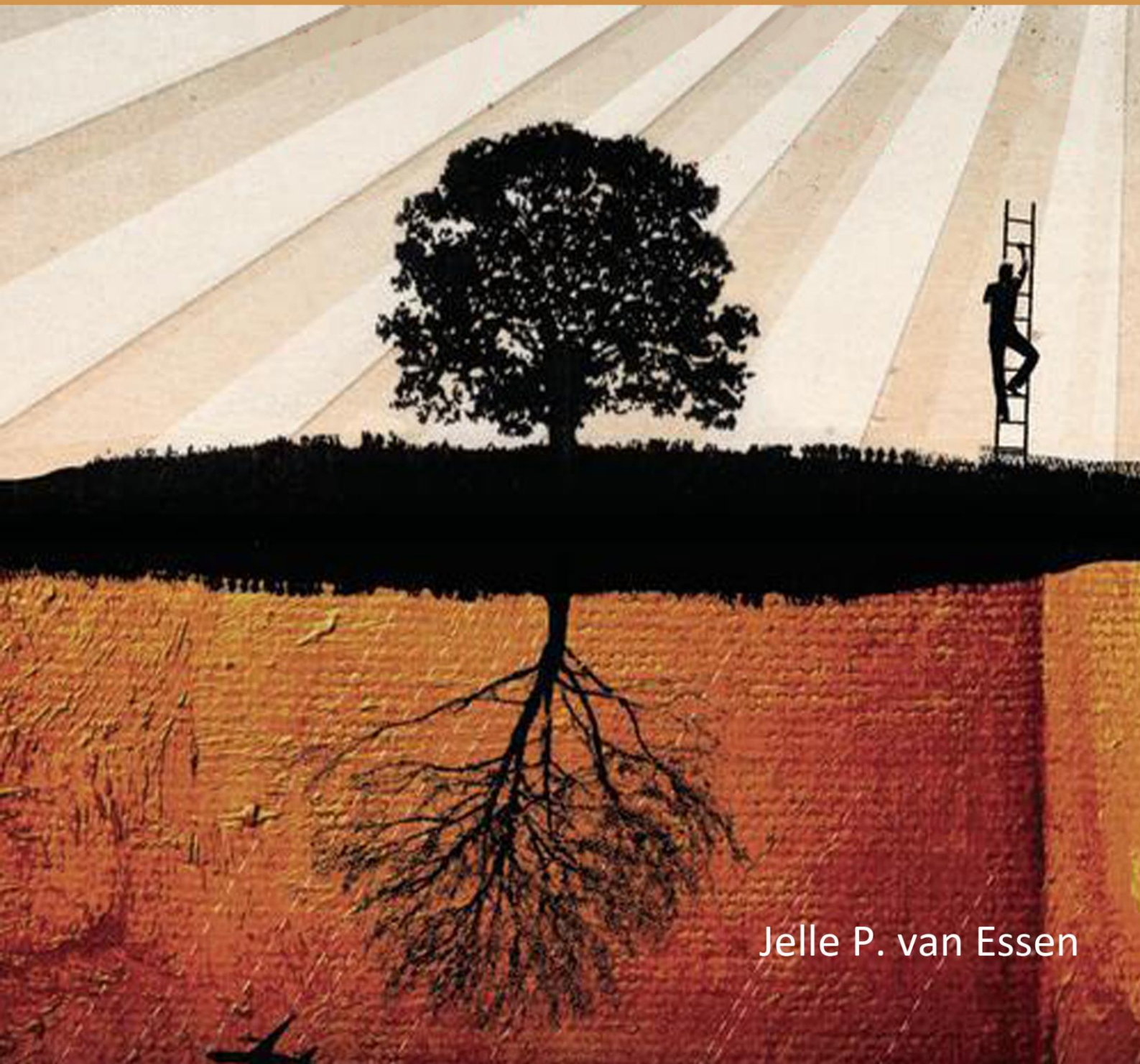


Master Thesis

# Recognizing Reconciliation

The role of culture  
in post Second World War and post Cold War  
reconciliatory processes and acts of apology



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# Recognizing reconciliation

The role of culture on post World War II and post-Cold War  
reconciliatory processes and acts of apology

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis has been to conduct research on what *culture* can tell us about the characteristics of *apologies* and *reconciliation*. The main observation of this thesis has been that when post-conflict reconciliation stagnates, the role of culture, or more precisely the negligence of culturally-sensitive approaches in this particular process, appears to be of key importance to the outcome. By relating these concepts with one another, recommendations are presented for a fuller notion of culture-sensitive peacebuilding approaches in post-conflict societies.

The research's methodology consists of a thorough analysis of primary sources and literature, approached from a historical angle by looking into the historical background and its implications on contemporary issues. Subsequently, a comparative aspect has been implemented by looking into post World War II and post-Cold War reconciliatory processes. All these aspects have been examined in a detailed fashion consisting of two case studies; *Bosnia* - on the post-civil war Bosnian reconciliation process, and the *Vertriebenen* - about the process of reconciliation since the expulsion of ethnic Germans in the immediate post-World War II period. Three questions have been important in this research: First, how the concepts of culture, reconciliation and apology relate to one another in post-conflict societies. Second, to what extent reconciliatory processes in the post World War II differs from that in the post-Cold War era. Third, to what degree apologies differ between domestic Western policies compared to policies concerning apologies of the Western-dominated international community.

This thesis finally offers four guidelines, which presents a framework for a fuller notion of cultural-sensitive reconciliation efforts. First, it is important for the international community to take culture-sensitive policies serious and not leave 'culture' to be rarely moved beyond the level of rhetoric. Second, the need to look at different peacebuilding approaches and how they can compliment each other, instead of having a polarizing effect on the post-conflict society. Third, underlining the importance of a genuine and patiently perceived internal process which can achieve social cohesion and to encourage dialogue. Forth, the need of giving priority to educating both the conflicting groups and the international actors in a post-conflict reconciliation process, in which education creates a broader scope of the own perceived historical narrative, and the international actors involved will be better informed about the culture and history of the host-society.

## Key words

Reconciliation, Apology, Culture, Bosnia, Vertriebenen, Historical culture, political culture



## Foreword and Acknowledgements

This thesis is written as completion to the Master History of Society, Specialisation Global History and International Relations, at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The subject of this thesis, *the role of culture in post World War II and post-Cold War reconciliatory processes and acts of apology*, falls within the scope of the Master's field, because of the historical perspective to the concept and its relevance to international relations in the global context.

This particular topic has surfaced after reading Alexander Hinton's work '*A head for an eye: revenge in the Cambodian genocide*', in which he insightfully describes how the Cambodian cultural model of disproportionate revenge in combination with communist party ideology provided a cultural template for the extreme violence that took place during the Khmer Rouge period. His methodology has been the starting point of my own research, in which he analyzed particular culture-specific features and relating this to polarizing and destructive circumstances, in order to further understand why this episode of extreme violence could take place. What I have done is look at culture in a similar fashion, but instead of doing research on how violence took place, my goal is to come to a better understanding how reconciliation in post-conflict societies takes place while relating this to the concept of culture. Along this line of thought I think one can argue that it is possible to bring forth a model that provides a template that entails culturally-sensitive approaches that are more likely to support sustainable reconciliatory processes. In this way culture has a central role in understanding what the multiple aspects are of reconciliation within post-conflict societies.

Since February 2014 I have been conducting research on the topic. I have experienced this period as very interesting and pleasant undertaking. In the beginning I had some challenges finding the right primary sources sufficient for my research. However, I have been able to achieve a result I am very satisfied with. I would like to thank my supervisor from the University, Dick Douwes. His valuable insights and directions gave me needful guidance to complete the research and write this thesis. Subsequently, I would like to thank my girlfriend Dineke Woonink, who has been a great support, and I think fondly of the moments studying together. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the life of Jesus Christ as my most important source of inspiration for true reconciliation.

Jelle P. van Essen

De Meern, September 2014

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research question

A preliminary literature research reconciliatory processes resulted in three assumptions: First, attempts at formulating a framework of analysis into the significance of the cultural dimensions in the field of conflict resolution are largely absent, and there is no singular point of view concerning the use and dynamics of apology within reconciliation processes. Second, there is a lacuna between the Western-European and North-American discourse dominant within reconciliatory practices on the one hand, and the culture and context of the host-country on the other. The lack of methods sensitive towards the local culture, both at the interpersonal and organizational levels, has consequences for the success of reconciliation. Finally, the international community presses ethnic communities into an act of public apology, without the intrinsic consent of the regional actors themselves.

After careful consideration of these observations, a research problem can be defined. Particularly, this thesis deals with the dynamics of apologies and reconciliation processes, and the role culture has on them. The central question of the research is therefore: *'Based on the assumption that historical and cultural aspects are crucial to the process and outcome of reconciliation, to what extent do historical and culturally-sensitive features explain the characteristics of apologies and reconciliatory processes?'* Three questions serve to further refine the answer. The first, and most general is: *'How do culture, apology and reconciliation relate to one another in post-conflict societies?'* The second sub-question provides the historical background for the research: *'To what extent do reconciliatory processes in the post World War II era differ from similar features in the following post-Cold War era?'* The last sub-question covers the difference between apologies and reconciliation processes in a specific national context, and of the wider international community: *'In what way do the apologies and reconciliation processes in domestic Western politics differ from those demanded by the Western-dominated international community, specifically in post-conflict societies in Western-Balkans?'*

## 1.2 Nature of sources

Research for this thesis was mainly based on primary and secondary literature, from various sources. A diverse and significant number of primary sources were consulted for the Bosnia case study. Official UN-documents related to the post-conflict Bosnia, such as the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Dayton Accord, as well as relevant resolutions are used to describe the role of the United Nations in reconciliation processes and how the organization values the concept of culture. UN-working reports on these issues are also used, particularly to see how the concepts are handled in the process of peacebuilding itself. Official documents and working papers from the European Union similarly contribute to better insight on policy making within the EU.

Secondary literature contains a wealth of information, and provides a different perspective on the topic than official documents. Publications were consulted to research peacebuilding, reconciliation, transitional justice and the role of culture in these processes. Academic journals which reflect aspects of academic debate on the nature of reconciliatory processes, and the role of culturally-sensitive and context-specific approaches in contemporary post-conflict peacebuilding efforts were particularly useful. These journals cover disciplines as different as history, political science, sociology and to some extent psychology. Articles are written by scholars, NGO's, and institutions affiliated with international and national governments, whose goal is to bring a multi-perspective and multi-disciplinary view of the issue.

## 1.3 Methodology

This thesis applies a three-way methodology to extract new ways of understanding the multi-layered dynamics and results of reconciliatory processes. First, there is an analysis of the various primary sources and relevant literature available. Then, the question is approached from a historical angle; history is explicitly present in the temporal-comparative aspect of the research, and implicit through the use of history in post-conflict reconciliation processes. Finally, two case studies are analyzed use the comparative method: the reconciliation process in post-civil war Bosnia, and the *Vertriebenen*, the process of reconciliation since the expulsion of ethnic Germans in Central Europe in the immediate postwar period after World War II. These case studies connect theory and practice, and provide a clear understanding of the core concepts on which this thesis is based. The point of departure is an international comparison of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding with respect to the political and social policies undertaken. It is contended that the latter have been affected and influenced by country-specific and culturally-sensitive aspects by the actors involved. The two cases studies aim to provide a solid basis for



comparison because of the different levels of post-conflict recovery experienced by the countries and other relevant actors.

