that the main reason for agreeing to become an informant was political conviction; "their belief in the inherent goodness of the socialist idea and in the legitimacy of protecting against the covert operations of the enemy forces, was thereby to do something for domestic peace."[35] On top of the significant proportion of party members that were IMs, there were also the Stasi's Partners of Operational Cooperation (POZW), a group of

[28] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi,* 85
[29] Ibid., 85.
[30] Ibid., 83.
[31] Ibid, 86.
[32] Ibid., 87.
[33] Ibid., 87.
[34] Ibid., 89.
[35] Ibid, 89.

quasi informants made up of the most dedicated SED supporters, or those who were "career opportunists." This group was made up of those in the police force who were not accepted into the MfS, loyal state factory managers, and former Stasis themselves who had quit or been dismissed by the MfS.[36] From this perspective, it would be misguided to characterize East Germans as being willing Stasi collaborators. While there was a significant number of IMs who were party functionaries, it is important to also understand the factors that led to the remaining two thirds becoming Stasi informants.

The Stasi's Non-Communist Informants

It is crucial to understand why those outside of the SED and party apparatus agreed to help the Stasi. Gieseke's findings show that in 1967, 60% of informants surveyed stated that they joined out of "awareness of social necessity, 49% because of ideology, and 27% for personal gain."[37] Moreover, Barbara Miller argues in *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany* that recruitment was based on a candidate's political outlook towards the state as well as their perspective on life and beliefs. It was crucial that the Stasi could convince a candidate and informer that they were serving the greater good.[38] Even amongst those who were not party members, political conviction remained high. This is because by the time the MfS had completed its massive expansion throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, a new generation of East Germans were coming of age. By the 1980s, the Second World War, the 1953 uprising, and even the Berlin Wall's construction were associated with their parents' and grandparents' generation. As one informant stated: "I had only ever known the wall in my lifetime and my childhood on this side was free of conflict."[39] Therefore, by helping the Stasi, informants were contributing to the peaceful prosperity of the 'good' Germany.

Compliance was not always so simple for the Stasi recruiters; however, they thoroughly did their homework, having other informants provide information that could help convince a recruit to join. One of the most successful and widely used tactics was to provide the recruit with a sense of meaningful purpose. One recruit codenamed 'Rolf' was an environmental activist, unhappy with the regime's environmental policies. The Stasi convinced him that through agreeing to be an informant, he would be able to help change the government's position. He agreed, stating: "I have to say at that moment I wasn't unwilling. I was almost convinced that it was a good thing, that it would help prevent something."[40] Conversely, the Stasi did not care about environmental issues, they cared about the dissident contacts that Rolf had, and as a result he was asked

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[36] Ibid., 90.
[37] Ibid., 91.
[38] Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany: Stasi informers and their impact on Society.* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 41.
[39] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 41.
[40] Ibid., 43.

to gather information on friends and colleagues. He eventually stopped informing for the Stasi, however this was a rare case. As Miller points out, most informants recruited through meaningful purpose soon realized they had been misled. However, they continued to find ways to rationalize their actions, unwilling and feeling unable to break off contact themselves.[41]

Although breaking off contact was rare, many still succeeded in doing so, as there were several ways that East Germans were able to escape Stasi control. Some simply refused, claiming they were not the "informer type," while others stated their unwillingness to report on their friends and family. Another popular tactic was to initially agree to be an informant and then never show up to scheduled meetings. Wasting a Stasi officer's time was the easiest way to get off the hook, as the Stasi called these "avoidance and deception manoeuvres... the Stasi quickly lost interest in the candidate or newly recruited informer," and moved on.[42] Others did the unthinkable, but what now probably seems the obvious choice they told others that they had been approached by the Stasi and that they were an informant. Gieseke notes that this was by far the most likely choice for those who were pressured or blackmailed into agreeing to inform for the Stasi. Once this occurred, the IM had burned their cover and were completely useless as a covert contact.[43]

Finally, in the later years of the Stasi's repression, it became increasingly more likely for informers to break off contact on their own accord. Of all the IMs discharged in 1986, 30-40% were a result of informers providing false information, for the sole purpose of being released by the Stasi.[44] Many were able to work their way out from under the Stasi's control, and despite their uncertainty of the consequences, they mustered up the courage to accept their fate as morality prevailed. However, for the vast majority it was fear and uncertainty that kept them informing for the Stasi for years, sometimes even decades.

The feelings of hopelessness and inability to break contact with the Stasi were all by design. One of the most crucial aspects that allowed the MfS to achieve blanket surveillance was by way of instilling loyalty in their informants. While monetary benefits were occasionally given to informants, the most common way of ensuring an informant's loyalty was through praise and recognition for their hard work.[45] One contentious way that the Stasi convinced people to become informants was through blackmail. Miller points out that one study finds that it was an uncommon tactic, with blackmail only occurring 7.7% of the time.[46] MfS guidelines did not condone blackmail as a tactic, as it did not ensure loyalty, and for this reason it is far less likely that a Stasi officer would have noted the use of blackmail in their report. Coercion in general was to be avoided as it was

[41] Ibid., 44.
[42] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 49.
[43] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 94.
[44] Ibid., 95.
[45] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 45.
[46] Ibid., 47.

counterproductive to the MfS's goals in obtaining genuine quality information. The objective for any recruiting officer was to "nurture the correct feelings towards the enemy, strengthening the unofficial employees' convictions that what they are doing is right."[47] Although coercion was frowned upon, the Stasi's recruiting process was almost completely built around manipulating the candidate into thinking and feeling that they were personally protecting the state.

The Stasi perfected the art of "bending," meaning that they bent a recruit to their will. The Stasi sought out recruits who would be susceptible to this kind of manipulation, carefully studying a candidate to understand what their gravest concerns, hobbies, interests, and outlook on life were, allowing them to formulate a plan designed to share these same concerns. If a candidate had negative feelings towards the SED, the agent might engage in sharing those feelings, creating a bond, building trust, and in this process, it became highly unlikely for their offer to be rebuffed.[48]

Moreover, "bending" was particularly commonly used against targets that were "mentally unstable with strong emotional needs."[49] Although the relationship between officer and informer was wholly unequal, many informants considered their 'Stasi' as an equal and a colleague, one informant said "she could talk to her officer like a good friend."[50] Others saw their officers as a willing therapist, who they could share the personal intimate details of their life with, and also the problems that were troubling them.[51] Another factor that played into the relationship was that there was simply no one else to turn to. You could not tell anyone that you worked for the Stasi, not just out of secrecy, but because of the stigma involved. As a result, an informant's officer often became a friend to them. One informant sums up the experience: "you worked from home, from where you had to write your reports, you couldn't go to any work events, since your identity was to remain secret from other employees."[52] An informant's only colleague was their Stasi officer.

Although part of the Stasi's manipulation game, the officers did act as therapists, but it is unclear if the officers developed any real feelings or concern for their informants. However, when an issue came up, officers tried to help. In one case, the Stasi were able to secure a candidate's child a much needed place in a psychiatric clinic. In Rolf's case, his officer was able to get his mother moved into a better apartment, and 'Stephana's' officer had her divorce quickly concluded.[53] Miller points out that many of the informants that she interviewed indicated that they would be interested in seeing their case officers again, feeling as if they had lost a friend.[54]

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[47] Ibid., 50.
[48] Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi*, 93.
[49] Ibid., 93.
[50] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 61
[51] Ibid., 63
[52] Ibid., 64.
[53] Ibid., 63.
[54] Ibid., 45, 65.

This is interesting as it explains why it was so difficult and unusual for informants to break off contact, and it also helps us understand why and how the Stasi were so successful in recruiting and surveilling society.

The Stasi's Impact

How effective was the Stasi and how valuable was their informants information? Although the Stasi had amassed the largest secret police network the world had ever seen, they never utilized or mobilized it to its fullest extent. Poor education and unhealthy work competition led to much of the information that was gathered to never being operationally used. Informants initially were recruited to provide information on a specific person or area of interest; however, if the informant changed jobs and could no longer provide valuable information, they remained an informant giving updates on the "general mood of the population."[55] On average, Stasi officers met with their various informants about 2,500 times a year, with a large majority of their time being taken up with useless information and informants which they called "card corpses."[56] Furthermore, at any given time the majority of informants were not actively working towards gathering any information. One study shows that nearly 78% of informants on the books were either not active or no longer working for the Stasi, and that almost 25% of IMs had never been given an assignment after they were recruited.[57] Additionally, because of the sheer volume of meetings officers had to attend, much of the information they received was not reported until several days later, which by that time was often distorted and no longer useful.[58] Moreover, even if an informant provided no useful or meaningful information, they were kept for the purpose of boosting an officer's numbers. Stasi officers were well aware of how inefficient the system was, and one of their biggest complaints was that the regime had become obsessed with "blanket surveillance," and that the Stasi increasingly became the SED's tool for widespread repression.[59] It is also worth remembering that an officer's career advancement was tied to how many informants and reports they produced, not the results they achieved. In this sense, officers may have been frustrated with how the system was run, but they were happy to receive the benefits and carry out the regime's goal of blanket surveillance.

The Stasi may have been mismanaged and run inefficiently, but they succeeded in systematically oppressing a population of seventeen million people. In his book *The File*, Timothy Garton Ash sums up the effect that the Stasi had on him: "suspicion is everywhere, it strikes in the bar, it lurks in the telephone, it travels with you in the train. Wherever two or three are gathered together, there suspicion will be."[60] Similarly, across

[55] Bruce, *The Firm,* 49.
[56] Ibid., 49.
[57] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 43.
[58] Ibid., 53.
[59] Bruce, *The Firm,* 75.
[60] Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 110.

the country people lived as if they were constantly being watched, and as a result, the people did a lot of the Stasi's work for them. East Germans censored themselves with fake telephone conversations to laud the state, assuming the Stasi were listening, letters contained empty phrases that required the reader to read between the lines, and in public, political figures were applauded out of fear of being watched.[61] In reality, the Stasi listened in on and read a small percentage of people's mail. For example, in the Dresden area only about 4-5% of mail was read by the Stasi.[62] Nevertheless, in the GDR, peace of mind was impossible to achieve.

Petra Epperlein and Michael Tucker's documentary *Karl Marx City* is filled with everyday accounts of how the Stasi tormented people's lives with inescapable fear. Early on in the film, Epperlein's mother states: "I didn't join the party because I believed in the state. I did not believe in the state, I was afraid."[63] Later on in the film Dr. Douglas Salvage states that it is hard for people born outside of dictatorships to understand why populations go along with repressive regimes and join organizations such as the Stasi: "generally people try to make the best of their life, in the given conditions where they live, so this sort of explains why so many people were complicit."[64] Building on this, Harry Schröder argues that people in the GDR "learned to live with the existing power structures to use them to their own advantage... their general behavioural stance was one of opportunism."[65]

Moreover, conforming to the state's will was a conscious decision "that resulted in cognitive dissonance" in the GDR, in which people were forced to either conform to the state's accepted behaviour causing "inner conflict" or that they should live by their "true convictions" and face the state's violence.[66] For the most part, East Germans opted to take the path of least resistance as seen in Epperlein's mother's statement. This also provides us with an impossible question: how do we make sense of those who were victims and who were perpetrators?

For this question, Gary Bruce suggests that perhaps we do not have the language to really explain the power dynamic between the state and the people; even for Stasi officers, he argues that the term "perpetrator seems too harsh given its association with the Nazi era."[67] He goes on to state that: "they are certainly not desk murderers, nor are they harmless paper tigers, they occupy some middle ground of an individual who had the ability to control the life opportunities of their fellow citizens, often in heavy handed ways."[68] Moreover, Bruce

[61] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 95-96.
[62] Ibid., 100.
[63] 14:30-14:40. *Karl Marx City*, directed by Petra Epperlein and Michael Tucker (2016; Chemnitz, Germany: Bond 360 and Pepper & Bones present, 2017), https://torontopl.kanopy.com/video/karl-marx-city.
[64] 15:15-15:30, *Karl Marx City.*
[65] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 97.
[66] Ibid., 98.
[67] Bruce, *The Firm,* 78
[68] Ibid., 78.

defines the dynamic of those who worked with the Stasi and those who were affected by them: it might be best to call those who came in contact with Stasi repression as "the affected ones" and consider the Stasi "not as perpetrators but rather as affectors of lives."[69] Bruce shows there is a significant gap in the scholarship of how we can make sense of a repressive state that functioned and survived largely because the people conformed and allowed it to. This does not mean a nation of seventeen million were complicit in the Stasi and SED's totalitarian reign, but that the relationship is far more complicated and nuanced than it appears at face value.

Another reason why it is so difficult to put Stasi violence into context is as Dr. Hubertus Knabe states, unlike in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarch's film *The Lives of Others,* there was no member of the Stasi that was willing to help their victim the way that Stasi officer Gerd Wiesler did. Dr. Knabe goes on to explain that director Donnersmarch felt it was necessary to show that "there's something good inside the bad." However, Dr. Knabe goes on to point out that not only do we have no evidence that any Stasi officer ever helped their victims in this way, but it was simply too dangerous to do so.[70] As we have seen in earlier accounts, Stasi officers were able to reward and positively help informants in limited ways, in those circumstances it was to reinforce the nature of their work, even when officers were unhappy with their work or assignments, they accepted it just as the public accepted the Stasi.

Moreover, both Stasi physical and psychological violence appear to be overshadowed by the legacy of Nazi crimes that Germans continue to work through. Dr. Knabe states: "although this regime was a criminal regime, this regime was not so obviously criminal as the regime of the Nazis. So we don't have any photos of mountains of killed people, we have only these rooms which are empty."[71] Dr. Knabe's quote is very interesting as he shows that even for East Germans, it is hard to reconcile and understand that unlike the Nazis' violent murderous crimes, the Stasi's were psychological in nature. When the regime finally collapsed in the fall of 1989 and East Germans stormed the various Stasi offices, people demanded to see "the Stasi torture chambers and the blood stains from Stasi victims."[72] Because of the nature of the Stasi's repression it remains incredibly difficult for Germans to process their lives under the regime's rule.

Not only is it difficult for victims to process these violent and often psychological crimes, informants who occupy a grey area find it nearly impossible to accept their role in achieving blanket surveillance. Garton Ash points out that for former informers who are confronted by those they spied on, their immediate reaction is to deny, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.[73] In another instance, when Garton Ash confronted

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[69] Ibid.
[70] 26:00 - 27:15, *Karl Marx City.*
[71] 28:02-28:30, *Karl Marx City.* The "rooms" in which Dr. Knabe is refering to are the interegation rooms in Hohenschone prison, the most notorious and infamous of all the MfS prisons.
[72] Bruce, *The Firm*, 63-64.
[73] Garton Ash, *The File,* 122.

'Michaela,' one of the informants who gathered evidence on him, she immediately admitted to her role stating: "yes, one was obligated to in my position."[74] However, she tries to reframe what she was done, as Garton Ash states she asked "what did they report? Not "I" but them."[75] In this way, Michaela is trying to absolve herself of any wrongdoing, placing the blame on the system instead. Michaela goes on to say:

> We repressed so much, why didn't I apply to see my file? Because I didn't want to know what was in it...who knows what else there is, I think this is the only time I reported so extensively on private matters. Well, I hope if you do write you'll try to explain the subjective as well as the objective conditions. How it was then. But probably that's impossible. Even I can't really remember now.[76]

This type of thinking is typical for those who had contact with the Stasi. 'Dissonance theory' helps explain it as: "individuals feel uncomfortable when they realise current attitudes clash with prior ones, they tend to reduce this discomfort by forgetting their original stance."[77] However, many former informers are willing to meet with those they spied on, for both sides it acts as a means of coming to terms with the past.[78] It is a way of accepting what they have done and understanding how they affected the lives of others.

Conversely, for former Stasi officers, there appears to be little remorse or acceptance for the way they changed and ruined people's lives. Bruce's interviews with former Stasi officers provide a glimpse into how they feel about their time with the MfS. Officer Werner Beuster "expresses no remorse nor does he believe that the Stasi was the sinister organization that is sometimes portrayed."[79]Another officer, Anne Klenk, holds the opinion that the Stasi only receives "negative publicity as a function of present politics" rather than "historical reality." Another unnamed officer stated "in 1937, it was the Jews. Now it's the Stasi."[80]

The inability for both informers and Stasi officers to accept the past helps explain why today the memory and legacy of the Stasi remains largely irreconcilable. Following German reunification in 1990, other than an initial short period of anger, no meaningful dialogue and discussion regarding the role of the Stasi has continued. Coupled with a lack of meaningful restorative justice, Germany, and especially former East Germans, continue to struggle in grappling with the role they played in creating and living with the practice of blanket surveillance.

[74] Ibid., 149,
[75] Ibid., 149.
[76] Ibid., 154.
[77] Miller, *Narratives of Guilt,* 109.
[78] Ibid., 113.
[79] Bruce, *The Firm*, 56
[80] Ibid., 60.

Beyond the Stasi: Areas For Future Research

This article has brought together the voices of some of the post prominent scholars and experts on East Germany's secret police for the purpose of untangling the complex relationship between the Stasi and their informants. What this has shown is that East German society was incredibly complex, consisting of many shades of grey, with informants stuck somewhere between collaborators and the "affectors of lives." While many great works have been written and researched about the Ministry of State Security, how they operated, and how they served the state, there remains a wide gap in the literature that focuses on the impact that the Stasi has had on East German society overall. Though much remains to be written about the Stasi, it is important for future research to look closer at the wider impact that the Stasi has had on the lives of East Germans, not only throughout the history of the GDR, but also in post *Wende* Germany.

When the Stasi archives opened in December 1991, East Germans were finally able to view the information that the Stasi held on them and confirm their suspicion that the Stasi was lurking around every corner. However, the opening of the archives created an unexpected phenomenon known as 'File Envy.' To the dismay of millions of East Germans, the Stasi never surveilled or kept a file on them. For many, this was simply impossible and irreconcilable with their own personal lived experience. As Timothy Garton Ash states, when he speaks to East Germans about his file they often reply "how lucky, what a privilege" or conversely, "it seems mine was destroyed or it must be in Moscow."[81] Having altered their behaviour for most of their lives out of fear of the lingering Stasi, it is unimaginable for most to accept that this was never the reality.

Therefore, exploring the phenomenon of file envy in reunified Germany could reveal a much deeper understanding of how former East Germans have come to interpret their lives in the GDR. Such a study could also provide valuable insight into how East Germans have sought and achieved closure since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Another area of study worth exploring would be how former informants have integrated back into German society. While for many, talking to those who informed on them has brought a degree of closure, for others finding out close friends and relatives informed on them has been debilitating and life altering. Seeing how the position of an informant occupies a complicated grey area, it would be worth knowing what kind of impact this has had on informants' relationships with friends, family, and their work prospects. This could also provide an opportunity to evaluate the level of restorative justice that has taken place since 1990, how successful it has been, and the ways that it has also potentially damaged the process of integrating and stigmatizing East Germans.

[81] Garton Ash, *The File,* 32.

While these are only two possible avenues of exploration in the emerging field of the German Democratic Republic, the aim is to shift future research to take a more personal approach, away from the totalitarian organizations and back to the society that they affected. Through shifting the academic discussion to integrate this lived experience, we stand to gain a better understanding of the true impact of the Stasi, and how life in the GDR continues to shape Germany today.

Conclusion

In conclusion, between 1950 and 1989 the Ministry of State Security recruited over 274,000 officers and nearly 600,000 informants. Following the building of the Berlin Wall, the MfS increasingly became obsessed with collecting information on every aspect of public life. As the Stasi's security apparatus expanded, so too did their scope of security, taking on what is now known as blanket surveillance. Throughout the Stasi's rapid expansion, a complicated relationship developed between the State, Stasi, and the citizenry. Although it was the Communist regime in the GDR that sanctioned widespread surveillance of the domestic population, it would have been impossible without the tolerance of everyday people. This article has aimed to explain how this relationship was created and how it unfolded. Although it was the people that allowed blanket surveillance to happen, there were a myriad of reasons as to why someone decided to inform for the Stasi. From political conviction, blackmail, manipulation, and by preying on the most vulnerable in society, the Stasi perfected their techniques.

Through widespread repression and omnipresent surveillance, the Stasi caused the nation of seventeen million to censor their behaviour. As a result, the population took the path of least resistance, submitting to the Stasi's psychological violence. Consequently, East Germans are faced with the impossible task of trying to reconcile their relationship with the former German Democratic Republic. Over the past thirty years, the memory and legacy of the Stasi has been overshadowed by German reunification, the Berlin Wall has fallen but the *Mauerkopf* remains. Without a continued meaningful dialogue, former East Germans are left with more questions than answers, and wounds that cannot be healed solely by the collapse of communism. Who was a victim and who was a perpetrator? Blanket surveillance is just one piece of the complicated relationship between the people and a totalitarian regime.

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Manufactured Phantoms: Deconstructing the 'Migrant as Potential Terrorist' Narrative in Hungary

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Introduction

In what ways, and through which institutions, does the Orbán regime utilize a "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative? In this case, I consider narrative to be a rhetorical device, and less of a story (though it retains some of a story's features). In May 2015, a nation-wide survey regarding "illegal border-crossers" was distributed to some eight million Hungarians. This survey was accompanied by a letter written by Prime Minister Orbán. He wrote the following:

> I am sure you will remember that at the beginning of the year Europe was shaken by an unprecedented act of terror. In Paris the lives of innocent people were extinguished, in cold blood and with terrifying brutality. We were all shocked by what happened. At the same time, this incomprehensible act of horror also demonstrated that Brussels and the European Union are unable to adequately deal with the issue of immigration. (para. 2).[1]

The National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism, of which the survey and letter are parts, was designed to gather public opinion on "illegal" migration, and how it is linked to terrorism.[2] The timing of the National Consultation preceded the most severe waves of the so-called European Refugee Crisis ("the Crisis"), which would peak in the later half of 2015 and into 2016.[3] The Hungarian state received severe criticism, from the international and European Union (EU) communities, for its handling of the Crisis. The focal point of much of the criticism was aimed at the razor-wire fencing that had been erected on the Hungarian-Serbian border. Government Spokesperson Zoltán Kovács stressed that Hungary was forced to

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[1] The docx version of the questionnaire and letter can be found at https://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/national-consultation-on-immigration-to-begin under "related files".
[2] Hungary, Prime Minister's Office, "National consultation on immigration to begin," *News* (April 24, 2015) https://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/national-consultation-on-immigration-to-begin.
[3] Jon Henley, "What is the current state of the migration crisis in Europe?" *The Guardian,* November 21, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/what-current-scale-migration-crisis-europe-future-outlook

"cope with a higher-than-average immigration burden compared with their relative size."[4] Criticism has also been levelled at the police's use of violence when removing foreign nationals, as well as policy which denies food to those who were not granted asylum.[5] Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which work with asylum-seekers have faced "intimidation, stigmatisation, and smear campaigns."[6]

Orbán's regime has been widely discussed and dissected in political science literature, among other disciplines, for its illiberal and authoritarian governance style. However, there is less discussion about the communication styles of the government, and how it is used in tandem with policy decisions. In this paper, I will examine the use of the "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative by the regime and how it is reflected in the current political landscape. The deconstruction of narrative and framing devices is important, not just for understanding what the narrative is about, but for understanding how it was created, and how it is used. Knowing who the audience is, and who is targeted by the rhetoric, can also help to facilitate our understanding of why it is being used.

I argue that this narrative is not being used to call attention to pressing policy concerns or current events, but rather to serve as a tool (and, when necessary, as a weapon) to push forward Orbán's illiberal agenda and undermine civil society and his critics. The decision to highlight the "ills" of illegal migration is reflected, partially, in historical context. Furthermore, the narrative is a potent rhetorical device designed to assign blame for the Crisis, provide a justification for questionable policy, and uses contemporary and historical imagery to enforce it.

Literature Review

In terms of discourse, migration in Hungary is often framed in exclusionary, populist-style rhetoric that dehumanises its object.[7] This framing style preys on the insecurities of the internal population, using emotionally-driven language like *horror, terrifying,* and *cold blood*. This is not surprising, considering that the Orbán government is notorious for its jingoism and anti-immigration policies.[8] The rhetoric alludes to or explicitly states the existence of a problem: that is, terrorism will become an issue because of "illegal border-crossers". Though these techniques draw upon powerful emotions like fear, this narrative does not have strong roots in reality.

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[4] The Prime Minister's Office, "National consultation."
[5] Jennifer Rankin, "Hungary accused of fuelling xenophobia with anti-migrant rhetoric," *The Guardian,* May 21, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/21/hungary-accused-of-fuelling-xenophobia-human-rights-violations
[6] Ibid.
[7] Cathrine Thorleifsson, "Disposable Strangers: Far-right securitisation of forced migration in Hungary," *Social Anthropology* 25, no. 3 (2017): 319. DOI: 10.1111/1469-8676.12420.
[8] Akos Bocskor, "Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary during the 'Crisis' Year: The Orban Government's 'National Consultation' Campaign of 2015," *Sociology* 52, no.3 (2018): 558, DOI: 10.1177/0038038518762081.

According to the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TESAT), the number of terrorist attacks across the European Union (EU) in 2018 was the lowest in four years.[9] Hungary did not report any arrests in 2018 for terror-related crimes.[10] Furthermore, between 2016 and 2018, Hungary concluded court proceedings in only five cases; when compared to Belgium, France, Germany, or Spain, this figure is very low.[11] In reality, terrorism is practically a non-issue when compared to attack rates in other parts of Europe. When our frame of reference is expanded, we see that terrorism in the EU only accounts for approximately 2% of all global activity in 2015.[12] These facts should not diminish the suffering and pain of victims, but rather should place into perspective the severity of terrorism more generally in the EU, and specifically Central Eastern Europe (CEE). CEE is not a 'terrorism-free zone', but rather can be considered as a 'low-rate zone'.[13]

Historically, during the communist era, support for foreign terrorist groups who were "aimed against Western democracies and Israel was typical" of the Visegrad area governments.[14] The use of the Visegrad states for 'logistical operations' of terrorist groups is more likely to continue than the likelihood of targeting these particular states, despite popular fear.[15] This is not to say that Hungary is a terrorism *free* zone. It is not.[16] One of the prominent sources of terrorism, if we consider terrorism to be the use of violence for political ends, is the extreme right. These groups were responsible for violent attacks against the Roma minority between 2007-2009.[17] This poses two questions. Why are migrants being scapegoated for criminal acts that they may or may not perpetrate? Secondly, why use this narrative when the incidences of terrorism in Hungary are nearly non-existent?

Adam Henschke and Timothy Legrand, in their study on counterterrorism (CT) policy, argue: "terrorism is distinct … because, if the perpetrators are successful, our very societies will be destroyed."[18] There is something about the aims of terrorism that make it more terrifying because "some abstract good or value, essential to our survival as a society, is at stake."[19] The partial answer to the previous two questions, then, is

[9] European Union (Europol), *Terrorism and Situation Trend Report*, (2019), retrieved from https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat_2019_final.pdf, 13.
[10] Ibid, 15.
[11] Ibid, 71.
[12] Sebastian Wojciechowski, "Contemporary Terrorism in the European Union – the Hydra Syndrome," *Strategic Review/Przegląd Strategiczny* 10 (2017): 295-296.
[13] Miroslav Mareš, "Terrorism-Free Zone in East Central Europe? Strategic Environment, Risk Tendencies, and Causes of Limited Terrorist Activities in the Visegrad Group Countries," Terrorism and Political Violence 23 (2011): 247, doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2010.529389.
[14] Ibid, 234.
[15] Ibid, 247.
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid, 244.
[18] Adam Henschke and Timothy Legrand, "Counterterrorism policy in liberal-democratic societies: locating the ethical limits of national security," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 5 (2017): 549, doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2017.1342764.
[19] Ibid, 550.

fear. There is the fear that the newcomer – the unknown quantity – will come to destroy the society in which Hungarians live. That is, it goes beyond threatening the individual – it hurts the collective. It also carries the fear of unpredictability, at least to the general public. We can, as individuals, take precautions while driving, or seek help if our spouse becomes violent; however, the threat of terrorism is more difficult to shield against at the individual level. The unpredictability of terrorism, therefore, can play into the idea that immigrants will pose a threat to society.

Stephen Zunes rejects the assertion that terrorism has been made 'worse' or will be made 'worse' by the Refugee Crisis. He argues that those who commit terrorist acts in Europe are likely to born in Europe, and are then radicalised by terrorist organizations.[20] A study done by Vincenzo Bovo and Tobias Böhmelt had seemingly contradictory results. First, their results support the idea that "immigrants are an important vehicle for the diffusion of terrorism from one country to another," particularly when those immigrants come from areas with higher levels of terrorism.[21] There is a caveat to this, however: "only a minority of migrants from high-terrorism states can be associated with increases in terrorism, and not necessarily in a direct way."[22] To further complicate matters, they found that migration, more generally, is negatively associated with terrorism (in the host country) and that, when controlling for other variables, it is "unlikely to positively affect terrorism."[23] Regardless of the nuance, the established narrative that links immigration and terrorism is an effective discourse tool. The two questions above – why use the narrative, and why are migrants picked as the scapegoat, – now have a complete answer: they tap into anxieties and fear. Secondly, these choices are deliberate *because* it works. It is simple and to the point, but it is not necessarily original.

Bridget Anderson points to an important distinction in the narrative structure around migrants and refugees: the word *refugee* "retains connotations of deservingness and human rights," whereas *migrant* "became overtly pejorative."[24] This is important in the discussion on the Hungarian "immigrant as potential terrorist" narrative. The Orbán government uses the Hungarian word for migrant – *migráns*. This is a distinct, conscious decision, designed to distance the average Hungarian from an asylum seeker. Word choice is key. Cathrine Thorleifsson argues that, in the Hungarian case, "The initial framing of migrants was not grounded in the logic of human waste. On the contrary, it was the hyperinstrumentalisation of migrants as an economic threat that prompted their further racialization and dehumanisation in the image of the *crimmigrant* other."[25]

[20] Stephen Zunes, "Europe's Refugee Crisis, Terrorism, and Islamophobia," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 29 (2017): 1-2, doi: 10.1080/10402659.2017.1272275.
[21] Vincenzo Bovo and Tobias Böhmelt, "Does Immigration Induce Terrorism?" *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 2 (2016): 584-585, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/684679.
[22] Ibid, 585.
[23] Ibid, 584.
[24] Bridget Anderson, "The Politics of Pests: Immigration and the Invasive Other," *Social Research* 84, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 11-12.
[25] Thorleifsson, "Disposable Strangers," 319.

Forced migrants were viewed as dirty, *other,* and wholly unwelcome.[26] If they are dehumanised and unwelcome, dirty and foreign, then the questionable policy decisions taken by the state do not immediately become illegitimate. Framing a group of people in this way creates a dichotomy that contrasts migrants with ordinary Hungarians. Migrants are potentially dangerous and foreign, and this threatens the domestic population.

Dehumanizing whole groups of people is a potent device; if they are not human, then they are not deserving of humane treatment. Önder Canveren and Akgül Durakçay studied the Hungarian government's response to the Crisis. Unlike Thorleifsson and Anderson, who point to the dehumanisation of asylum seekers and the importance of language, Canveren and Durakçay argue that the state used the Crisis to create migrants as "threats to [the] national, cultural, economic, and internal security of Hungary and the EU."[27] However, like Thorleifsson and Anderson, they argue that categories of terrorists and foreigners are "deliberately used to create a perception of fear."[28] The use of these categories is justified under the guise of managing migration and terrorism policy, topics which tend to be highly complex and difficult to simplify. Assigning moral categories to groups can help to simplify these issues. Because the state is positioning themselves as dealing with "threats" to Hungarians, a harsher CT policy may not be immediately illegitimate.