The case of the *Vertriebenen*, dating back some 70 years, remains an obscure episode in European history. Compared to it, the violent images and atrocities of the post-Cold War Bosnian civil war still lie fresh in our memories, 20 years after the fact. Both cases have their own documented background and have produced specific post-conflict narratives. Particularly those narratives of collectivized guilt and victimhood undermine attempts at reconciliation in both cases. The two have their own starting points in history, yet there are aspects that allow for comparison. The *Vertriebenen* reconciliatory process has its 'ground zero' at the end of World War II. However, it found new momentum in the Post-Cold War era, with the unification of Germany, and gave new energy to German expellee organizations into making their claims, particularly those for lost property and lands. The Bosnian reconciliation process has its origins in 1995, with the 'Dayton Peace Agreement' that marked the end of the Bosnian civil war. Yet understanding the dynamics of this reconciliation process is almost impossible without understanding the complicated history of the region. See figure 1 for a chronology of the two reconciliation processes, from the the second half of the 20th century, until present day.

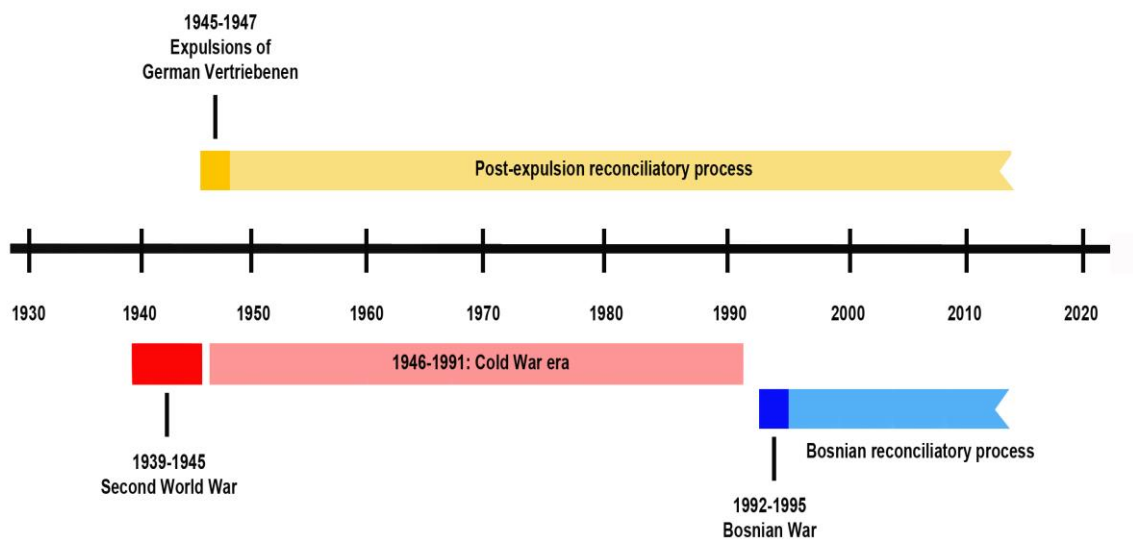


Figure 1: Timeline of both case studies

### *Similarities and differences between case studies*

The cases range in the intensity of the conflict, and in the number and nature of actors involved in the specific post-conflict peacebuilding strategies and policies. However, both case studies concern geopolitical areas that were once multi-ethnic. These areas are known for the eruption of clashing ideologies, and diverging narratives. Another similarity is that both cases have a multitude of cultural, political and historical layers, which have to be taken into consideration when doing research on the character of their reconciliatory process; the role of culture must be recognized. Both cases are known for having a historical development that includes grave human rights violations, such as ethnic cleansing, expulsions, rape and other war crimes. Moreover, both cases immerse in reconciliatory dynamics within the context of the process of their respective states seeking membership to the European Union. Nevertheless, each process had its own momentum and took place within a specific geopolitical reality. Each area was dominated by international politics in a particular way; and each case shows identity-seeking nations in a post-communist geopolitical reality. It is surprising how two seemingly separate historical timeframes so frequently refer to each other through legal documents, media coverage and literature. The example of Willy Brandt, the West German chancellor, who in 1970 paid tribute to the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto has been used countless times by the Bosniaks, who clamors for a 'Serb Willy Brandt'<sup>1</sup>

An international comparative study offers insights on how to approach current areas of post-conflict contextualization, such as Iran or Syria, and how to strategize reconciliatory and transitional peacebuilding. The lessons extracted from the analysis of official documents concerning post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the case of the *Vertriebenen*, are also used as building blocks of a framework for the self-sustainable and culturally-sensitive recovery of divided societies.

### **1.4 Outline of thesis**

In chapter two, an operational definition is provided for the core concepts of this thesis: *culture*, *apology* and *reconciliation*. An overview of relevant secondary literature on these concepts is given. Then, the relation between apology and reconciliation is addressed, and the connection between these two concepts is explained in further detail. Finally, the dynamics of politics in relation to apologies are investigated. On the quest to understand the extent to which historical and culturally-sensitive features are indicative of the characteristics of apologies and

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<sup>1</sup> Babic, D., 'Bosnia and Herzegovina: The War Of Narratives' May 26, 2012 <http://www.eurasiareview.com/26052012-bosnia-and-herzegovina-the-war-of-narratives-analysis/> accessed on April 12, 2014.

reconciliatory processes, it is important to place theory in its social and historical context. The abovementioned concepts will therefore be applied to real events, and the daily lives of people.

The two case studies are discussed in chapters three and four. The former deals with the post-conflict context of Bosnia, and the latter further researches the fate of the *Vertriebenen*. This particular order for covering the cases was chosen because the Bosnia case study occupies a central role. The *Vertriebenen* case is secondary, but not less important, due to its added value as a point of temporal comparison. Chapter three first explains the historical background of the Bosnia case, followed by a presentation and brief discussion on its complex outcomes. This will be dealt with through official documents and secondary literature. Finally, the preliminary conclusions of the multi-faceted features of the reconciliatory process in the post-conflict context of the Bosnia case study are presented. Chapter four analyzes the case of the *Vertriebenen*. The historical background of one of the largest forced expulsions in the history of mankind is first provided, which sets the basis for an analysis of the implications of historical memory, narratives and the debate surrounding the *Vertriebenen*. Moreover, through a media analysis of articles from *Der Spiegel*, the role of culture in the dynamics of apologies and reconciliatory processes in the case of the *Vertriebenen* is considered. This chapter ends with preliminary conclusions regarding the features of the reconciliatory process in the post-conflict context of the *Vertriebenen*.

The research conclusions are presented in chapter five. This chapter first gives an explicit answer to the main research question and the sub-questions. Answers will be presented based on the main observations distilled from the research. The second part of the conclusion, titled '*Towards a template for culturally-sensitive reconciliation*', then presents a framework of culturally-sensitive and society-specific reconciliatory processes. This template is a translation of the accumulation of observations. It allows turning the research question into clear-cut action points to further encourage the importance of *culture* in *reconciliation* and *apology*. All these elements ultimately provide the contributions of this thesis to the existing debate on the role of culture in reconciliatory processes and acts of apology.

### 1.5 Contribution to the scientific debate

Linking culture to reconciliation and the act of apology in two historical case studies in the quest for new insights on conflict resolution, contributes to the debate on how to understand post-conflict contexts, both in theory, and in the field of contemporary peacebuilding.

To be more specific, this thesis contributes to the body of knowledge of reconciliatory processes in post-conflict societies by implementing four approaches: First, the central role given to the *act of apology* and the dynamics that surround this feature. Second, the centrality of

exploring the particular *role of culture* means a new way of looking at the dynamics of both reconciliation in general, and that of apologies more specifically. Third, this thesis has its own approach to discovering new insights on the core concepts of culture, reconciliation and the act of apology, by implementing a *historical comparative aspect* within the analysis. Finally, this thesis also looks at how the reconciliatory processes have evolved in the particular cases of Bosnia and the *Vertriebenen*. Each case has specific dynamics and their analysis provides new insights into the broad scope of literature on post-conflict reconciliatory processes.

## 2. Literature report

### 2.1 Operational definitions of theoretical concepts

Given that cultural aspects are indicative of how apologies and reconciliatory processes are characterized, the three main concepts mentioned directly in the primary question, namely *reconciliation*, *apology* and *culture*, deserve substantial attention. This chapter offers an overview of existing literature on these central concepts.

#### 2.1.1 Reconciliation

*"Reconciliation is not a matter of ignoring a true past, but a means of confronting it, with inclusion, generosity and truth."* - Barack Obama during his speech at Nelson Mandela's funeral in 2013.

Reconciliatory processes are omnipresent in contemporary international politics. Reconciliation has become more relevant, and its use more widespread, among scholarly and policy circles, in international relations and social psychology, as well as civil society at large. These groups, however, are also concerned with the dynamics of the reconciliatory processes in a post-conflict situation, and are confronted with a lack of consensus concerning the basic definition of reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

According to Lederach, peace research and conflict studies began to emerge as disciplines in the first half of the 20th century. This process was significantly accelerated by the two world wars.<sup>3</sup> Although the concept of reconciliation has long been known, only in the past two decades has the study of reconciliation really emerged as an area of interest in political science.<sup>4</sup> For Bar-Simon-Tov, the concept of reconciliation evolved from the understanding that there is a need to study the conditions for stabilizing peace.<sup>5</sup> A historical starting point for the field is the 1991 His work *Mea Culpa: a sociology of apology and reconciliation*, written by Nicholas Tavuchis, one of the first scholars to discuss the topic of political apologies.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bloomfield, D., *On Good Terms: Clarifying reconciliation*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Report no. 14 (2006) 4.

<sup>3</sup> Lederach, J.P., *Building Peace. Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*, (Washington 1997) 3.

<sup>4</sup> Bar-Tal, D., Bennink, G.H., The nature of reconciliation as an outcome and as a process, in: Bar-Simon-Tov, eds., *From conflict resolution to reconciliation* (2004) 11.

<sup>5</sup> Bar-Simon-Tov, Y., *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (Oxford 2004) 4.

<sup>6</sup> Barkan E., A. Karn, *Taking wrongs seriously: Apologies and reconciliation* (Stanford 2006) 5.