Methodology

My data for this project informed my methodological choices. Over the course of a week, I conducted interviews with a number of stakeholders from Hungarian civil society and academia. Each interview was conducted in a conversational manner, and only loosely structured around several major questions. In addition to this data, I have collected information from secondary academic sources and news media, and primary source material that includes government documents and statistics. I will analyze these data through the lens of problem definition and with the discourse-historical approach (DHA).

My analysis of the "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative will be deconstructive in nature and will draw upon problem definition as a framework to break down the narrative. I will also employ the DHA of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which I believe complements problem definition. CDA can help to deconstruct the "relationships between language and ideology, language and power, language and gender" and help to understand how concepts like national identity and *othering* are created.[29] In essence, I will position

[26] Ibid, 321.
[27] Önder Canveren and Akgül Durakçay, "The Analysis of the Hungarian Government's Discourse towards the Migrant Crisis, A Combination of Securitization and Euroscepticism," *Yonetim ve Ekonomi* 24, no. 3 (2017): 870-871.
[28] Ibid, 861.
[29] Antonio Reyes, "Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions," *Discourse and Society* 22, no. 6 (2011): 785, doi: 10.1177/0957926511419927; Jiayu Wang, "A New Political and Communication Agenda for Political Discourse Analysis:

my analysis in the context of these frameworks, so I may tease meaning from the narrative by examining its constituent parts.

As an analytical tool, problem definition is concerned with the utility of word choice, particularly agenda setting and discourse. In essence, it is about analyzing how issues or events are framed and projected to the public. According to work done by David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, problems are comprised of five major dimensions: "problem causation, nature of the problem, characteristics of the problem population, ends-means orientation of problem definer, [and] nature of the solution."[30] The nature of the problem has several subcomponents, including: severity, incidence, novelty, proximity, or crisis.[31] Analytically, it is useful for disassembling problems into their constituent parts; DHA helps to analyze the historical context of the discourse, as well as the contemporary context.[32]

One of the critical understandings of CDA, and by extension, DHA, is that "discourses are underpinned by ideologies,"[33] while the theory is interested in the "relation between language and power."[34] Regarding the question at hand, this has important consequences because there is an inherent power imbalance between the state and the target group (asylum seekers). Additionally, discourse can be seen as made up of "non-discursive and discursive social practices," and also as a constituent part of these practices.[35] This is especially important for understanding the positioning of the Orbán government because the way in which they frame the Crisis did not originate in a vacuum.

Analysis

Words are chosen for a specific reason, particularly when it comes to something as deliberate as governmental discourse. Terms like *refugee, asylum seeker,* and *migrant* all have different connotations, and these connotations can change. The sentiment, or lack thereof, that is elicited by these words is important to this "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative. For this analysis, I will use the term "forced migrants" to refer to those who seek refuge or asylum in Europe. I will use the term "regular migrants" to discuss those who

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Critical Reflections on Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 2768.

[30] David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, "Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Choice," *Policy Studies Journal* 21, no. 1 (1993): 62 (table 1).

[31] Ibid, 65-66.

[32] Martin Reisigl, "The Discourse-Historical Approach," in *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies,* eds. John Flowerdew and John E. Richardson (Oxon, OX: Routledge, 2018), 53.

[33] John Flowerdew and John E. Richardson, "Introduction," in *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies,* eds. John Flowerdew and John E. Richardson (Oxon, OX: Routledge, 2018), 3-4.

[34] Ruth Wodak, "What is CDA About – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis,* eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London, UK: Sage, 2001), 2.

[35] Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis,* eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London, UK: Sage, 2001), 66.

willingly move. According to the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees, forced migrants (or "forcibly displaced people") include those who are internally displaced, refugees, and asylum seekers.[36]

An important usage of terminology was noted by Mr. András Léderer of The Magyar Helsinki Bizottság (The Hungarian Helsinki Committee): when the Hungarian government discusses migrants and migration, they are actually speaking about forced migrants, and not about economic migrants or individuals from neighbouring states.[37] This was also echoed by Dr. Matthijs Bogaards, who argued that all the media in Hungary (which is disproportionately managed by the state and their allies[38]) talks about *migrants,* even if they have been acknowledged as refugees.[39] This is demonstrative of the ideology of the government: they use words with particular meanings that align with their values.

The Hungarian government does not use the Hungarian word for refugee; they do, however, use *migráns* (or, migrant).[40] The word has implications of *otherness,* and is often used to describe non-white individuals or to denote an "illegal" status.[41] This usage is no accident. In Mr. Léderer's estimation, a majority of Hungarians would have never heard the word *migráns* prior to the Orbán government's appropriation of the word.[42] Using words, according to Mr. Léderer, that sound foreign to your language almost implies that you speak with a degree of authority on the subject.[43] I argue that this is a choice in framing – that is, how a subject or issue is contextualized by the speaker. Choosing a word which implies *otherness*, instead of a word that has similar connotations to *refugee* or *asylum seeker,* is deliberate because it projects those connotations to the audience. As well, it also projects certain characteristics on the speaker, who is now seen as authoritative on the subject matter. This allows the speaker – in this case the government, to control, in the context of the narrative, the nature of the problem, emphasize its cause(s), and assign characteristics to the problem population.

If the word used to describe the problem population implies: *otherness*, is a word that is foreign, and is underutilized in common usage, then this implies that they are a *strange* population. I think, too, that it imagines a divide between the audience (Hungarians) and forced migrants. Furthermore, when Orbán chose

[36] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Figures at a Glance," Accessed January 14 2020 https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html
[37] András Léderer (Information and Advocacy Officer, The Hungarian Helsinki Committee), in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[38] Reporters Without Borders, "Level of media control in Hungary is "unprecedented in an EU member state," December 5, 2019 ," accessed from, https://rsf.org/en/news/level-media-control-hungary-unprecedented-eu-member-state
[39] Dr. Matthijs Bogaards (Visiting Professor, Department of Political Science, Central European University), in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[40] Bogaards, discussion; Ákos Bocskor (PhD Candidate, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[41] Bocskor, discussion.
[42] Léderer, discussion.
[43] Ibid.

to focus on the bloody aspect of the attack in Paris, and then follow this statement with a critique of EU immigration policy, he also assigned a threatening character to asylum seekers. In their portrayals of asylum seekers, the government frames them as young, usually male, and Muslims who are "coming to create their own caliphate in Europe."[44] This messaging attempts to prove that all forced migrants are physically violent, and have a strict, conservative devotion to Islam.[45] It goes deeper: migrants are dangerous and they are alien. If they do not pose an immediate threat, then their children, when they grow up, will.[46] Showing this particular message and image to the audience is calculated. It assigns dangerous and violent tendencies to forced migrants, and this added a further degree of urgency to the 2015 Crisis. Not only were there tens of thousands of forced migrants attempting to enter Europe – many of them through Hungary – they were *dangerous,* too.

One such example came in the form of Ahmed, an asylum seeker. In August 2015, he left his home in Cyprus to help his family find refuge in Europe.[47] However, he got stuck at the Hungary-Serbia border. When clashes broke out between Hungarian security forces and migrants, some migrants, including Ahmed, were throwing stones.[48] Ahmed had been given access to a loud-speaker, which he used at the border to call for calm; his words were mistranslated, and then he was charged with terrorism.[49] According to Dr. Boldizsár Nagy, his situation was used to create a terrorist.[50] The state now had a concrete 'example' in their narrative and discourse against forced migrants. Whether or not he had committed a terrorist act is irrelevant; the situation was cleverly framed by the state to show what a terrorist looked like. The Refugee Crisis provided an excellent opportunity for the state to exploit. As forced migrants crowded at the border fence, the state had the ability to focus on a 'problem population' and further amplify the state ideology through discourse. Through Ahmed, they were able to finally point to real person, and use him as an example of what they have been warning against.

The idea of the *crimmigrant,* a portmanteau of 'criminal' and 'immigrant,' has been more widely disseminated into the political lexicon in recent years.[51] The idea that migrants can be conflated with criminality is part and parcel of the Hungarian political discourse. Framing them as terrorists, particularly ones that will threaten the culture of the host country, furthers this notion. In Ahmed's case, some argue that he was

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[44] Bulcsú Hunyadi (Senior Analyst, Political Capital, Budapest) in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[45] Hunyadi, discussion.
[46] Léderer, discussion.
[47] Amnesty International, "Release of Syrian man wrongly convicted of terrorism in Hungary an 'overwhelming relief'," January 18, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/01/release-of-syrian-man-wrongly-convicted-of-terrorism-in-hungary-an-overwhelming-relief/.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Boldizsár Nagy (Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Central European University), in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[50] Nagy, discussion.
[51] Katja Franko, *The Crimmigrant Other: Migration and Penal Power,* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020): 6.

wrongfully charged, and that his case was merely reflective of the state's interest in demonizing migrants.[52] Assigning criminality to immigrants who do not use governmentally approved channels is more likely to be done to those who are poor, or those who are from "perceived-to-be western-unfriendly" states.[53] So, those who are assigned to the *crimmigrant* category are disproportionately those who cannot afford to use the proper channels, or who were forced to use 'illegal' means.

In summer 2015, there were a number of billboards which seemed to target newcomers; messages saying "If you come to Hungary, respect our culture" and "if you come to Hungary, respect our laws" were printed on the billboards.[54] This already assumes that anyone entering the country, any *migráns,* would already be thinking about breaking the laws. After all, they are illegally entering the country, which makes them criminals. The presumptions in the Billboard Campaign – that asylum seekers would not follow laws, and that they would try to uproot Hungarian culture – is primarily only being applied to the forced migrants from non-European countries and from non-Christian countries. It marries the idea of "illegal migrants," (those who are usually non-white and non-Christian) with job-stealing and bad intentions. This is also demonstrative of choosing a target group that has little political strength or influence, and framing them negatively. In 2015, the Deputy Prime Minister, Zsolt Semjén, argued that he was not "against Hungary receiving economic migrants, but only those who would benefit the country."[55] He goes on to say that immigrants need to respect that Hungary has Christian heritage.[56] The messages used in the Billboard Campaign, he says, are addressed to those who enter the country illegally.[57] I argue, instead, that the Campaign signaled to Hungarians that the state will challenge those who want to destroy the Hungarian "way of life."

If the state was interested in spreading this message to "illegal migrants," then the billboards would have been in Arabic, Persian, or a language that "illegal migrants" were likely to speak.[58] However, the billboards were in Hungarian.[59] It was less about "warning" asylum seekers or migrants, and more about signalling to the general Hungarian populace that the government was taking a strong stance against "illegal migrants." It is likely, especially if they are recent arrivals from non-Hungarian-speaking areas, that asylum

[52] Amnesty International, "Release of Syrian man."
[53] Daniel Gyollai and Anthony Amatrudo, "Controlling irregular migration: International human rights standards and the Hungarian legal framework," *European Journal of Criminology* 16, no. 4 (2019): 433, doi: 10.1177/1477370818772776.
[54] Zsófia Nagy, "Repertoires of Contention and New Media: The Case of a Hungarian Anti-billboard Campaign," *Intersections, East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2, no. 4 (2016): 110, doi: 10.17356/ieejsp.v2i4.279.
[55] Hungary, Prime Minister's Office, "Left conducting anti-Hungarian propaganda on issue of immigration," *News*, June 15, 2015, https://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/left-conducting-anti-hungarian-propaganda-on-issue-of-immigration
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] According to UNHCR statistics, there are approximately 25.9 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum-seekers in the world. 6.7 million refugees come from Syria, while another 2.7 million come from Afghanistan. Figures from: United Nations, "Refugees," accessed March 15, 2020, https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/.
[59] Nick Thorpe, "Hungary's poster war on immigration," *British Broadcasting Corporation,* June 14, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33091597.

seekers would not read Hungarian. It is part of governmental signalling which uses the "dangerous migrant" narrative to justify certain actions and policies. Some individuals and organizations seemed to be aware of this. Not only were the billboards defaced as part of a mini-campaign to mock the government's migration policy, but the UN took part in trying to reverse the narrative by promoting one of their own – a campaign showing refugees who have integrated (despite the Deputy Prime Minister's warnings) into Hungarian society.[60] However, the Hungarian state has continued to insist that illegal migrants are a problem and problems need "solutions." [61]

Perhaps a 'solution', in the broadest sense, comes in the form of the detention centres. I say that they are a solution, because it allows for a minimization of the number of people seeking asylum in the country.[62] The Hungarian state legalized collective expulsion, which means that if you are not in possession of valid documentation, then the state will take you into custody, and take you to the border and 'push' you into Serbia.[63] These are what are known as pushback cases.[64] They are not documented, and the state is not interested in asking who a person is or what they are doing.[65] This is something the Orbán government believes is the Hungarian state's right – "to decide who can live within Hungary's borders."[66] Mr. Léderer rightfully argued that this is a lapse in security, and a gross breach of human rights.[67] Dr. Nagy informed me that the Hungarian government suggests that the detainment of these individuals is not forced – they are more than welcome to leave.[68] However, when your only option is to go to Serbia, is it really an option? Do you really have the freedom to make that kind of choice?

The Visegrad Group is diametrically opposed to EU policy on the migrant issue. Particularly, they dislike the use of the quota system, and instead argue for solving the 'causes' of the Crisis.[69] Indeed, EU mismanagement is partially blamed for the Crisis. Perhaps not its root causes, but the causes needed for it to become a *crisis.* EU law is, according to Dr. Nagy, not well designed.[70] The law makes it so that some states get a disproportionate number of forced migrants.[71] This, coupled with the lack of member state cooperation

[60] Thorpe, "Hungary's poster war on immigration."
[61] Hungary, The Prime Minister, "You wanted migrants, but we didn't," *News,* Accessed January 9, 2018, https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/news/you-wanted-migrants-but-we-didn-t.
[62] Léderer, discussion.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] The Prime Minister, "You wanted migrants."
[67] Ibid.
[68] Nagy, discussion.
[69] Diana Ivanova, "Hungarian Security Policy and the Migrant Crisis (2015-2017)," *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organisation* 23, no. 1 (2017): 167-168, doi: 10.1515/kbo-2017-0026.
[70] Nagy, discussion.
[71] Ibid.

creates a crisis of solidarity.[72] He argues that the EU should be a protection space, where an application to a country is an application to the EU; the EU can then delegate the applications.[73] But, instead, we have leaders like Orbán who criticize aspects of EU policy, and instead try to deal with the issue in a way that is dehumanising and degrading. For his part, Orbán does not believe that his conduct is "anti-European," even though he strongly criticizes Brussels.[74] Another significant policy and institutional response to this issue is the Hungarian Counter Terrorism Centre.

The Hungarian Counter Terrorism Centre (*Terrorelhárítási Központ* or TEK) was established in 2010, despite a low terrorist threat.[75] The Centre itself is very visible and militarized.[76] They also are well-funded and have many rights, particularly in areas of surveillance and operations.[77] TEK has many duties, including the arrest of criminals; protection detail for the Prime Minister, President, or delegations from abroad; and, deals with organized crime and gun violence.[78] Indeed, TEK hardly performs counterterrorism duties, but still remains the primary agency for it.[79] It puts "together all the information and intelligence on terrorism and prevents interagency turf wars but this also results in the fact that a seemingly CT-focused unit is mostly invested in catching dangerous criminals or drug dealers."[80] This response by the state is superfluous; indeed, many in Hungary view it as an overemphasis on the terrorism issue in particular.[81]

Generally, the founding of TEK was less about managing a security threat, and more about creating an agency that is firmly within the control of the executive.[82] Its existence, however, is coherent within the context of the narrative space. A well-funded agency with rather draconian powers is not out of place in this environment. During a discussion on the issue of terrorism, Ms. Alexandra Béni, a contributor for *Daily News Hungary* and a PhD candidate at Corvinus University, told me that she believes the terrorism policy will stay the same because it seems to be working and satisfying the needs of the state.[83] Indeed, they seem "proud" of their policies and activities.[84] Dr. Bogaards argues that there is not much need for a terrorism policy, precisely

[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] The Prime Minister, "You wanted migrants."
[75] Péter Stauber, "Fit for the Job? Legislation and Legal Practice on Terrorism in Hungary," *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 24, no. 4 (2015): 104.
[76] Alexandra Béni (Contributor, Daily News Hungary), in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[77] Léderer, discussion.
[78] Béni, discussion.
[79] Kacper Rekawek, "Referenced but Not Linear? Counterterrorism in Central-Eastern Europe in Theory and in Practice," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 31, no. 1 (2017): 188, doi: 10.1177/0888325416678657.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Béni, discussion.
[82] Léderer, discussion.
[83] Béni, discussion.
[84] Ibid.

because the terrorism issue is minute.[85] However, he, along with Mr. Léderer, believe TEK is mostly for show.[86] It is part of the smoke and mirrors the Orbán government uses on the forced migrant issue. The creation of this agency, then, was not to deal with the issue of terrorism; it was to signal that something was 'being done' about terrorists, even though there are few. TEK's high visibility in public is a signal to the audience. How does the audience respond to the narrative, if at all?

At first, Mr. Ákos Bocskor said that the narrative of a non-law-abiding immigrant confused Hungarians.[87] There was not an "immigrant problem" until Summer 2015, and the National Consultation had drawn on an economic narrative about migrants wanting to exploit the welfare state.[88] The fact that migrants were negatively framed at all drew on a general, negative attitude against foreigners.[89] The 2014 European Social Survey showed that approximately 91% of Hungarian respondents agreed with either allowing 'none' or a 'few' Muslims to live in the country.[90] This works perfectly with the discourse peddled by the Orbán government because these beliefs provide a basis for the narrative. When asked whether the government should be generous in judging refugee applications, 38% said they neither agreed nor disagreed, while those who disagreed or strongly disagreed accounted for 39% of responses.[91] Additionally, these negative attitudes towards Muslims and refugees have only gotten more polarized.[92]

When asked if many or few immigrants of a differing race or ethnicity from the majority should be allowed to live in Hungary, approximately 84% of respondents to the 2018 European Social Survey answered 'allow a few' or 'allow none'.[93] This is in contrast to a similar question, which asked if many or few immigrants of *the same* race or ethnicity should be allowed to live in the country; approximately 50% of respondents in this case said 'allow a few' or 'allow none.'[94] While the second question reflects a more lenient attitude towards newcomers if they are of a similar ethnicity, it still shows that a large proportion of respondents do not like the idea of many or any newcomers living in Hungary. When discussing the issue of immigration with Mr. András

[85] Bogaards, discussion
[86] Ibid; Léderer, discussion.
[87] Bocskor, discussion.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Raw data for the 2014 Hungarian survey can be downloaded from: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=hungary. The variable in question is coded as almuslv in the dataset. The range of answers is 1 (allow many) to 4 (allow none). Percentages calculated by the author. N=1553.
[91] The variable in question is coded as gvrfgap. The range of answers is 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (Disagree Strongly). Percentages calculated by the author. N =1642. https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=hungary
[92] András Kováts (Director, Menedek), in discussion with the author, December 2019.
[93] Raw data for the 2018 Hungarian survey can be downloaded from: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=hungary. The variable in question is coded as imdfetn in the dataset. The range of answers is 1 (allow many) to 4 (allow none). Percentages calculated by the author. N=1596.
[94] The variable in question is coded as imsmetn in the dataset. The range of answers is 1 (allow many) to 4 (allow none). Percentages calculated by the author. N=1612. https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=hungary

Kováts, he stated that Hungarians have always been suspicious of foreigners because they are something that is not understood.[95] In his opinion, understanding is important because it allows for empathy.[96] However, this narrative pushed by the state is designed to keep people from empathizing with asylum-seekers or refugees. This discourse does not just exist in verbal communications. It is embedded in the security institutions and aggressively projected in the media. It is also tied to the government's stigmatization of NGOs.

Mr. Kováts, Director of the Menedék institution (literally meaning *shelter* or *refuge* in Hungarian), told me that since the Orbán government began their campaign against NGOs, much of his time is dedicated to damage control, attempting to mitigate it.[97] When I asked how this anti-migrant narrative impacts the work done at Helsinki Committee, Mr. Léderer explained that there are continued attacks by the government and intimidation.[98] He described the intimidation tactics as accusatory, that government attacks state that the Helsinki Committee is working with George Soros, foreign governments, and are helping foreigners.[99] George Soros has become the new "enemy" of the Orbán government, accusing him of attacking Hungary. The government has stated that all those who are opposed to their immigration policy are being paid by Soros or foreign actors.[100] It has extended to propaganda aimed at smearing anyone who might be sympathetic or helpful towards forced migrants.

Mr. Léderer described a time when a pro-government weekly appeared with the ISIS flag emblazoned on it. Instead of Arabic script, they had placed the Helsinki Committees' flag with similar text.[101] This directly insinuates that Helsinki is helping terrorists – an insinuation that is grossly inaccurate, but one that is still being made. Because Helsinki helps "foreigners" at all, and in the discourse sphere that the Orbán government has created, this is as a good as aiding terrorists. Similarly, the government has portrayed Menedék to a be a pro-refugee NGO, has said that the organization wants to flood Hungary with migrants, and that the organization believes migrants are better than Hungarians.[102] It has gotten to the point, Mr. Kováts said, that other organizations are afraid and nervous to interact with Menedék because of potential blowback from the state.[103] This is incredibly alarming, but coherent, within the sphere of the discourse on "migrant as potential terrorist." This toxic narrative extends into uprooting Hungarian civil society, muzzling the media, and eroding human rights; it did not appear in a vacuum.

[95] Kováts, discussion.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Léderer, discussion.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Hunyadi, discussion.
[101] Léderer, discussion.
[102] Kováts, discussion.
[103] Ibid.

Why pick this narrative, instead of something that has stronger roots in reality? Firstly, the narrative works. It has allowed the state to: expand their rhetoric around the EU and its failed policies, to target other organizations or individuals that may challenge state authority, and it created an atmosphere of fear that is easier to exploit. This narrative and its symbols are also rooted in a familiar history. There is a basis for the narrative in Hungarian folk tales, where Orban portrays himself as a prince fighting a dragon.[104] This folk identity and historical elements also refer to a time in Hungarian history where the country was ruled by the Ottomans. This was seen on television in Hungary, aired on a channel connected to the government, where events in history and elements of national identity were linked to the "migrant as potential terrorist" narrative.[105]

Elements also include the state's identification with Christianity, where Orbán has suggested that European Christian heritage is being threatened by Muslim newcomers, who are only coming to take advantage of a higher quality of living.[106] The linkages between Hungary under Turkish (and therefore, Muslim) rule and the immigrants coming to "flood the country" is actually quite clever. It invokes a familiar story in Hungarian history where the invaders took over, but in the modern context, this has yet to happen. Showing migrants at the border – sometimes while grossly overestimating the numbers – creates an opportunity for the viewer or reader to conclude that there is an impending invasion.[107] Due to the government's indirect and direct control on almost all of the media in the state, it becomes a method that is easy to use. [108] Using what is already present (that is, present historically or in people's attitudes) makes this narrative seem more realistic.

Conclusion

Using events like the Refugee Crisis in political communication is a part of politics. The Orbán government, for their part, has masterfully manipulated the media and governmental institutions alike for the sake of promoting the "migrant as potential terrorist narrative." As I have argued here, it is not that terrorism is an extraordinarily pressing issue for Hungary or that forced migrants pose anymore of a threat than regular migrants. The narrative that is used by the state is one that is not rooted in contemporary reality, but, rather, is rooted in people's fears and distrust of the unknown. To add another layer to this narrative, the state has infused it with symbolism from Hungary's past, using phrases like "Muslim invasion." [109] While the use of such

[104] Béni, discussion.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ivanova, "Hungarian Security Policy," 167; The Prime Minister, "You wanted migrants."
[107] Léderer, discussion.
[108] Hunyadi, discussion.
[109] The Prime Minister, "You wanted migrants."

a narrative (dangerous migrants or migrants who will steal jobs) is not novel, Orbán's government has weaponized it effectively and have proven that it is a versatile tool in its undermining of liberal democracy. Arguing that certain NGOs are helping terrorists is a concrete example. Endlessly airing stories about the "threat" ensures that society is more and more steeped in this narrative.[110]

Essentially, this narrative is another tool for the Orbán government to use. It is used because it is effective, because it is easy to demonize those who are the *other* and those who are marginalized, and it is easy when the state is able to take ownership of the problem and provide "solutions" to it. It is even easier when the "problem population" is, in terms of power and influence, weak and unable to counter with their own narrative. Problem ownership is powerful, because the person who owns the problem (in this case, Orbán and his government) controls the problem. The issue has been taken, amplified, and given urgency. The problem population has been vilified and framed as, at best, incapable of being part of Hungarian society, and at worst, terrorists. Solutions to this issue include pushing people (literally) out of the country and "beefing up" CT policy, though neither truly addresses the root causes of the 2015 Crisis. The Crisis seems to be the well from which the Orbán government draws from, and he assigns blame for it on EU mismanagement and bad policy.

If we consider the framework of problem definition – causation, nature of the problem, characteristics of the problem population, ends-means orientation of problem definer, and nature of the solution – I have shown how the narrative, as used by the Hungarian state, is constructed and why each category is important to its efficacy. I hope that through this analysis, I have demonstrated each of these categories in turn, and discussed how they are being used by the state. As for DHA, I have shown how this discourse is underpinned by ideology and established how this type of language is also linked to the relative power of the problem owner, the problem population, and the audience. I have also demonstrated that there is a particular context for this narrative to exist. While similar narratives are used by other governments, this particular one is unique to Hungary's contemporary and historical contexts.

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[110] Béni, discussion; Bogaards, discussion; Léderer, discussion.

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Illusive Sovereignty: Why Chechnya Did Not Achieve Independence

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Michael Shirley is a current graduate student at the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Toronto. He completed his bachelor's degree at Simon Fraser University where he majored in Political Science and minored in History. His undergrad studies were focused on Russian foreign policy under Vladimir Putin and on Soviet/Russian history. He also participated in the NATO field school simulation program where he studied both Canadian and Global security and defence policy. He is currently researching Russia's policy orientations in sub-Saharan Africa.

"We didn't go to war. The war came to us." – German Sadulaev, *I Am a Chechen!*[1]

Introduction

An estimated 160,000 Chechen combatants and civilians were killed in the two wars fought by the Chechen Republic and the Russian Federation.[2] The first was fought from 1994-1996 and the second from 1999-2001, followed by a lengthy insurgency phase until 2009. Each war was fought under the banner of Chechen independence from Russia. Though the origins of the Chechen separatist movement can be traced back to when the region was incorporated into the Russian Empire, it was the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the 15 new republics (some created by separatist movements) that reignited the flames of secession for some Chechen leaders. After enduring two brutal wars, the first ending essentially in a victory for Chechnya, the Chechen Republic has not achieved independence and the possibility of its secession appears to have dissipated, if not vanished entirely.

This paper asks: why did the Chechen independence movement fail to create a viable, sovereign Chechnya? The answer appears to be multifaceted, and will require a reach beyond the dominant theories – which tend to focus on the legality of Chechnya's independence – as they appear to be insufficient in explaining why the Chechen independence movement failed in its quest. This paper will harmonize new theories with the dominant literature to provide a more comprehensive answer to this question. It will first contextualize the issue through a brief discussion about the history of the Chechen independence movement and the factors

[1] German Sadulaev, *I Am a Chechen!* (Vintage UK: New York City 2012), 139.
[2] "Chechen official puts death toll for 2 wars at up to 160,000," *The New York Times,* https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/16/world/europe/chechen-official-puts-death-toll-for-2-wars-at-up-to-160000.html, accessed November 5, 2019.

that lead to its re-emergence. This paper will argue that Dzhokhar Dudayev co-opted the independence movement in favour of expanding his own power, and that the post-Dudayev Chechen leaders were unable to assert meaningful control in the region (which bred chaos and limited the ability of the independence movement) Finally, this paper will assert that there was no conceivable scenario in which the Russian Federation would allow Chechnya to separate.

Literature Review

Notable difficulties arise when examining literature about Chechnya's independence movement. Reliable sources on the movement are limited after the year 2000 as Russia restricted external access to information about Chechnya.[3] This is likely why the most prevalent argument made in the literature about Chechnya's secession deals with the legality of it.

The legality of the separation remains fairly clear. According to the Russian constitution, no region can separate from Russia without a mutual agreement between the central government and the separation government.[4] Neither domestic nor international law allows for Chechnya to unitarily separate from the Russian Federation.[5] Instead, moral arguments over Chechen independence are used to meet the legal constraints. It is argued that Chechens have only suffered under Russian domination, and that the international community should have recognized their independence because of this.[6] In the same vein, it is argued that the international community allowed for Russia to, as author Trent Tappe believes, illegally enter the Chechen republic with force.[7] While this moral argument may be compelling, it is not enough to override the legality behind secession. From the Russian perspective, Chechnya is a part of their territory and any leader who declares independence, regardless of whether the region is autonomous, compromises the integrity of the Russian state. The independence movement failed, from a legal perspective, because it was illegal.

The problem with a purely legal analysis, as is common in the literature, is that it is banal and does not encapsulate the entirety of the story. A more successful Dudayev may have been able to overcome the accepted norms and laws had his case been more reliable. Further, it does not answer why Russia would continue to want to hold onto a tiny, problematic republic. The linkages between denying separation and Presidential popularity offer a surprising insight into Russia's response. This paper, in recognizing the gaps in the existing

[3] Alison S. Thomas, "Legitimacy, Success and Rebellion in Chechnya: The Rise and Fall of Chechen Independence," (PhD diss., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017): 12.
[4] Diana Draganova, "Chechnya's Right of Secession under Russian Constitutional Law," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 3, vol 2 (2004): 571-590.
[5] Mike Bowker, "Russia and Chechnya: the issue of secession," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, vol. 4 (2004): 474.
[6] Trent N. Tappe, "Chechnya and the State of Self-Determination in a Breakaway Region of the Former Soviet Union: Evaluating the Legitimacy of Secessionist Claims." *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 34, no. 1 (1995): 291.
[7] Ibid.

literature, employs a multifaceted approach. It will borrow theories about clientelism, de-secularization of conflict, and diversionary foreign policy to help fill in some of the gaps in the existing literature.

Clientelism does not have a universally accepted definition, but for the purposes of this paper, it is best understood as the exchange of political success and/or power for access to resources and/or wealth for a select few.[8] The relationships between the client (those who receive power) and the patron (those who receive access) may be close, face-to-face relationships contingent on loyalty, or they may relationships that funnel down from the height of power through a representative (a broker) to a local actor.[9] The variables surrounding Dudayev fit the clientelism theory as his legitimacy had more to do with his preferred elite than with common Chechen people. Dudayev, as discussed below, managed to co-opt the Chechen independence movement and manufacture a system which benefitted himself and his preferred few. Chechnya, upon Dudayev's death, was faced with no legitimate political structure as a result of Dudayev's clientelist network, and chaos reigned supreme.

The de-secularization of the Chechen conflict did not happen until the death of Dudayev, but it warrants an analysis given the role that Wahhabism plays in the second Chechen war. The de-secularization of any aspect of society requires the growth of religious influence over a particular social aspect. Additionally, growing religious societal influence can only be considered de-secularization if the influence developed in reaction to secular events.[10] De-secularization emerged in Chechnya in reaction to the secular period under the Soviet regime and to Dudayev's decision to maintain a secular constitution. Religion is not what initially drove Chechnya's independence movement but as the conflict evolved, and opportunities were made available, the de-secularization of Chechnya forged a path for extremists to pursue a conflict under a new banner; continuing the trend of a chaotic Chechnya.[11]

The literature on diversionary conflict states that embattled leaders may seek conflict to bolster domestic support and alleviate political pressure.[12] While much of the literature focuses on the embattled

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[8] Allen Hicken, "Clientelism," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no.14 (2011): 290.
[9] Ibid, 291; Michael Moerman,"A Thai village headman as a synaptic leader," *Asian Studies* 3, no. 28 (1969): 535-549; Gerald Curtis, *Election Campaigning Japanese Style*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 33-62; Anirudh Krishna, "Politics in the middle: mediating relationships between the citizens and the state in rural north India." in *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitshelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 141-158; Ethan Scheiner, "Clientelism in Japan: the importance and limits of institutional explanations." in *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitshelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 276–297.; Steven I. Wilkinson, "Explaining changing patterns of party-voter linkages in India," in *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitshelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 110-140.
[10] Vyascheslav Karpov, "Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2 (2010): 5.
[11] Christopher Marsh, "The Desecularization of Conflict: The Role of Religion in Russia's Confrontation with Chechnya, 1785–Today," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 14:1 (2016):77.
[12] Kyle Haynes, "Diversionary Conflict: Demonizing enemies or demonstrating competence?," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 34, no.4, (2017): 337.

leader seeking external conflict, the same variables are *particularly* present when that leader is facing a militant secessionist movement. The core theories about diversionary conflict deal with the "rally around the flag" concept in which nationalism and support for the country will be bolstered by conflict[13] or the "gambling for resurrection" argument in which troubled leaders might pursue conflict when they are likely to lose political office.[14] Boris Yeltsin, outside of having the stronger legal case, had to consider what his domestic audience would think if Chechnya was able to secede. He was already plagued by domestic issues and facing an election. A military success in Chechnya would likely bolster his popular support and maintain his legitimacy. His potential motivators fall nicely into either theory of diversionary conflict.[15]

These theories equip this paper with the necessary tools to expand on the legal-based argument and assert a fuller picture explaining why the Chechen independence movement failed to build a sustainable and independent Chechnya.

Background

The history of Chechen resistance to Russian rule spans back to before the region's incorporation into the Russian Empire in 1859.[16] Though the history of Chechnya's struggle against Russian domination is rich and has been captured by literary icons like Leo Tolstoy, the Chechen independence movement that sprang to life during the 90s and early 2000s began with the Chechen experience within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Resistance remained a constant throughout the Bolsheviks' establishment of Soviet Russia. Chechen religious leaders called for a *jihad* against the Red Army, but they were eventually outmaneuvered by Stalin, and pieces of the Caucasus were incorporated into the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Chechen resistance remained active against collectivization, but Soviet power began to limit their abilities. By 1934, the Soviets had unified the regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia into a single *oblast'* (administrative region) and granted it autonomous republic status in 1936. Chechen insurgents remained a thorn in the Soviets' side as they continued to seize control of numerous mountain regions, installing their own form of

[13] Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, (New York: Free Press, 1956), 139-149; Jack Levy, "Domestic Politics and war," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4, (1988): 653-673.
[14] Richards et. al, "Good times, bad times, and the diversionary use of force: A tale of some not-so-free agents," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37, no. 3, (1993): 504-535; George W. Downs and David M. Rocke, "Conflict, agency, and gambling for resurrection: The principal-agent problem goes to war," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 2, (1994): 362-380; Hein E. Goemans and Mark Fey, "Risky but rational: War as an institutionally-induced gamble," *Journal of Politics* 71, no. 1, (2009): 35-54; Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Goemans, *Leaders and International Conflict,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011),12-13; Kyle Haynes, "Diversionary Conflict," 341-342.
[15] Daniel Treisman, "Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 3, (2011): 590.
[16] Tony Wood, *Chechnya: The Case for Independence,* (Verso: London and New York, 2007): 24.

government.[17] During World War II, the region experienced Nazi occupation from 1942-1943. Soon after his recapture of the region, Joseph Stalin disbanded the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) in March of 1944 and began to deport ethnic Chechens and Ingush from the area. The Soviets claimed that these deportations served as punishment for Chechen collaboration with the Nazis, but the evidence of this relationship remains thin.[18] It appears, instead, that it was the Soviets' inability to enforce direct control over the entire region that offers a more nuanced explanation as to why the deportations happened.

The deportations serve as one of, if not the most, significant unifying factors for the Chechen people. 412,548 out of 724,297 deportees moved between February and July of 1944 were Chechen. They were forcibly removed from their homes, jammed into abominable train cars with little to no food, and sent to designated living spaces, often in Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan.[19] The horrible conditions in which these individuals were transported in directly or indirectly lead to the death of 30 percent of the Chechen population.[20] The importance of these deportations cannot be overstated, as not only are they frequently mentioned by Chechen independence leaders, they also illustrate how hostility towards the Russians (the terms 'Soviet' and 'Russian' are often blurred to the same meaning, erroneously or not) could easily be fostered in the minds of Chechens. Their families experienced great suffering at the hands of what they saw as an occupier.[21]

After Stalin's death, Chechens began to return to their traditional homes, and in 1957 the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was re-established. Chechens returned to find Russians living in their homes and were expected to assimilate to the Russian language and the Soviet belief system. The social cleavages between the Russians and the Chechens in Chechnya began to facilitate tensions amongst the different ethnicities. Many Chechens were blocked from the formal economy and had to find solace in the black market.[22]

It was only during Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* initiatives of the late 1980s that the Chechens were able to voice their disdain with their lives, and national movements began to take shape.[23] Intellectuals challenged the idea that Chechnya and Ingushetia consented to becoming incorporated with Russia, and their claims were bolstered when Boris Yeltsin told them to assert as much sovereignty as possible.[24] In the summer of 1990, Dzhokhar Dudayev emerged as a political leader, and through slick manoeuvring he was able to become the President of the Chechen region in less than a year.[25]

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[17] Ibid, 37.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, 37-42.
[20] Ibid, 38.
[21] Ibid, 38-39.
[22] Ibid, 45.
[23] Valeriy Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004): 57.
[24] Wood, *Chechnya: The Case for Independence*, 48.
[25] Steven Erlanger, "Man in the News; Chechen Warrior Chief: Soviet Army Creditials – Dzhokar M Dudayev," *The New York Times*, (1996).

Dudayev (1990-1996)

Prior to the summer of 1990, Dzhokhar Dudayev had not been in the Checheno-Ingushetia Republic for several decades. A former Soviet general stationed in Estonia, he emerged from the ashes of the Red Army having witnessed the success of the Estonian independence movement. Encouraged and supported by his colleagues, and later advisors, Dudayev asserted control of the National Congress of the Chechen People (OKChN), a political party dedicated to Chechen sovereignty, and adopted a declaration proclaiming that Chechnya was a state separate from both the USSR and the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic.[26] The central government in Moscow, though declaring a state of emergency in the Chechen republic, was left paralyzed and unable to respond to the Chechen independence movement. The Gorbachev-Yeltsin rivalry afforded Dudayev an opportunity that he did not shy away from.

Following the failed coup against Gorbachev in August of 1991, Dudayev's OKChN had rallied support for Boris Yeltsin.[27] This, naturally, gained the favor of Yeltsin. This favor would be repaid as Yeltsin, now significantly more powerful, offered support for Dudayev over the local competition, Doku Zavgaev. Dudayev was elected President on October 27, 1991, though the legitimacy of this election is contested.[28] However, this support would not last long, as the Chechen independence movement evolved beyond Moscow's wishes as Dudayev, now armed with an electoral mandate, declared the Act of Sovereignty of the Chechen Republic.[29] Additionally, the radical elements of Dudayev's movement increasingly influenced his policy decisions, causing further grief with Moscow. These radical elements are what helped facilitate the failure of Chechen independence under Dudayev.

Co-optation of a Movement (1990-1994)

It appears as though Dudayev did not rule as one who wished for a better life for the Chechen region. The discrepancy between his rhetoric and the reality of the situation suggests that he sought power under the guise of independence. There are strong indications that the very election that granted him his Presidency was flawed. The anti-secessionist regions of Ingushetia, Nadterechy District, and the Urus Martan never cast a vote in the 1991 Presidential election. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that ethnic Russians were harassed by Chechen officials during the election. This should raise doubts over how much independence was actually sought by the public.[30] Additionally, in contrast to Dudayev's claim to speak for the will of the Chechen people,

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[26] Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, 60.
[27] Nikolai V. Grammatikov, "The Russian Intervention in Chechnya in December 1994: Issues and Decision-Making," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 11, vol. 4 (1998): 112.
[28] Gail W. Lapidus, "Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya," *International Security* 23, no.1 (1998): 12.
[29] William Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya, 1990-1994," *Civil Wars* 2, vol. 4, (1999): 34-35.
[30] Bowker, "Russia and Chechnya: the issue of secession," 467.

the emergence of political opposition to Dudayev and to secession was swift. The supposed unity of the Chechen consciousness that Dudayev's rhetoric often cites is removed from the reality of the situation, and cracks within the independence movement begin to emerge. Rather than representing a unitary Chechen consciousness that demanded independence, the political movements of Chechnya were more interested in fighting amongst themselves for power.[31] It can be inferred that this collapse of unity is also demonstrated in Ingushetia's choice to separate from Chechnya in 1992.[32] A re-evaluation of Dudayev's rhetoric and the immediate response from different Chechen political groups to his presidency suggests that he was not a leader for the masses, but a leader for a small group of elites.

Criminal behavior, conducted both by the Russian and Chechen elites as well as regular citizens, began to flourish under Dudayev's rule. Kidnapping became a constant in the region, and Dudayev's government mirrored the workings of the Mafia more than it did those of a traditional government.[33] Under the guise of individual freedoms and democratic rights, Dudayev's government created a constitution for the Chechen republic (known to them as Ichkeria, named after a mountainous region the Chechens defended against the Russian Empire) in 1992. The constitution also called for a division of powers into a legislative, executive, and judicial branch.[34] It was not long before Dudayev ignored the provisions of the constitution and began to dominate every aspect of political life. He abolished the parliament in 1993 due to their questioning of his encroaching authoritarianism and support for criminal activity. Though abolished, the parliament still met and called for Dudayev to be removed from power, and had even arranged for a referendum on the issue to be conducted on June 5, 1993; However, these ambitions were met with a hail of bullets as Dudayev's Presidential Guard stormed parliamentary supporters, destroying two-thirds of referendum ballots and killing 50 people.[35] Instead of protecting the rights of Chechens, as he claimed he would do, Dudayev asserted control over society and turned a blind eye to the corruption and criminal activity in the region as he was able to profit from it.

The telling of Dudayev's pre-war independence movement does not reflect the movements of Lithuania, Estonia, or Latvia – as some have made the moral argument comparing the situations.[36] Instead, Dudayev's pre-war movements suggests that he was an opportunist who took advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Chechens' historical distrust of the Russians, as a way to rise to prominence. He was able to manipulate a genuine hope for Chechen independence into his own political gain. In the end, the "we"

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[31] Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya," 34-37.
[32] "Chechnya, Ingushetia Prepare for Border Talks." *RadioFreeEurope,* Web, 2012, https://www.rferl.org/a/chechnya-ingushetia-prepare-for-border-talks/24720732.html, accessed November 7, 2019.
[33] Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, 64-65.
[34] Ibid, 64.
[35] Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya," 40.
[36] See Tappe, "Chechnya and the State of Self-Determination in a Breakaway Region of the Former Soviet Union," 255-296, for more.

that he referenced when talking about Chechens before and during the first war was no more than three to five thousand armed individuals.[37] His failure to live up to what he claimed to stand for can be further explored in his failure to conduct meaningful state building following his ascension and during the war.

Failure in State-building (1990-1996)

Dudayev's increasingly authoritarian attitude and his allowance of the rampant criminal activities in the region did not create opportunities for the Chechen people. The mafia-like rule of Dudayev's leadership did not encourage adequate state-building behaviors. The government and its supporters failed to implement effective public services – which in turn allowed for corruption to bleed into the region's economy.[38] A 1992 report conducted by the London-based non-governmental organization (NGO) International Alert appears to confirm this. The report concludes that Dudayev had done very little to consolidate Chechen statehood, and did not appear to want to conduct economic reform aimed at bettering Chechen society. Further, the report found that he promoted a small group of followers who supported the mafia-like governing style mentioned above. Finally, the report also demonstrates that Dudayev's response to any opposition was to reignite fears of Russian intervention, costing him the opportunity to adequately negotiate with the Russian leadership while simultaneously emboldening the hawks in Moscow to finally settle the issues in the region.[39]

What seemed like a political win for Dudayev, the negotiations which lead to Moscow withdrawing troops from Chechnya in 1992, appears to have been negative for the Chechen people. Evidence suggests that the deal included a stipulation in which the Russian army would leave a considerable stockpile of arms behind. Though not much information is available on what the Russian received in return, it is argued that the backroom deal included access to Chechnya's oil.[40] The consequences of this deal span well into the second Chechen conflict. Illicit weapon deals amongst the government and various insurgent groups were able to be made and private militias were able to form because of their access to weapons. A "Kalashnikov culture" emerged as a consequence of these deals.[41] Weapons were sought by ordinary citizens because of their value in the black market.[42]

A dual economy emerged as a result of Dudayev's backroom deals and passivity towards criminal activity. Unemployment, which had been 33 percent at the start of Dudayev's rule, drastically increased.

[37] Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, 13.
[38] Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya," 24.
[39] Chechnya Report, *Chechnya: Report from an International Alert Fact-finding Mission*, *September 24-October 3, 1992, London: International Alert*, 1992.
[40] Grammatikov, "The Russian Intervention in Chechnya in December 1994," 114-115.
[41] Tishkov, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, 97.
[42] Ibid.

Schools and hospitals collapsed while seniors began to no longer receive their pensions.[43] All this was happening while the elite plundered funds in the government – funds that were often sent from Moscow. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) believed that a minimum of 40 percent of the Chechen economy was driven black-market deals.[44] The lawlessness promoted by Dudayev's inability to provide basic public services made the smuggling of weapons and drugs, kidnapping, train robbery, and other illicit activities a legitimate option for desperate Chechens. Rather than providing Chechens the opportunity of a better life, Dudayev's policies (or lack-thereof) forced Chechens to seek alternative measures to live a meaningful life.

The most obvious negative policy that Dudayev pursued was confrontation with the Russians. On the surface, this fact appears banal. But considering the facts above, it appears that the Chechens had the war forced upon them, rather than choosing to fight it in the name of independence. This is not to suggest that Dudayev did not have support from common Chechens – there is a wealth of ethnographic research that highlights how individuals believed in him.[45] Rather, his often paranoid rhetoric about Russian intervention in the face of opposition suggests that Dudayev *required* Russian intervention as a means to fully legitimate his rule. And once Yeltsin came out victorious in his power struggle with the Supreme Soviet in 1993, Dudayev got his wish.

The (Un)Reliability of Dudayev

Popular support for Dudayev was not as constant as it may seem. It was fluid and fluctuated as Dudayev became more and more authoritarian. Popular support for Chechen independence was more of a constant in the Chechen consciousness.[46] It appears that Dudayev was the wrong man to deliver it to the Chechen people as he remains a polarizing figure in contemporary Chechnya. Some see him as a liberating hero while others see him as an incompetent, totalitarian leader who deprived Chechnya of a meaningful existence.[47] The lack of unity again presents itself. What strikes as surprising in the public's evaluation of Dudayev is just how wide this gap is. Some go so far as to claim that Dudayev never had the interest of Chechens in mind at all and was simply a placeholder for the Russians until they could assert their dominance in the region.[48] Dudayev's swift ascension to the Chechen leadership raises questions even to the untrained eye. Given the inherent difficulty in analyzing conspiracy theories, the potential accuracy of this theory will not be examined. Instead, the theory allows for a discussion about the reliability of Dudayev to champion an independence movement.

[43] Ibid, 66.
[44] Grammatikov, "The Russian Intervention in Chechnya in December 1994," 120.
[45] See Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, 75-90.
[46] Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya," 26.
[47] Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, 77.
[48] Ibid, 84.

Dudayev's role in the Soviet military has caused Chechens to question the legitimacy of his claim to represent the best interests of the Chechen people. This is compounded by the fact that he had little connection to the republic (beyond being born there only a few weeks before being deported in 1944) and had a Russian wife – one who made no effort to convert to Islam or speak to the Chechen people.[49] Knowing the historical distrust of the Russians/Soviets that the Chechens carry, it is not foolish to assume that many Chechens simply did not trust Dudayev as the champion of their independence. Some believe him to have been a Russian or Soviet agent all along who was sent to create the conditions for Russia to reinforce its rule over Chechnya as a message to any Republic which sought independence.[50]

The chaos that followed Dudayev's death has only added to these beliefs.[51] This kind of cynical view reflects neither the unity which Dudayev said he represented nor the confidence of common Chechens in the Chechen independence movement. The lack of cohesive unity continued even beyond Dudayev's death in April of 1996 and into the second Chechen conflict.

A lack of faith in Dudayev's leadership, in addition to his failure to implement meaningful state-building policies, offer a compelling explanation for why Chechnya was unable to achieve *legitimate* independence in the early 1990s. Further, the evolution of the black market in Chechen society compounded with Dudayev's constant prodding of the Russians suggests that war was both inevitable and profitable for those who benefited from Dudayev's rule. Whether Dudayev's ambitions changed once he achieved power or he never truly aspired for Chechen independence, it is clear that the conditions provided by his leadership would have not been sufficient in establishing an independent Chechnya.

A Loss of Control (1996-2009)

Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed in April of 1996 by a tactical bombing conducted by the Russians. Even with their leader killed, Chechens continued to fight the Russians and were able to force the Russians to seek a ceasefire with the small republic in August of 1996 – to the embarrassment of the Russians. However, instead of a sense of solidarity and enthusiasm, which was expected, the end of the first conflict brought about an internal division of Chechen elites. This coincided with a general apathy by the Chechen population.[52] Dudayev's successor, Zelimkhn Yandarbiyev, was unable to enact meaningful control and lost an election to Dudayev's former chief of staff, Aslan Maskhadov. Unsurprisingly, much of Maskhadov's policies followed

[49] Ibid, 59.
[50] Ibid, 83-84.
[51] Ibid, 81, 84.
[52] Ibid,105.

those of Dudayev's – though he implemented more references to Islam and practiced even more authoritarian policies.[53]

For Chechens, particularly those who fought in the war, the war was a sea of change. Many lost sight of the declared goal of sovereignty and found themselves at odds with the values that peace brought with it.[54] Indeed, by 1995 Maskhadov had admitted that it was in Chechnya's interest to keep the war going.[55] Hostile warlords emerged from the destruction of the war and many Western observers declared (correctly or not) that the region was a failed state.[56] Maskhadov's government was unable to overcome the challenges posited by a region that encouraged criminal behavior and had been devastated by war.

By 1998, unemployment in the republic had reached 80 percent and the legitimate sources of income would only provide a third of what was needed to reach the poverty threshold.[57] The black market offered Chechens an opportunity to do what the legitimate market could not – make a living. A crisis of kidnappings emerged following the first war. Between 1996 and 1999 an estimated 2,669 individuals out of a population of an estimated 350,000 actually living in the republic were kidnapped – with an increase in numbers every year.[58]

The Role of Islam (1990-2001)

Islam was able to be reintroduced to the public sphere of the North Caucasus following Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*.[59] Prior to the Soviet crackdown on religion, Islam was publicly practiced throughout the region for centuries. Ever the opportunist, Dudayev – in a similar fashion to his co-optation of the independence movement – attempted to utilize Islam as a way to unite Chechen consciousness. He made an appeal for the influential Islamic leader Abdul-Baki to visit Chechnya and act as a spiritual legitimizer of his rule. Unfortunately for Dudayev, Abdul-Baki claimed that Dudayev's government could not be called Islamic because the structure of the government was used to destroy Chechen society, rather than aid it. Dudayev promptly denounced Baki and labeled him as a traitor to Islam.[60] This again highlights Dudayev's inability to adequately represent any movement that he relied on rhetorically.

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[53] José Manuel Rivas & Adrián Tarín, "Leadership Style and War and Peace Policies in the Context of Armed Conflict," *Problems of Post-Communism* 64, no. 1, (2017): 5.
[54] Ibid, 106.
[55] Grammatikov, "The Russian Intervention in Chechnya in December 1994," 128
[56] Wood, *Chechnya: The Case for Independence*, 81.
[57] I.G. Kosikov and L. S. Kosikova, "Severnyi Kavkaz: sotsialno-ekonomicheskii spravochnik", Moscow Times, Moscow (1999): 188-190.
[58] Wood, *Chechnya: The Case for Independence*, 87.
[59] Katrien Hertog, "A Self-fulfilling Prophecy: The Seeds of Islamic Radicalisation in Chechnya," *Religion, State and Society* 33, vol. 3, (2005): 240.
[60] Tishkov, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, 79.

Possibly due to these failures, Dudayev remained cautious in implementing Islam in the actual workings of government. The 1992 Constitution of Ichkeria made no mention of Islam or of Allah.[61] Any claims that there were linkages between Dudayev's independence movement and Islam appear to be mistaken. Traditional Islam, then, was not a supplementary force for the early 1990s Chechen independence movement. Indeed, it has been asserted that there are no arguments to be made in favor of using Islam to explain the national consciousness among the Chechen people.[62] It was only in the second Chechen conflict that radical Islam played a meaningful role.

In the mid-1990s, the branch of Islam known as Wahhabism came to the Chechen Republic.[63] It offered solace from the chaos brought about both during the war and in the interwar period. Traditional Sufi Islam had been established as the official religion of Maskhadov's government as a way to further the region's claim to sovereignty[64], but they were powerless to stop Wahhabism's appeal. Maskhadov implemented Shari'a law and increasingly utilized religious symbols in public as a way to compromise with the fundamentalists, but it was not enough to stop the spread of Wahhabism.[65] The socioeconomic status of many Chechens left them without options. The government was not providing adequate services, while Wahhabism promised an alternative.[66] A divide emerged not only between the fundamentalists and the traditional believers, but between those who had aspired for Shari'a law to dominate the judicial realm of the republic and those who aspired for civil laws.[67] Chechnya had traditionally been a place where civil law dominated and religion was reserved for the private sphere. The creeping religious radicalization of Chechen law further paralyzed the government, as they were unable to contain the spread of militarized fundamentalism through appeasement and were left helpless when fundamentalist claimed that they would fight for independence. [68]

It appears that the independence movement lived and died with Dudayev. The war did not bring about a unified consciousness of the Chechen people with the goal of establishing an independent state. Instead, nefarious actors exploited the chaos both in the name of profiteering and in the name of fundamentalist religion. Similar to Dudayev's original opportunism, these actors were able to turn the instability of the region into their gain. The Second Chechen war, therefore, was not the culmination of individuals willing to fight and

[61] Ibid, 64.
[62] Georgi M. Derlugian, "The Chechen Revolution and Chechen History," in *Russia and Chechnya: Socieities and States,* ed. Dmitri Furman (1999): 210.
[63] Tishkov, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, 172.
[64] Wood, Chechnya: The Case for Independence, 91.
[65] Tishkov, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, 177.
[66] Hertog, "A Self-fulfilling Prophecy," 250.
[67] Tishkov, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, 195.
[68] Ibid, 195.

die for their independence, but another co-optation of the independence movement by a small collective out for their own benefit.

The Russian Position (1990-2001)

Chechnya and Chechen elites alone cannot bear the burden of a failed independence movement. The Russian Federation, particularly under Yeltsin, acted in a way that perpetuated the movements of independence while simultaneously demanding that it stop. As far as the Russians were concerned, the separation of Chechnya from their territory was both unacceptable and illegal.

The Legitimacy of the President (1994;1999)

Dudayev declared Chechen independence in 1991 and yet it was not until 1994 that the Russian military was mobilized to defend the Russian Federation. Some point to this significant gap in events as evidence that Yeltsin only went to war to protect his presidency.[69] This claim may be further legitimated by examining the boost in approval for Vladimir Putin following his Chechen campaign.[70]

This line of reasoning suggests that the legitimacy of the President of the Russian Federation is intricately linked to maintenance of its territory – a secessionist movement within Russia threatens the legitimacy of the Russian President and so there is little room for these movements to succeed. Indeed, it has been established that even the Russian government thought domination over the Chechens would help Boris Yeltsin gain a second term in 1996. Sergei Ushenkov inside the Duma stated that he believed that a small a victorious battle was *necessary* to bolster approval for Yeltsin.[71] The Chechen wars illustrate the need for the Russian President to meet secessionist movements within Russia with force in order to bolster their popularity and maintain their legitimacy. It is difficult to envisage a scenario in which a Russian President would meet an independence movement within their country positively with their popularity on the line.

The Domino Effect and Sending a Message

Had the Chechens been successful in achieving independence from Russia, it would not be unreasonable to assume that other regions of the country would follow suit. There are over 100 autonomous

[69] Michael McFaul, "Eurasia Letter: Russian Politics After Chechnya," *Foreign Policy* 99 (1995): 150-151.
[70] Linette Lopez, Alana Kakoyiannis, and Lemar Salter, "How a series of deadly Russian apartment bombings in 1999 led to Putin's rise to power," *Business Insider,* Web. 2018. https://www.businessinsider.com/how-the-1999-russian-apartment-bombings-led-to-putins-rise-to-power-2018-3, accessed November 7, 2019.
[71] Reported by Duma Member Sergei Ushenkov in Carolla Gall and Thomas De Wall's *Chechnya: A Small, Victorious War*, London, (1997): 161.

regions in the country – by 1992, some 20 republics had declared sovereignty.[72] A successful Chechen independence would set an uncomfortable precedent for the Russian leadership. A flurry of independence movements did not follow Chechnya's, but different republics began to exhibit a new confidence when negotiating their autonomy with Moscow.[73] Chechnya, then, served as a warning to independence movements across Russia. Secession would be met with force.

The combination of legality, potential consequences for the Russian President, and the integrity of Russia's territory suggests that there was no scenario in which Russia would have accepted Chechnya's independence. Even if Chechnya had a more reliable leader and a more stable environment, Russia could not logically accept the region's secession. Yeltsin needed to maintain his grasp on an already shaky Russian Federation and Putin needed something to legitimize his swift rise to power.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the legal explanation for Chechnya's failed independence, though useful, does not capture the whole story. Chechen independence succumbed to the failures of Dzhokhar Dudayev and to the will of the sitting Russian president. Dudayev failed to conduct meaningful policies that would help Chechnya to properly assert its sovereignty, and the leaders that followed him continued this trend of incompetence while a militarized version of fundamental Islam crept into the region and further divided the populace. The chaos of the wars did not unify the Chechen people. They were hardly unified before the first war began. The war was chosen for them as the Russian government, once stabilized at home, turned its head towards the problematic region. Thousands died for a cause that may have never truly been sought.

Contemporary Chechnya looks much different than the chaotic region it was in the 1990s. In many ways, its history in the 1990s and early 2000s has mirrored the Russian experience. Similar to Vladimir Putin, Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of the region, rules the territory with authoritarian tendencies. Criminal activity has persevered during Kadyrov's rule, but the territory has enjoyed some semblance of stability since he took control. The Chechen independence movement has failed and, for the foreseeable future, hope for an independent Chechnya does not seem possible. While the region continues to recover from the misadventures of leaders past, the ghost of an independent Chechnya lays in the thousands of unmarked graves of Chechen civilians.

[72] Kevin A. O'Brien, "The War in Chechnya," *Peacekeeping & International Relations* 24, vol. 1, (1995): 10.
[73] Hayden, "The political genesis of the conflict in Chechnya, 41.

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Is Spain Really an Exception? The Salience of Populism in Spain

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Introduction

As Europe experiences a rise in support for populist parties and ideas across the continent, many scholars are puzzled by the apparent lack of right-wing populism in Spain. This has led many to believe that Spain is immune to the populist wave that has seen Populist Radical Right (PRR) parties increase their vote share and in many instances become mainstream parties – such as the Lega Nord in Italy, National Rally in France, and The Finns in Finland.[1] Spain was able to avoid the rise in PRR parties until 2018 when the right-wing Vox entered regional parliament in the southern autonomous community of Andalucía, going on to become the third most popular party in the November 2019 Spanish General Election and increasing their seat count by twenty-eight seats between the April 2019 and November 2019 elections.[2] An overwhelming majority of scholars attribute the rise of Vox to the Catalan independence crisis of 2017, as Vox explicitly stated its desire to quell Catalan nationalism in favour of a broad, all-encompassing Spanish nationalism. But Spain has not been without economic and cultural crises prior to the Catalan independence referendum in 2017. How, then, does this explain the sudden rise of Vox beginning only in 2018? This leads to a broader question of not just why Spain appeared to have been "immune" to populism until 2018, but also the question of what populism actually encompasses.

This paper will argue that Spain did not see a rise in PRR parties until 2018 due to the populist radical *left* already occupying the populist niche. The populist left-wing party Podemos, has seen widespread support since its founding in 2014, and they currently form a governing coalition with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). Podemos has provided an outlet for Spaniards that were dissatisfied with the Spanish economy and previous governments. Furthermore, there was no radical right increase in the wake of the European Migrant Crisis that peaked in 2015 because the mainstream right-wing parties such as the Partido Popular (PP)

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[1] Jens Rydgren, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).
[2] Stuart J. Turnbull-Dugarte, José Rama, and Andrés Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking: Voting for VOX in the 2019 Spanish General Elections*," Political Research Exchange* 2, no. 1 (2020): 2-3.

were already representing nativist ideals. However, by 2018 with the closure of Italian ports to migrant ships, Spanish regions such as Andalucía, and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla that border Morocco, saw an increase in migrants. It was the combination of these two events – the 2017 Catalan crisis and the 2018 influx of migrants – that bolstered support for right-wing populism and Vox. Due to the existence of both populist left- and right-wing parties, this paper will also argue that populism encompasses a way of doing politics, rather than a specific ideology in itself. Spain has seen left-wing populism represented by Podemos since 2014, and even regional populism, as evidenced in separatist parties found in Catalonia and the Basque region since Spain's transition to democracy in the 1970s. For these reasons, this paper pushes back on the idea that Spain had been an exception to the rise of populism in Europe.

Popularity of Populism

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser define populism as: "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people."[3] Put simply, populism is politics as 'us' versus 'them'. However, the Populist Radical Right goes further than the 'us' versus 'them' mentality of simple populism, and also includes the features of nativism and authoritarianism.[4]

There exists a debate within literature on populism regarding the specific factors that contribute to the salience of populism within a nation. Two large factors that prove salient are cultural and economic issues. To scholars such as Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, populism becomes salient when there is a cultural backlash, such as a dramatic shift from 'materialist' to 'postmaterialist' values.[5] Certain groups feel as though their way of life is under threat from the new generation or elite, and therefore desire a return to a 'traditional' way of life encompassed by a nostalgia for the past.[6] This translates into nativist rhetoric that regards outside cultures as incompatible with this 'traditional' way of life and views immigrants as unable to fully integrate into the nation.[7] This is evident in support for Vox in Andalucía due to a sudden increase in migrant arrivals in the south in 2018.[8] Many of these immigrants arrive from Muslim countries, and are therefore seen as unable to integrate into a Catholic and 'Western' Spain. However, this nativist rhetoric is not monopolized by Vox.