While there is no universal agreement on what 'reconciliation' actually means, Susan Dwyer has an insightful observation;

The notable lack of any clear account of what reconciliation is, and what it requires, justifiably alerts the cynics among us. Reconciliation is being urged upon people who have been bitter and murderous enemies, upon victims and perpetrators of terrible human rights abuses, upon groups and individuals whose very self-conceptions have been structured in terms of historical and often state-sanctioned relations of dominance and submission.<sup>7</sup>

Johann Galtung argues that reconciliation is "the process of healing the traumas of both victims and perpetrators after violence, providing a closure of the bad relation."<sup>8</sup> Lederach compliments this view with a religious definition of the concept based on Psalm 85:10; "Truth and Mercy have met together, Justice and Peace have kissed."<sup>9</sup> Retributive and restorative justice are two inherent features of reconciliatory processes. Retributive justice refers to something given or demanded to repay a wrong done in the past. Restorative justice, however, is future-oriented and its positive contributions are evaluated through the process of individual or societal healing. The process of restoring justice may include truth-telling, pain reckoning, and punishment, when such actions are required in a post-conflict society.<sup>10</sup> Along this line of thought, for Bloomfield reconciliation implies finding a way to live alongside former foes: "To not necessarily love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to develop the degree of cooperation so that we all have better lives together than we have had separately."<sup>11</sup> This concise account of reconciliation can be considered to have a more objective and goals that are easier to meet. Moreover, Andrieu considers that this approach is globally used, for example with the prosecution of perpetrators and in victim compensation. Reconciliation in this sense can be seen as an event, rather than a process.<sup>12</sup> Michael Ignatieff's description of reconciliation is both crude and philosophical, as in his view, reconciliation;

Must reach into the shared democracy of death to teach the drastic nullity of all struggles that end in killing, the unending futility of all attempts to avenge those who are no more. For it is an elementary certainty that killing will not bring the dead back to life.<sup>13</sup>

By acknowledging the reality of the other's history, Rigby states, even when you perceive the past from another angle, the basis can be laid for some kind of solidarity and a respect for difference.

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<sup>7</sup> Dwyer, Susan, 'Reconciliation for Realists', *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 13, no.1 (1999) 81-98; 82.

<sup>8</sup> Galtung, Johann, 'After Violence: Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Resolution', in: *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence*, ed. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Lanham 2001) 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Lederach, John Paul, 'Civil Society and Reconciliation', in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, eds. C. Crocker, F. Hampton and P. Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 854.

<sup>10</sup> Montiel C.J., Sociopolitical forgiveness, *Peace Review*, Vol. 14, no. 3 (2002) 271-277; 275.

<sup>11</sup> Bloomfield D., Barnes T. and Huyse L., *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict. A Handbook* (Stockholm 2003) 12.

<sup>12</sup> Andrieu, K., 'Sorry for the genocide' how public apologies can help promote national reconciliation, *Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 38, no. 1 (2009) 3-23; 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ignatieff, M., *The Warrior's Honor* (Londen 1989) 190.



However, this requires people to face up to their own flaws, and their past, to acknowledge the grief and remorse of the other.<sup>14</sup> Self-sustainable peace does not just mean stopping hostilities, but strengthening and reasserting structures that enable individuals in postwar situations to share “common identities and expectations that enhance a social order that eliminates exploitation, corruption, and all forms of existential insecurity.” Traditional conceptions of peacebuilding promote mainly so-called negative peace, which emphasizes state security and state building mechanisms.<sup>15</sup> Through a more realistic lens, reconciliation takes place between different narratives, “guided by normative ideals of intelligibility, coherence and understanding”<sup>16</sup> Staub comments that some shifts in attitude toward perpetrators take place after discussing the forces that lead them to commit their actions. If the perpetrators are “affected by conditions in society and the culture in comprehensive ways, then perhaps their evil actions are not simply the result of an evil nature.”<sup>17</sup> If influences that led to atrocities such as genocide are clear, the recurrence of violence may be preventable. All these changing perspectives may open possibilities for reconciliation. Given the great diversity in post-violent contexts, each and every single case should be carefully considered to see whether it presents the aforementioned culture-specific aspects of reconciliatory processes.

### 2.1.2 Apology

*“Apologies are no monologue, they are a powerful element in the building of discursive solidarity in the aftermath of mass atrocity. The action of offering and accepting an apology is an intersubjective process that can help reactivate the moral community.”* - Kora Andrieu in; ‘Sorry for the genocide’

For Tavuchis, apology bridges a linguistics and psychological gap between the victim's need for acknowledgement and the perpetrators desire to reclaim his humanity. Interestingly, since the author voiced his perspective on the subject, the shift in the significance of the subject has become apparent. He once asked; “How do these apologies, which appear both magical and mundane, do their work?”<sup>18</sup>, whereas today apologies are engaged at the center of international politics.

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<sup>14</sup> Rigby, “Forgiving the Past: Paths Towards a Culture of reconciliation” n.d., Centre for Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Coventry University, [http://faculty.human.mieu.ac.jp/~peace/ipra\\_papers/rigby.doc](http://faculty.human.mieu.ac.jp/~peace/ipra_papers/rigby.doc) Accessed on 18 November 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Conteh-Morgan, E., Peacebuilding and human security: a constructivist perspective, *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2005) 69-86; 76.

<sup>16</sup> Dwyer, ‘Reconciliation for Realists’, 106.

<sup>17</sup> Staub, E., Genocide and mass killing: Origins, prevention, healing and reconciliation, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 21, no. 2 (2009) 367-382; 278.

<sup>18</sup> Barkan, Karn, *Taking wrongs seriously: Apologies and reconciliation*, 5.

According to the United Nations, transitional justice is “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, transitional justice consists of;

Both judicial and non-judicial processes, such as; prosecution initiatives, reparations programs, truth-seeking, institutional reform or an appropriate combination of these mechanisms and can contribute to achieving the broader objectives of prevention of further conflict, peacebuilding and reconciliation.”<sup>20</sup>

The processes of apology in post-conflict settings involves; first, an acknowledgement of the transgression; second, feeling and expressing remorse for the wrongful act; and third, doing something to restore that which was wronged.<sup>21</sup> Andrieu states that apologies are the acknowledgment of a wrongdoing, the acceptance of one’s responsibility and the expression of sorrow and regret for it. Primarily, an apology involves forgiveness and, ultimately, reconciliation between the offender and the offended.<sup>22</sup>

An interesting connection between *trust* and the act of apology is made by DeGreiff, who states that “confidence in political legitimacy arises incrementally out of small actions and decisions.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, an official apology can make political institutions trustworthy in the aftermath of mass atrocities. Even though ethnic conflict is caused by “the fear of the future, lived through the past.”<sup>24</sup> By acknowledging past wrongs, admitting responsibility and expressing regret, a leader sends a strong signal to the victims: the state has no intention of hurting them again. The act of apology thus creates a climate in which acts of repentance and forgiveness can occur, both between individuals and at the group level.<sup>25</sup>

On the dynamics of apology, Larry Langer argues that “the logic of law will never make sense of the illogic of genocide.”<sup>26</sup> However, the recognition of this disproportion should not become an excuse for revenge. Those crimes “transcend the domain of human affairs”,<sup>27</sup> but humans must nevertheless confront them. Scholars have also focused on leadership in the act of apologies in post-conflict settings. Montiel describes that the enactment of collective apology needs leadership within the group that expresses public remorse. Public symbols and socially influential individuals can lead others through a process of social apology. A public figure has greater

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Secretary General, *The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies*, UN Doc. S/2004/616 (23 Aug. 2004) 4.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations, Guidance Notice of the Secretary-General: United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice (2010) 3.

<sup>21</sup> Montiel, *Sociopolitical forgiveness*, 273.

<sup>22</sup> Andrieu, 'Sorry for the genocide', 5.

<sup>23</sup> DeGreiff, P., *The Role of apologies: On Making Trustworthy Institutions Trusted*, in: *The age of apology*, ed. Mark Gibney (Philadelphia 2007) 129.

<sup>24</sup> Andrieu, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>26</sup> Langer, L., *Admitting the Holocaust* (New York 1995) 171.

<sup>27</sup> Langer, 171.

symbolical power in the apology process if they were previously connected with abusive acts during the conflict.<sup>28</sup> If the one who apologizes is in a position of authority within the transgressing group, then the process of cultural transformation of collective remorse can advance faster. Leaders can “give their societies permission to say the unsayable, to think the unthinkable, to rise to gestures of reconciliation that people cannot imagine.”<sup>29</sup> The example of Nelson Mandela is useful to illustrate societal dynamics of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa in the 1990’s.

### 2.1.3 Culture

Because international affairs often focus on dramatic and high profile issues, understanding contemporary peacekeeping and reconciliatory operations is not prioritized within the field. In contrast, Rubinstein argues that the necessary conditions for the success of such undertakings are found in a broader understanding of concerns on social and cultural aspects of daily life.<sup>30</sup> Culture is defined as relatively stable patterns of behavior, actions and customs. This view was dominant between World War II and the 1960’s and fit within the paradigm of political realism. However, in the past thirty years analyses have shifted towards recognizing that meaning, construction, symbolism and rituals have a fundamental role in human life.<sup>31</sup> Sztompka uses culture articulated as a ‘context of change’, where actors are engaged with different cultural resources and have to label, define and interpret multiple aspects and events in society.<sup>32</sup> For Duffey, culture in its simplest form is a system of implicit and explicit beliefs, values and behaviors shared by members of a community or group, through which experience is expressed and interpreted.<sup>33</sup> In an attempt to turn culture from an abstract to a more applicable concept, Trouillot affirms that apologies in the context of reconciliatory processes are always culturally-specific.<sup>34</sup> For example, what is perceived as a satisfactory expression of remorse between two Nepalese peasants involved in a land feud, may not work in a similar situation in Sicily.

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<sup>28</sup> Montiel, 273-274.

<sup>29</sup> Ignatieff, *The Warrior’s Honor*, 188.

<sup>30</sup> Rubinstein, R.A., ‘Cultural aspects of peacekeeping: Notes on a Substance of symbols’, *Millenium*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1995) 547-562; 549-550.

<sup>31</sup> Rubinstein, ‘Cultural aspects of peacekeeping’, 550.

<sup>32</sup> Sztompka, P, Cultural Trauma: The other face of social change, *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2000) 449-466; 451.

<sup>33</sup> Duffey, T., Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 7, no. 1 (2000) 142-168; 165. While Duffey doesn’t point this out in her main text, she describes this asserted definition of culture in one of her foot notes, which I found useful to include in my research.

<sup>34</sup> Trouillot, M., Abortive rituals. Historical apologies in the global era, *Interventions*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2000) 171-186; 175.

Next, the relation between culture and post-conflictual reconciliatory processes is discussed more in depth. Grever introduces the concept of 'historical culture', pointing at;

The whole complex of narratives and infrastructures that give meaning to the past; the scholarly and popular production, distribution and reception of historical narratives and representations, expressed in documents, buildings, statues, traditions education, symbols and commemoration rituals, organized by communities, schools, national governments and institutions."<sup>35</sup>

Another concept relevant to this research is that of 'political culture'. Its working definition comes from the account 'Civic voices':

People's shared, learned beliefs about their political system and their role within that system. Political culture influences the way people see their political world. It influences what people value most in their political world. Some political cultures place a high value on individual freedom while other cultures prize community solidarity.<sup>36</sup>

An additional point of view comes from Mölder, who brings in the notion of 'culture of fear', into the discussion, and defines it as follows: "The emotional response produced by actors using fear as a political incentive. The culture of fear increases the role of instability and anxiety in social discourses and relationships and makes distinctions between friendly Us and hostile Others."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Grever, M., Fear of Plurality: Historical Culture and Historiographical Canonization in Western Europe, in: Epple, A. and A. Schaser eds., *Gendering historiography: beyond national canons* (Chicago 2009) 45-62; 54.