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[3] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.
[4] Cas Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2016), 4.
[5] Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties: The Silent Revolution in Reverse," *Perspectives on Politics* 15, no. 2 (2017): 444.
[6] Ibid, 450, 452.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Stuart J. Turnbull-Dugarte, "Explaining the End of Spanish Exceptionalism and Electoral Support for Vox," *Research & Politics* 6, no. 2 (2019): 2.

Catalan independence parties such as the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) also utilize a nativist 'us vs. them' mentality when discussing the issue of independence. The belief perpetuated by such parties that the Spanish government is encroaching on Catalan sovereignty, along with a history of discrimination against Catalan culture and language, are used in order to mobilize Catalan separatist sentiment.[9] This often creates clashes between Catalan *independentistas* and Catalans that also see themselves as Spaniards and believe in a unified Spain. These Catalans who are not separatists are labelled as 'not real' Catalans or traitors.[10] The ultimate goal of parties such as the ERC is Catalan independence, however there is continued benefit in the lack of independence for these parties – in order to continue a nativist message and remain in power within the Spanish government, especially as much of the parties messaging is solely about gaining Catalan independence.

Other scholars, such as Dani Rodrik, believe that populism has its roots in economic factors, including a feeling of being 'left behind' by globalization that is usually accompanied by an increase in economic inequality.[11] The economic issue is the focus of Podemos, which rallies against an economic elite, and is in favour of leftist redistributive policies. Such policies prove popular with those who had suffered through the global economic crisis beginning in 2008 and continuing for many years after the introduction of Spanish austerity measures in 2011. Podemos embraces an integrated Europe and progressive social policies, while also utilizing populist rhetoric that proves popular with young voters who are disillusioned with the state of Spain, and their lack of job prospects.[12] Podemos is able to support European integration while also advocating for left-populist economic policies due to the overall economic effects on Spain. As Davide Vampa describes in his article, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics":

> Another important aspect of globalization is trade openness or liberalization, which, while producing gains in terms of aggregate economic growth, is likely to have important distributional effects and create losers and winners. More exposure to global trade may produce increasing demands for compensation and redistribution. In this context, the socio-economic focus of left-wing populist parties may be more electorally appealing.[13]

In other words, Podemos can praise European integration for its positive effect on the Spanish economy as a whole, while also advocating for redistributive policies for citizens who have suffered at the hands of an elite that continues to make large profits.

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[9] Davide Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics: the Cases of Vox and Podemos in Spain," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 28, no. 3 (2020): 310.
[10] Toni Rodon, "The Spanish Electoral Cycle of 2019: a Tale of Two Countries," *West European Politics* 43, no. 7 (2020): 1497-98.
[11] Dani Rodrik, "Populism and the Economics of Globalization," *Journal of International Business Policy* (2018): 7.
[12] Alexandros Kioupkiolis, "Late Modern Adventures of Leftist Populism in Spain: The Case of Podemos, 2014-2018," in *The Populist Radical Left in Europe*, eds. Giorgos Katsambekis and Alexandros Kioupkiolis (London: Routledge, 2019), 47.
[13] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 308.

As these scholars debate what exactly causes the rise in support for populism generally, perhaps it is worth looking at the cultural versus economic debate as the cause for right-wing versus left-wing populism. Support for Vox and ERC reflects cultural sentiment within Spain, while support for Podemos reflects economic desires. The split in support for right-wing and left-wing populism can also be viewed in countries such as the United States. Though most are familiar with American right-wing populism and Donald Trump – supporters of which are generally older, working class men – *left*-wing populism is especially popular among the younger generation, as can be seen in the popularity of figures such as Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.[14] Supporters of Trump fall within the ethnic/cultural cleavage, while supporters of Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez fall within the economic cleavage.

Rather than describing a rise in populism in general within a given country, perhaps it is more effective to describe a rise in left-wing or right-wing populism. Spain may have been 'immune' to right-wing populism until Vox's rise in 2018, (if regional parties such as ERC are not included) but it was certainly not immune to populism generally, specifically left-wing populism. Because populist rhetoric encompasses a wide range of voters with very different backgrounds and ideologies, the concept of 'populism' becomes more understandable if described as a means to an end, rather than a specific set of beliefs. Though Podemos and Vox both have specific ideologies that are opposed to one another, populist rhetoric is used by both in order to buttress their political positions. It is used in order to provide an outlet for those who feel disenfranchised, regardless of ideology. The left-wing university graduate who is open to the project of European integration is just as susceptible to populist rhetoric as the unemployed miner from the Asturian countryside. But populist rhetoric takes on different forms in order to achieve an end goal. Podemos utilizes populism in order to attack the Spanish elite, Vox utilizes populism in order to attack Catalan separatists and those opposed to Spanish nationalism. Both parties cultivate an 'us vs. them' mentality, though with very different end goals. Therefore, it is not *populism*, generally speaking, that is supported only by the uneducated, white male voter, but a specific right-wing populism that is encompassed in parties such as Vox. Populism of the left-wing variety is just as salient with a young, educated electorate.[15]

Populism and Podemos

While scholars argued that Spain was an exception to the populist wave seen throughout Europe, Podemos gained rapid support in the wake of Spanish economic crises. This resulted in Podemos occupying the populist niche in Spain, but from a left-wing/economic position. This was especially significant as Spain

[14] Rodrik, "Populism and the Economics of Globalization," 2.
[15] Kioupkiolis, "Late Modern Adventures of Leftist Populism in Spain," 55.

had imposed strict austerity measures under Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's PP government in 2011 to combat Spain's failing economy.[16] The global economic crisis beginning in 2008, along with the introduction of austerity in 2011, created widespread dissatisfaction with the Spanish government and saw massive protest movements across the country such as the 15M Movement and the *Indignados* that lasted until 2015.[17] This led to the creation of the left-wing populist party Podemos, which is described by Josep Maria Antentas in his article "Podemos and the Spanish Political Crisis" as a "political incarnation of the 15M spirit and its derivatives."[18] Led by the charismatic Pablo Iglesias, (named after the father of Spanish socialism, Pablo Iglesias Posse) with his long hair and disdain for the politician's suit, Podemos is very much linked to these anti-austerity protest movements, and is explicitly anti-elite.[19] Podemos' support demographic also goes against what is often assumed of for populist parties. Normally supported by working class older men, left-wing Podemos sees much of its support from young voters, including students, urban residents, and the middle class.[20]

Though Podemos is not of the radical-right variety, it still shares similarities with PRR parties, as according to Cas Mudde's definition, it subscribes to an authoritarian desire to seize power.[21] According to Antentas, Podemos continuously alters its position on issues in order to maximize a support base in a desire to achieve hegemony "rather than acting as a tool to raise political awareness."[22] All political parties desire a maximization of votes and seats, however this desire is within the bounds of a democratic system that recognizes competition between parties. Podemos is not interested in cooperation and desires a radical rise to power. As Antentas states, "[Podemos] lacks any conformist mentality and seeks to seize power" which is much in line with the "legacy of Euro-communism."[23] The party's use of 'empty signifiers' of populism in a Laclauian sense, served as a way to alter political ideology in order to best fit the desires of the electorate, regardless of what Podemos' initial ideological position had been. However, as Podemos becomes more so a party led by an elite class like academics in Madrid, and less focused on its origins as a protest-based populist movement, it has seen a loss of support since 2018 coinciding with the rise of Vox.[24]

The decline in Podemos' popularity may also be attributed to its position regarding the Catalan independence referendum. Podemos supported a legal referendum on the question of Catalan independence

[16] Josep Maria Antentas, "Podemos and the Spanish Political Crisis," *Labor History* 58, no. 4 (2017): 471.
[17] Ibid, 468.
[18] Ibid, 471.
[19] Kioupkiolis, "Late Modern Adventures of Leftist Populism in Spain," 51-52.
[20] Ibid, 55.
[21] Antentas, "Podemos and the Spanish Political Crisis," 477.
[22] Ibid, 478.
[23] Ibid, 477.
[24] Kioupkiolis, "Late Modern Adventures of Leftist Populism in Spain," 59-62.

while also supporting a unified Spain.[25] Podemos' lack of a concrete position angered both Catalan and Spanish nationalists. This prompted many to believe that Podemos was secretly a supporter of the opposite side, whether that meant a support of Catalan independence or a unified Spanish state. This was the complete opposite of Vox's position, which called for the suspension of Catalan autonomy in order to ensure Spanish unity.[26] Vox's concrete position on the Catalan referendum made the party highly popular amongst not only Spanish nationalists, but those who felt that Podemos and other mainstream parties such as the PP and Ciudadanos, had been too ambivalent with their positions on Catalonia.[27] By 2018, Podemos had been declining in the polls, ranking fourth, while Vox has since only increased in popularity.[28] Alexandros Kioupkiolis attributes Podemos' decline to its loss of "'transversal' outreach," going on to say that Podemos "tends to become yet another traditional leftist-party, all-too vertical, centralised and personality-driven, bent on protest rather than on programmatic proposals and creative interventions."[29] The party that once was seen as a new alternative to politics in Spain became the party of Iglesias, and one that relies on 'empty signifiers' rather than the enforcement of actual change.

The Rise of Vox

In 2018, Vox entered the Andalusian regional parliament for the first time, winning twelve seats and supporting a PP-Ciudadanos government.[30] Andalucía had been a stronghold for the PSOE prior to 2018, and this was the first time right-wing parties would form a government.[31] Podemos had occupied the populist niche since 2014, now it had a rival in Vox. Scholars such as Pablo Ortiz Barquero attribute Andalucía's geographic position to the rise in support for the nationalist and xenophobic Vox, this did not happen until 2018 – three years after the height of the migrant crisis.[32] As the southernmost region in continental Spain, Andalucía received a disproportionate number of migrants during the European migrant crisis in 2015.[33] Yet, Vox did not enter Andalusian parliament until 2018. This increase in support only beginning in 2018 can perhaps be explained by two factors: the consolidation of the traditional right-wing parties' position towards migrants that satisfied voters in 2015, and the sudden influx of migrants to Andalucía in 2018.[34] The positions of parties such

[25] Ibid, 65.
[26] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 310.
[27] Turnbull-Dugarte, Rama, and Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking," 15.
[28] Kioupkiolis, "Late Modern Adventures of Leftist Populism in Spain," 62.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 305.
[31] Pablo Ortiz Barquero, "The Electoral Breakthrough of the Radical Right in Spain: Correlates of Electoral Support for Vox in Andalusia (2018)," *Genealogy* 3, no. 4 (2019): 3.
[32] Ibid, 3-4.
[33] Turnbull-Dugarte, "Explaining the End of Spanish Exceptionalism and Electoral Support for Vox," 2.
[34] Ibid.

as PP and Ciudadanos that catered to the more conservative voters provided a barrier to Vox's entry as voter demands were generally perceived as being met.[35] However, though the Andalusian regional elections may have allowed Vox's entry into government, it was the Catalan crisis that cemented national support for the party, rather than regional support due to an increase in migration.

Established in 2013, Vox was founded by former PP members Santiago Abascal, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, and Jose Antonio Ortega Lara.[36] What is especially interesting is that all three men had been PP members in regions that favour separatism – Catalonia and the Basque country. Ortega Lara had even been kidnapped by the Basque terrorist organization, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA).[37] Santiago Abascal and Vox have also utilized social media in order to gain support. Abascal's Instagram account is littered with Spanish flags and photos of him surrounded by crowds of supporters. He also utilizes imagery of the medieval Spanish Empire, which conjures images of the *Reconquista* of Spain from the Moors. In fact, Vox embraces the idea of the "Reconquest," regularly calling for the "Spirit of Reconquest" in many promotional videos.[38] This is very much targeted towards migrants crossing from Morocco into the Spanish autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla.[39] In fact, in the 2019 elections, citizens of these cities voted largely in favour of Vox, much the same as Andalucía.[40] This is the opposite of Podemos, who saw more support in areas such as Catalonia, Valencia, and Galicia.[41] Podemos also saw a large number of its supporters in these areas favouring devolution.[42] Vox advocates for the recentralization of the Spanish state, and the abolishment of the autonomous communities. It also has a hardline stance against immigration, an issue that became salient once again in 2018 after Italy closed its ports to migrants, resulting in a subsequent increased flow of migrants in Spain.[43]

In their 2014 article entitled "Spain: No Country for the Populist Radical Right?" authors Sonia Alonso and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser discuss the salience (or lack thereof) of PRR parties in pre-Vox Spain. According to them, there were two main reasons why the PRR could not find footing with the Spanish electorate. The first being the far-right's association with the Franco dictatorship that lasted from 1939-1976.[44] Far right parties existed in Spain after the transition to democracy, such as *Alternativa Española, Fuerza Nueva,*

[35] Turnbull-Dugarte, Rama, and Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking," 6-7.
[36] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 306-307.
[37] Mariana S. Mendes and James Dennison, "Explaining the Emergence of the Radical Right in Spain and Portugal: Salience, Stigma and Supply," *West European Politics* (2020): 11.
[38] Duncan Wheeler, "Vox in the Age of COVID-19: The Populist Protest Turn in Spanish Politics," *Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2020): 175.
[39] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 312.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Mendes and Dennison, "Explaining the Emergence of the Radical Right in Spain and Portugal," 15.
[44] Turnbull-Dugarte, Rama, and Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking," 6-7.

Espana-2000, and *Democracia Nacional*; however, these were minor parties with no real influence.[45] Spaniards embraced democracy eagerly, and the Spanish government quickly developed into an unofficial two-party system between the PSOE and PP within a broader proportional representation system.[46] Because the far-right parties were associated with the dictatorship, they became unattractive to voters. The second reason Alonso and Kaltwasser outline is the belief that the PRR could not gain support in Spain due to the relationship between the central Spanish government and the autonomous communities.[47] Regions such as Catalonia or the Basque country viewed themselves as separate nations within the Spanish state. Since Spain was made up of various smaller 'nations' within the Spanish state, PRR parties could not find footing with a message of all-encompassing Spanish ethno-nationalism.[48]

By 2018, however, with the Catalan crisis becoming such a polarizing issue in Spain, Vox's hardline position against an independent Catalonia bolstered support for the party within the Spanish electorate. In a crisis that creates an 'us' (Spanish nationalists) versus 'them' (Catalan separatists), Vox was able to utilize PRR nativist rhetoric in order to gain votes from otherwise centre-right voters of the PP and Ciudadanos (as these parties were no longer seen as capable of handling the Catalan crisis).[49] Calls for suspension of Catalonia's autonomy, though extremely unpopular in Catalonia, have seen support amongst Vox's most conservative supporters.[50] The party has also called for a ban on separatist political symbols and language in Catalonia, the suspension of the regional police force, and the "transformation of Spain into a unitary system, with only one government and one parliament and the re-centralization of key regional competencies such as education, healthcare, security and justice."[51] The autonomy of each community in Spain is imbedded in the Spanish Constitution, and promises to suspend autonomy by Vox are unconstitutional and highly unpopular amongst those in regions like Catalonia.[52] But if Catalonia continues to attempt to assert its independence, and the Spanish government continues to be perceived as doing nothing, then Vox will continue to gain popularity among those voters who desire a unified Spain that prioritizes a Spanish nationalist ideal.

2019 saw two general elections held in Spain, the first in April, with the election of Pedro Sanchez of the PSOE as Prime Minister. However, Sanchez was unable to form a government, and this resulted in a second general election called in November. Vox, having won twenty-four seats in the April 2019 election with 10.3%

[45] Sonia Alonso and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Spain: No Country for the Populist Radical Right?" *South European Society and Politics* 20, no. 1 (2014): 26.
[46] Turnbull-Dugarte, Rama, and Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking," 6-7.
[47] Turnbull-Dugarte, "Explaining the End of Spanish Exceptionalism and Electoral Support for Vox," 6.
[48] Alonso and Kaltwasser, "Spain: No Country for the Populist Radical Right?" 28.
[49] Mendes and Dennison, "Explaining the Emergence of the Radical Right in Spain and Portugal," 3.
[50] Turnbull-Dugarte, "Explaining the End of Spanish Exceptionalism and Electoral Support for Vox," 6.
[51] Vampa, "Competing Forms of Populism and Territorial Politics," 310.
[52] Joan Miró, "The Tensions of Populism in Power: a Discursive-Theoretical Analysis of the Catalan Secessionist Push (2006-2017," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* (2020): 9.

of the vote, more than doubled their seat count in November 2019, winning fifty-two seats with 15.1% of the vote.[53] Vox's increase in vote share may be in part to a belief that the inability of Sanchez and the PSOE to form a government only exacerbated disapproval of regular politics. However, the other populist party Podemos saw a decrease in its vote share between April and November 2019 (losing seven of its seats). This was also a major decrease from Podemos' result in the 2016 election, having lost twenty-nine of its previous seventy-one seats in April 2019.[54] Therefore, the increased popularity of Vox was not simply a desire for populist parties and a dismissal of traditional Spanish parties such as PP or PSOE. The losses by Podemos show that the 2019 elections saw an increase in support for the PRR Vox, rather than the populist-left Podemos, which had been transitioning into a more traditional left-wing party rather than maintaining its roots in left-wing populism. Though the Catalan independence crisis had taken place in 2017, the sentencing of pro-independence Catalan politicians on charges of sedition in October 2019, reintroduced the Catalan issue once again to political salience in Spain. This resulted in violent clashes between protestors and Spanish police, serving as a scapegoat for Vox to use in its desire to quell Catalan separatist sentiment.[55]

The Catalan Issue

Long before 2017, Catalonia had a strong regional separatist movement, much like that of the Basque country – though the aforementioned ETA utilized terrorist activities more so than its Catalan separatist counterparts.[56] Catalonia perceives its history as one of oppression by the Spanish state – one in which ethnic Catalans could not use their own language and partake in Catalan customs. As Spain transitioned to a democratic state, Catalan political groups formed in order to provide a voice for what they saw as marginalized Catalans.

Spain is divided into seventeen autonomous communities, each with their own sovereignty under a unified Spanish state. With this, each community is given much freedom in exercising the desire of its citizens.[57] Because of the decentralized nature of Spain, many different minority cultures and languages are able to thrive. Aside from Spanish and Catalan, Spain is home to five other languages that in turn produce many various dialects, such as Basque, Galician, Occitan, Aragonese, and Asturian. As such each autonomous community is given the opportunity to essentially do as they please within the bounds of the Spanish Constitution of 1978.[58] In October 2017, the Catalan government held an unauthorized referendum on the question of independence,

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[53] Turnbull-Dugarte, Rama, and Santana, "The Baskerville's Dog Suddenly Started Barking," 3.
[54] Rodon, "The Spanish Electoral Cycle of 2019," 1502.
[55] Sam Jones and Stephen Burgen, "Violent Clashes over Catalan Separatist Leaders' Prison Terms," *The Guardian*, Oct. 14, 2019.
[56] Miró, "The Tensions of Populism in Power," 9.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

and on October 27th, declared Catalonia as an independent state.[59] This led the Spanish government, led by Mariano Rajoy, to invoke Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution in order to suppress the Catalan separatist movement.[60] This meant that Madrid temporarily directly ruled over Catalonia, rendering the Catalan government and other regional authorities incapable of governing.[61] As protests between police sent from Madrid and Catalan separatists increased to the point of mass violence, Catalan independence leaders such as Carles Puigdemont, went into exile in Brussels to avoid being punished in Spain.[62] Catalans were obviously not pleased with the Spanish government's show of power over Catalan authorities, while Spaniards, especially those on the right, were unhappy with the way Rajoy and his PP government handled the Catalan crisis, believing the party had mismanaged it.[63]

The 2017 Catalan separatist crisis and its aftermath greatly affected Spanish citizens and how Catalonia is perceived within Spain. Though practically all of Spain's regions have their own language and culture, from Asturias to Valencia or Madrid, each region for the most part has embraced an overarching Spanish identity rather than regional identity. The desire of many Catalans to become a separate nation goes against many Spaniards' belief in a state that transcends regional identity. The promises made by Vox to create a centralized Spanish state and the abolishment of autonomous communities appealed to many Spanish citizens who feel as though Spain is being threatened by separatism. This led many PP voters to become supporters of Vox and its Spanish-nationalist agenda. Many Spaniards see an independent Catalonia as an insult to Spanish culture, illustrating Inglehart and Norris' argument that populism arises when there is a cultural backlash.[64] The Catalan crisis remains extremely salient in Spanish politics and extremely controversial. So long as parties such as PP, Ciudadanos, and Podemos are perceived as unable to properly handle Catalan separatist sentiment, Vox will remain the most popular party amongst Spaniards who desire a unified Spanish state.

Conclusion

While the Catalan crisis remains salient, Vox will continue to capitalize on it. Spaniards have clearly shown an acceptance of Vox's Spanish ethno-nationalism and xenophobia that recalls imagery of the *Reconquista*. With more migrants arriving in Spain, most recently to the Canary Islands, Vox will most likely be able to successfully utilize PRR rhetoric, and maintain the salience of the immigration issue as well.[65]

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[59] Turnbull-Dugarte, "Explaining the End of Spanish Exceptionalism and Electoral Support for Vox," 2.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, 6.
[64] Mendes and Dennison, "Explaining the Emergence of the Radical Right in Spain and Portugal," 3.
[65] Milagros Costabel, "How the Canary Islands Became Europe's Largest Migrant Hotbed," *Euronews*, Nov. 25, 2020.

Spain had not been immune to populism while the rest of Europe saw an increase in PRR parties. Rather, left-wing and regional populism had occupied the populist niche in Spain, while mainstream right-wing parties were seen by voters as being tough enough on immigration and other cultural issues. But as Podemos' popularity began to decline, and Catalonia experienced its independence crisis, Vox gained popularity with its hardline stance on both immigration and Catalan nationalism. With its popularity only increasing since 2018, and especially with its growing number of seats in the Spanish parliament after the November 2019 general election, Vox looks as though it is here to stay in Spanish politics – at least for the time being. Spain is just as susceptible to populism as any other European country, and though it did not see right-wing populism emerge until 2018, Spain is not an exception to the populist wave.

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The Strugatskys in Context: A Case for Science-Fiction from Behind the Iron Curtain

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"MY DEAR, THE WORLD IS SO UNUTTERABLY BORING. THERE'S NO TELEPATHY, NO GHOSTS, NO FLYING SAUCERS. THEY CAN'T EXIST. THE WORLD IS RULED BY CAST-IRON LAWS. THESE LAWS ARE NOT BROKEN. THEY JUST CAN'T BE BROKEN. DON'T HOPE FOR FLYING SAUCERS. THAT WOULD BE TOO INTERESTING."

---STALKER (1979), ANDREI TARKOVSKY

In the early months of 1970, in Komarovo, just outside Leningrad, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky had tucked themselves away to work on a writing project. In the afterword of one of their most famous works, Boris Strugatsky wrote of long strolls along the coast of the Finnish Gulf, and of a journal he and his brother kept, full of ideas, some of which would eventually become *Roadside Picnic*: "Thirty year after the alien visit, the remains of the junk they left behind are at the center of quests and adventures, investigations and misfortunes. […] knowledge fallen from the sky is useless and pernicious."[1] Since its publication in the Soviet literary journal *Avrora* in 1972, *Roadside Picnic* has been translated into multiple languages and has become a staple of the science-fiction genre across the globe, both within the former Eastern Bloc and outside of it. Moreover, with titles like *Roadside Picnic*, *Hard to be a God* (1964), and *The Doomed City* (1988-89) in their canon of works, the Strugatsky brothers have become synonymous with science fiction in the late Soviet Union.

This paper will focus predominantly on *Roadside Picnic*, which has been analyzed from several perspectives. Many have, naturally, read the story bearing in mind that it was written and published behind the Iron Curtain. Others have deconstructed the pure literary value of the book, leaving much of the historical context in the periphery. I will endeavour to merge the two approaches in my exploration of the story,

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[1] Boris Strugatsky, "Afterword," Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, *Roadside Picnic*, trans. Olena Bormashenko (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1972/2012), 195.

examining literary techniques, while ensuring that the background of the Soviet Union (and all that that necessitates) remains visible. In particular, I will be exploring themes of Soviet behaviour and anxieties that are addressed in *Roadside Picnic*, namely the concept of the New Soviet Man, as well as apprehensions about nuclear technology, and the war with the West. I will also be addressing the context of the late Thaw period as an important aspect of the Strugatskys' writing process, as Soviet Primer Nikita Khrushchev's liberalization of the Soviet Union in the mid 1950s had lasting effects for writers and the arts.

Firstly, it is important to understand how the genre of science fiction arrived at the Thaw. The definition of science fiction has proven to be an elusive thing, especially for Russia and the Soviet Union. A variative definition was created for the Soviet agenda shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution and the end of the subsequent civil war. Prior to the official establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922, modern science fiction found its roots in Western writers, particularly the British writer H.G. Wells.[2] Wells was praised by Russian writer, Yevgeny Zamyatin, for broaching all fields of science and technology in his works; Zamyatin believed that Wells had created logical fairy tales.[3] This notion of the fantastic mixed with the logical became the basis of modern science fiction, both in the East and the West. As science advanced and became increasingly a mark of a nation's status in the early twentieth century, the genre became tied with literary explorations of the logical conclusions of real-life technologies. The Bolsheviks, however, in their quest to become a technological rival to the rest of the world, were not satisfied with relying on Wells to be the intellectual foundation of a genre so tied to technology. Thus, they created their own variant of the genre that they understood to be uniquely Russian; science fiction remained tied to modernity, but their version used communist instruments to create new ideas of progress, all in the aim of proving that the Soviet Union was more modern than the West.[4] In her exploration of Russian and Soviet science fiction, Anindita Banerjee points to historian Mark Steinberg's idea of Russia's "obsessively self-aware backwardness" and its role as a motivating factor that lead the Soviet Union to industrialize and modernize rapidly.[5] This process is reflected in its literature as well and branched off easily into science fiction. The appeal for the genre was in the ability to create a new world that was moulded by science and technology, but also free from the dichotomy in which Russia would be compared to the West; thus, they could admire their technological achievements in their own right.[6] The genre's intrinsic ties to

[2] Anindita Banerjee, *We Modern People: Science Fiction and the Making of Russian Modernity* (Middletown, Connecticut: Weslyan University Press, 2012), 2-4.
[3] Yevgeny Zamyatin, *A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yevgeny Zamyatin*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 261.
[4] Banerjee, *We Modern People*, 6-10.
[5] Ibid., 10.
[6] Ibid., 12-3.

technology, progress, and modernization, made it a frontier of industrialization and a useful tool for internal propaganda as well as outward projections of innovation and modernity.

The notion of the Soviet utopia was particularly conducive to the genre of science fiction. Distant planets explored by brave cosmonauts could be visions of the Soviet future. Alexander Bogdanov's *Red Star* (1908) popularized the motif of using other planets and beings as representations of what the Soviet Union could become once it had reached full implementation of Marx's communism. Bogdanov's Martians were scientifically advanced, but they also acted as models for behaviour and community.[7] The exploration of other planets can also be understood as an extension of the post-revolutionary push to explore the uncharted arctic, or the skies through developments in aviation. The allegory here becomes evident: communism is a righteous and unrelenting force, and it can be projected nearly anywhere, even the cosmos. The stars became a space where humanity was free from manmade methods of domination, imperialism, and tyranny.[8] Beyond utopia, the genre also became a space where one could espouse the Soviet notion of humanism, which juxtaposed itself confidently across from the perceived inhumanity of the capitalist West.[9] Ultimately, the genre was a vessel for conveying not just Soviet ideology, but Soviet supremacy over the non-communist world.

Though, during the Stalinist period, science fiction had to conform to Socialist Realism, and was thus a quiet and unimaginative genre.[10] When the liberalizations of the Thaw were set in place, writers were given far more creative leeway than before. This was also the decade where the Space Race began in earnest. It was during the Sputnik era that the Soviet Union truly became a technological rival to the West, and its science fiction reflected these "twin axes" of the Space Race and Khrushchev's Thaw.[11] By this time, science fiction had been popular in the West (especially in the United States) for several years. Spurred by moments like Sputnik, however, the West grew curious about Soviet science fiction, leading to the importing and translating of several works. Many Western science fiction writers wanted nothing to do with the Soviet side of their genre, as they considered their own works to be part of the fight against communism.[12] Writers whose political inclinations leaned to the left, on the other hand, were eager to discover what Soviet writers could contribute to the genre. In the Soviet Union, however, the genre was experiencing a move towards more expressive styles of writing, shifting away from Stalin's comparatively strict style of Socialist Realism.[13]

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[7] Colleen McQuillen and Julia Vaingurt, "Introduction," *The Human Reimagined: Posthumanism in Russia*, ed. Colleen McQuillen and Julia Vaingurt (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 28-9.
[8] Ibid., 14-15.
[9] Elana Gomel, "Our Posthuman Past: Subjectivity, History, and Utopia in Late Soviet Science Fiction," *The Human Reimagined: Posthumanism in Russia*, ed. Colleen McQuillen and Julia Vaingurt (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 37.
[10] Elana Gomel, "Gods like Men: Soviet Science Fiction and the Utopian Self," *Science Fiction Studies* 31, no. 3 (2004), 362.
[11] Banerjee, *We Modern People*, 4.
[12] Ursula K. Le Guin, Foreword to *Roadside Picnic*, by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, iv-v.
[13] Istavan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., "Science Fiction and the Thaw," *Science Fiction Studies* 31, no. 3 (2004): 338.

This is when Arkady and Boris Strugatsky rose to prominence. The duo had been writing together since the 1950s, though their works were only translated into English in the '70s, continuing the liberalizations that had grown out of the Thaw. Their stories were some of the first brought to the West, during the Long Thaw: a time when cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union was promoted for the sake of encouraging the spirit of détente.[14] Empowered by the Long Thaw, the Strugatsky brothers used science fiction as a vessel for commentary on life in this period, with remarks on the state subtly mixed in with wit and ample vulgarity. The first of their works to be brought to the West was 1973's *Hard to Be a God*. Upon its translation, American science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin, wrote: "At last, a Strugatsky novel! And it's a beauty."[15]

The initial Western reception to the Strugatskys was indelibly linked to the Cold War context in which their works were received. They were evaluated based on literary aspects such as plot and character, but the bulk of the discussion surrounding them focused on the search for Marxist intonations, or perhaps even some subtle condemnations thereof. Readers, especially fellow writers like Le Guin, wanted to know what these writers were saying about the Soviet Union: were they critiquing it? Praising it? Calling for further liberalization? The dichotomy was clear for Western readers, science fiction writers from behind the Iron Curtain were either actively resisting their oppressive regimes, or they were creating literature in favour of them. To a certain extent, this reaction seems natural for the time – the Cold War was certainly an all-encompassing thing, and there seemed to be no other way to read literature coming from the Eastern Bloc. The West wanted to know if science fiction writers (and subsequently, their readers) from the Soviet Bloc were secretly on the side of the fight against communism.