<sup>36</sup> "What is political culture?" [http://www.civicvoices.org/userfiles/file/SV\\_Guide\\_political\\_culture.pdf](http://www.civicvoices.org/userfiles/file/SV_Guide_political_culture.pdf) Accessed on June 30, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Mölder H., The culture of fear in international politics-a Western dominated international system and its extremist challenges, *ENDC Proceedings*, Vol. 14 (2011) 241-263; 241.

## 2.2 Dynamics between reconciliatory processes and the act of apology

*'How to achieve justice without distorting the law, and how to stage a trial by victors over the vanquished without distorting history'?*<sup>38</sup>

- Ian Buruma, in: *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*

*'Unless people manage to forsake their determination to 'get even', there can be no new beginning, no transformation of relationships. Everyone will remain imprisoned in a particular history or mythology, recycling old crimes and hatreds.'*<sup>39</sup>

- Hannah Arendt, in: *The Human Condition*

These quotes show that the relation between reconciliation and the act of apology is extensive, multi-faceted and a complicated process. Societal *mechanisms*, which have political religious and cultural *features*, are all *factors* that claim priority and, for this reason, it is of added value to take a closer look at the specific dynamics that color different reconciliatory processes in post-conflict societies.

### 2.2.1 Intrinsic features of reconciliation

Robert Putnam states that the greater the levels of trust within a community, the higher the likelihood of cooperation. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that an official recognition of past wrongs and an expression of sincere regret might start the virtuous circle of trust-building in a post-conflict society.<sup>40</sup> Despite the obvious benefits of reconciliation, Montiel makes an important observation: The process of social healing may create additional burdens for the less powerful, and the victims. The reconciliation process can only move forward fairly and more humanely, when these vulnerabilities are addressed.<sup>41</sup> These complicating factors in reconciliatory processes, and the role that apology plays, are illustrated by the fact that, in most large-scale societal conflicts both antagonistic groups are simultaneously victims and aggressors. Even though both parties are to blame for violent acts, apologies rarely occur for several reasons: First, both parties perceive themselves primarily as victims and not as aggressors. Also, both conflicting groups expect an apology, instead of having to apologize themselves. Third, perpetrators seldom think that they did something wrong during the conflict. They see their abuses as righteous behavior for their country or ethnic group.<sup>42</sup> Another complementary observation when engaged in collective remorse is to confuse a public apology with a personal one. Although public remorse tends to speed up the process and help move the post-conflict situation forward, public repentance may not be as

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<sup>38</sup> Buruma, I., *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, (London 1994) 144.

<sup>39</sup> Arendt, H., *The Human Condition* (New York 1959) 213.

<sup>40</sup> Andrieu, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Montiel, 277.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 273.

deepening and transformative as private apologies.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, apologies cannot be used for political purposes, Derrida argues, since this would annihilate their pure essence, because of their religious heritage. Forgiveness cannot be ‘normal’ or ‘instrumentalized’, because “forgiveness only forgives the unforgivable”, and is therefore perceived as irrational. Ricoeur agrees with to this notion of forgiveness being too noble to be institutionalized.<sup>44</sup> Andrieu, who states that a single ‘collective memory’ as an answer to all disputes would be deeply illiberal, voices another problematic feature of the apology. Any unilateral attempt to assess historical debates through law can result in a “miscarriage of justice”.<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Jankelevitch further states that: “Forgiving gigantic crimes against humanity would be committing another crime against human kind”,<sup>46</sup> which complicates the dynamics and debate surrounding the act of apologies. Apologies would be no more than empty gestures, which can never replace judicial retribution or material reparations.<sup>47</sup> A common objection to official apologies is that nations are not individuals, and that there can be no such thing as collective forgiveness. Ignatieff legitimately asks on this particular feature: “Who has the right to apologize? And to whom? Does it make sense to attribute mental states like ‘forgiveness’, ‘resentment’ or ‘trust’ to them?”<sup>48</sup> To compliment this dynamic, it has been observed that after mass violence, people often want to know exactly what happened, and victims are rarely satisfied. For reasonable interpretations to be possible the facts must be determined and limits must be settled.<sup>49</sup> Being sensitive to the historical, cultural, and political contexts of both conflicting groups is necessary for public forgiveness. Because of its context-specific sensitivity, not one single formula for public forgiveness exists, apart from perhaps respect for ‘pluralism and local experimentation’, as Montiel argues.<sup>50</sup> Ignatieff insightfully argues that an immediate, shared truth about the past is impossible, because “truth is related to identity”.<sup>51</sup> Andrieu presents a sobering account; she states that any attempt to fix history and impose a single vision of the past would be problematic, as would “any utopian wish for ultimate reconciliation.”<sup>52</sup>

### 2.2.2 Apologies in reconciling societies

The aforementioned objections to apologies neglect the symbolic role of apology. The recognition of past suffering and of the material and psychological legacies present in a post-conflict society may in itself be some sort of reparation. The strength of apologies lies in the fact that, for many victims,

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<sup>43</sup> Montiel, 274.

<sup>44</sup> Andrieu, 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ignatieff, 188.

<sup>49</sup> Andrieu, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Montiel, 271.

<sup>51</sup> Ignatieff, 174.

<sup>52</sup> Andrieu, 11.



this symbolic recognition is more valuable than any material compensation.<sup>53</sup> It is thus important to further explain how the act of apology positively affects the reconciliatory process.

Pablo de Greiff, an acclaimed policymaker and scholar in this topic, provides the working definition of an unreconciled society that is used in this thesis. He states that “resentment would have a dominant role and characterize the relationships between individuals, groups and citizens and their institutions and/or governments within society.”<sup>54</sup> The question of how an apology can help to overcome resentment remains, however. The study on the concept of apologies is a new and developing field, where numerous accounts of the concept appear to confuse the actual characteristics of apology and its outcomes. Apologies have been defined as a ‘performance of penance,’ the ‘expression of concern for future good relations,’ ‘the offer of repair’ and ‘an acceptance of responsibility and expression of regret.’<sup>55</sup> Two accounts of how apologies work present aspects essential to understanding the relation between apology and reconciliation. The first one involves the act of apology, and concerns the dynamics of exchanging power relations:

What makes an apology work is the exchange of shame and power between the offender and the offended. By apologizing, you take the shame of your offense and redirect it to yourself. You admit to hurting or diminishing someone and, in effect, say that you are really the one who is diminished - I’m the one who was wrong, mistaken, insensitive, or stupid. In acknowledging your shame you give the offender the power to forgive. The exchange is at the heart of the healing process.<sup>56</sup>

In this view, the act of apology redraws current power relations and gives the offended the position to grant or withhold forgiveness. It also shows a unique exchange of humiliation between the offender and the victims, where some apologies help regain hope and dignity in post-conflict societies.

The second account of how apologies are related to reconciliation is from Tavuchis, who argues that apologies are not possible without norms and values that validate the act of apology. In this way, apologies reaffirm societal norms and values:

Genuine apologies may be taken as the symbolic foci of secular remedial rituals that serve to recall and reaffirm allegiance to codes of behaviour and belief whose integrity has been tested and challenged by transgression, whether knowingly or unwittingly. An apology thus speaks to an act that cannot be undone but that cannot go unnoticed without compromising the current and future relationship of the parties, the legitimacy of the violated rule, and the wider social web in which the participants are enmeshed.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Andrieu, 11.

<sup>54</sup> DeGreiff, “The Role of Apologies, 129.

<sup>55</sup> DeGreiff, 129.

<sup>56</sup> Lazare, A., “Go Ahead, Say You’re Sorry,” *Psychology Today*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1995) 40-45; 42.

<sup>57</sup> Tavuchis, N., *Mea Culpa. A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford 1991) 13.

This account shows the norm-affirming nature implicit in apologies and it does not correspond with the feeling of resentment previously mentioned. Therefore, if a society, characterized by resentful relations that are obviously not reconciled, responds to a violent and torturous past where norms and values are breached with an act where the validity of these norms and values is reaffirmed, this will calm or relieve some of the experienced resentment, and therefore contribute to reconciliation.<sup>58</sup> Another direct connection between the act of apology and a sustainable process of reconciliation is Lind's idea that denials of past aggression, injustices and atrocities fuel distrust and elevate fears among adversaries. In failing to atone for past violence, a country, or the political elite shows disdain for its victims' suffering and, by doing this, implies that the violence that occurred was justified in some way, and the perpetrators may again engage in it in the future.<sup>59</sup> In the case of peacemaking efforts, apologetic remembrance is considered to be a costly signal of innocent intentions because sorrow for past wrongdoings makes it harder for leaders to mobilize their populations for war.<sup>60</sup>

Social psychologists have identified a number of components of apologies that transcend cultural differences. First, an apology requires admitting past misdeeds and regretting them. Secondly, when apologetic remembrance affects relations between former adversaries, it should have a strong positive effect as it should encompass a broad range of apologetic policies, such as reparations, statements, commemoration, trials and education.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.2.3 External challenges for reconciliatory processes

*'Not only do about half of all peacebuilding operations fail after around five years, but there also seems to be no clear idea of what 'success' or 'failure' actually mean, nor of what an appropriate time frame for measuring success might be'.<sup>62</sup>*

- Krause and Jutersonke, in: *Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments*

This introductory statement on the character of contemporary peacebuilding discourse is alarming to say the least. According to Conteh-Morgan, both material factors and norms, values, and mores are deeply interconnected, and therefore peacebuilding efforts are very complicated. Moreover, peacebuilding efforts overemphasize the political at the expense of individuals, groups and communities, and may not flourish in war-torn countries in need of security.<sup>63</sup> When reconciliatory processes and acts of apology are examined on whether culture has a distinct influence on the way

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<sup>58</sup> De Greiff, 11.

<sup>59</sup> Lind, J., Apologies in International Relations, *Security Studies*, vol. 18 (2009) 517-556; 519, 521.

<sup>60</sup> Lind, Apologies in International Relations, 521.

<sup>61</sup> Lind, 523.

<sup>62</sup> Krause K., O. Jutersonke, *Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments*, Graduate Institute of International Studies, *SAGE Publications*, Vol. 36, no. 4 (2005) 447-462; 448.

<sup>63</sup> Conteh-Morgan, *Peacebuilding and human security: a constructivist perspective*, 76.

they happen, two dominant aspects need further elaboration to bring the challenges to light. The first potentially problematic feature is the dominant Western discourse that brings its own dynamics to the field. The second is the seemingly unimportant role the concept of culture is given in these post-conflict settings.

### *Dominant discourse on peacebuilding*

The field of conflict resolution reflects Western European and North-American intellectual traditions, where expectations, values and rationality originated and became embedded. The discipline has too often falsely assumed that its methods and theories are universally applicable. However, an essential translation has to be made for managing and resolving conflict that takes place in specific social and cultural contexts.<sup>64</sup> This is argued by Conteh-Morgan, who established that current peacebuilding efforts, whether in Asia, Africa, or Europe, generally go alongside the language of power, exclusion, or defense of an international order, and that this inadequately addresses other important post-conflict issues, such as belonging, emancipation and security.<sup>65</sup> Cultural elements of society in a specific conflict are rarely understood by the international community. The necessary information is not gathered, formal or informal channels are not created and locals are not consulted, regarding the formulation of intervention policy and practice. It frequently occurs that once peacekeeping actors arrive to an area, they realize that the local society obviously has different conceptions of the conflict, different ways of managing it, and different approaches to seemingly simple everyday tasks.<sup>66</sup> A first example of these misinterpretations and misunderstood undertakings is the fact that bottom-up perspectives of local cultures in post-conflict settings are often overlooked by the international community. It rather focuses on a short-term, linear, top-down process of state-centric conflict containment. In this process, the international actors assume that their peacekeeping approach is right, without considering the reality of the conflict on the ground as viewed by the population directly involved.<sup>67</sup> “It is precisely these norms, values, and management systems of the recipients that NGOs and government programs often tend to destroy through their wrongly conceived interventions and programs”, as voice by an anonymous recipient of post-conflict aid.<sup>68</sup> Taking these experiences to the scholarly context, Nobles states that scholars have said little about these dynamics because these features are not within the scope of their topical framework. In historical injustices,

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<sup>64</sup> Duffey, *Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping*, 143.

<sup>65</sup> Conteh-Morgan, 70. Fetherston and Nordstrom affirm the previous statements by saying that peacekeeping actors interpret the geopolitical and sociocultural reality through the lens of their own culture, in: Fetherston A.B. and C. Nordstrom, 'Overcoming Habitus in Conflict Management: UN Peacekeeping and War Zone Ethnography', *Peace and Change*, Vol. 20, No.1 (1995) 94-119; 106.

<sup>66</sup> Duffey, 153.

<sup>67</sup> Fetherston and Nordstrom, *Overcoming Habitus in Conflict Management*, 106.

<sup>68</sup> Duffey, 152.

motivations for asking for remedy of the torturous past, and the desired outcomes are less clear than in recent democratization processes. The passage of time makes the transformation of most injustices difficult. Without the possibility of direct remedy, symbolic gestures like an apology, compensation and reparations, can be regarded as severely deficient.<sup>69</sup>

### *The overlooked role of culture*

To gain consent and legitimacy, a solid cultural understanding of the conflict and the local actors is required. Consent is promoted only if the parties feel understood and are made shareholders in the peace process; international intervention is considered legitimate only when the international community invests in understanding and supporting the local resources and institutions.<sup>70</sup> A seemingly logical related notion is that several cultural features in a particular society require specific understanding to effectively engage in sustainable conflict resolution activities. Duffey argues that ignoring these elements most certainly affect the outcome.<sup>71</sup> Nobles argues that it has not been sufficient to just advocate the remedy of harms suffered by individual citizens. She further insists that benefits are societal and political. Very few studies show how the opinions and attitudes of individual members in post-conflictual societies are effected by these activities. This is an empirical gap that scholars are only now beginning to address. For example, a 2000 survey among political prisoners of the former communist Czechoslovakia found that transitional justice policies help to reduce material inequality and restore the social status of victims.<sup>72</sup>

Conflict resolution practitioners are beginning to acknowledge the effects of cultural differences on the interactions between the actors involved in reconciliatory processes. The purpose of the interaction level of analysis is to understand the dynamics of these differences before they lead to misunderstanding and conflict at the micro-level, which may obstruct the process. Although cultural understanding does not guarantee success, it does rule out a partially useless or unproductive strategy. Culture is a largely unrecognized dynamic that plays an important role in determining the success or failure of conflict resolution processes in peacekeeping interventions.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Nobles M., The prosecution of human rights violence, *The Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 13 (2010) 165-182; 178.

<sup>70</sup> Duffey, 149.

<sup>71</sup> Duffey, 158. Rubinstein states in the same line of thought that peacekeeping operations take place in the context of the daily lives of multiple communities: diplomatic, military, humanitarian and local. In practice, the intersection of these spheres is sometimes problematic. In; Rubinstein, 'Cultural Aspects of Peacekeeping, 553.

<sup>72</sup> Nobles, *The prosecution of human rights violence*, 176-177.

<sup>73</sup> Duffey, 164-165.

## 2.3 The politics of apologies

*"Apologies reifies the memory of the conflict and pays respect to the victims and, as such, creates a political space for compromise"*

- Elazar Barkan, in: *Historical reconciliation: redress, rights and politics*.

The goal of this chapter is to gain insight into how domestic and international participants conceive the act of apology and the accompanying politics. Melissa Nobles has eloquently written about official apologies from politicians to indigenous peoples from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The motives, complicating features and the role of elites in this process have surfaced and it is inspiring to write about these particular dynamics in the particular context of contemporary peacebuilding backed by the international community. Moreover, to find parallels with the research material of the present work on the core concepts *apologies*, *reconciliation* and *culture* and the political discourse of Western states.

### *When political apologies become desirable*

The phenomenon of apology faces a number of important challenges that are recognized within political discourse, where concrete issues such as responsibility, restitution after the specific event, and the political language used all influence how the apology is colored and framed.<sup>74</sup> Nobles argues that apologies are desired, offered and given in order to change the terms and meanings of membership in a political community. What makes apologies desirable? Apology helps to bring history into the conversation, providing justification for political and policy changes and reforms.<sup>75</sup> Why would governments apologize? Certain political elites judge the situation to be in need of reform and are supportive of apologies. Within Western states there are organized groups that demand and provide apology in order to help change the terms and meanings of national membership.<sup>76</sup> Elster identifies three interrelated motivations in transitional justice processes: interest, reason and emotion. He stresses that these processes are highly context-dependent.<sup>77</sup> Ghannam contributes to the conversation about apologies by stating that they are most achievable when both the aggrieved groups and the political elites desire this act. The desire to change the status quo is rooted in a deep sense of grievance of having been subjugated and disregarded by the Other. In their view, to address these grievances, political and economic alterations are required, next to acts of apologies. Apologies in this context play an important role

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<sup>74</sup> Cunningham M., Saying sorry: The politics of apology, *The political quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (1999) 285-293; 292.

<sup>75</sup> Nobles, *The politics of official apologies*, x-xi.

<sup>76</sup> Nobles, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Historical justice in historical perspective* (New York, 2004) 82.

in the individual and group strategies, where the envisioned goal is to reshape their socio-cultural and political future.<sup>78</sup>

*Looking at the other side of the coin*

Successful apologies affect national membership. This is because the acknowledgement of historical injustices and atrocities such as war crimes, in theory a distinct part of the apologizing act, is directly tied to altering membership of a nation in the midst of restoration and dealing with post-conflict challenges. This is the case of the complex situation both in Bosnia and the *Vertriebenen*. When all cultural, ethnic and racial violations are taken into consideration across a multitude of societies and historical cases, it becomes difficult to consider a process that provides significant closure when individuals, groups and societies are engaged in the act of apology.<sup>79</sup> From this point of view, efforts to evoke collective guilt do not necessarily lead to an apology taking place. Two strong incentives are responsible for this: First, pride and honor can override feelings of guilt; second, a prerequisite of feeling guilty is the perception of being guilty of the injustices expressed.<sup>80</sup> The dynamics of attention to elections and public opinion can affect decision making regarding apologies. It is detrimental for elected politicians to know if they will be punished, or rewarded, or if the act of apology will leave them unaffected. A closer look at the act of apologies itself, reveals that the effects of official apologies can be sobering, because apologies are largely diffuse, reinforcing and indirect. On the other hand, the prolonging of non-acknowledgement, minimizing and the upright outright denial of historical injustices have the power of neutralizing reconciliatory efforts, international peacebuilding projects and undermine the groups that experienced wrongdoings, precisely because the wrongs themselves have gone unacknowledged.<sup>81</sup> Another distinct dynamic worth mentioning is that it does not make sense to apologize for particular events, when it is argued that no one individual can be held responsible for the injustice and crime committed. The more general expression of regret in this sense are criticized, because there are no costs attached to these acts, or 'politics of gesture'. In this line of thought, apologizing had long the function of winning favor without really paying for one's mistakes' and arguably was nothing more than "empty, sentimental and cheap words."<sup>82</sup> In addition, there are apparent problems in the language used in apologies. Nuance and ambiguity have led to reservations towards the rise in apologies in the political sphere.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ghannam J., Repairing the past, *American Bar Association*, Vol. 38 (2000) 39-70; 63.

<sup>79</sup> Cunningham, Saying sorry: The politics of apology, 288.

<sup>80</sup> Nobles, 21-22.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>82</sup> Cunningham, 288.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 287.



*Domestic Western policy and policies of the international community*

Nobles argues that there is a difference in the dynamics of apology between domestic Western politics and that of host-countries of contemporary peacebuilding efforts. Western countries are generally democratic; therefore historically they have had open channels of participation for racial and ethnic minorities. In all cases where apologies were appropriate, they were characterized by sharp views on insurmountable cultural and racial differences between majority and minority groups. Furthermore, complex administrative and legal apparatuses were created to manage these differences.<sup>84</sup> Kriesberg deliberates on the difference of domestic and international reconciliatory settings. He describes that four dimensions that influence the consequences of reconciliatory efforts: the degree of integration, the extent of shared identity and culture, the boundedness of entities, and lastly the multiplicity of parties and identities.<sup>85</sup> Because of the dominant role of culture within in the present work, further deliberation on the second dimension now begins. When people within the same culture are compared to others in different societies, the former have a greater sense of solidarity. This common feeling helps to overcome the difficulties in de-escalating a conflict and working together in reconciliatory efforts. Different countries can find some degree of shared culture and not wage war, as illustrated by democratic countries not waging war against one another. And where a conflict does appear, escalation is limited. Generally, the standards of conflict related matters such as justice and legitimate means of struggle are similar on a regional level, compared to the global.<sup>86</sup> In the Bosnia case study this account will be further discussed. This same dynamic is recognized when looking at how Western style and culture are used in international peacebuilding efforts and the host-societies have a different culture, different societal mores and working ethics. In important ways, states in the process of democratizing that have experienced more war and regime change than long-established democracies face the same basic issues, albeit at different times. Dealing with past injustices is an ongoing process, not a one-shot deal. The decision has to be made whether to do anything at all, and if so, what and for how long. Both old and new democracies share this fundamental similarity of facing and focussing on injustices, even if they cannot be fully remedied.<sup>87</sup> Elster states that counteracting mechanisms of injustice and political transition, may keep memory and resentment alive for a century or more.<sup>88</sup> The significance of legal, institutional, ideational and political histories and demographic factors all play a role within the dynamics of apology, necessity of motivation, political strategy and opportunity in accounting for demands or

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<sup>84</sup> Nobles, 9.

<sup>85</sup> Kriesberg L., *Comparing reconciliation actions within and between countries*, in: From conflict resolution to reconciliation, Yaacov-Siman-Tov (Oxford/New York, 2004) 81-110; 94.

<sup>86</sup> Kriesberg, *Comparing reconciliation actions within and between countries*, 94.

<sup>87</sup> Nobles, 13-14.

<sup>88</sup> Elster, *Closing the Books: Historical justice in historical perspective*, 77.

offers of apology. Mobilized groups of actors within a political transition and restorative justice process are separate from others because of their shared culture, which enforces their group identity and upholds important cultural and experiential differences.<sup>89</sup> It is therefore intriguing to see how political motivations in a national context differ from motivations in the international political arena, and how political culture and ideology play a role in the enactment of apologies.