To be sure, over the '70s and into the '80s, as more science fiction from the East travelled westward, they were read increasingly for their literary value. When Le Guin reviewed *Roadside Picnic* in 1977, she called it "a 'first contact' story with a difference."[16] Her review contained little to no mention of the fact that this is fundamentally a Soviet work; rather, she discussed the plot and themes of the novel, the versatility of the Strugatskys as writers, and their "[…] good humour; compassion; [and] emotional honesty."[17] Two years after the translation was released in the West, Soviet director Andrei Tarkovksy brought *Roadside Picnic* to the screen with *Stalker* (1979) for which the screenplay was also written by the Strugatsky brothers. *Stalker*

[14] Ibid., 337, 340.
[15] Ursula K. Le Guin, "European SF: Rottensteiner's Anthology, the Strugatskys, and Lem," *Science Fiction Studies* 1, no. 3 (1974): 182.
[16] Ursula K. Le Guin, "Review: A New Book by the Strugatskys," *Science Fiction studies* 4, no. 2 (1977): 157.
[17] Ibid., 158.

received international praise from film connoisseurs upon its release, and to this day maintains its place in the canon of great films (though its production process remains infamous).

Once General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's process of *perestroika* began, however, the West's interest in Soviet science fiction (and literature in general) began to dwindle.[18] The old 'spirit of détente' did not need as much nurturing as before, as Gorbachev was doing everything in his power to bring the East and the West closer together.[19] The Strugatskys were still publishing and writing in the Soviet Union during the dying days of communism, and their stories were still being translated into English for Western consumption, but not to the popular reception they had seen during the initial burst of the '70s. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the West had very little interest in Soviet works of any kind, and the citizens of the (now former) Soviet Union were too busy trying to make the political and social transition to be bothered with literature.[20]

In the 21st century there has been a renewed interest in the Strugatsky brothers and other works of Thaw-era science fiction. Following the success of new, post-Soviet Russian science fiction like Dmitry Glukhovsky's 2002 hit, *Metro 2033* (which was also transformed into a highly successful video game series) readers from both sides of the Cold War have been encouraged to reassess the legacy of the conflict. Furthermore, the cult Ukrainian video game *S.T.A.L.K.E.R: Shadow of Chernobyl* (as well as its prequel and sequel, *Clear Sky* and *Call of Pripyat*, respectively), inspired by Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, has spawned renewed interest in *Roadside Picnic* as their source material.

As the Soviet Union fades farther and farther away into historical memory, analysis on Soviet science fiction has perhaps lost sight of the primacy of its historical context. Recent works delving into the genre revolve around the various literary movements that existed at the time, particularly humanism (and subsequently, post-humanism), as well as the various allegories present in Soviet works. Most scholars, such as Elana Gomel, have disavowed themselves from the old dichotomy of analyzing texts based on whether or not they can be considered works of protest against the Soviet state, calling this approach overly simplistic.[21] This has led to very compelling research on the various literary devices and themes within the Strugatskys' works that sincerely enrich the reading experience of their stories. While I would agree that reading Soviet science fiction in the protest-or-propaganda dichotomy is extremely reductive, this does not mean that the historical context should be brushed aside. Authors like the Strugatskys deserve to be read as creators of great literary

[18] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., "Science Fiction and the Thaw," 342.
[19] Ibid., 338.
[20] Ibid., 343.
[21] Gomel, "Our Posthuman Past, "41.

works in their own right. They were, however, working and writing in the unquestionably totalitarian Soviet Union.

Taking the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union into account is an extremely important facet of reading the regime's literature. With the presence of censorship boards as well as the extensive processes of the Union of Soviet Writers (to which, if a writer had any hopes of being published, they would need to be member), writers working in the Soviet Union had less freedom than their Western counterparts.[22] Evidently, censorship boards were different during the Thaw period than they were under Stalin, but these institutions remained sternly in existence for the sake of ensuring that published literature was in accordance with state values. This did not necessarily mean that all works had to be Marxist mouthpieces, amounting to little more than propaganda. Especially during the Thaw, writers were encouraged to explore emotional complexities and questions of consciousness, and ways of understanding the developments of the twentieth century.[23] This was a time when science fiction was being written more for the young intelligentsia, who were being encouraged to create a new and technologically sophisticated Soviet Union. They were those "for whom science represented a freedom from Stalinist superstition."[24] The party-state, even during the Thaw, maintained a tight grip on communication, and typically had a hand in creating media outlets like news and reporting; however, literature was one aspect which was not directly created by the party, thus it had to be monitored very closely.[25]

These were the conditions under which the Strugatsky brothers worked. In his afterword for the 2012 edition of *Roadside Picnic*, Boris Strugatsky recounted parts of the novel's writing and publishing process, with the Soviet Union firmly in the rear-view mirror of his memory. He had kept the correspondence between him and his brother with the editors and the Writers' Union, and told of the eight years that their anthology spent being sent back and forth through the publishing house, as no one seemed able to make up their minds:

> But mainly, and the whole, and obstinately and invariably, from one year to the next, from one conversation to the next: take the reanimated corpses out of the *Picnic*; change Red Schuart's language; insert the word 'Soviet' when talking about Kirill Panov; get rid of the bleakness, hopelessness, coarseness, savageness…[26]

The main issue that the editors had with *Roadside Picnic* was not that it seemed apolitical, but the overall vulgarity of the work. Boris Strugatsky included excerpts of the notes that the editors from the Union had left for *Roadside Picnic*, sorted into categories: comments concerning the immoral behaviour of the heroes (such as excessive drunkenness and drinking, swearing, and acting indecently); comments concerning physical

[22] Leonid Heller and E.M. Swiderski, "Perestrojka and Literature: Texts and Context," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 40, no.1/3 (1990): 192.
[23] Banerjee, *We Modern People*, 2.
[24] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., "Science Fiction and the Thaw," 338.
[25] Ibid., 340.
[26] Boris Strugatsky, Afterword, *Roadside Picnic*, 203.

violence; and comments concerning vulgarisms and swearing (of which there were 251 for the whole book, where Strugatsky only included a random ten in his afterword).[27] The editors' reason for concern was that they understood the audience of *Roadside Picnic* to be teenagers, that it was written "for members of the Young Communist League who see Soviet literature as a textbook on morals, a guidebook to life."[28] In many ways, they were less concerned with the ideological purity of the work, but rather the way in which the behaviour of its characters would be understood by its impressionable readers.

It is with this background in mind that I will investigate one aspect of the work: its exploration of Soviet life and behaviour. To be sure, *Roadside Picnic* is about much more than that. The Strugatskys inspire the reader to ask questions about their place in the world and in the universe. They ask questions that feel fundamentally human. However, in keeping with the context of the totalitarian state, it is important to examine the ways in which things that were uniquely Soviet made their way into the story. For this purpose, I will be analyzing the role played by the concept of the New Soviet Man, particularly regarding the story's protagonist Red Schuart. The New Soviet Man is meant to be the ideal Soviet citizen: hard-working, obedient, and follows the Party's ideology. The most important facet of this is self-actualization and self-transformation; the responsibility for becoming a good citizen of the state rests with the self and with the decision to change.[29] In order to avoid the false dichotomy of resistance-or-propaganda, Red will not be analyzed as being either a rejection or an acceptance of the New Soviet Man; rather, he can be understood as a representation of what it means to be someone who is trying to reinvent themselves in a society that constantly forces them to make sacrifices in order to survive.

Redrick Schuart is meant to be the everyman. He works hard, he is loyal, and he tries to protect his family. At the same time, he drinks very often, he lashes out, and swears habitually. The world he lives in is one that is actively and increasingly hostile. This is because Red Schuart is a stalker, someone who explores the forbidden and narrowly understood Zone in search of the alien artifacts scattered there. A Visit some time ago has left these areas viperous, but full of treasures and technology that humanity is still trying to understand. Red sells his labour to scientists seeking to make sense of the Zone and the Visit, and dangerously ventures into the Zone to collect objects for them to analyze. He also has a family that he is trying to provide for. His daughter, Monkey has become deformed and almost alien, as all children of stalkers are, and as she grows, her abnormalities become more evident. In the final scene of the story, Red guides a group of people through the Zone in search of the Golden Sphere, which is said to grant any wish. After sacrificing a member of the group,

[27] Ibid., 205-7.
[28] Ibid., 204.
[29] Raymond Bauer, *The New Man in Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 180.

Red finally obtains the sphere, but instead of wishing for his daughter's health as he intended, he begins to shout:

> I'm an animal, you can see that I'm an animal. I have no words, they haven't taught me the words; I don't know how to think, those bastards didn't let me learn how to think. But if you really are – all powerful, all knowing, all understanding – figure it out! Look into my soul, I know – everything you need is in there. It has to be. Because I've never sold my soul to anyone! It's mine, it's human! Figure out yourself what I want – because I know it can't be bad! The hell with it all, I just can't think of a thing other than those words of his – HAPPINESS, FREE, FOREVERYONE, AND LET NO ONE BE FORGOTTEN![30]

These are the final words of the novel. Here, Red forgoes his personal wishes for the sake of the collective. He has spent much of the story lamenting the misery of his life and of the world around him, and in the last moments of the book, Red wishes for joy for everyone, without cost.

Does this make him a hero? Does this make him a New Soviet Man? The answer is not simply yes, or no. Elana Gomel has argued that science fiction had always been a space for Soviet writers to deconstruct and analyze notions of the New Soviet Man through the creation of different characters.[31] This idea finds its roots quite far back: in Bogdanov's *Red Star*, in its idealized societies, and more importantly in their citizens; Bogdanov uses these characters as prototypes for the New Soviet Man.[32] Red's final scene can be read as a moment of redemption, as he makes this choice to change and acknowledge something bigger than him: the collective. At the same time, the New Soviet Man is also supposed to be someone who has been rationalized into submission and who understands why obedience is right.[33] Red is breaking the law every single time he ventures into the Zone, he is even arrested and goes to jail for a segment of the story, making him far from obedient. On the other hand, he can be seen as obedient to the scientists who hire him to go into the Zone to collect artifacts (they themselves, actively breaking the law by asking him to do so). Thus, Red is not meant to be a representation of the New Soviet Man, but he is not the foil of one either.

According to historian Jay Bergman, the New Soviet Man is someone who "uses reason and logic, along with science and technology, to subjugate nature, thus transforming it from an alien force that threatened him into something that he could use."[34] This resonates with the goals of Red, the other stalkers, and the scientists; they want to subdue the Zone into something that they can understand and make use of. The Zone is an extremely dangerous place, it distorts reality, kills stalkers (either in the Zone itself, or slowly, by exposure

[30] Strugatsky, *Roadside Picnic*, 193.
[31] Gomel, "Our Posthuman Past," 38-40.
[32] McQuillen and Vaingurt, *The Human Reimagined*, 28-9.
[33] Ibid., 177.
[34] Jay Bergman, "The Idea of Individual Liberation in Bolshevik Visions of the New Soviet Man" in *European History Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1997): 60.

to it), deforms their children, and contains things that rationality cannot explain. Red is one of many trying to understand the Zone and the things inside of it, but he is never fully able to. He can be understood as a representation of someone attempting to transform themselves into the New Soviet Man, but he is unable to fully make the change because of the world around him. He is a gray zone – perhaps the story of what the New Soviet Man looks like on the ground. In a world of scarcities, where immense amounts of sacrifice are required simply to get by, Red Schuart is a man who is trying to survive. He does not have the luxury of choosing who he thinks he should be, the only choice he has is to be what the situation requires of him. In this sense, Red could be the New Soviet Man that the system inadvertently created; he is not what the system wanted him to be, but what the circumstances of daily life within the system made him.

In her article, "Gods like Men: Soviet Science Fiction and the Utopian Self," Elana Gomel argues the paradoxical nature of the New Soviet Man. Much of the Soviet Union's science-fiction cancelled the process of change in accordance with the Marxist theory of history, in which the Communist utopia (where the New Soviet Man lives and thrives) rests at the end of history.[35] Red can serve as a symbol of a previously unexplored space of change. He can represent the growing pains a citizen trying to become the New Soviet Man experiences. Red Schuart begins the novel as a smuggler, a bit of a scoundrel to be sure, but a decent man; but by the end of the novel, he is "either a murderer, or a saint, or both."[36] Red embodies the paradox pointed out by Gomel: he has caused another member of the group to die in order to get to the Sphere, but at the last minute uses it to wish for something completely abstract, rather than his daughter's health. The reader will never know whether or not his wish was granted. As Gomel writes: "As the gap between Soviet ideology and the reality of its implementation becomes impossible to ignore, the New Man turns from a millenarian promise into an apocalyptic threat."[37] Perhaps this is a moment in the story where Red recognizes that he will never go back home, that he will die in the Zone, and it is in this moment that he attains freedom from all his burdens. Thus, he can wish for whatever he likes.

Many have read the Zone as an allegory for the Soviet Union – it is harsh, lifeless, and hostile. Others have interpreted the Zone as an allegory for the West – it is completely unfamiliar and despite the relentless attempts to break through to it and understand it, even to be a part of it, it remains unknowable. Some Western readers have interpreted the Zone as a metaphor for the Gulag: a system constantly on the periphery of everyday life, yet a place where men are mutilated and broken if they remain for too long.[38] It is also possible that the meaning is more poetic, that the Zone is a space where one is unburdened by strict social rules and

[35] Gomel, "Gods like Men," 358.
[36] Gomel, "Our Posthuman Past," 43.
[37] Gomel, "Gods like Men," 363.
[38] Ibid., 361.

codes; it is simply the Outside. In several aspects of their writings, the Strugatskys are fascinated and haunted by 'the Other' and the unknowable in a way that could represent anything from space, the West, or the distant future.[39] This interpretation of the Zone is helped along by Tarkovsky's visual representation of the Zone in *Stalker*. In it, scenes set inside the town are in sepia tone, crowded, and unkempt. The Zone, on the other hand, is lush and green and brightly coloured. The Zone is a place that is unfamiliar, but that also means that it is untouched by the misery of everyday life. There exists, however, something of a warning in this: The Zone is not a place that should be romanticized simply by virtue of it being unknown. It remains a space that is hostile to anyone who interacts with it. In this sense, the Zone could represent life outside the Soviet Union: perceived by many to be a better place, but perhaps so much so that its sins go unnoticed. For some characters, like Red's wife Guta, it is a place that should be avoided at all cost. For others, like Red and the stalkers, it represents the chance at a new life.

This is part of what makes the Strugatskys such brilliant writers. It is one of the reasons why the book is still read and analyzed. The above interpretation is possible, yet the issue that editors had with the story was its vulgarity. The Writers' Union published *Roadside Picnic* for adolescents of the intelligentsia so that they would be inspired by science in a way that was ideologically appropriate. Meanwhile, some Westerners were able to read the story as an act of protest against the Soviet Union. In the early 1980s, Polish science fiction author Stanisław Lem, of *Solaris* (1961) fame, wrote an essay on *Roadside Picnic*. Lem was not only contemporaneous to the Strugatsky brothers, but he was also an author of the same genre, working behind the Iron Curtain, asking similar questions about space, life, and consciousness. They also shared the commonality that Tarkovsky had tackled bringing their *maître-d'oeuvre* to the screen, as he directed the film adaptation of *Solaris* in 1972. Lem believed that the story of *Roadside Picnic* had "the ethos of a fairy tale."[40] He was particularly drawn in by the way the Strugatskys had written the Visit and the aliens. According to him, the brothers broke all conventions of the genre by writing the aliens through omission.[41] In traditional science fiction, the alien visit occurs, and it is always drastic in some way, it is always intentional – the aliens invaded or visited earth on purpose, because planet earth matters; this is then normally followed by humanity banding together to understand and combat the threat.[42] For the Strugatskys, however, the Visit is unseen, brief, and in all likelihood completely arbitrary.

The ethos of the Visit and the Zones it created is relayed in the title: *Roadside Picnic*. During the segment of the story where Red is in jail, the reader gets the chance to follow characters who are closer to the

[39] Gomel, "Our Posthuman Past," 42.
[40] Stanisław Lem, "About the Strugatskys' *Roadside Picnic*" trans. Elsa Schnieder in *Science Fiction Studies* 10, no. 3 (1983): 330.
[41] Ibid., 318.
[42] Ibid.

scientific research into the Zone. It is in one of these sequences that the title of the work is explained. A scientist named Valentine Pilman, extremely drunk on cognac, is attempting to explain to his equally drunk friend, Noonan, what he thinks of the Visit:

> Imagine a picnic […] Imagine: a forest, a country road, a meadow. A car pulls off the road and into the meadow and unloads young men, bottles, picnic blankets, girls, transistor radios, cameras… a fire is lit, tents are pitched, music is played. And in the morning they leave. The animals, birds, and insects that were watching the whole night in horror crawl out of their shelters. And what do they see? An oil spill, a gasoline puddle, old spark plugs and oil filters strewn about… Scattered rags, burnt-out bulbs, someone has dropped a monkey wrench. The wheels have tracked mud from some godforsaken swamp… and of course there are the remains of the campfire, apple cores, candy wrappers, tins, bottles, someone's handkerchief, someone's penknife, old ragged newspapers, coins, wilted flowers from another meadow […] A picnic by the side of some space road. And you ask me whether they'll come back…[43]

Said otherwise, the artifacts in the Zone that stalkers like Red risk their lives for is tantamount to alien litter. Greater, more advanced beings have come and gone, with no grand story of first contact, and humanity rummages through the garbage they have left behind in search of meaning. Mankind is small in the face of the Visit, and ultimately meaningless. In a world such as this, one cannot blame Red for aspiring for a better way of living. For Lem, this was part of the appeal for the Strugatskys. He argued that the world of science fiction "must be (to put it quite plainly) a real world: that is, one in which no one is privileged from the start."[44] The Strugatskys had taken this to its logical conclusion, both on the individual (through Red) and societal level.

Through all this, though, one must keep in mind the *zeitgeist* of the era in which the Strugatskys were working. This was a period, as can be seen in the themes of *Roadside Picnic*, largely defined by its anxieties. The threat of nuclear war was pervasive, and many authors, both from the East and West, had deliberated over what the world could look like if the Cold War turned nuclear.[45] This is evident in the Zones, which read like nuclear wastelands in their general aesthetic as well as the fact that it is such a hostile, desolate environment. With an apocalypse constantly looming, authors were forced to confront the possibility of a dystopic future, and this was true for both sides of the conflict. Something that was more unique to the Soviet side was the era of the Thaw, the time during which much of the Strugatskys' works were written. This was a time perceived as being extremely liberal, especially in contrast to its predecessor, the Stalinist period; in reality, the liberalizations of the Thaw were very selective and often pulled back through subsequent 'freezes.'[46] This is to say that Khrushchev and his successors were very wary of public opinion, and instated liberties or

[43] Strugatsky, *Roadside Picnic*, 131-32.
[44] Lem, "About the Strugatskys' *Roadside Picnic*," 319.
[45] Csicsery-Ronay Jr., "Science Fiction and the Thaw," 337.
[46] Ibid., 337-340.

withdrew them in order to regulate how they were perceived; Khrushchev was particularly concerned with winning over the intelligentsia in order to have a firmer backing against more conservative bureaucrats and other citizens.[47] At the same time, science became an increasingly important field, as it was considered a progressively crucial front on which the Soviet Union could assert its superiority over the West. As a result, scientific discoveries and advancements from behind the Iron Curtain began to take precedent over many other aspects of life.

For the genre of science fiction, and subsequently for the Strugatskys, this created an interesting shift; it had to accelerate its own sense of fantasy in order to outpace the real world. Science fiction became gritty and realistic; rather than exploring the stars, the genre was used to explore the human psyche. Lem argued that at a certain point during the Space Race, science fiction exchanged Wells' cosmic Darwinism (in which aliens and humans interacted on the basis of which of the two was strongest) for something much less glorious, where "aliens take over because it pleases them to do so."[48] The genre had taken a drastic turn away from its utopic and cosmic roots and came down to earth in a very literal way. Authors were more interested than ever in investigating the possible ramifications of the actions of mankind during the 20th century, rather than exploring their often utopic assumptions. As science became more and more advanced, darker consequences were more possible than they had been when interstellar communication, for instance, had been a distant dream.[49] I would argue that this is reflective of a point of insecurity for mankind; having spent most of our existence convinced that we were special, humanity was now, by virtue of our own scientific discoveries, forced to admit that we are quite small in the universe. This notion was something the Strugatskys certainly explored in their canon of works. It can also be argued that this marks the exploration of the Marxist theory of history; if there truly was meant to be an endpoint to history, would the Visit have happened? The Strugatskys were not the only ones exploring these questions. As aforementioned, this was a period of time defined by its anxieties, and the relentless literary obsession with questions of humanity's place in the universe brought about many pessimistic answers. This can be seen in a broader trend that peaked in the mid 1980s with a revival of anti-utopian writers like Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell.[50] When Lem praised *Roadside Picnic* and the Zone for being realistic, he also meant that it was honest in its representation of a world without any sense of utopia.

[47] Ibid., 338.
[48] Lem, "About the Strugatskys' Roadside Picnic," 318.
[49] Ibid., 319.
[50] Heller and Swiderski, "Perestrojka and Literature," 200.

This realism comes from the fact that with texts like these, the reader is empowered to go beyond what they read on the page and to form associations between the written and the real.[51] This is accomplished through the use of allegory. In her analysis of allegories in the Strugatskys' works, Elana Gomel calls *Roadside Picnic* something of a half-allegory.[52] The story is not a one-for-one code for a different story, but the presence of allegorical elements is strong, as has been explored in the various ways the Zone can be understood by the reader. However, the various literary devices used by any author requires a cultural consensus in order to be understood.[53] This does not mean that only Soviet readers were able to understand the messages and motifs of *Roadside Picnic*. To the same extent that it required cultural consensus, this dialogue between the writer and the reader can also create one.[54] This could explain why, as previously explored, the editors saw very little problems with the politics (or lack thereof) in the story, where Western readers read the work as an ideological critique of the Soviet Union. Through the clever use of literary devices such as allegory, the Strugatskys were able to turn both interpretations into truth.

Thus, they wrote for mankind. The Strugatskys asked questions that crossed borders and Iron Curtains alike. They explored the consequences of scientific discovery; many have turned to *Roadside Picnic* and Tarkovsky's *Stalker* as a sad foreshadowing of incidents like that of Chernobyl, something that the *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* video game series was quick to draw on. They surveyed the significance of humanity on the cosmic scale and forced the reader to confront the idea that all that exists in the universe may be unknowable. At the same time, the Strugatskys unequivocally understood and wrote for their Soviet audience – they had to, as they worked in a totalitarian state that required ideological adherence from its writers. They recognized the place of the intelligentsia as their main audience. They posed questions on what it means to be the New Soviet Man; whether or not such a transformation is truly possible, and what happens when it goes wrong, or when someone is trying to self-actualize but is ultimately unable to. They explored how people behave in a system that is miserable to live in, but who try to get by. The Visit may have happened, and the Zone may exist, but Red still has to put food on the table. While absolutely totalitarian on a state level, the Soviet Union was not an ideological monolith; it was also a place with citizens who were trying to go about their lives. In this sense, its literary and cultural works deserve to be read in their own right, as a product of the resilience of those who lived under this system.

[51] Elana Gomel, "The Poetics of Censorship: Allegory as Form and Ideology in the Novels of Arkady and Boris Strugatsky," *Science Fiction Studies* 22, no.1 (1995): 89.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 101.
[54] Ibid.

In her foreword for *Roadside Picnic*, Ursula K. Le Guin ushers in the start of the novel by claiming: "What they did, which I found most admirable then and still do now, was to write as if they were indifferent to ideology – something many of us writers in the Western democracies had a hard time doing. They wrote as free men write."[55] While the sentiment remains valid, I would argue the statement is not necessarily true. Though, on the surface, the story of *Roadside Picnic* is rather apolitical, even by Boris Strugatsky's own admission, the system in which they wrote was not one where authors could write 'as free men' because they were not free. They had more liberties than their predecessors who had been writing in the extremely repressive Stalinist era, but they still had to answer to the Writers' Union, to their editors, and ultimately to the state. The fact that the Strugatskys were operating in a state that was still fundamentally totalitarian should not be forgotten. The historical and literary values of *Roadside Picnic* are not mutually exclusive. In fact, acknowledging and delving into the historical context in which the work was written truly enriches the reading experience, even now that the Cold War has been over for 30 years.

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[55] Le Guin, Foreword to *Roadside Picnic*, vi.

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Mémoires rêvés of Irène Némirovsky: Élisabeth Gille's Path in Recollecting and Working Through Trauma

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Sara-Jane Vigneault is a second-year master's student at the University of Toronto's Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies with the Collaborative Program in Jewish Studies. Under the supervision of Dr. Doris Bergen, her dissertation explores Irène Némirovsky's late work's survival Suite Française *and her daughters' working-through process through archival research, methodological application, and the use of fiction and postmemory literature. Sara-Jane is also currently working as a research assistant for the Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair in Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto while working with Dr. Susan Solomon on her new documentary* Après Coup *on children of the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide.*

Introduction

"How could you describe this heart in words without filling a whole book?" wrote Leonardo da Vinci beside an anatomical drawing of the heart, circa 1513.[1] This citation, while taken out of its original context, nonetheless seems appropriate to this research paper. Indeed, how could you describe pain, loss, and fading memories without using a medium such as literature to uncover and deal with a traumatic past? Recent academic works advocate for the diversification of testimonies to avoid the possible erasure of the ones that do not comply with the narrow frameworks that often favor a perspective of "management" rather than "confrontation" of painful past memories and traumas.[2] This research, which focuses on Élisabeth Gille's *Mémoires rêvés* ("Dreamed Memories") of her mother Irène Némirovsky and her path in recollecting and working through trauma, first studies Irène's posthumous book *Suite française*. The paper addresses the novel's survival by scrutinizing her daughters' paths towards working through a traumatic event, the Holocaust, and reconciling themselves with their losses. Finally, this research explores Susan R. Suleiman's notion of the 1.5 generation and Marianne Hirsch's postmemory literature approach and analyzes Élisabeth Gille's books *Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés* and *Un paysage de cendres.* Consequently, this paper emphasizes the use of art as a way to delve into and enact the working-through of a traumatic past, especially when the trauma was experienced at an age when memories faded away, and the past became dust.

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[1] Amelia Peral, « Au-delà des mères perdues ou comment nommer la mère après la Shoah », *Central and Eastern European Library* 1 (2012): 140.

[2] See Carolyn J. Dean's and Zoë Vania Waxman's works.

Irène and her *Suite*

Irène Némirovsky was one of the most prolific and widely read female authors of the 20th century. Published by several editors, such as Bernard Grasset with *David Golder* (1929) and *Le Bal* (1930), and Albin Michel with *Le Vin de solitude* (1935), *Jézabel* (1936) and *La Proie* (1938), Némirovsky's works had a second wave of appreciation following the *Rentrée littéraire* of 2004 with the publication and adaption of her posthumous book *Suite française.* The book*,* written between November 1940 and July 1942, contains two novels out of her planned sequence of five and retraces a fictional account of the Nazi Occupation, portraying life in France between June 4, 1940 and July 1, 1941.[3] The other three novellas were supposed to take place later during and at the end of the war, comprising a total of one thousand pages and representing "the main work of [her] life."[4]

Born in Kiev in 1903 to a wealthy disunited Ukrainian-Jewish family, Irène received an education steeped in French culture.[5] The only daughter of a prosperous, self-made banker and a cold, resentful mother, her family fled the Russian Empire at the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, spent a year in Finland, and finally established themselves in Paris, where Némirovsky attended the Sorbonne and began to publish her works.[6] In 1926 she married Michel Epstein, a Russian-Jewish banker working at the Banque du Nord in Paris. The couple had two daughters: Denise, born in 1929, and Élisabeth (Babet), born in 1937.[7]

Although born to a Jewish family, neither Irène nor her parents were adherents. Judaism was not transmitted to her in any way, but her Jewishness was sufficient to sentence her to death. Thus, the Occupation of France destructively altered Irène's life and comfort. The novelist, shocked by the *Kristallnacht*, chose to baptize her family in 1939 as she wanted to protect them from persecution: "You never know what the future will be made of," she said, perhaps a little too late.[8] Her faith and *naïveté* toward France and the regime had finally left room for bitter and anguished fatalism in the face of the anti-Jewish measures of the Vichy regime. Tensions in France eventually made the Epsteins flee Paris.

In June 1940, the Epsteins were at Issy-l'Évêque, on the borders of the Nièvre and the Saône-et-Loire, soon to become part of the occupied zone. The location and the circumstances inspired Irène to write *Suite française*.[9] As the Epsteins' children were born in France and the family later converted to Catholicism, the

[3] Angela Kershaw, "Finding Irène Némirovsky," *French Cultural Studies* 18, no. 1 (2007): 59.
[4] Olivier Corpet, *Irène Némirovsky: Un destin en images* (Paris, Denoël, 2010), 100 (it should be noted that several quotes were translated by me in English but were originally written in French).
[5] Denise Epstein*, Vivre et Survive : Entretiens avec Clémence Boulouque* (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 2008), 185.
[6] Élisabeth Gille, *Le Mirador* (Paris : Éditions Stock, 2000), 150.
[7] Epstein, *Survive et vivre*, 185.
[8] Susan R. Suleiman, *La question Némirovsky : Vie, mort et héritage d'une écrivaine juive dans la France du xxe siècle* (Paris : Éditions Albin Michel, 2017), 121.
[9] Patrick Lienhardt et Olivier Philipponnat, *Préface à Chaleur du sang : Les Paradis perdus d'Irène Némirovsky* (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 2007), 19-21.

family tried several times to become naturalized French citizens in the 1930s.[10] However, these requests were not granted, and the Epsteins tried until it was officially too late. On July 13, 1942, Némirovsky was arrested as a "stateless person of Jewish descent" by policemen employed by Vichy France in the Morvan (Bourgogne-Franche Comté) under the racial laws, which did not take into account her conversion to Roman Catholicism.[11] As she was being taken away, she told her daughters, "I am going on a journey now."[12] She was brought to a convoy assembly camp at Pithiviers, and on July 17, 1942, together with 928 other Jewish deportees, she was transported to Auschwitz.[13] Upon her arrival two days later, her forearm was marked with an identification number, and she died a month later of typhus.[14] On October 9, it was Michel Epstein's turn to get arrested. When seized, Michel Epstein urged his eldest daughter never to leave the suitcase containing "mom's notebook": "My father told me to take care of two important things: my little sister and a suitcase which he made me promise never to part with."[15] Michel was deported on November 6, 1942 to Auschwitz and immediately sent to the gas chambers upon arrival.[16]

The notebook contained *Suite française* which is highlighted by Myriam Anissimov as "a violent work, an extraordinarily lucid fresco, a picture taken from the heart of France and the French" during this dismal period.[17] *Tempête en juin* and *Dolce* – the two novels contained within the work – are considered remarkable because they were written during the Occupation (until July 1942) and are a product of reflection, rather than a journal of events. *Suite française* is a realistic and violent piece that offers a pragmatical picture of French society under the Occupation.