Nobles proposes that liberal parties in Western countries in general embrace the importance of individual rights and a limited government. In the context of this research, this means that liberal parties are generally more hesitant to support indigenous groups in the West, such as the Canadian government repealing the Indian Act in 1969 and the Australian government on Aboriginal group rights in 2008. In contrast, labor parties have the tendency to be more supportive of group claims, as they are committed to social equality and collectivism.<sup>90</sup> These examples show how political culture influences the manner in which apologies are handled in the domestic contexts of democratic countries. However, when the same Western countries establish policies concerning apologies in the international context as part of peacebuilding efforts, the two political cultures seem to have one voice. They tend to give a central role to the act of apology within the overall reconciliatory process of the concerned post-conflict host-country.<sup>91</sup>

As a manner of conclusion, on the characteristics on apologies Cunningham states that a long-term trend in the process of apologies is the role of cultural identity as an aspect of the articulation of the apology, and more specifically, how particular interest groups pose demands regarding the voiced content of the apology. Furthermore, the emphasis on community and cultural groups not only has an increased appeal on the existing policies and constitutional structures, but will play an important role in recognizing past wrongs and their resonance on present implications.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Nobles, 14.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>92</sup> Cunningham, 292-293.

### 3. The Bosnia Case

*"The Balkans have a tendency to produce more history than they can consume."*<sup>93</sup>

- Winston Churchill.

The first case study in this thesis is the reconciliatory process and forthcoming act of apologies in post-Cold War Bosnia. To fully understand one of the darkest chapters of European modern history still fresh to our memory, the concept of historical origins and identities need closer examination. However, to be able to situate the case study in its proper historical background an outline of events is provided. Later, a study of official documentation of the Bosnian context is made to gain further insight into the extent to which culture played a role in the development of the Bosnian reconciliatory process. Looking at both positive and complicating features of the concepts of *reconciliation* and *apology*, the influence *culture* has on these features, is also included to get a full account. Finally, an effort is made to look at culturally-sensitive and country-specific policies from a variety of secondary literature. This provides an alternative to the contemporary peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia.

#### 3.1 Historical background Bosnia case

The Western Balkans has carried the burden of a long and difficult historical legacy, as Hawton says, this is "a region where history is still used to justify war."<sup>94</sup> Babic argues that the Balkans suffered "too much history and too little mutual understanding".<sup>95</sup> In fact, the Western Balkans has experienced a startling four wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone. In 1912, the war of independence from the Ottoman Empire was started by the Kingdoms of Serbia, and Montenegro. In 1914, the declaration of war against Serbia by the Austria-Hungarian Empire started World War I, which ended in 1918. The third war started in 1941 with the Axis invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during World War II. This resulted in a series of civil wars in which resistance groups and Axis-supported groups fought each other.<sup>96</sup> The Balkan wars of 1991-1999 were the last of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which further illustrates its intricate and tormented history.

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<sup>93</sup> Babic, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina: The War Of Narratives'

<sup>94</sup> Hawton, N., Conflicting truths: The Bosnian war, *History Today*, Vol. 59, No. 8 (2009)

<http://www.historytoday.com/nick-hawton/conflicting-truths-bosnian-war> Accessed on 4 April, 2014

<sup>95</sup> Babic.

<sup>96</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksander, A reconciliation model for the Former Yugoslavia, *Peace Review, A journal of social justice*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2000) 103-109; 103.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union is crucial to the understanding of the eruption of ethnic violence and the devastating civil war of the 1990s. Simultaneously, lagging support of the Communist cause for Yugoslavia provoked the gradual dissolution of the communist Socialist Federal Republic. Yugoslavia lost its ideological grounds due to separatist and nationalist movements that had begun gaining momentum in the late 1980s.<sup>97</sup> The Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in March of 1992.<sup>98</sup> This was accomplished by a referendum for independence, where, two-thirds of the population was in favor of independence by virtually unanimous consent; 99%. The remaining one-third, mostly Bosnian Serbs, boycotted the referendum altogether.<sup>99</sup> Directly after these developments Serb militias occupied large territories of Bosnia, provoking a fierce opposition by Muslims and Croats on 6 April 1992, the official date of independence.<sup>100</sup>

### *The war years*

The growing concern of the international community quickly led to peace talks in London a month after the first violent outbursts. The Croats, Muslims and Serbs agreed to the deployment of UN troops. The plan failed since the Bosnian Serbs eventually refused to take part. Additionally, the US was unwilling to deploy armed forces because Washington considered the crisis to be primarily a European issue. The Europeans for their part were hesitant to send troops without US support.<sup>101</sup> During the civil war Bosnian Muslim forces fought against Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs, sometimes simultaneously. The war between Muslims, Croats and Serbs continued, despite the efforts of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). In May and June 1993 'safe areas' were created by UN Security Council mandate. Before the final agreement had been reached by the governments of Bosnian, Serbia and Croatia, many small scale clashes continued and the violence escalated with the Markale market bombings in Sarajevo. During the massacre at the Srebrenica-enclave - one of the appointed 'safe areas' - more than 8,000 Muslims were executed by the Bosnian Serb army.<sup>102</sup> A Dutch UN-battalion had been assigned to protect the enclave and 'Srebrenica' is considered a black page in Dutch history. Bosnian Muslims and Croats jointly fought the Bosnian Serbs in 1994, and especially the backing of the NATO-bombings on Bosnian Serb positions proved crucial to defeat the Bosnian Serb army, between September and October of

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<sup>97</sup> Filipov, Filip, *Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador and Sierra Leone*. Some thoughts from the rights to education and health, *CEPAL – SERIE Politicas sociales*, no. 123, Social Development Division, Human Rights Unit (2006) 25.

<sup>98</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights - Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina*, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1 (3 March 2014) 3.

<sup>99</sup> Filipov, *Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador and Sierra Leone*, 25.

<sup>100</sup> Filipov, 25.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>102</sup> Pavkovic, *A reconciliation model for the Former Yugoslavia*, 103.

1995.<sup>103</sup> Chandler describes that in Bosnia-Herzegovina alone there were thousands of casualties and close to half of its population became displaced or refugees because of the civil war.<sup>104</sup> These figures are backed by the detailed account of Filipov, where it is stated that there were up to 100,000 civilian and military casualties, and close to 1.3 million internally-displaced people and refugees that fled the country as a result of the conflict.<sup>105</sup> Some Bosniaks claim that the total number of deadly casualties hovered between 200,000 and 250,000. Figures by the Research and Documentation Center (IDC) claimed that the toll was not much higher than 100,000. The demographic unit of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) agrees with the findings of the IDC, estimating that the total war related deaths between 1992 and 1995 is around 102,622, of which 25 % Serbs, 65 % Bosniaks and the rest Croats and other ethnic groups.<sup>106</sup> The shocking influence the war had on social and ethnographic aspect is illustrated by the fact that, of a population of 4 million, a staggering 2 million were made refugees and more than 100,000 were killed.<sup>107</sup>

### *Peace Talks*

The Markale bombings and the Srebrenica massacre pushed the United States government to intervene, pressuring the parties to come together for peace negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, in the United States. The final peace agreement, in which the parties finally pledged to live up to the political peacekeeping solutions, was signed in Paris on 14 December 1995.<sup>108</sup> The violent armed conflict, that had lasted three-and-a-half years by then, came to an end with the signing of the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (GFA) or Dayton Accord.<sup>109</sup> Dayton divided Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the majority were either Muslim or Croat, and the Republika Srpska, with mostly Bosnian Serbs. Republika Srpska comprised 49% of the territory, leaving the Federation with 51%. The Dayton Agreement aimed to realize a swift and complete recovery by implementing policies of social mobility, where all civilians were allowed to move freely within the two political entities, and economic revival, with the much needed political consolidation.<sup>110</sup> Since 1995, international presence in the area has been led by the Office of High Representative of the International Community (OHR).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Pavkovic, 103.

<sup>104</sup> Chandler, D., Democratization in Bosnia: The limits of civil society building strategies, *Democratization*, vol. 5, no. 4 (1998) 78-102; 79.

<sup>105</sup> Filipov, 23.

<sup>106</sup> Babic

<sup>107</sup> Hawton, *Conflicting truths: The Bosnian war*.

<sup>108</sup> Filipov, 25.

<sup>109</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1, 3

<sup>110</sup> Filipov, 26.

<sup>111</sup> European Commission, *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012 Progress Report*, SWD (2012) 335, 5.

*Historical identities within reconciliatory processes in Bosnia*

Hawton expresses, about history and politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), that the concept of 'truth' is, like 'beauty'; it is in the eye of the beholder. The ethnic groups involved had so many different interpretations of the truth that not only the cause, but the actual events during the war are up for debate. Every interpretation of history is colored, and 'the other' has been blamed for having a hidden agenda, part of a grand conspiracy.<sup>112</sup> In the prelude to, and throughout the civil war, historical labels were put on ethnic groups in Bosnia. The Serbs were called 'Chetniks', in reference to the Serb-nationalist and loyalist paramilitary organization during World War II. The Croats were labeled the 'Ustasha', after the Fascist, nationalist and hardline Catholic Revolutionary Movement, that ruled a part of Yugoslavia while under Axis occupation during World War II. Finally, the Bosnians were labeled 'Turks', a reference to Ottoman rule of the Balkan region for more than 500 years.<sup>113</sup> The rationale behind this labeling by extremist Serbs lay in accusing Bosnian Muslims of wanting to create a new Islamic Republic as heirs of Ottoman rule. In turn, many Muslims accused Serbs of walking in the footsteps of the 'Chetniks', who aimed to create a greater Serbia in the first half of the 20th century, at the expense of other ethnic groups in the Western Balkans. The First Balkan War is an example of Serbian aspirations of annexing the then Ottoman-controlled Bosnia.<sup>114</sup> Serbian political leaders envisioned themselves as heirs with the historical role of liberating their Medieval and Christian land from the Islamic Ottoman occupiers, who had been there since the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.<sup>115</sup> Fittingly, Croat Ustache leaders in 1941 and Bosnian Muslims in 1992 expressed that they were fighting a struggle for liberation from Serbian aggression.<sup>116</sup> For example, Serb leaders like Milosevic and Karadzic explicitly warned the Serb and Bosnian Serb populations that they were under threat once again referring to both World War II and 500 years of Ottoman rule. Croats and Bosnian Muslims too would be referring to other conflicts 50, 200 or 500 years ago and made evidenced that the misuse of history in nationalist propaganda became alive in the minds of the ordinary people.<sup>117</sup>

It is intriguing to observe how nationalist Serbian movements have positioned their 'origins' historically in relation to the Ottoman era. Serbian sentiment and its attached identity imply that the Serbian people were the original inhabitants, before the Ottomans conquered the Balkan region. This evolves for an important part from the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 which pitted the Ottomans against the Medieval Serb Kingdom led by prince Lazar, a significant figure of Serb nationalism. This battle is "not just a battle, but their nation's identity, and the sacred will and

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<sup>112</sup> Hawton, *Conflicting truths: The Bosnian war*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Pavkovic, 104.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>117</sup> Hawton.

testament which contains religious, ethical, and national principles for all Serbian generations.”<sup>118</sup> Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian leader during the prelude of the Bosnian War, instigated a large crowd during one of his nationalist speeches, giving this very battle a prominent role; “Six centuries later, now, we are being again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet. However, regardless of what kind of battles they are, they cannot be won without resolve, bravery, and sacrifice, without the noble qualities that were present here in the field of Kosovo in the days past.”<sup>119</sup>

Zerubavel provides a useful approach to illustrate these narratives and their complex history, through the use of divergent historical memory overviews.<sup>120</sup> He describes the politics of

historical priority, and gives further insight into different narratives of the two sides and the direct connection between an actually-felt history and a common identity of the community or country. Figure 2 shows why this approach is attractive for nationalist politicians to persuade their audience of giving priority to their own narrative. For a political cause this particular framing is important to take full advantage of the existing political momentum.