Moreover, it should be noted that her book does not mention persecution against Jews. History and politics only appear in the background, as Irène was more interested in the repercussions and characters' experiences. As scholar Jonathan M. Weiss underlines, "what interested Irène was not the cause of wars but the effect of great historical events on individuals."[18] Her first novel, *Tempête en juin*, retraces the exodus of several individuals and families from diverse social backgrounds whose paths intersect. Revealing each of the characters' respective flaws, it shows how social capital molds different outcomes. The second novel, *Dolce*, portrays three specific months of a French village's daily life in the German-occupied era. *Dolce* recounts both

[10] Irène Némirovsky, *Suite française* (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 2004), Annexe II.
[11] Claire Messud, "Introduction," in *David Golder, The Ball, Snow in Autumn, The Courilof Affair* (London: Everyman's Library, 2008), ix–xix.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Olivier Corpet, Irène Némirovsky : Un destin en images, 33-35 and Denise Epstein, Survivre et vivre, 79.
[16] Némirovsky, *Suite Française*, Annexe II.
[17] Myriam Anissimov, « Préface », in *Suite française*, 29.
[18] Jonathan M. Weiss, *Irène Némirovsky* (Paris : Éditions du Félin, 2005), 233.

collaboration and resistance and shows in multiple shades the cohabitation between French villagers and German soldiers.

Critics highlighted the contemporaneity of the book upon its delayed release in 2004, awarding it the Prix Renaudot. This honor has been justified in terms of "righting wrongs by giving recognition, however belatedly and insufficiently, to a writer whose future was annihilated by the Holocaust and whose oeuvre was neglected in post-war France."[19] *Suite française* is ultimately a novel in which the absence of explicit judgment from the narrator and her contemporaneity (which prevented her from knowing the end) allow an aesthetic of contrast and a juxtaposition of multiple points sacred to the author and later to the readers. There is a level of apprehension in the book that highlights its authenticity. It is enhanced by the incorporation of correspondences and letters from Némirovsky and from her husband after her deportation, granting us a window into her life during this period, her anxieties, and her reflections. The book's survival has been celebrated almost as a "defiance of fascism" and as a re-affirmation of the importance of fiction as testimony.[20]

This highly acclaimed book could have benefited from further analysis. Nevertheless, this paper posits its interest in the miracle of the text's survival and the response of Irène's daughters, especially Élisabeth, whose biographical, autographical, and fiction books *Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés* and *Un paysage de cendres* depict the experiences of her mother and herself.

The suitcase – Daughters' epic

The preface of *Suite française* explains how the manuscript survived in a suitcase carried by Denise and Élisabeth. Following the arrest of the girls' father, Julie Dumont, a French woman whom Némirovsky had employed as a nanny and who had become a family friend, stayed with Denise and Élisabeth and helped them hide until the end of the war. "It is a story worthy of *Silence de la mer* by Vercors," mentions Élisabeth.[21] Indeed, as they were getting arrested with Michel Epstein, Julie and the girls were taken to the police station:

> My older sister was very blonde, and a German looked at her. He took out of his pocket a picture of his own daughter, also blonde. He said, "She looks like her." And he spoke to Julie, our governess: "We are not going to take the children away this evening. Go home. We will pick them up tomorrow morning." Our governess understood.[22]

Denise and Élisabeth were able to survive by hiding in Catholic boarding schools and shelters, thanks to the help of Julie and a consortium of family friends of Irène and Michel such as the Éditions Albin Michel, la Société des gens de lettres, and the Banque du Nord, who agreed to provide for the children's support and

[19] Angela Kershaw, "Finding Irène Némirovsky," 60.
[20] Ibid., 59-60.
[21] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 233.
[22] Ibid.

education.[23] In 1945, when trains of survivors began to arrive at the Gare de Lyon, the children went to the station every day. They later went to the Hôtel Lutétia, wearing placards around their necks on which they had written their family name until they realized they waited in vain for their parents' return.[24]

It took 60 years before the daughters opened their mother's notebook.[25] The suitcase – which evokes a potent literary metaphor of the (un)known past and the trauma that the daughters had to carry – was first hidden by Dumont and contained photos, papers, a bit of laundry, and the notebook. Scholar Susan Rubin Suleiman states that it was actually Dumont who had to hide the suitcase as Denise Epstein was given the suitcase only in 1957, after Dumont's death.[26] In 1957, Denise sent a typed version of *Suite française*, which her father transcribed before his deportation, to journalist Catherine Valogne who deemed the book "remarkable" yet "unpublishable."[27] Suleiman nevertheless believes that this refusal was salutary as the historical context (repression of the "Vichy years") and literary style (*Nouveau roman*) of the post-war period would have hampered critics and the public to read a fiction "about everyday life during the Occupation, devoid of heroism and written in a classic style."[28]

In 1957, Denise and Élisabeth were aware of the existence of the novel since they had their father's transcribed version. Nonetheless, the notebook in the suitcase remained a mystery. According to Denise, this notebook was kept for several years in her drawers for many reasons: "We waited for the return of the legitimate owner for many years."[29] When she finally admitted that her mother would never come back, Denise opened the suitcase and found her 'mom's notebook.' However, once opened, both sisters thought that it was perhaps a diary: "Here again," said Denise, "we preferred to respect her writings."[30] Lastly, an ethical question was pending: "Even if the word 'End' was written, did we have the right to publish the manuscript as it was?"[31]

As psychiatrist Claudine Vegh shows in a study published in 1979, one of the characteristics that appears in most children of Holocaust victims is this impossibility of assuming, confessing the loss of the parents or remembering their faces. Consequently, the question which torments them is that of "whether they have the right to speak about it."[32] Denise and Élisabeth's prolonged questioning, hesitation, and silence could be

[23] Irène Némirovsky, *Suite Francaise*, Annexe II, and Denise Epstein, *Survivre et vivre*, 101.
[24] Epstein, *Survive et Vivre*, 94.
[25] Denise Epstein, « Fille d'Irène Némirovsky, parle avec Egill Helgason », September 7, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8oH8csAJhk&list=WL&index=249.
[26] Susan R. Suleiman, La question Némirovsky : Vie, mort et héritage d'une écrivaine juive dans la France du xxe siècle, 341.
[27] Ibid.
[28] *Ibid.*, 345-346
[29] Epstein, « Fille d'Irène Némirovsky, parle avec Egill Helgason. »
[30] Denise Epstein, « Si mes souvenirs sont exacts... ». Lettre à Paul Renard », accessed June 12, 2020, https://www.cairn.info/revue-roman2050-2012-2-page-5.htm
[31] Ibid.
[32] Claudine Vegh, Je ne lui ai pas dit aurevoir : des enfants de déportés parlent (Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1979), 132.

understood as embedded in this anxiety. Moreover, scholar Ingrid Kisliuk mentions that because hidden children endured intense trauma in their young lives they often did not speak since they did not want to remember the period right after the war (Denise), or because they had only a few memories (Élisabeth).[33] Their conflicted questioning is an intrinsic part of the affect that follows the hidden children, who have waited in vain for their parents throughout their lives. "It took us a long time to talk about it," corroborates Denise.[34]

Furthermore, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Dominick LaCapra describes a reluctance in working through the past. There is a melancholic sentiment that in enabling survival or re-engagement in life, one is "betraying those who were overwhelmed and consumed by that traumatic past."[35] One's bond with the dead may invest trauma with value and make its "reliving a painful but necessary commemoration or memorial to which one remains dedicated or at least bound."[36] This situation may create a more or less unconscious desire 'to remain' within trauma. The daughters' silence can then be seen as a way of "returning to and remaining bound within the traumatic past."[37] Through complex associations with their lost family members, they could also recover what Lawrence Langer calls a "missed destiny of death."[38] Silence first appeared as a method to reconnect with lost family, via a shared traumatic memory, when other recollections of the past were fading and becoming difficult to access.

Denise and Élisabeth finally donated their mother's papers to the archives of the Institut Mémoire de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC) at the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, Denise overcame the emotions that had hitherto prevented her from reading the notebook: "I couldn't let go of this manuscript without knowing what was in it."[39] She then realized that it contained the first two installments of her mother's *Suite française,* with several differences from her father's version.[40] It took her two years of diligent work to transcribe the words of her mother's notebook written so small that she had to decipher them with a magnifying glass because her mother feared that there would be no more paper or ink.[41] One day, opening it askew, she found *Dolce*, the second novella: "I discovered it over the pages, and you almost didn't have the second part, because it ended after *Tempête en juin* and then I came across blank pages."[42]

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[33] Ingrid Kisliuk. From Trauma to Trepidation: Memories Transmitted by Hidden Children to the Second Generation (Newton Mass: Nanomir Press, 2008), 193.
[34] Epstein, Survivre et vivre, 96.
[35] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History*, *Writing Trauma* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 22-23.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Dean Krouk, "Failing Silent; Holocaust Trauma and the Breakdown of Postmemory in Merethe Lindstrøm's Dager i stillhetens historie," *Årgang* 104, no. 4 (2017): 361.
[38] Lawrence L. Langer, *Using and Abusing the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1-2.
[39] Denise Epstein, « Entretien », dans *Irène Némirovsky, Un destin en images* (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 2010), 41.
[40] Angela Kershaw, "Finding Irène Némirovsky," 60.
[41] Denise Epstein, « Si mes souvenirs sont exacts… ».
[42] Internationales Literaturfestival Reykjavik, "Denise Epstein über Ihre Mutter," June 10, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbyWAHS1Mk8

After her diligent transcription, Denise's work went back to her drawers as Élisabeth was also preparing to publish, in 1992, *Le Mirador: mémoires rêvés,* to which Denise contributed archival material and notes. Élisabeth did not want the publications to overlap.[43] It would take Olivier Corpet, Myriam Anissimov, and Oliver Rubinstein's insistences for Denise, whose youngest daughter died in 1996, to authorize the publication of *Suite française* on September 30, 2004.[44]

From both daughters' paths and processes, an essential question arises: how to recover lost mothers, childhoods, and pasts that have been torn apart? Perhaps a picture could testify to their existence. Sometimes mediums such as writing or drawing could help memory come out of oblivion. Denise and Élisabeth broke their silence and found the words to describe the indescribable through writing, as they both tried differently to recover the time where, as children, they had a mother to love.

For Denise, literature was considered with crucial importance. Indeed, it was through writing that both sisters bonded: "We became real sisters by bringing our parents back to life."[45] Considering herself as a 'transmission belt' and not a writer, Denise acknowledged that literature brought a series of "small healings which, added together, eventually brought some relief."[46] Denise proceeded her working-through by effectuating substantial and methodologic work with *Suite française*, visiting schools to discuss her past to younger generations, doing interviews, and by achieving archival work with *Le Mirador*. Her journey ended with the publication of *Suite française,* about which she said afterward, "I'm at peace."

> This beautiful adventure ends and it allowed my mother to resume her place in literature, my father not to be forgotten, my children perhaps to understand their mother better and in these difficult times to always remember that Memory is essential and that it is universal. Nobody owns it.[47]

On the other hand, Élisabeth, the younger daughter, to whom the last segment of the quote can implicitly be addressed, used fiction to bridge her forgotten past and her deceased mother. If Élisabeth first asserted herself by suppressing her mother's image, she then transferred her loss by remembering her belatedly. Élisabeth, five years old when her mother and father disappeared, could only unleash her talent as a writer and her working-through process of her past by writing her *Mémoires rêvés* of Irène, and her own, a few years after. "I knew it was a vital need for Élisabeth to go in search of a mother she did not remember," said Denise.[48] As Élisabeth combines fiction and reality in her novels, this paper emphasizes the use of fiction and art by

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[43] Olivier Philipponnat, « Chronologie de la vie d'Irène Némirovsky », dans *Irène Némirovsky, Un destin en images*, 110.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Epstein, *Survivre et vivre*, 152.
[46] Ibid., 163.
[47] Ibid., 182-183.
[48] Ibid., 154.

analyzing theories regarding generations and postmemory literature while highlighting the necessity of diversity of testimonies within the field of history.

The 1.5 – forgotten but possessed recollections

In focusing on Élisabeth's *Mémoires rêvés*, Élisabeth's difficult position concerning the notion of affect and generation needs to be underlined. Holocaust scholars often implement a set of affects on a specific generation. For Alan Spitzer, a generation explanation allows us to assume and categorize that "groups of coevals are stamped by some collective experience that permanently distinguishes them from other age groups as they move through time."[49] One should nonetheless consider this set of affects as neither exhaustive, nor always representative.

Élisabeth was five years old when she lost her parents and, hence, experienced the consequences of the Holocaust at a very young age. As a result of this premature state, the continuity between the events lived and her memories are hampered. She is a survivor, a hidden child who has been affected by the Holocaust – affected directly by the loss of her parents – and yet, also indirectly by the absence of concrete memories of this once lived experience and these once existing parents. The specificity of Élisabeth Gille is characterized by her premature experience of the Holocaust, which – when taken into account at a generational level – complicates her categorization into a specific group. As Susan R. Suleiman elaborates:

> Maybe there were no generations in the Holocaust, only individuals, each with his or her unique story. And yet, we intuitively (or just commonsensically) know that there were children there, and that those who survived shared some common experiences that may have influenced their choices and behaviors in later life.[50]

Her young age implied specific and traumatic experiences that occurred (or at least, began) before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases, before any "conscious sense of self."[51] Although young, Élisabeth did experience the Holocaust and is a survivor. However, due to her young age, she cannot recall her experiences, nor her memories, which sink more and more into a blurry limbo.

In her article, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," Susan R. Suleiman provokes new discussions by attributing the term "1.5 generation" to some survivors, emphasizing the importance of accepting the so-called "flexible" categories rather than having rigid ones.[52] Like Élisabeth,

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[49] Susan Rubin Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," *American Imago* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 279.
[50] Ibid., 284.
[51] Ibid., 277.
[52] Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," 284.

child survivors of the Holocaust were "too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have been there during the Nazi persecution of Jews."[53] Thus, unlike the second-generation, in which the most common shared experience is that of "belatedness and unknown" (as French writer Henri Raczymow's shocking statement points out: "We cannot even say that we were almost deported"),[54] the 1.5 generation's shared experience is that of "premature bewilderment and helplessness."[55]

Therefore, studying the Holocaust survivors and using a generational definition allows us to distinguish "among those who were adults during those years, those who were children or adolescents, and those who were not yet born."[56] It helps us to be more specific in studying the various affects of each generation and each group that has lived through this past, while acknowledging Élisabeth's distinct position. This understanding also allows us to delve into the use of art and fiction to depict affect and trauma.

Art – the use of literature to transcend trauma

Several decades after Theodor W. Adorno's famous line, "To make poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," arts such as poetry and literature are becoming one of many supplemental genres and institutions of transmission and representation of the past and affect, especially as survivors are becoming less and less numerous.[57] As Lawrence Langer posits, Adorno's aphorism unleashes anxiety about "the potential moral and aesthetic conflict between art and atrocity that threatens the quest for a form and style to represent the unthinkable."[58] Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld agrees with Adorno's warning but argues that the human need to "ritualize" grief and pain overrides the plea to silence implicit in Adorno's caution.[59] Holocaust art representations, which were created even during the Holocaust, thus involve a transaction between facts and imagination, between details of destruction and various techniques for facing or effacing their grotesque features.[60]

Moreover, for scholar Marianne Hirsch, fiction, art, memoir, and testimony are "shaped by the attempt to represent the long-term effects of living in close proximity to the pain, depression, and dissociation of persons who have witnessed and survived massive historical trauma."[61] The use of art can appear as a coping mechanism to manage actual emotion, where the superego - following moralistic needs - repudiates reality and

[53] Ibid., 277.
[54] Henri Raczymow, "Memory Shot Through With Holes," *Yale French Studies* 85 (1994): 104.
[55] Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," 277.
[56] *Ibid.*, 280.
[57] Theodor W. Adorno, *Essay on Cultural Criticism and Society*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT, 1983), 34.
[58] Lawrence L. Langer, *Using and Abusing the Holocaust*, 123-124.
[59] *Ibid.*, 124.
[60] See Charlotte Solomon, Pavel Fantl, Bedrich Fritta, and several other artistic works, for instance.
[61] Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 112.

serves an "illusion" of a past experience to protect the ego.[62] Thus, art shows the limitations of dealing with and representing a distinctive past, while also acting as a possible form of therapy for trauma. As the film *Unzere Kinder* highlighted: "What is the purpose of theatre, if not to provide a release for tragedy in a creative manner?"[63] The use of art for retelling and testifying about a traumatic past can then be seen as a purgation – a passage from darkness to light made more easily accessible by enabling a process of acting-out and working-through.

Intellectualized by Freud and LaCapra, the notion of acting-out, for the latter, is described as "compulsive, repetitive behavior" that reflects senses of entrapment within the past of a former state of mind. It is a tendency to relive the past, to exist in the present without any distance from it through actions such as "flashbacks, nightmares, or words compulsively repeated."[64] Acting-out tends to repeat traumatic scenes in a way that can be both destructive and necessary to transcend trauma. For LaCapra, working-through, intimately correlated to acting-out, involves relating to a traumatic past in a way that "gains critical distance" and allows the victims to be an "ethical agent."[65] It involves the capacity to distinguish between past, present, and future. While LaCapra stresses that some people might not fully transcend acting-out, the two concepts should not be implied in a binary position. LaCapra sees them as interconnected but not necessarily "sequential" Thus, while some may act out and work through simultaneously, others may proceed in turns.[66]

In his essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud observes that in order to accomplish the natural process of mourning – to grieve and then move on – one has to know what one has lost.[67] Here lies an intrinsic struggle in Élisabeth's case and for other survivors of the 1.5 generation. This past represents a residue of memory that can only be marked by its oblivion: the absence of memories of her mother, her family, and her own experiences. The use of art to enable a working-through process allows a privileged place for the literary in the narratives of child survivors, and for the artistic representation of their experiences by work on language and thought that produces "understandings of the self and the world, both on the part of the writer and on that of the readers."[68] In a way, Élisabeth's writing process enabled her to achieve this needed purgation. Although I suggest seeing Élisabeth Gille as intertwined with the 1.5 generation, it also seems relevant to address her case with theories of postmemory literature, usually attributed to the second-generation.

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[62] Sigmund Freud, "Humour," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 9, no. 1 (1927): 166.
[63] Natan Gross et al, *Unzere Kinder (Our Children)* (Waltham, Mass: National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University, 2008), https://play.library.utoronto.ca/play/0faddf2c1968360739bd08cd27a9e3b0
[64] Yad Vashem, "Acting-Out' And 'Working-Through' Trauma: Excerpt from interview with professor Dominick LaCapra," Shoah Resource Center, The International School for Holocaust Studies, June 9, 1998, https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203646.pdf
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Sigmund Freud, « Deuil et Mélancholie, Extrait de Métapsychologie », *Sociétés* 4, no. 86 (2004): 13.
[68] Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," 291.

Postmemory literature demonstrates the difficulty of undertaking the perilous mission of the duty of memory since its connection to the past is influenced by representations often based on unspoken sentiments and experiences rather than on memories, "on the invisible rather than the visible."[69] The source is then mediated not through acts of recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. This objective of transcending the impossibility of fully knowing and concretely representing the past of the Holocaust thus brings "narrative transgressions," demonstrating once again the anxieties and the crisis that the authors might experience in their efforts to face a traumatic past. The metaphor of "sewing" proposed by Erin McGlothlin demonstrates that these writings leave visible traces and that they "leave gaps between the stitches."[70]

Psychoanalyst Judith Kestenberg mentions that descendants of survivors and victims often find the need "to discover, to re-enact, or to live the parents' past."[71] For survivors, psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman emphasizes the importance of survivors in reclaiming an earlier history and life from before the traumatic event as part of the recovery process.[72] Despite the different theoretical frameworks, these two notions can effortlessly be linked to Élisabeth's *Le Mirador*, where she imagines and dreams of her mother's past, from childhood to adulthood, having no concrete memories of her. Thus, interlinked with art, we see both the "child's helplessness" and trauma, "and the adult's attempt to render that helplessness retrospectively" throughout language and postmemory literature.[73]

It should be noted that the power of postmemory literature can also be a weakness, for great difficulties can arise within the texts, provoking denial of historical accuracy and tarnishing the reconstruction of trauma and violence. Nevertheless, the index of postmemory – as opposed to memory – is a performative index, shaped more by affects, needs and desires at a time when temporal distance attenuates links to authenticity and 'truth.'[74] The aim is not to manage traumatic events but to confront them. Postmemory, as Gille's *Mémoires rêvés* aims to do, "seeks connection [and] creates where it cannot recover. It imagines where it cannot recall [and] mourns a loss that cannot be repaired."[75]

[69] Erin McGlothlin, Second-generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration (Rochester: Camden House, 2006), 11.
[70] Ibid., 12.
[71] Alan Berger and Victoria Aarons, *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History and Memory* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 58.
[72] Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence* (New York: Basic Book, 1992), 176.
[73] Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust," 292.
[74] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 124.
[75] Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," *Poetics Today* 17, no. 4 (1996): 664.

Le Mirador : Mémoires rêvés & Un paysage de cendres – literary emanation of the referent

In *Le Mirador* (The Mirador), Élisabeth Gille imagines her mother's every footfall: her childhood as the beloved daughter of one of the wealthiest Jewish bankers in Russia; her grotesque relationship with her mother; the family's exile in Finland; their new life in Paris; her marriage to Gille's father; and her last years with her children under the Occupation. The book goes into a personal and historical tragedy as an attempt to bridge more than just a temporal divide and the lacunae of Élisabeth's memories. Indeed, with Élisabeth's publication of *Le Mirador*, Denise was finally able to "share" her mother with her younger sister. Denise remarked: "it was great since I found a sister. […] We each had our suffering, no doubt different but which established a solid bond between us and which we had just discovered but so late."[76]

Privileged witness, yet partly amnesiac, Élisabeth long waited to write this recollection: "I have built a very solid wall and if I have managed to lead a relatively balanced existence, with my marriage, my children, my career as a translator and editor, it is thanks to the defenses that I have built. The price of my balance was repression."[77] For an extended period, silence accompanied Élisabeth as her position was intrinsic with the debate of telling (as a means to express past trauma) or silencing (as the failure of language to 'adequately' capture and represent her experiences and the Holocaust). This oscillation between these two actions demonstrates the survivor's difficult choice (and again, LaCapra's notion of silence as a connection to trauma) caught between words and silence and between the dangers of telling and of being silent. As scholar Raef Zreik mentions: "If silence at times appears as death, on many other occasions words and speeches appear as death," unable to convey emotions of an experience, since "words simply fail us."[78] To finally override the plea to silence by telling the unutterable was also to highlight that the events experienced during the Holocaust, albeit erased from the subconscious, can still accompany those who can no longer recover their damaged childhood.[79]

In *Le Mirador* Élisabeth had to attack various questions and assume a series of identity elements that she had partially avoided until then: Russia, Judaism, her mother's relation with Judaism, and survival.[80] Russia appeared to be the most problematic part in recounting her mother's past because Élisabeth wanted a documented, realistic biography: "The problem is that from 1903 to 1930 I had no documents on her."[81] Imagining this previous world was necessary for Élisabeth as Marianne Hirsch underlines this sense of exile

[76] Epstein, *Survivre et vivre*, 155.
[77] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 231.
[78] Raef Zreik, "Writing Silence - Reading Khoury's Novel Children of the Ghetto: My Name Is Adam," in *The Holocaust and the Nakba*, eds. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 316 & 318.
[79] Amelia Peral, « Au-delà des mères perdues », 130.
[80] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 11,
[81] Ibid.

from a world that "we have never seen and never will see, because it was irreparably changed or destroyed by the sudden violence of the Holocaust."[82]

Gille's fictional imagination was significantly fueled by this desire to know a world that her mother lived in prior to the Holocaust, a process that Herman values as reclaiming an earlier history and life before the traumatic event.[83] Reclaiming a world that Élisabeth had not experienced, she draws an allegory of origins to reach the dream country: her mother's homeland. Varying between imagination and recollecting her mother's past, Élisabeth underwent a process crucial for her, one that Hirsch also underlines in her own process: "The Czernowitz of my postmemory is an imaginary city, but that makes it no less present, no less vivid, and perhaps because of the constructed and deeply invested nature of memory itself, no less accurate."[84] By linking together memories, fictions, and facts, Élisabeth allowed herself to gather and fix her own memory holes and found comfort in imagining her mother's little-known past.

Moreover, as literature was her chosen way to confront trauma and forgotten memories, it was necessary for Élisabeth to face the problem of the Holocaust, to accept the idea of having survived her mother, but also of having passed the age at which Irène had died.[85] How does a child cope with information regarding the brutalization of its parents? What does it do with such knowledge? Writer and sociologist Anne Karpf also proposes an answer: "Perhaps it becomes another story. You mythicize it, structure it round the rhetorical devices and narrative features of the other fables you know."[86] With her first novel, Élisabeth conjures the weight of the shadow of her mother and her tragic destiny by also alluding, through literature, to her own deeply internalized struggles, which were subtly entangled and formed the potency of her trauma in the present.[87]

Le Mirador reveals Élisabeth's anxieties and trauma, I suggest, by writing her mother's story in the first person. By doing so, Élisabeth took action to re-appropriate her mother's past and appropriate her own memories. This mother, of whom she had no personal memories, had made her silent in literature by a phenomenon of involuntary intimidation beyond death. *Le Mirador* showed that what had hitherto stopped Gille's writing career and own voice was also the result of being the daughter of a prolific writer.[88] "I am not a writer," she said.[89] The quintessential writer was for her, of course, her mother. In her struggle to understand

[82] Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," 661.
[83] Returning to Herman's conception earlier mentioned; Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 176.
[84] Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," 664.
[85] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 7.
[86] Anne Karpf, *The War After: Living with the Holocaust* (London: William Heinemann, 1996), 94.
[87] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 10.
[88] Ibid., 7.
[89] Ibid.

her place in the world and by writing in the first person, Élisabeth decided to assume the challenge and push boundaries by recovering her own voice.

Indeed, chapters of the *Le Mirador* are also punctuated by italicized paragraphs that record Gille's own recollections. Hence, the use of first-person narration embodied the figure of the hitherto unknown woman, her mother, while she describes periods of her own life using third person narration.[90] The two women's voices then overlap, giving each other the floor and representing this transgression where the past not only interacts with the present but interrupts it, sometimes presenting it as a function, even a direct representation in the present. The narrative strategies Gille developed, I would finally suggest, elicit in readers a greater openness to hearing the experiences of the victim (of whom we would have perhaps otherwise forgotten) and to hearing the survivor (even when some of these memories could not be perfectly recalled, nor entirely remembered).

In 1996, after the publication of *Le Mirador*, Élisabeth wrote *Un paysage de cendres* ("Shadows of a Childhood"), a novelization of her own experience as a hidden Jewish child during the war, which won several literary prizes, including the Prix Goncourt, the Prix Renaudot, the Prix Médicis, and the Prix Fémina, and which was also crowned in 1997 by the Grand Prize for Readers of Elle. The passage from *Le Mirador* to *Un paysage de cendres* enabled her to finally transfer her voice found in her previous novel and depict her own experience, again, by using fiction.

Un paysage de cendres is striking for its ring of authenticity. The novel begins in 1942 as a member of the French Resistance brings Léa, a five-year-old girl, to a convent in Bordeaux. Traumatized by the new environment and conformity to which she has to comply, Bénédicte, a seven-year-old, provides a source of comfort for Léa, who attaches herself like a shadow. Gille, whose own personal story mirrors that of her young heroine, shows a body of literature devoted to expressing a 'shadow' of the immense pain of the Holocaust. Shortly after Léa's arrival, members of the French Milice enter the institution to ferret the Jewish girls. However, Léa's presence in the convent goes unnoticed, as she has already become one with the collective. The burning of Léa's clothing and her doll, which had been a gift from her father, represents her transformation within the collective and the erasing of her Jewishness.

The novel provides another glimpse of Élisabeth's experiences and bridges the reality of Élisabeth and her protagonist as Léa, following the Liberation, waits at the Hôtel Lutétia (the same one where Denise and Élisabeth long waited for their parents) for the return of deportees. Léa, as Élisabeth once felt, slowly becomes aware of her parents' fate and the fact that she waits in vain, for they have vanished. Léa, perhaps once like Élisabeth, is conflicted as she knows nothing about herself, nor about her origins or identity. She was "no more

[90] Amelia Peral, "Au-delà des mères perdues," 136.

than scorched earth, a landscape of ashes."[91] Moreover, Léa's struggle with the memory of her parents creates an 'invisible tragedy': "the more memories she lost, the more she invented."[92] As a result of her growing amnesia, Léa's identity is undermined as she has to accept the paradoxical fact that her parents are present mainly through their absence: "I have no father or mother. I never had any parents."[93]

As Léa is taken care of by Bénédicte's family (Élisabeth was also cared for by a family who raised her as a member of the family, with their own daughter who was the same age as her),[94] Léa seems incapable to lose her focus on the loss of her parents. She obsessively reads newspapers' accounts about the camps and the treatments, misses school to attend trials of collaborators, frequently mutilates herself, and withdraws into silence. Jacqueline, Bénédicte's mother, soon realizes that Léa was kept "artificially alive by [Bénédicte's] energy and life force."[95] Furthermore, at eighteen years old, Léa still has not menstruated, reinforcing the idea that, even physically, she remains a child.

Élisabeth conveys, with Bénédicte's accidental and sudden death, an end with a powerful depiction of ashes: "a rain of ashes, which covered her completely in a shadowy gray blanket that finally deadened all sound."[96] The end of *Un paysage de cendres* thus delivers a vivid portrayal of the consequences of the Holocaust for the children survivors in the post-Holocaust era. The end offers no sense of hope as it highlights the unimaginable and unending despairs of the protagonist. Léa, as scholar Alan L. Berger suggests, is a "perpetual rootless soul, at home nowhere […] lack[ing] family, memories, documents, a language, a culture, even an ancestral cemetery."[97] Perhaps, there was no other way for Élisabeth to end her novel about the Holocaust. Gille emphasizes that hidden children (or at least her) found no "respite" from their wounds as a fractured identity cannot be made complete.[98] Perhaps the purpose of novels such as *Le Mirador* and *Un paysage de cendres* was also to underline the need to remember both the dead and the survivors and to remind readers of the horrors of the Holocaust, both in the past and in its continuity.

Élisabeth's books were, above all, the result of a working-through process, allowing her to make peace with these remnants of memory. As LaCapra interconnected the processes of acting-out and working-through with mourning, he argues that one may never entirely transcend an attachment to a lost other or even some kind of identification with a lost other. However, one may generate "countervailing forces so that the person

[91] Élisabeth Gille, *Un paysage de cendres* (Paris : Éditions Point, 2006), 126.
[92] Ibid., 39.
[93] Ibid., 82.
[94] Epstein, *Survivre et vivre*, 106.
[95] Gille, *Un paysage de cendres*, 126.
[96] Ibid., 138.
[97] Alan L. Berger, "The Hidden Children: The Literature of Hiding," in *Jewish American and Holocaust Literature: Representation in the Postmodern World* (New York: SUNY Press, 2004), 26.
[98] Ibid.

can reengage an interest in life."[99] Élisabeth enabled this countervailing force, I argue, by retelling her fragmented and imaginative memories of her mother and by fictionalizing her own experiences of the Holocaust, its aftermath, and her losses. In 1996, Élisabeth also published *Le Crabe sur la banquette arrière* ("The Crab in the Back Seat"), a novelization of her battle with cancer, which ultimately caused her death the same year.