The lack of post-civil war consensus between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republik of Srpska, with their diverging visions on the fate of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is one of the main issues contended. A shared perspective is absent as a result of fundamental disagreements regarding the past. The creation of Republika Srpska in 1992 was presented by the Serbian political leadership as a

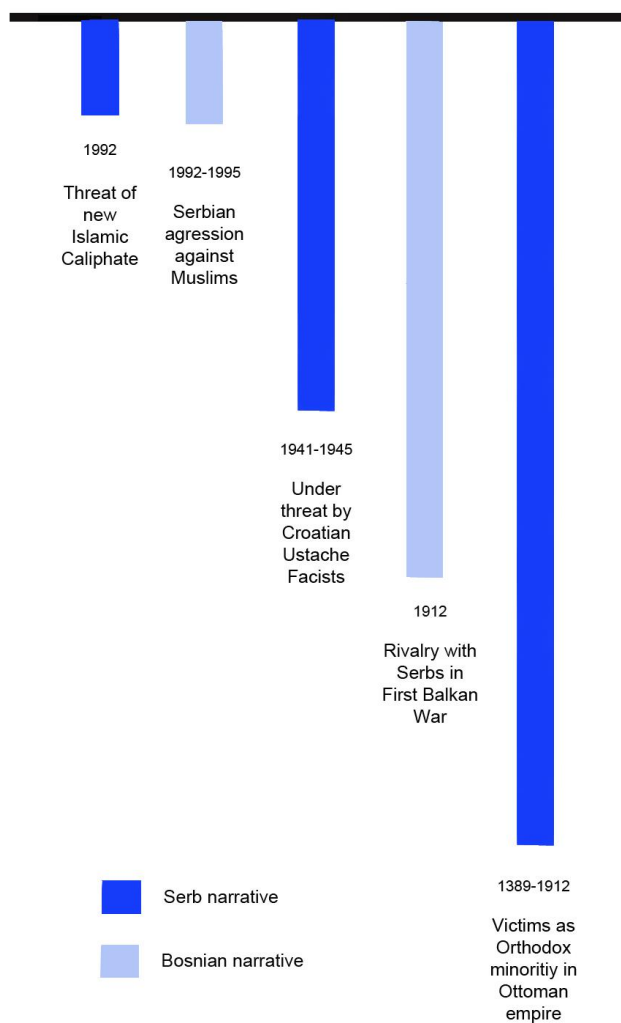


Figure 2. Table of historical priority between Serb and Bosnian narratives

<sup>118</sup> Majectic, “Kosovo and Vidovdan after six hundred years” <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/bookstore/kosovo/kosovo19.htm> accessed on June 2, 2014.

<sup>119</sup> Milosevic’s Speech, Kosovo, 28 June 1989 BBC Translation EE/0496/B/

<sup>120</sup> Zerubavel, E., *Time Maps. Collective memory and the social shape of the past* (Londen 2003) 106-108.



necessary step to protect the Bosnian Serb population against violence and to protect their interests rooted in past events. Likewise, Bosnian parties use historical events to legitimize their struggle for more rights, as being essential to protect the Bosniaks from violence and the narrowing of their living space. The complex reality of diverging narratives in the country is illustrated in a 2014 report by the UN Special Rapporteur; “Bosnia and Herzegovina is confronted with the coexistence and competition of three official memory narratives and ethno-national identity constructions.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1, 4.

### 3.2 Positive reconciliation efforts in the Bosnian context

*“Dedicated to peace, justice, tolerance, and reconciliation.”*

- The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>122</sup>

This section gives insight into the dynamics of the positively perceived core concepts of *culture*, *reconciliation* and *apology*. First, UN and EU documents are assessed in their own right, before further analyzing these documents looking for clues concerning the role of culture in the reconciliatory process in BiH. Another important reason to look into particularly these documents is their relevance for the contemporary geopolitical situation, and what policy makers are considered to act upon in the context of the Bosnia reconciliatory process.

The first part consists of an overview of documents concerning reconciliation and transitional justice, followed by the dynamics of ‘cultural rights’. In the second part documents that specifically point to the Bosnian context and looked at, analyzed for the ‘sign-posts’ to discover a positive stance towards the aforementioned core concepts in these policies.

#### *The UN on post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts*

The UN has a wide range of projects, institutions, aligned NGOs, commissions and sessions in the Security Council that discuss post-conflict reconciliatory efforts. The first reference on transitional justice in a UN working paper shows strong confidence in reconciliation projects. It presents a definition on transitional justice as “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.”<sup>123</sup> Another interesting reference which considers the role of the UN is the 2004 document *Post-Conflict national reconciliation: role of United Nations*. Concerning the context of post-conflict restorative justice and reconciliation mechanisms, it states that when justice is justly served, a countries’ stability and ability to create a new moral climate are strengthened; in that the respect for human rights and the rule of law are central; and that the moral climate subsequently contributes to avoiding denial of the causes of the conflict and the past.<sup>124</sup> The following excerpt from the same document illustrates another positive stance from the point of view of the UN concerning widely viewed goals: “National reconciliation is not possible without a strong mental and physical undergoing of cleansing of the torturous past and emotional tensions of the civil war. The goal is to facilitate and create an

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<sup>122</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Doc. A/50/790 S/1995/999 (30 Nov. 1995) 59.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, ‘Transitional justice and economic, social and cultural rights’, working paper (2014) 5.

<sup>124</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of United Nations, UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 7.

atmosphere of understanding and dialogue, free of xenophobia and guilt.”<sup>125</sup> Another relevant aspect mentioned is that the two key components of post-conflict reconciliation and trust-building are 'justice' and 'prospects'. A historical record, which leaves no room for misinterpretation is needed and justice has to be served.<sup>126</sup> Efforts at promoting reconciliation in post-conflict societies need to create the right conditions, and for this, the diverse historical and societal experiences of those groups involved need to be considered.<sup>127</sup> Lastly, the report argues that the UN should take notice of the importance of local and regional organizations in the field of reconciliation, which are better positioned to engage in these processes in the long run.<sup>128</sup> In this line of thought the 1996 UN Secretary General Report *Agenda for Democratization*, states that the definition of 'democratization' established by the UN is to constitute a 'comprehensive approach' covering the broad range of peace-building priorities,<sup>129</sup> 'top-down' international regulation of elections, economic management and institutional development, and also 'bottom-up' assistance to develop a democratic political culture through civil society-building.<sup>130</sup> The 1994 UN Secretary General Report *Agenda for Development* underlines this by describing:

A vigorous civil society is indispensable to creating lasting and successful development. Locally based NGOs, in particular, can serve as intermediaries and give people a voice and an opportunity to articulate their needs, preferences and vision of a better society. Policy makers should view local actors not as rivals to government but as partners.<sup>131</sup>

Throughout the Secretary General's report, *The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies*, published in 2004, the UN underlines its careful consideration of the particular needs in each host country:

Myriad factors must be assessed, such as the nature of the underlying conflict, the will of the parties, any history of widespread abuse, the identification of vulnerable groups, and the condition and nature of the country's legal system, traditions and institutions.<sup>132</sup>

### *Cultural rights in the context of UN promotion of human rights*

In 2009, the General Assembly of the UN adopted a resolution concerning human rights and transitional justice. There, policies concerning cultural rights, amongst other human rights, were considered. The document states that there is “necessity for the Commission to intensify its efforts”, in “cooperation with national and transitional Governments” and in consultation with “relevant United Nations entities”, and proposing “country-specific post-conflict peacebuilding

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<sup>125</sup> UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 11.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations, Secretary General, *Agenda for Democratization*, UN Doc. A/51/761 (Dec. 1996) 5.

<sup>130</sup> UN Doc. A/51/761, 19.

<sup>131</sup> United Nations, Secretary-General, *Agenda for Development*, UN Doc. A/48/935 (May 1994) 19-20.

<sup>132</sup> UN Doc. S/2004/616, 6.

strategies.”<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, to promote the rule of law and accountability in the design of a post-conflict reconciliation and transitional justice strategy, the “specific context of each situation must be taken into account” and the strategy must; “ensure social cohesion, nation-building, ownership and inclusiveness at the national and local levels”<sup>134</sup> Subsequently, the document underlines that truth-seeking processes should be designed within a “specific societal context and to be founded on broad national consultations with the inclusion of victims and civil society”<sup>135</sup> Lastly, it states that a “comprehensive process of national consultation”, particularly with those affected by human rights violations, would be “contributing to a holistic transitional justice strategy that takes into account the particular circumstances of every situation.”<sup>136</sup>

### *Apologies, reconciliation and expressions of regret in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Official sources and reports describe the significant steps toward reconciliation between the former warring states of BiH, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro 2003 onwards. On 10 September 2003, Serbian President Svetozar Marovic extended a public apology to Croatian President Stjepan Mesic for atrocities committed against Croatian citizens during the war. On 13 November of that same year, Marovic extended another public apology during the Inter-state Co-operation Council meeting “for every evil or tragedy that anyone in BiH suffered from anyone from Serbian militias and the army.”<sup>137</sup> Another good example of positive developments concerning reconciliation is the visit of Serbian President Boris Tadic to BiH at the end of 2004, and his public apology “for those who committed crimes in the name of the Serb people”, which sent a strong signal. During the visit, the BiH and Serbian presidents officially affirmed their countries’ common goal of EU membership.<sup>138</sup>

The Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, shows a continued step towards Bosnian post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, where the EU granted all countries of the Western Balkans a clear perspective of EU membership, subject to fulfillment of the specific conditions, in particular the Copenhagen Criteria and the conditions of the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). The Copenhagen Criteria reflect the EU values like the importance of a functioning market economy, the rule of law, democracy and respect for fundamental rights.<sup>139</sup> A positive development concerning the reconciliatory process, backed by political commentators and scholars, is official Serb

<sup>133</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Resolution on Human rights and transitional justice*, A/HRC/RES/12/11 (Oct. 2009) 2.

<sup>134</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/12/11, 3.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>137</sup> European Union, *Report to the European Parliament by the OHR and EU Special Representative for BiH*, 2003 <http://europa.ba/News.aspx?newsid=4988&lang=EN> Accessed on April 6, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> European Union, *Report to the European Parliament by the OHR and EU Special Representative for BiH*, 2004 <http://europa.ba/News.aspx?newsid=4986&lang=EN> accessed on April 6, 2014.