Conclusion

"IL M'ARRIVE TROP SOUVENT D'AVOIR PEUR POUR MES LIVRES PLUS ENCORE QUE POUR MOI-MÊME, DE LES IMAGINER DÉTRUITS, À JAMAIS EFFACÉS DE LA MÉMOIRE HUMAINE." (IRÈNE NÉMIROVSKY)[100]

Studying the epic of Irène, Denise, and Élisabeth brings the reader to a privileged proximity to their family, which emphasizes the importance of art as a medium for working through trauma and highlights (while carrying on) the rich literary heritage of Irène. This paper posits that Irène's daughters' efforts, through archival research, methodological application, and fiction, undermined Irène's biggest fear that her books would be forgotten. Perhaps one can also suggest that this process enabled both daughters to work through their affect, absence, and losses – each in their own way. Therefore, this paper suggests the potent use of art and fiction as a working-through mechanism for child survivors. Novels such as *Le Mirador* and *Un paysage de cendres* allow a window into Élisabeth's anxieties and traumatic experiences, by highlighting her affect and her peculiar position as a hidden child during the Holocaust. By using the performative index, shaped more by affects, needs, and desires at a time when temporal distance attenuates links of a past, Élisabeth's novels allow connections with her past. They create where they cannot recover and recall, which enables her – with her *Mémoires rêvés* – a countervailing force that grants her the ability to mourn.

The richness of this use, I finally argue, elicits in readers and scholars both cautiousness and a better receptiveness for adequately dealing with and representing a traumatic past while recognizing art as a medium of therapy and working through trauma for the survivors. It advocates for the diversification of testimonies to avoid the possible erasure of those that do not necessarily comply with the often narrow frameworks and *modus operandi* that some pre-established narratives can impose. Those frameworks that are involved, in severe cases, in what historian Carolyn J. Dean mentions as "phantasmatic projections about victims that only rarely engage with victims themselves."[101] It also highlights survivors' agency and how they negotiate between those cultural constraints and constructs, bringing their voices to the forefront.

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[99] Yad Vashem, "'Acting-Out' And 'Working-Through' Trauma."
[100] Gille, *Le Mirador*, 222.
[101] Carolyn J. Dean, *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 179.

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Within Sight of the Past: Refugees' Dislocation and Relocation in Soviet-Run Armenia

John Weston

John Weston studied comparative politics, sociolinguistics, and a touch of anthropology during his undergraduate at McGill University. His current research interests are how grassroots behaviours impact collective organization and societal actions, particularly in the context of large-scale change or upheaval.

While reflecting on the fateful deportations and the Genocide of ethnic Armenians during the First World War, Marc Nichanian accounts that forced conversions, massacres, and exterminations eliminating even the memory of the lost are sadly common throughout history. Cultural vandalism and archival annihilation erase lives by destroying the very records of their presence.[1] However, memory of lives lost persists among the displaced victims. The danger Nichanian notes is if survivor testimonies remain documents alone, they are read solely to reconstruct historical facts or tragedy.[2] Documents are divorced from their subjects; however, the refugees of the Armenian Genocide had much more complex experiences.

Armenian Genocide survivors did much to recount the horrors they experienced while reflecting on the need to keep alive the memory of the atrocity. Writing about one's own life is already difficult – even without witnessing horrific events; when testimonies are only "documents", they are vulnerable to being shelved in libraries and lost from collective memory.[3] Given the impossibility of capturing the multitude of Genocide refugees, each with a unique story, Nichanian recommends treating survivor testimonies as monuments with inherent independent value. Keeping in mind this emphasis on humanity, increasingly gaining credence in refugee studies as a whole, this paper will examine the stories, experiences, and testimonies of Armenian Genocide refugees living in the Soviet ruled "homeland" of Eastern Armenia, linking the experiences of survivors with the themes of loss and return, intergenerational trauma and regrowth, and memory and refugee acceptance in contemporary Post-Soviet Armenia.

The first Armenian testimony published of the Genocide was that of Haig Toroyan. Toroyan travelled down the Euphrates in 1915 as an interpreter, witnessing the concentration camps in Ottoman Mesopotamia. He and his companion took notes and photos – however, his co-witness became delirious and killed himself.

[1] Marc Nichanian and Grigor Hakobyan, "Testimony: From Document to Monument," in *The Armenian Genocide,* ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 43.
[2] Ibid., 45.
[3] Ibid., 50.

Toroyan continued to the Caucasus, where he recounted his story to an Armenian novelist, who published it under her signature.[4] The Genocide Torayan witnessed, perpetrated by the Ottoman Young Turk regime, saw 1.5 million out of approximately 2 million Ottoman Armenians, alongside smaller populations such as Assyrians, perish in horrific and intentionally sadistic circumstances.[5] Violent deportation of Armenians from the Eastern Anatolian lands they had occupied for millennia was accompanied by systematic cultural eradication. After the war, the Kemalist regime, sometimes represented by the officials who had conducted the Genocide, continued policies of erasure: defacing or destroying architecture and razing cemeteries and landmarks. Initially divided, Ottoman Armenian subjects were made into Armenians by deportation, violence, and denialism.[6]

Eastern Versus Western Armenia

Before the genocide, historic Armenia was divided between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Culturally distinct Western Armenia fell under Ottoman rule and by 20th century faced the brunt of repression, while Russia controlled the eastern territory. However, as Tsarist Russia collapsed during the Bolshevik Revolution and the Ottomans advanced, the eastern portions untouched by the Genocide found themselves briefly thrust into independence.[7] As Ottoman forces pushed into Eastern Armenia alongside refugees, survivors, and civilian losses, there were wide fears that the Ottomans would complete the Genocide on Eastern Armenian soil.[8] Armenian forces fought off the invading armies; however, key portions of formerly Russian Eastern Armenia were surrendered without resistance, a process that would repeat and result in permanent territorial loss amid isolation and invasion in 1920.[9] Today, only one-sixth of the lands regarded as historic Armenia lies within its modern boundaries.[10]

Diaspora Versus Homeland

In January 1989, the population of Soviet Armenia was 3,283,000, with a third of the populace living in the capital, Yerevan. Only 67% of Soviet Armenians lived inside Armenia, even after an influx of Armenians

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[4] Ibid., 54.
[5] Henry C. Theriault, "Rethinking Dehumanization in Genocide," in *The Armenian Genocide,* ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 28-30.
[6] Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Lost in commemoration: the Armenian genocide in memory and identity," *Patterns of Prejudice* 48, no. 2 (2014): 147-166.
[7] Mikayel Zolyan, "Between empire and independence: Armenia and the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic," *Caucasus Survey* 8, no. 1 (2020): 9-20.
[8] Ibid., 14.
[9] Ibid., 13-15.
[10] Peter Rutland, "Democracy and nationalism in Armenia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 5 (1994): 840.

from other parts of the USSR.[11] During Soviet rule, Armenia was run primarily by Armenians, with little interference after Stalin's death. Soviet Armenians moved outside the Republic, returning to Armenia later in life and promoting links with the USSR.[12] Diasporic Armenians and Armenians within Armenia have had different trajectories along political, socio-cultural, and religious lines. The decimation of much of historic Armenia split the international diaspora and homeland.[13] Diasporic Armenians speak the dialect of Western Armenian rather than Eastern Armenian, and a strong memory of loss, massacres, and victimization among the diaspora is less present in Armenia itself.[14]

The Genocide is a powerful symbol in diasporic Armenian literature and culture, including themes of bridging catastrophe and dislocation, and modern Armenia as a homeland and site of remembrance.[15] However, less focus has been put on survivors who reached Eastern Armenia. From the capital of Yerevan, on a clear day, the mountain of Ararat – a national monument located in present-day Turkey – can be seen in the distance. Mount Ararat is a dominant symbol in Soviet and diasporic imagery, unobtainable but ever-present.[16] The mountain's backdrop is recounted by Anna Astvatsaturian after fleeing from Baku to Yerevan amid pogroms against Armenians in 1989. She writes: "Up in the sky, higher than my familiar mountains, was a white, powerful and silent peak of a great mountain…. I asked Mama and Papa what the mountain that I saw was. They told me it was Ararat… the symbol of Armenia."[17]

Although the Genocide's memory is less potent in Soviet and Post-Soviet Armenia, it was not forgotten. Despite Soviet censorship, oral collective memory was transmitted among survivors' families.[18] The memorial complex of Tsiternakaberd (constructed after mass demonstrations on the Genocide's fiftieth anniversary) and Mount Ararat are constant reminders.[19] Another venue for memory is literature. Soviet literature had to follow the model of "national in form, socialist in content." After the 1930s, addressing the past was dangerous. Soviet Armenian official education placed less emphasis on history, literature, and culture, and secret police arrested refugees and raided homes and archives.[20] In Soviet Armenia, writing openly about the Genocide and lost homes and lives was challenging. Of the thousands exiled, many of them survivors, those

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 841.
[13] Razmik Panossian, "The Past as Nation: Three Dimensions of Armenian Identity," *Geopolitics* 7, no. 2 (2002): 137.
[14] Tsypylma Darieva, "Rethinking Homecoming: Diasporic Cosmopolitanism in Post-Soviet Armenia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 495.
[15] Barlow Der Mugrdechian, "Across the Chasm: From Catastrophe to Creativity," in *The Armenian Genocide,* ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 65-80.
[16] Jo Laycock, "Armenian Homelands and Homecomings, 1945–9," *Cultural and Social History* 9, no. 1 (2012): 109.
[17] Anna Astvatsaturian, *Nowhere a Story of Exile* (Lexington: hybooksonline.com, 2012), 153.
[18] Rubina Peroomian, "Historical Memory: Threading the Contemporary Literature of Armenia," in *The Armenian Genocide,* ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 98.
[19] Paul G. Pierpaoli Jr, "Armenian Genocide Memorial," in *The Armenian Genocide the Essential Reference Guide* ed. Alan Whitehorn (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO LLC, 2015), 63-64.
[20] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 101-102.

who returned after Stalin's death struggled to speak about their trauma. Some put their memories into writing, but none received permission to be published, leaving the manuscripts to be circulated underground.[21] In part because of this legacy of repression some Armenians believe referencing the Genocide is an act of masochism.[22]

Immediate Post World War One – Refugeedom, Loss, and a Safe Home

During the Armenian Genocide, an estimated 300,000 to 370,000 Ottoman Armenians fled the massacres in Anatolia to reach relative safety in Tsarist Russia.[23] Facing escape routes endangered by Russian-Ottoman battles and suffering from famine, dehydration, and infectious diseases, many refugees perished (up to a third of the 100,000 refugees fleeing from Van in the summer of 1915 did not survive).[24] By 1916 many refugees were protected by irregular units, however, exposure to violence, abuse, and genocidaires posed extreme danger as attacks on refugee convoys killed thousands.[25] Surviving refugees settled along the border, entered into Caucasian refugee camps, or self-settled in rural areas as the under-resourced camps exceeded capacity.[26] Although Ottoman Armenian refugees viewed their stay as temporary, the collapse of the Russian and Ottoman Empires, the Sovietization of the short-lived Armenian Republic, and the founding of the Republic of Turkey rendered any return impossible as prospects for independence or land return diminished amid Soviet disinterest in conflict with Turkey.[27]

Immediately after the war, independent and then Soviet-controlled Armenia had to cope with over half a million refugees with a population of just under 2 million.[28] Refugees who had not initially found their way to non-occupied Eastern Armenia also attempted to reach their kin. The Soviet Union was not eager to open its door as it went through its own post-revolutionary struggles, and Eastern Armenia struggled under the initial refugee crisis. However, mindful that denying entry would be a propaganda defeat, Soviet authorities allowed further refugee entry.[29] Although the bulk of survivors preferred to stay put or move to the burgeoning

[21] Ibid., 109.
[22] Ibid., 114.
[23] Ayşenur Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home': The ex-Ottoman Armenian Refugees and the Limits of Belonging in Soviet Armenia," *Journal of Migration History* 6, no. 1 (2020): 133.
[24] Ibid., 134.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 135.
[27] Ibid., 136.
[28] Alan Whitehorn, "Overview," in *The Armenian Genocide the Essential Reference Guide* ed. Alan Whitehorn (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO LLC, 2015), 1-4.
[29] Peter Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars: Armenia and Poland Compared," *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 4 (2007): 515.

diasporas in Western Europe or the Americas, immigration to Soviet Armenia had some appeal and large-scale programmes were developed and aimed at creating an Armenian national home.[30]

The ex-Ottoman Armenians' "new homeland" was now Soviet Armenia, a country under transformation. In 1921–1922, the Armenian Communist Party crushed anti-Bolshevik uprisings, exiling, arresting, or killing independence-oriented intellectuals and activists.[31] A complicated process of adaptation was common to all Armenian refugees in the USSR. Regardless of relief projects or policies, Soviet leadership was suspicious of refugees. Sovietisation caused resentment and alienation among some refugees, but not the whole population. Many refugee communities believed independence had failed them amid loss, disease, and starvation.[32] Nonetheless, a total transformation into Soviet citizens was required, including learning Russian and adjusting to new state-dictated norms and practices.[33]

Genocide survivors found themselves somewhat supported. Non-refugee Armenians applauded returnees as suited for post-war reconstruction due to their skills and perseverance amid trauma.[34] Soviet authorities undertook efforts to organize the population, including creating Armenian schools and newspapers for dislocated youth to prevent recruitment by anti-Soviet revolutionary forces.[35] Refugees' arrival was not painless however. Throughout the 1920s, ex-Ottoman Armenians were screened and monitored to assess the purpose of their arrival, knowledge of Russian, and any political stances.[36] Refugees also maintained a separate identity, sticking to the Western dialect, naming children and villages after their old homes, and resisting inter-marriage. Others lived near the Turkish border, waiting to return to their lost lands.[37]

Conditions were not as hostile as sometimes portrayed. Refugees could speak their own language and be among their kin.[38] Throughout the 1920s, refugees found space in Soviet Armenia, within sight of their homeland. Pro-Soviet authorities placed newspaper and radio appeals abroad and distributed propaganda films and messages, even promising the right to build private homes.[39] An Armenian in Beirut noted that refugees were extremely happy to "return home".[40] Migration scholar Peter Gatrell argues genocide refugees were not

[30] Keith David Watenpaugh, "'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920—1927," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (2010): 315-339.
[31] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 136.
[32] Ibid., 137.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars," 515.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 138.
[38] Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars," 516.
[39] Ibid., 517.
[40] Ibid.

simply responding to Soviet propaganda or difficulties faced abroad – non-political refugees sought to reconstruct a "homeland" infused with safety after disaster, trauma, and persecution.[41]

Early Soviet authorities acknowledged non-Russians. The Armenian Communist Party supported cultural and linguistic projects, promoting art exhibitions, festivals of refugee folk dances, and celebrating national epics.[42] The First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party, Aghasi Khanjyan, was an ex-Ottoman Armenian refugee and tolerated writing on the destroyed past.[43] However, this tolerance abruptly ended with Stalin's terror, marking a new phase for Soviet Armenia. 1937 was among the bloodiest times in Soviet history; under coercion and fear, people informed on neighbours and family members, with few escaping the effects.[44] In Armenia, the crackdown began when Khanjyan was allegedly shot by Lavrentiy Beria, future head of the NKVD; a year later, other Communist Armenian politicians were executed.[45]

From the 1930s to the mid-1950s, 42,000 Soviet Armenians were purged, imprisoned, executed, or sent to labour camps. In 1936–1938 alone, 8,837 were arrested, half of whom were sentenced to death. No exact figures exist as to how many were ex-Ottoman refugees, but estimates are that they made up most of the victims. Stalinists attacked refugees for writing about their experiences or expressing nostalgia for their homeland.[46] Writers tried self-censorship or erasing elements of their literary history; however, these efforts were generally futile. Branded enemies of the state, many were incarcerated, killed or deported to Siberia.[47] New displacements and victimization shaped refugees' integration process into their new "homeland", contributed to the strengthening of feelings of nostalgia, and hampered efforts to take root in Armenia.[48]

Repatriation in the 1940s – Return, Regrowth, and Rejection

After World War Two, resettled refugees were again joined by returnees. Between 1946 and 1949, more than 100,000 Armenians left their homes in the Middle East, Greece, the Balkans, France, and the United States to resettle in Soviet Armenia – 10 percent of the worldwide total.[49] Much like the 1920s, they initially received a warm welcome. However, visions of national renewal faded as newcomers were accused of failing to work "patriotically" and repatriates expressed disappointment with reconstruction.[50] Stalin had intended to

[41] Ibid., 518.
[42] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 129-150, 139.
[43] Ibid., 139.
[44] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 101.
[45] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 144.
[46] Ibid., 144-145.
[47] Ibid., 145.
[48] Ibid., 150.
[49] Eviya H. Hovhannisyan, "'Exorcism of cultural otherness' Refugee women in post-Soviet Armenia," in *Security, Society and the State in the Caucasus* eds. Derek Averre and Kevork Oskanian (London: Routledge, 2018), 172.
[50] Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars," 518.

repopulate the regions taken by Turkey in the 1920s (a formal claim was made in 1949[51] but then dropped as Turkey became a key western ally).[52] In the late 1940s authorities began arresting repatriated refugees who complained about their living conditions.[53] Due to the difficult circumstances, many repatriates, particularly those from the West, left Soviet Armenia in the 1970s.[54]

Nonetheless, many refugee repatriates found solace in Soviet Armenia. One refugee described how he could see Mount Ararat on one side of his home and Yerevan on the other, evoking a powerful sense of homecoming.[55] As the alleged resting place of Noah's Ark, Mount Ararat is imbued with significance for Armenians. The repatriation campaign was characterized as a return to "the sight of glorious Ararat" with some repatriates declaring the mountain to be important in their decision.[56] Yerevan as a symbol was less entrenched. Once a provincial outpost of the Russian empire, the First World War led to its transformation; however, conditions deteriorated as Yerevan filled with the displaced and refugees.[57] Although Yerevan came to represent socialist transformation, for decades, poverty and housing shortages were the reality in the strained city with little infrastructure and resources.[58]

Post Second World War repatriation was a rare case of migration across a normally impenetrable border. Although the "return" of Armenians between 1946 and 1949 is described as repatriation, most were refugees.[59] In order to portray the campaign as humanitarian, Soviet authorities used language contrasting Armenians' mass expulsion from Anatolia with their return to the Soviet "homeland".[60] Alongside ideology, repatriation propaganda addressed material hardships. Living conditions among diaspora communities, particularly in the Middle East and Greece, were difficult, especially after the Second World War.[61] Approximately 20 percent of repatriates arrived from Greece. Even more (37 percent) came from Syria or Lebanon, where refugees' prospects were limited by social and political upheaval.[62]

Letters from repatriates reported a new-found sense of belonging, of being wanted among kin rather than treated as foreigners.[63] The Genocide's aftermath spread friends and families across the globe. Repatriation offered a rare chance of reunification. For some, this desire was stronger than any political motivation, even if

[51] Darieva, "Rethinking Homecoming," 496.
[52] Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars," 517.
[53] Ibid., 519.
[54] Darieva, "Rethinking Homecoming," 496.
[55] Laycock, "Armenian Homelands and Homecomings," 103.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 104.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 106.
[60] Ibid, 111.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 113.
[63] Ibid.

it overlooked linguistic differences and the effects of Soviet rule.[64] However, on arrival in Soviet Armenia, repatriates faced difficult conditions. Although they acknowledged sacrifice, hardship, and suffering would be integral to homecoming, they were particularly vulnerable to internal deportation on charges of anti-Soviet sentiment.[65] Moreover, Armenia's long-standing housing crisis was exacerbated by the war. Many refugee repatriates found themselves on Yerevan's outskirts, lacking basic facilities or transportation.[66] Repatriates again named settlements after destroyed towns in Anatolia, but the environment encountered was not the romanticized or advertised notions of Yerevan or Ararat.[67]

As Jo Laycock recounts, rather than commonalities, differences between refugee repatriates and Soviet Armenians came to the fore exaggerated by the repression of post-war Soviet society. As one writer wrote: "We were all, and all of the time, under strict surveillance... Even closest friends started to avoid each other. The natives feared to befriend us, and we felt more alienated in our homeland than in the countries we came from."[68] Some repatriates forged relationships with their Armenian neighbours. However, many did not feel at home, causing them to rethink their sense of belonging.[69] For the Soviets, repatriation was not just about a reunion, it provided needed manpower and resources while easing genocide-era refugees' plight in Greece and the Middle East. Repatriation's failure is often viewed as a betrayal by the Soviet Union and remains sensitive.[70] Nonetheless, the USSR supported controlled repatriation and provided a certain security that even non-communist Armenians acknowledged.[71]

Remembrance: The Continual Impact of Refugee Memory Amid Repression

Historical consensus is that Armenian memory was forcibly paused with Sovietization.[72] However, various reviews have shown the reality was more complex. Soviet nationalities policies fluctuated over time. On April 24th, 1965, the Genocide's fiftieth anniversary saw unprecedented protests lead to the construction of Yerevan's Genocide memorial, suggesting that policies were not all-encompassing.[73] Outside of Stalin's era, censorship was more lenient towards refugee literature and stories. Mourning, demanding justice, and pledging to bring home occupied lands and Ararat was tolerated within limits.[74] Works written in Armenian, by Soviet

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 115.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 116.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 117.
[71] Gatrell, "Displacing and Re-Placing Population in the Two World Wars," 519.
[72] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 97.
[73] Jo Laycock, "Beyond National Narratives? Centenary Histories, the First World War and the Armenian Genocide Armenian Genocide," *Revolutionary Russia* 28, no. 2 (2015): 96.
[74] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 106.

Armenians, lend insight into these times as they are not meant as raw testimony for the "other", but instead provide monuments to refugee struggles and remembrance in Armenia.[75]

Although refugees of the genocide achieved a sense of "home" in Soviet Armenia, they maintained feelings of attachment and symbolic loss to the local "homes" where their roots were located.[76] A range of literary and cultural works were produced by genocide refugees and their children, mainly published and circulated in Yerevan between the 1920s and 1980s.[77] In early Soviet Armenian literature, pre-Genocide everyday life was depicted with yearning alongside the violence and uprooting to Eastern Armenia.[78] Songs and poems by refugees expressed grief over the displacement and non-return. The 1930s folk song, 'Let's Go My Son' (*Kele Lao*), elicits a reaction to the flight and expulsion and a fervent desire to return.[79]

As Ayşenur Korkmaz recounts, this memory even persisted among those loyal to Bolshevism. Gurgen Mahari (1903–1969) was born in Van and lost his mother, sister and grandmother en-route to the Caucasus. During his teenage years, Mahari became an advocate of Soviet socialism.[80] Despite his Bolshevik loyalties, Mahari reflected on his childhood with grief. Regarding his mute sister fleeing, Mahari wrote: "You had black eyes and were tall. You came to the world and had a right to live, to love, and to be loved. But on a sunny morning, your life turned into a terrifying night. Your brother is still living… He wished you would also reach the sunny days."[81] His loyalty would not spare him; between 1936–1938, Mahari, alongside other refugee writers, intellectuals, and politicians fell victim to the Stalinist terror.[82]

After Stalin's death, nostalgic accounts and genocide mourning bloomed as the 1915-1916 Genocide and the purges of 1936–1938 enmeshed into one tragedy.[83] Although mysterious deaths throughout the 1970s were suspected as persecution, between the 1960s and 1980s novels, short stories, and poems appeared recounting violence and expulsion.[84] Korkmaz summarizes Hrachya Kochar's novel *Karot* as encapsulating this merger. The protagonist of the novel, living in a small village on the Turkish border, carries fear that his homeland has become barren in the Armenians' absence. Part of his daily routine is gazing at the mountains across the river border, lamenting how his homeland "was distant and unreachable, yet standing before his eyes."[85] Despite the danger, the protagonist swims across the river, visiting his parents' graves, and the

[75] Nichanian and Hakobyan, "Testimony," 41-62.
[76] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 130-131.
[77] Ibid., 133.
[78] Ibid., 140.
[79] Ibid., 139.
[80] Ibid., 141-142.
[81] Ibid., 143.
[82] Ibid., 143-144.
[83] Ibid., 150.
[84] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 97-119.
[85] Korkmaz, "At 'Home' Away from 'Home'," 148.

mountains, valleys, and monasteries of his youth. Pursued by the Kemalist state, he returns to Soviet Armenia, where a sympathetic border guard lets him go free.[86]

Korkmaz also describes how Vasily Grossmann, the Jewish dissident writer, writes in 'An Armenian Sketchbook' (1965), about a wedding he attended in a small village. On a happy day the refugees were mournful, describing their nostalgia and the persecutions they had endured. In Grossman's description: "the married couple kissed and wept for the incalculable loss and suffering… they could not weep for their relatives who had perished and no joy could make them forget their grief for their homeland on the other side of Mount Ararat."[87] These refugees, including politicians, writers, and professors, left their impact on Soviet Armenia. Folk dances originating from Sasun, were popularised in 1935 and *Kele Lao*, the refugee folk-song, is still performed at get-togethers, wedding ceremonies, and celebrations today.[88]

Continued Echoes of the Past on the Present

The tragedy of the Armenian Genocide and its impact, even though repression, has a clear presence. Jack Danielian posits that trauma is contagious, marking all who encounter it and it often creates a balance between memory and forgetting that traumatologists refer to as the "conspiracy of silence".[89] Given silence, trauma transmits to subsequent generations through family and societal influences.[90] Such themes feature in Diasporic creative coverage of the Genocide – for instance, the French-Canadian film *Ararat* plays heavily on intergenerational trauma and denialism manifesting in the personal lives of the affected.[91] Empirically illustrating this trauma is a 2007 study among Armenian Genocide refugee descendants living in Greece and Cyprus testing for PTSD symptoms. 35.7% of respondents reported symptoms, with most expressing they were permanently active. Although the second generation was most affected, over a third of third-generation survivors and one-fifth of fourth-generation survivors, those under 30 in 2007, exhibited clinical symptoms linked to the Genocide.[92]

Spectres of loss and displacement have brought refugeedom in Armenia to the forefront in different ways over recent years. Many today associate post-Soviet Armenia with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 149.
[88] Ibid., 139.
[89] Jack Danielian, "A Century of Silence: Terror and the Armenian Genocide," *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis,* 70, no. 3 (2010): 246.
[90] Selina L. Mangassarian, "100 Years of Trauma: the Armenian Genocide and Intergenerational Cultural Trauma," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 25, no. 4 (2016): 375.
[91] *Ararat*, directed by Atom Egoyan (Miramax Films, 2002).
[92] Hatsantour Karenian, Livaditis Miltos, Sirpouhi Karenian, Kyriakos Zafiriadis, Valentini Bochtsou, and Kiriakos Xenitidis, "Collective Trauma Transmission and Traumatic Reactions Among Descendants of Armenian Refugees," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 57, no. 4 (2011): 327–37.

however, many Armenians view the issue as a matter of self-determination on the claim that the region was given to Azerbaijan by Stalin to placate Turkey.[93] Ethnic massacres against Armenians in Sumgait, Baku, and Ganja in Azerbaijan echoed the past, and by the mid-1990s, some described the Azeri president as "the new leader of genocide".[94] Armenian demands for Karabakh are woven into this discourse, highlighting the threat of "another genocide" if defense is not put up against Azerbaijan and Turkey.[95] Azeri civilians have suffered greatly in the conflict as well, however active genocide denial by Azeri officials has not helped as erasure, loss of life, and ties to land re-activate old and painful parallels.[96]

Similar patterns of memory and displacement arose in accommodating the conflict's refugees. As has been true through Armenia's history of accommodation, in the 1990s, the country faced unemployment and deteriorating living conditions, with more than half of the population living below the poverty line and many desiring to emigrate.[97] As with repatriates, different cultural standards furthered divides, especially in rural areas dominated by traditional mores.[98] Although the situation stabilized through the 2000s, resettlement tensions alongside emotive links to the past show historic patterns and memory are alive, especially as the conflict re-erupts with Turkey's direct participation alongside Azeri forces.

A secondary case exhibiting the ongoing legacy of the Genocide, is Armenia's acceptance of Syrian-Armenian refugees. In contrast to Azeri-Armenians and paralleling the initial refugees of the 1920s, Syrian-Armenians received a warm welcome. Many Syrian-Armenians grew up with Armenian culture and language and feel that Armenia is a homeland they would remain in if possible.[99] In return, partially because Syrian-Armenians are seen as the grandchildren of Genocide deportees, in 2012, the Armenian government allowed citizenship applications in consulates and voided the need for residency permits for those of Armenian origin taking refuge from violence.[100] Hundreds of families have been matched with hosts offering support and help integrating into post-Soviet life. Refugees have access to citizenship, free public services, counselling, and an encompassing range of social welfare support.[101]

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[93] Rutland, "Democracy and nationalism in Armenia," 845.
[94] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 97-119.
[95] Panossian, "The Past as Nation," 139.
[96] Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 78-79.
[97] Liesl A. Riddle and Cynthia Buckley, "Forced Migration and Destination Choice: Armenian Forced Settlers and Refugees in the Russian Federation," *International Migration* 36, no. 2 (1988): 235-255.
[98] Hovhannisyan, "'Exorcism of cultural otherness'," 174-175.
[99] Rebecca L. Thomas, Grace Felten, Lisa Yagaloff, and Marine Yarmaloyan, "Returning Home: The Experiences of Resettlement for Syrian-Armenian Refugees into Armenia," *International Migration & Integration* 21 (2020): 471.
[100] Georgia Călin-Ştefan, "The Integration of Syrian-Armenians in the Republic of Armenia: A Case Study," *Romanian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 2 (2014): 62.
[101] Tigran Yepremyan, "Armenian Migration from War-torn Syria to Europe: From Diaspora to Diaspora or Homeland?" *Eurolimes* 23/24 (2018): 198-199.

This is not to say, that the process is seamless. Citizen refugees are not legally refugees, despite having the same needs.[102] As with genocide survivors, an element of "suffering" remains despite no longer living in an active war zone[103]; including the loss of home and security, language barriers, the destruction of records, and Armenia's age-old dilemma of housing and employment amid challenging economics.[104] When asked if they feel their situation is similar to the past, some refugees referenced fear of massacres as motivating their flight; for others, the conflicts' different natures justified not leaving sooner.[105]

Viewing Armenian history as an endangered identity has masked complexities by presenting Armenians as victims rather than agents with inherent value.[106] The legacies of Genocide, refugeedom, and survivordom are not the only facets of post-Soviet Armenia. Independence and the Karabakh conflict play large roles in post-Soviet identity alongside linguistic identifiers, the notion of Armenia as the first Christian nation, and fringe elements of racial-nationalist ideology.[107] Nonetheless, Genocide refugee memory has left its monuments. Davit Muradyan, a contemporary Post-Soviet writer, pictures his protagonist reminiscing of survivors speaking with pain and yearning: "You cannot evoke these nights by simply depicting them… You have to be seated on your father's lap, devour these stories, and catch the gleam and the sadness in the eyes of these men."[108] These stories and the continued influence of refugeedom in Armenia today are not just pieces of evidence. Instead, they show the richness of refugees' experience under extreme adversity, perseverance and accommodation amid tragedy, and the human ability to express, rebuild, and revere despite trauma and repression, even while within sight of the past.

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[102] Călin-Ştefan, "The Integration of Syrian-Armenians in the Republic of Armenia," 61.
[103] Thomas et. al, "Returning Home," 470.
[104] Yepremyan, "Armenian Migration from War-torn Syria to Europe," 191-205.
[105] Anoush Baghdassarian and Lauren Broidy, "Documenting 100 Years of Displacement Among Syrian-Armenians: An Interview with Anoush Baghdassarian Conducted by Lauren Broidy," *Review of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 341.
[106] Laycock, "Beyond National Narratives?" 96.
[107] Panossian, "The Past as Nation," 121–46.
[108] Peroomian, "Historical Memory," 98.

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Autocratic Legalism in Hungary During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Eroding Rule of Law at Home and Abroad

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Introduction

Although Hungary was among the strongest examples of successful post-Soviet recovery during their transition in the 1990s, their growing shift towards illiberal constitutionalism began in 2010 when the Fidesz party gained a constitutional supermajority in Parliament, and has since been reelected in 2014 and 2018.[1] Prime Minister Viktor Orban immediately began to formally alter the Hungarian Constitution through a series of constitutional changes and amendments by capitalizing on his two-thirds supermajority in Parliament.

In early 2020, the COVID-19 virus spread quickly and became a global pandemic. While countries scrambled to adjust to the new reality, the rule of law crisis in Hungary worsened exponentially during this time.

My research question is: how has Orban's government used the pandemic as an opportunity to unconstitutionally expand its powers both domestically and in the European Union (EU)?

This paper is threefold: in Part I, I begin by illustrating the degradation of rule of law in Hungary since 2010 and Hungary's trend towards illiberal constitutionalism. In Part II, I cite Hungarian government responses to the pandemic to argue that they were unconstitutional expansions of power. Finally, in Part III, I focus on how Orban and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki blocked the EU's €1.8tn deal, including a multiannual financial framework (MFF) and a COVID-19 recovery fund, to highlight how Orban's government has taken advantage of developments of the pandemic to further mock rule of law in the EU forum.

I argue that Orban's government has taken advantage of the pandemic to opportunistically expand its government powers domestically and to undermine the EU's attempts to preserve rule of law.

[1] Ádám, Zoltán. "What Happened Hungary? Political institutions and political economy dynamics before and after the 2010 authoritarian populist turn." *Minda de Gunzburg Open Forum Paper Series* - Working Paper 41 (2020): 1.

I - Rule of Law Crisis in Hungary Since 2010

Autocratic Legalism and Illiberal Constitutionalism

In her seminal article, Kim Lane Scheppele defined "autocratic legalism" as the phenomenon when political leaders are voted in by democratic election and then proceed to "use their electoral mandates to [legally] dismantle the constitutional systems they inherited"[2] in order to extend their powers indefinitely. She underscores that the process of autocratic legalism includes the regimes "masquerading as democracy"[3] while capitalizing on their electoral mandate to launch illiberal constitutionalist legal changes. Tímea Drinóczi and Agnieszka Bień-Kacała define "illiberal constitutionalism" as a stage of democratic backsliding situated along the spectrum from liberal constitutionalism to outright authoritarianism.[4]

Rule of Law Crisis in Hungary

Since their electoral victory in 2010, the Fidesz party immediately initiated institutional changes in the Hungarian judiciary, capitalizing on loopholes in the Hungarian Constitution and electoral system to create a "laboratory of illiberal governance."[5] Since Fidesz won a supermajority in Parliament, they could take advantage of their two-thirds majority to legally issue new legislative reform in accordance with the Constitution.[6] After making 12 amendments to the existing 1949 Constitution at the time, they passed an entirely new one known as the Fundamental Law (FL) in April 2011, which entered into effect in January 2012.[7] Since then, they have added 800 new bills and amendments. The most severe of Fidesz's constitutional amendments upon judicial independence in Hungary include: the amendment to change the hiring process for Constitutional Court justices and President of the Constitutional Court,[8] the court-packing increase of Constitutional Court judges from 11 to 15 (with extended terms which authorized Fidesz to select over half of the judges),[9] and the Fourth Amendment which "repealed [all Constitutional Court decisions] made prior to

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[2]Kim Lane Scheppele. "Autocratic Legalism." *The University of Chicago Law Review* 85, no. 2 (2018): 545.
[3] Scheppele, "Autocratic Legalism," 547.
[4] They argue that illiberal constitutionalism involves the loosening of liberal constitutionalist elements by "relativiz[ing] the rule of law, democracy, and human rights in politically sensitive cases; constitutionaliz[ing] populist nationalism; and tak[ing] advantage of identity politics, new patrimonialism, clientelism, and state-controlled corruption." (1141) For more, see Drinóczi, Tímea and Agnieszka Bień-Kacała. "Illiberal Constitutionalism: The Case of Hungary and Poland." *German Law Journal* 20 (2019): 1141.
[5]Péter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): 39-51.
[6] Article 7(2) of Hungarian Constitution 1949.
[7] Venice Commission, , Opinion No. 621/2011 (June 20, 2011) https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2011)016-e.
[8] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "Illiberal Constitutionalism," 1146.
[9] David Kosar, and Katarina Sipulova. "The Strasbourg Court Meets Abusive Constitutionalism: Baka v. Hungary and the Rule of Law." *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 10 (2018): 87.

[the Fundamental Law],"[10] thereby erasing all legal precedent. Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała highlight that although these constitutional amendments are technically legal, their content substantially contravenes the spirit of the rule of law.[11] As Scheppele notes, legally removing Constitutional Court authority over the executive is one of the key indicators of autocratic legalism.[12]

Along with attacking the judicial independence of the Constitutional Court, the Fidesz party has also gone after the ordinary judiciary by reducing the compulsory retirement age for judges (Act CLXII/2011), which forced many judges into retirement to create space for Fidesz-approved judges.[13] They also established the National Judicial Office and National Judicial Councils that both inhibit judicial independence, and the Seventh Amendment which introduced an entirely new and separate public administrative judicial system, potentially with "'judges [who possess] neither legal training nor job security…walling off administrative action from serious judicial scrutiny."[14] Outside of the judiciary, Orban's government has also issued legal reform to minimize accountability of various government bodies, limit freedom of the press, and restrict civil society organizations.[15]

II - Hungary During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Fundamental Law stipulates the "special legal order" procedures for six types of state emergencies: (1) "state of national crisis," (2) "state of emergency," (3) "state of preventative defense," (4) "state of terrorist threat," (5) "unexpected attack," and (6) "state of danger."[16] On 11 March 2020, the Ministry of Justice declared a nation-wide state of danger in response to the pandemic.[17] Under Article 53 FL, the state of danger granted the government emergency powers for a 15-day period.[18] However, on 30 March, the government bypassed the time limit and extended emergency powers by passing the Coronavirus Act.[19]

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[10] Point 5 of Closing and Miscellaneous Provisions in Fundamental Law of Hungary (FL).
[11] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "Illiberal Constitutionalism," 1156.
[12] Scheppele, "Autocratic Legalism," 549.
[13]Kriszta Kovács and Kim Lane Scheppele. "The Fragility of an Independent Judiciary: Lessons from Hungary and Poland–and the European Union." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 3 (September 1, 2018): 191-193.
[14] Kovács and Scheppele, "The Fragility of an Independent Judiciary," 191-193.
[15] Digdem Soyaltin-Colella. "The EU's 'actions-without-sanctions'? The politics of the rule of law crisis in many Europes." *European Politics and Society* (2020): 4-5.
[16] Articles 48-54, "Special Legal Order," FL.
[17] Hungarian Ministry of Justice. March 11, 2020. 2640/2020. (III.11) Korm.rend. a veszélyhelyzet kihirdetéséről [Government Decree 40/2020 on the declaration of state of danger], http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0040K_20200311_FIN.pdf.
[18] Article 53(3), "State of Danger," FL.
[19]Csaba Győry. "Hungary's Response to COVID-19 Vastly Expands Executive Power." *Bill of Health*, June 9, 2020. https://blog.petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2020/06/09/hungary-global-responses-covid19/.

Special Legal Order: State of Danger (March)

Scholars have debated the appropriateness of the "state of danger" special legal order in March. Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała state that while Article 53 of the FL stipulates that the "state of danger" is to be declared "in the event of a natural disaster or industrial accident endangering life and property, or in order to mitigate its consequences,"[20] and does not specify a pandemic, this is not uncommon.[21] They posit that while the state of danger seemed "de facto unfit," it was nonetheless "de jure"[22] the best option, given the scope of the pandemic. Halmai and Scheppele counter that every preventative measure the government has enacted since March could have been done without the emergency and simply with Act CXXVIII of 2011 on Emergency Management and Act CLIV of 1997 on Health.[23] Further, Tordai argues that while activation of Article 53 was an "unconstitutional expansion of FL definitions," the "regulatory depth"[24] of the Constitution should be revisited. In agreement with Scheppele and Halmai, I insist that the activation of Article 53 unconstitutionally expands government powers especially since Article 53(2) gives Fidesz the power to "suspend the application of certain Acts, derogate from the provisions of Acts and take other extraordinary measures."[25] The "state of danger" granted Orban's government the power to suspend any law, which severely eroded rule of law, and as Scheppele and Halmai noted, was a completely unnecessary measure for the pandemic.

The Fidesz government using a crisis to declare emergency powers is not without precedent. In 2016, they cited Article 15(1), "[The Government] shall exercise all the functions and powers which are not expressly conferred by the Fundamental Law or the law on another organ,"[26] to declare a "state of crisis due to mass migration."[27] Since 2016, the Fidesz government has continued to renew the crisis. They renewed it for the eighth time on 6 March 2020.[28]

[20] Article 53(1), "State of Danger," FL.

[21] In fact, only the Estonian Constitution specifically mentions a pandemic. See Drinóczi, Tímea and Agnieszka Bień-Kacała. "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland: Extraordinary situation and illiberal constitutionalism." *The Theory and Practice of Legislation* 8, no.1-2 (2020): 178-179, 179n27.

[22] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland," 179.

[23]Gábor Halmai, and Kim Lane Scheppele. "Orbán is Still the Sole Judge of his Own Law." *Verfassungsblog*, April 1, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/orban-is-still-the-sole-judge-of-his-own-law/; Halmai, Gábor, and Kim Lane Scheppele. "Don't Be Fooled by Autocrats! Why Hungary's Emergency Violates Rule of Law." *Verfassungsblog*, April 22, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/dont-be-fooled-by-autocrats/.

[24] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland," 179-180.

[25] Article 53(2), "State of Danger," FL.

[26] Article 15(1), "The Government," FL.

[27] Kriszta Kovács, "Hungary's Orbanistan: A Complete Arsenal of Emergency Powers." *Verfassungsblog*, April 6, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/hungarys-orbanistan-a-complete-arsenal-of-emergency-powers/.

[28] Edit Inotai. "Pandemic-Hit Hungary Harps On About 'Migrant Crisis.'" *BalkanInsight*, March 19, 2020. https://balkaninsight.com/2020/03/19/pandemic-hit-hungary-harps-on-about-migrant-crisis/.

Coronavirus Act

Yet regardless of the debate surrounding the constitutionality of the states of danger and emergency, there is a scholarly consensus that the Coronavirus Act enacted three weeks later was definitely unconstitutional. First, Section 3 of the Coronavirus Act grants parliamentary pre-approval for future government decrees, thus removing "parliamentary oversight."[29] Second, it contravened the 15-day rule in the FL by "granting authorisation to the Government to extend the applicability of its decrees adopted during the period of state of danger"[30] beyond the 15 days. Third, Section 337 of the Act criminalizes the spread of "any untrue fact or any misrepresented true fact"[31] as a felony punishable by up to eight years, which though primarily addresses disinformation, Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała warn could bode dangerous potential against journalists and academia.[32] By 27 April, 74 people were charged for spreading untrue facts, out of a total 281 for pandemic-related crimes.[33] In response, over 100,000 Hungarian citizens signed a protest against the expedited Coronavirus Act and held the first online demonstration in Hungary.[34]

During the March-June state of emergency, the government issued 146 decrees (nearly 18 per week),[35] without "any formal consultation process…drafted in one or two days, and [without any] explanatory memoranda."[36]

While many of the decrees were to mitigate spread of the virus, for the purposes of this paper I will highlight several suspicious decrees that serve to weaken opposition parties and restrict fundamental rights wholly unrelated to the virus. For instance, decrees have reassigned control of opposition party annual budgets from municipal authorities to Fidesz party loyalists.[37] Decree 46/2020 gave the Minister of Innovation and Technology full access to the private data of any Hungarian "for the purpose of modelling and analysing the spread of the epidemic."[38] Decree 47/2020 allowed employers to "depart from the provisions of the [Labour

[29] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland," 180. See also Section 3 of Act XII of 2020 on the Containment of Coronavirus [Coronavirus Act], https://perma.cc/9LMR-YS3L.
[30] Coronavirus Act.
[31] Section 337(1) of Coronavirus Act.
[32] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland," 185.
[33] Halmai and Scheppele, "Orbán is Still the Sole Judge of his Own Law."
[34] Iana Fremer, "Hungary: National Assembly Adopts Act Giving Government Special Powers during Coronavirus Pandemic." *Library of Congress*, May 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/hungary-national-assembly-adopts-act-giving-government-special-powers-during-coronavirus-pandemic/.
[35] Csaba Győry and Nyasha Weinberg. "Emergency powers in a hybrid regime: the case of Hungary." *The Theory and Practice of Legislation* 8, no. 3 (2020): 341.
[36] Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała, "COVID-19 in Hungary and Poland," 185.
[37] Valerie Hopkins. "Orban's Emergency Powers Hit Opposition Funding." *Financial Times*, April 23, 2020. https://www.ft.com/content/5ba8a724-871c-480e-930d-ed9b0469cafe.
[38] Section 10(1) of Government Decree 46/2020 on the measures to be taken during the state of danger declared for the prevention of the human epidemic endangering life and property and causing massive disease outbreaks, for the elimination of its consequences, and for the protection of the health and lives of Hungarian citizens (III), http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0046K_20200410_FIN.pdf.

Code],"[39] removing employee protections during a pandemic. Decree 128/2020 enacted a significant company leadership change in publicly traded Kartonpack, bringing it under state control.[40] Decree 74/2020 dictated the operation of ordinary courts during a "state of danger," including many loopholes for cases to be suspended, or as Scheppele and Halmai argue, even "delayed indefinitely."[41]

With the Coronavirus Act, Orban's government expanded its own powers with Parliament as the only check on their authority: Parliament can "withdraw authorization"[42] of the decrees at any point. Of course, Fidesz controls two-thirds of Parliament. The feedback loop of power renders the check on Orban's government ineffective and decorative.

Even if Parliament applied Section 3 of the Coronavirus Act to withdraw authorization for the extension of emergency decrees, Orban's government could simply override that effort by applying Section 2 to reissue an emergency decree. Further, Section 2 is a cardinal law, while Section 3 is only ordinary.[43] There are two kinds of laws issued by Parliament: cardinal and ordinary. Cardinal laws require a two-thirds majority to be issued or amended, while ordinary laws only require a majority.[44] This means Parliament would need a two-thirds majority in order to change Section 2 to remove the Fidesz government's ability to reissue or extend emergency decrees.[45]

State of Medical Emergency

After significant criticism from the EU, Orban finally ended the state of emergency on 17 June.[46] However, by no means did this end the unconstitutional abuse of power in Hungary. In May, Orban's government had passed two draft laws that further expanded his powers with even less parliamentary supervision: Bill T/10747 on Terminating the State of Danger (hereafter: Termination Bill), and Bill T/10748 on the Transitional Provisions related to the Termination of the State of Danger (hereafter: Transitional Bill). According to a joint statement from the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, and Amnesty International Hungary, the Transitional Bill effectively established a "state of medical emergency,"

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[39] Section 6 of Government Decree 47/2020 on immediate measures necessary for alleviating the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on national economy, http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0047K_20200507_FIN.pdf.
[40] European Commission. "Commission Staff Working Document. 2020 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Hungary." September 30, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/hu_rol_country_chapter.pdf 18n136.
[41] Halmai and Scheppele. "Don't Be Fooled by Autocrats!"
[42] Section 3(2) of Coronavirus Act.
[43] Section 9 of Coronavirus Act.
[44] Halmai and Scheppele, "Orbán is Still the Sole Judge of his Own Law."
[45] Ibid.
[46] Act LVII of 2020 Terminating the State of Danger, http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020T0057P_20200618_FIN.pdf; Hungarian Ministry of Justice. June 17, 2020. Government Decree 282/2020 Terminating the state of danger declared on 11 March 2020, http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0282K_20200618_FIN.pdf; Halmai, Gábor, Mészáros, Gábor; Scheppele, Kim Lane: "So It Goes – Part I." *Verfassungsblog,* November 19, 2020, https://verfassungsblog.de/so-it-goes-part-i/.

as a "little sister" to the [State of Danger] special legal order."[47] Since the state of medical emergency is an amendment to the Health Act and outside the regulatory scope of the Fundamental Law, emergency decrees during this state are "entirely up to the government's discretion."[48] Moreover, restrictions and decrees issued during the new state of medical emergency are effective for six months and open to potential extension thereafter. In sum, on 17 June, Orban's government both ended the state of emergency and activated a new state of medical emergency effective for at least six months.[49]

Special Legal Order: State of Danger II (November)

On 3 November 2020, the Hungarian government declared a state of danger once again.[50] On 10 November, it was confirmed by Parliament and officially entered force on 11 November.[51]

The Fundamental Law stipulates that government decrees issued during a state of danger remain effective for 15 days unless Parliament specifically authorizes the extension of those decrees.[52] However, the Second Wave Coronavirus Act gives Orban's government power to issue decrees for 90 days without needing renewed authorization from Parliament.[53] Critics have pointed out the egregiously unconstitutional nature of this "blank cheque… without parliamentary oversight"[54] whatsoever.

This is not to deny that some decrees make sense in an effort to mitigate spread of the virus. For instance, Decree 484/2020 (XI. 10) includes a curfew, banning assemblies, closing restaurants (take-out only), virtual university classes, mask mandate, and other valid protective measures.[55]

However, unlike other countries, on 10 November, the government issued Decree 484/2020 which authorized the use of Hungarian Defence Forces to support the police in "carry[ing] out general policing tasks,"[56] which has been characterized as an entirely unnecessary measure. Hungary now has fully armed counter-terrorist (TEK *Terrorelhárítási Központ*) units patrolling the streets, which elicited criticism from

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[47] "Never-Ending Story? Rapid analysis of the Bills T/10747 and T/10748." *The Hungarian Helsinki Committee*, May 27, 2020. https://www.helsinki.hu/en/never-ending-story/.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Halmai, Mészáros, and Scheppele, "So It Goes – Part I."
[50] Hungarian Ministry of Justice. November 3, 2020. Government Decree 478/2020 on the declaration of state of danger, https://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0478K_20201104_FIN.pdf.
[51] Act CIX of 2020 on the Containment of the Second Wave of the Coronavirus Pandemic http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020T0109P_20201111_FIN.pdf.
[52] Article 53(3), "State of Danger," FL.
[53] Section 5, Act CIX of 2020 on the Containment of the Second Wave of the Coronavirus Pandemic http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020T0109P_20201111_FIN.pdf.
[54] Halmai, Mészáros, and Scheppele, "So It Goes – Part I."
[55] Hungarian Ministry of Justice. November 10, 2020. Government Decree 484/2020 on the second phase of protective measures applicable during the period of state of danger, http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0484K_20201216_FIN.pdf.
[56] Section 20(2) of Government Decree 484/2020 on the second phase of protective measures applicable during the period of state of danger, http://njt.hu/translated/doc/J2020R0484K_20201216_FIN.pdf.

Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony: "Along with many, I also don't know what the goal was of the [TEK] units patrolling the empty city in full armor."[57] On 13 November, the government issued Decree 499/2020 (XI. 13) which authorized the Hungarian Defense Forces to take up duties in hospitals, including management authority. As early as April, military commanders have taken over management of hospitals and overruled doctor assessments of patient health in order to rapidly clear out 36,000 hospital beds for potential COVID-19 patients.[58]

As aforementioned, there are six defined special legal orders in the FL, each with its own protocol. Article 50(1) (the "state of emergency" special legal order) permits the deployment of the Hungarian Defence Forces "during a state of emergency if the use of the police and the national security services proves insufficient."[59] However, as Halmai et al. have pointed out, nowhere under Article 53 (the "state of danger" special legal order) does it mention or permit the emergency use of military forces.[60]

To address this, in November a new constitutional amendment changed the taxonomy of the six special legal orders by grouping "state of national crisis", "state of preventative defense", and "unexpected attack" under one broad "state of war"[61] umbrella category. The amendment also broadens the criteria for declaring a "state of emergency [or a] state of danger" special legal order, which is unconstitutional as it lowers the bar significantly. A state of emergency now no longer requires physical violence and can be invoked in response to a non-violent threat. Further, a state of danger can now be invoked in response to "actions by those outside [the] government who aim to undermine or sabotage ("felforgatás") the constitutional order."[62] The vagueness of "sabotage"[63] expands the applicability of this special legal order significantly.

III - Undermining Rule of Law Efforts in EU

COVID-19 Budget Veto

In November, Orban and Morawiecki were the only member state leaders that vetoed the EU's proposed €1.8tn deal, which included a multiannual financial framework (MFF) and generous COVID-19

[57] "Heavily Armed Anti-Terrorist Units Patrolling During Curfew Draws Criticism from Budapest Mayor." *Hungary Today*, November 13, 2020. https://hungarytoday.hu/armed-anti-terrorist-unit-tek-patrol-curfew-budapest-karacsony/
[58] Fanni Kaszás, "Hospital Evacuations Stir Up Tension Between Medical Chamber and Gov't." *Hungary Today*, April 20, 2020. https://hungarytoday.hu/hospital-evacuations-stir-up-tension-between-medical-chamber-and-govt/; Halmai and Scheppele. "Don't Be Fooled by Autocrats!"
[59] Article 50(1), 'State of Emergency,' FL.
[60] Halmai, Mészáros, and Scheppele, "So It Goes – Part I."
[61] Ibid.
[62] Halmai, Mészáros, and Scheppele, "So It Goes – Part I."
[63] Ibid.

recovery fund. Their main contention was the rule of law conditionality baked into the budget proposal, which they argued unfairly targeted them and had "no basis in the [EU] treaties."[64] Łętowska has countered that Article 322 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) does provide a legal basis for "the financial rules"[65] to determine whether member states are eligible to receive EU budget funds.[66]

It is important to note that public opinion is remarkably in favour of the rule of law conditionality in the EU funding package. According to a survey conducted by the European Parliament, 77% of EU respondents, 72% of Hungarian respondents, 72% of Polish respondents, 72% of Slovak respondents, and 59% of Czech respondents voted in favour of the conditionality as part of the package.[67] Clearly, the veto was not a united Visegrad 4 venture nor one with Hungarian or Polish public support, but rather a venture isolated solely to the populist governments of Poland and Hungary. Orban and Morawiecki's veto effectively held the budget hostage and forced the German Presidency of the Council into extended negotiation talks, unnecessarily extending the interim before the package was finally agreed upon.

Rule of Law in EU Treaties

EU institutions have had difficulty preserving rule of law among member states who deviate from rule of law norms because they failed to clearly define rule of law and instill effective preventative protocol into any EU treaty. The rule of law conditionality in the COVID-19 budget proposal is another attempt by the EU to belatedly enforce rule of law by sugarcoating it: "money for the rule of law."[68]

In Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), rule of law is listed among the EU's founding values of "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities."[69] Article 49 of the TEU then references these founding values in Article 2[70] as a key eligibility requirement for EU accession. However, the EU failed to explicitly define rule of law in any document until 2014.[71] Especially in the case of the Hungarian judiciary under the Orban government, it is clear that the mention of rule of law in EU treaties without clear definition

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[64] Ewa Łętowska, "Disqualifying Instability: On the Selective Application of Rule of Law Principles." *Verfassungsblog*, December 8, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/disqualifying-instability/.
[65] Article 322 of Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E322.
[66] Łętowska, "Disqualifying Instability."
[67] "Europeans insist EU funds be linked to respect for Rule of Law." Published by European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/public-opinion-in-the-eu-in-time-of-coronavirus-crisis-3.

[68] Łętowska, "Disqualifying Instability."
[69] Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016M002
[70] Article 49 of TEU, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016M049
[71] Soyaltin-Colella, "The EU's 'actions-without-sanctions'?" 4.

was unproductive in protecting rule of law in member states. Since 2010, autocratic legalism and illiberal constitutionalism in Hungary flourished so long as the gestures of democratic institutions and elections remained in place, despite the evident erosion of rule of law.

In 2014, the European Commission (EUCO) finally defined rule of law principles as: "legality; […] legal certainty; prohibition of arbitrariness of the executive powers; independent and impartial courts; effective judicial review including respect for fundamental rights; and equality before the law."[72]

EUCO Conclusions

On 10 December, Orban and Morawiecki finally agreed to the budget after severely watering down the rule of law conditionality and successfully undermining the EU once again. The compromise between the German presidency of the Council, Orban, and Morawiecki was adopted in the European Council Conclusions released on 10-11 December (hereafter "EUCO Conclusions"). The EUCO Conclusions involve two key changes: first, they name the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) as the standard judiciary to finalize annulment of budget funds, should they invoke the conditionality. Second, they render the conditionality regulation practically inapplicable with carefully vague wording.

By naming the CJEU as the standard judiciary to finalize annulment of budget funds,[73] Orban opens up the possibility to unite with other member states against CJEU "juristocracy"[74] and undermine the legitimacy of EU law by citing the supremacy of national constitutional law and sovereignty over international law. Further, adding the CJEU as another obstacle to enforcing the regulation adds substantial delay to the process, which undermines the rule of law.

Moreover, the wording of Point 2(e) makes applying the conditionality regulation remarkably difficult. It specifies that to apply the regulation, the "causal link between breaches [of rule of law] and the negative consequences on the Union's financial interests will have to be sufficiently direct and be duly established. The mere finding that a breach of the rule of law has taken place does not suffice to trigger the mechanism."[75] This marks a significant achievement for Orban's government: so long as breaches of rule of law in Hungary cannot be proven in direct link to negatively affecting EU financial interests, they are beyond the scope of the Regulation's jurisdiction. Once again, rule of law withers.

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[72] European Commission. "Communication: A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law." March 11, 2014. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0158&from=EN
[73] Point 2(c) of EUCO Conclusions. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47296/1011-12-20-euco-conclusions-en.pdf.
[74] Renáta Uitz, "Towards an EU Cast in the Hungarian and Polish Mould: Why the December 2020 Compromise Matters." *Verfassungsblog*, December 14, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/towards-an-eu-cast-in-the-hungarian-and-polish-mold/
[75] Conclusion 2(e) of European Council. "Press Release: European Council meeting (10 and 11 December 2020) – Conclusions." December 11, 2020.
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47296/1011-12-20-euco-conclusions-en.pdf.

Finally, Point 2(g) further protects Orban's government from the Regulation by adding a required "thorough dialogue with the Member State concerned" even before "any formal opening of the procedure."[76]

The original proposal for the Conditionality Regulation was intended to tie rule of law as a condition to receiving funds, in order to halt EU funding to autocrats and illiberal government ventures.[77] Scheppele et al. criticize the finalized Conditionality Regulation as a "shrunken version of its previous self,"[78] having even removed the terms "rule of law" from the proposal title.[79] They also critique the capability of the Conditionality Regulation in stopping EU funding to autocrats, since according to Article 5(5): "The Commission shall do its utmost to ensure that any amount due from government entities or Member states [...] is effectively paid to final recipients or beneficiaries."[80] The Regulation does not stipulate how they are going to ensure the citizens of member states found abusing rule of law are not punished for the actions of their corrupt governments. Scheppele et al. point out that if Orban once again sets up EU-funded public contracts with his friends, even if the conditionality can be invoked, the EU still has to ensure that his friends are paid, since they constitute as the "final recipients or beneficiaries."[81] Uitz marked the EUCO Conclusions as another achievement of Orban's illiberal constitutional engineering, which she defined as "using familiar constitutional and legal techniques [...] that subvert constitutionalism and the rule of law."[82]

Once EUCO Conclusions were agreed upon, the European Parliament officially voted and adopted the Conditionality Regulation on 16 December as part of the budget. EP President Sassoli called the budget the "European Marshall Plan."[83]

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[76] Point 2(g) of EUCO Conclusions.
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47296/1011-12-20-euco-conclusions-en.pdf.

[77] European Parliament. "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council: On the Protection of the Union's budget in case of Generalised Deficiencies as Regards the Rule of Law in the Member States." May 2, 2018.
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0324&from=EN.

[78] Kim Lane Scheppele, Laurent Pech, and Sébastien Laurent Platon. "Compromising the Rule of Law while Compromising on the Rule of Law." *Verfassungsblog,* December 13, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/compromising-the-rule-of-law-while-compromising-on-the-rule-of-law/.

[79] European Parliament. "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council: A General Regime of Conditionality for the Protection of the Union Budget" (Hereafter "Conditionality Regulation") November 5, 2020.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/BUDG/DV/2020/11-12/RuleofLaw-Draftconsolidatedtext_rev_EN.pdf.

[80] European Union. "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Regime of Conditionality for the Protection of the Union Budget." (Hereafter, "Conditionality Regulation") December 16, 2020.
https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-64-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

[81] European Union. "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Regime of Conditionality for the Protection of the Union Budget." (Hereafter, "Conditionality Regulation"). December 16, 2020.
https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-64-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

[82] Uitz, "Towards an EU Cast in the Hungarian and Polish Mould."

[83] European Parliament. "MFF, Rule of Law Conditionality and Own Resources: statement by David SASSOLI, EP President following the vote in plenary." December 16, 2020. https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/mff-rule-of-law-conditionality-and-own-resources-sassoli_I200495-V_v.

The question will be whether or not the EUCO Conclusions are legally admissible, or if the European Parliament can ignore them and instead keep to the text of the Conditionality Regulation. Alemanno and Chamon have argued that the EUCO Conclusions breach EU primary law.[84] In their article, Scheppele et al. have examined potential avenues to annulling the EUCO Conclusions or applying against them.[85]

Nevertheless, the sheer achievement by Orban and Morawiecki to hold the budget proposal hostage and force the German presidency to agree to the EUCO Conclusions in the first place and render the Conditionality Regulation a shadow of its original intention is a victory for autocratic legalism and a great loss for rule of law.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Orban's government has manipulated the pandemic to its political advantage both at home and in the EU. The government has used the crisis as a vehicle to advance illiberal constitutionalism through domestic emergency decrees ostensibly to mitigate spread of the virus but primarily to expand government powers to a staggering degree. This is particularly evident in the unconstitutional provisions in the Coronavirus Act, the suspicious emergency decrees, and the amended taxonomy of special legal orders to broaden the criteria of issuing a state of emergency altogether. Further, the government has used the pandemic as a chance to publicly move against the EU by challenging the rule of law conditionality and forcing the EU into negotiation and compromise.

The study of autocratic legalism raises further questions about the integrity of legal institutions and governance. How has Hungarian society acclimated to these new circumstances and norms? How have these shifting constitutional and legal terrains affected Hungarian citizens' perceptions of the integrity of their governing institutions? What are the long-term effects of Fidesz's autocratic legalist maneuvers on civic education of legal institutions, governance, and constitutionalism?

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[84]Alberto Alemanno, and Merijn Chamon."To Save the Rule of Law you Must Apparently Break It." *Verfassungsblog*, December 11, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/to-save-the-rule-of-law-you-must-apparently-break-it/

[85] Kim Lane Scheppele, Laurent Pech, and Sébastien Laurent Platon. "Compromising the Rule of Law while Compromising on the Rule of Law." *Verfassungsblog,* December 13, 2020. https://verfassungsblog.de/compromising-the-rule-of-law-while-compromising-on-the-rule-of-law/.

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