<sup>139</sup> European Union, Communication from the Commission to the the European Parliament and the Council, *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014*, 14942/13 ELARG 136 COWEB 145 (17 Oct. 2013) 1.

parliamentary recognition and condemnation of the crimes committed in Srebrenica.<sup>140</sup> Also, the new Croatian president Ivo Josipovic has emphasized his aim to restore good neighbourly relations and also expressed deep regret regarding the division of Bosnia and the role Croats played in it, not to forget the suffering of innocent victims. Bakir Izetbegovic, a Bosniac member of the BiH-presidency, also apologized on Serbian television for all the innocent victims of the Bosnian army.<sup>141</sup> Another act worth mentioning is the signing of the Istanbul Declaration, in 2010, by the presidents of BiH, Serbia and Turkey, agreeing to continue to work on peace, stability and prosperity in the Balkans.<sup>142</sup>

### *Goals and tasks of the EU*

In Bosnia, the post-conflict efforts have been mostly implemented within the context of the new country becoming a full member of the European Union. Thus, the evolution of European reconciliation after two major wars is seen as an inspiration for BiH. The EU High Representative Catherine Ashton points to the EU as an example BiH should follow. She made this explicit in her speech commemorating Srebrenica on 11 July 2013:

“The decades-long reconciliation process that brought to the creation of the European Union should inspire the reconciliation in the Western Balkans. Large steps have been taken in that direction, but there is still much to be done, so that citizens of the region can fully enjoy peace and prosperity, together with their fellow Europeans.”<sup>143</sup>

The official goal of the EU in the context of peacebuilding is the implementation of liberal peace. Therefore, it focuses on increasing international cooperation, developing and consolidating the rule of law and democracy, strengthening the security of both the EU and the international community, fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>144</sup> With this in mind, the core tasks the Office of the High Representative’s Mission Implementation Plan of 2003 encapsulates are: entrenching the rule of law, ensuring that extreme nationalists, war criminals, and their organized criminal networks cannot reverse peace implementation, reforming the economy, strengthening the capacity the governing institutions of BiH, especially at the State-level, establishing State-level civilian command and control over the armed forces, reforming the security sector, paving the way for the country’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic framework and promoting the sustainable return of refugees and internally-displaced persons.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, D., BiH after the elections - A tale of disillusioned optimism, in: (eds.) Rupnik, *The Western Balkans and the EU: The hour of Europe*, European Union Institute of Security Studies (Chaillot Papers 2011) 49.

<sup>141</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, 48.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>143</sup> Speech of the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the commemoration of Srebrenica on 11-07-2013, accessed on April 6, 2014.

<sup>144</sup> Treaty on European Union, *The Maastricht Treaty*, 1992 O.J. C 191/1 (29 July, 1992) 7, 38.

<sup>145</sup> Report to the European Parliament by the OHR and EU Special Representative for BiH, 2003

### 3.3 Complex features of the Bosnian reconciliation process

*“The EU has a tendency to treat culture as an instrument that can only be taken into consideration when doing so is conducive to its political project in the region. Aspects of local culture which deviate considerably from its norms are considered a potential threat to the EU peacebuilding project”<sup>146</sup>*

- Kappler and Richmond, in: *Peacebuilding and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

For the analysis of the role of culture within the Bosnian reconciliatory process, documents that describe complicating ambiguous features towards culture-sensitive and localized peacebuilding agency are identified and analyzed next. First, the core issue of ethnic divisions and diverging narratives in contemporary BiH society are taken into consideration. Also the changing political culture in BiH and the standstill of the EU-integration process are described. The core issue of failing peacebuilding efforts is attributed to the fact that international actors built prescriptive frameworks without involving locals to understand how society is organized, and without accounting for its culturally-sensitive and country-specific contextualization.

#### *Ethnic divisions and separate narratives*

The first official document on ethnic division and diverging narratives originates at the UN General Assembly, and is dated 3 March 2014. In it, the Special Rapporteur illustrates the complex reality concerning diverging narratives in the country: “Bosnia and Herzegovina is confronted with the coexistence and competition of three official memory narratives and ethno-national identity constructions.”<sup>147</sup> From a historical and political perspective it is argued that, twenty years after the end of the war, ethnic divisions between communities seem to be exaggerated for political gain. While the younger generation desires a reconciliatory stance with the past and their former enemies, ethnic contrast and veiled hate speeches by nationalist politicians are imposed on them on a daily basis.<sup>148</sup> The report also shows that senior decision-makers and politicians are blocking positive efforts. A widely shared view is that the political situation has been deteriorating since 2005, and that every issue has become politicized, in particular those concerning culture and education.<sup>149</sup> Another development is the hijacking of cultural and educational institutions within the prevailing ethnic division and diverging narratives by the same senior decision-makers and nationalist politicians. The Special Rapporteur explains: “too often, culture and education are hijacked by the rhetoric of ethnic division, with a negative impact on cultural, academic and artistic

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<sup>146</sup> Kappler, S. and O. Richmond, *Peacebuilding and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Resistance or emancipation?*, *Security Dialogue*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2011) 261-278; 266.

<sup>147</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1, 4.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>149</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1, 7.

life.”<sup>150</sup> These observations are backed by independent local political analysts, who state that the established Bosnian narrative on the war, which is passed along by most mainstream Western media, focuses mainly on Bosniaks as the only victims of the war. This distorted narrative is endangering the fragile Bosnian society.<sup>151</sup> The origins of this development lie in the Post-Communist Re balkanisation of the narratives, described by Grigor and Severin, which consist of the “thawing out and resurrection of cultural, ethnic and religious disputes and wars, in search of mono-ethnic states based on mono-cultural societies inspired by a mythology of perfect societies.”<sup>152</sup>

Next, the *EU Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges Report to the Council of EU on Bosnia and Herzegovina* is used to analyze ethnic divisions and diverging narratives. On this matter, the document states that many bilateral problems have remained unsolved; fundamentally, historical views are still opposed. The report gives the example of prevalent hate speech and other manifestations of intolerance. Another challenge is the issue of dysfunctional institutions due to inter-ethnic disputes.<sup>153</sup> These observations are backed by civil society publications, one of which from Babic. In his work *The war on Narratives*, he describes that, “a culture of denial is still the leading paradigm in Serbian social cohesion”. This is problematic to say the least, when brought into the context of a post-conflict condition.<sup>154</sup> The Bosnian High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, said in an interview with TIME in Sarajevo in 2006, that there is a lot of fear and that people are hearing the same rhetoric as they were in the early 1990’s.<sup>155</sup> An example of the daily experiences of regular people is that of Emsuda Mujagic, a Muslim woman who lost 48 family members, murdered in camps; “I don’t think it’s a good idea for the international community to leave. I am afraid. The politicians will just have a free hand to build up ethnic intolerance and fear.”<sup>156</sup>

### *Changing political climate*

The elections of 2006 opened up new divides among political leaders in BiH, particularly on their vision of the future. The leading Bosnian Muslim candidate to prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, expressed that he would like the two entities dismantled, arguing that this would change the new states into citizen-based, rather than ethnically based states. Critics fear that these policies would

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>151</sup> Babic, *The war on Narratives*

<sup>152</sup> Grigor, A.N. and G. Severin, *Debalkanizing the Balkans. A Strategy for a Sustainable Peace in Kosovo*, IPG, vol. 1 (2007) 123-139; 127.

<sup>153</sup> 14942/13 ELARG 136 COWEB 145, 13.

<sup>154</sup> Babic

<sup>155</sup> Purvis, Andrew, *Can Bosnia's Peace Survive?*, *TIME MAGAZINE Europe*, vol. 168, no. 15, (2006)

<http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/article/0,13005,901061002-1538599,00.html>

Assessed on April, 8th

<sup>156</sup> Purvis, *Can Bosnia's Peace Survive?*



change the country into a Muslim-dominated state, with a strongly centralized government.<sup>157</sup> Another rather discouraging account is seen from the statistics related to visions of the country's future: 87% of Serbs would agree with the secession of Republika Srpska to become independent. 43% of Bosniak Croats would favor splitting the Federation of BiH into Croat and Bosniak entities.<sup>158</sup> Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of the Bosnian Serb Republic illustrates the hardened political reality. Shortly after the end of the war he was considered a man of good will in the eyes of the international community. He was seen as a supporter of reconciliation and the rebuilding of the country. However, Dodik now questions the peace agreements that ended the war, stating that his Serb-dominated Republic could join Serbia.<sup>159</sup>

While looking at political cultures in post-conflict settings in BiH, the emotionally charged nationalist rhetoric can be seen on the one hand, against the rather technical nature of the EU agenda on the other. The EU agenda is losing the so-called rhetoric war being waged in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>160</sup>

#### *A standstill in the process of integration with the EU*

There is ambiguity regarding the integration process of BiH. A document on the development of the Enlargement project of the EU published in 2005 stated that the BiH had made progress in setting priorities in the implementation, and was coping with the complex and inefficient constitutional structures that often lead to policies being implemented at a slow pace or even coming to a standstill.<sup>161</sup> Eight years later a more direct and sobering statement concerning this issue was published, describing the "standstill in the European integration process" of BiH. This conclusion was mainly drawn from the difficult co-ordination mechanism between the EU and BiH.<sup>162</sup> The Commission subsequently expressed that the refusal of BiH to adapt the Stabilisation and Association Agreement was unacceptable.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, the same body reported that for BiH politicians, the EU agenda did not appear to be a priority, due to ethnic interest and short term party policies. This resulted in little progress being made towards anchoring BiH in the EU.<sup>164</sup> Füle, the Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy wondered if BiH would continue their negotiations on the accession in the EU. Becoming a member state would mean receiving specific benefits and financial assistance. At the same time, the Commissioner expressed his concerns about BiH dropping its candidacy, because the alternative would be

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<sup>157</sup> Purvis, Can Bosnia's Peace Survive?

<sup>158</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, 54.

<sup>159</sup> Purvis.

<sup>160</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, 58.

<sup>161</sup> European Union, Communication from the commission, *Enlargement strategy paper 2005*, 14293/05 ELARG 74 COWEB 188 NT 29 (15 Nov. 2005) 8.

<sup>162</sup> 14942/13 ELARG 136 COWEB 145, 20-21.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>164</sup> 14942/13 ELARG 136 COWEB 145, 36.

worrisome. Moreover, the country would be cut off from development within the EU, which would have a significantly negative impact for businesses and citizens.<sup>165</sup> This standstill is described in a report on the police mission in BiH, that identifies “fundamental weaknesses built into the law enforcement and security structures in BiH”, interestingly enough regional partners “loudly articulate” for substantial transformation in this particular field.<sup>166</sup>

The 2010 Progress Report is a rather sobering account on the integration of BiH into the EU: “No steps have been taken to address the problem of legislation relevant for EU integration.”<sup>167</sup> A lack of vision and coordination of government, failure of a harmonized legislation, deliberate political obstruction and the lack of enforcement mechanisms are mentioned as main causes.<sup>168</sup> The Progress Report for 2012 describes that focus on EU membership was not maintained due to political disagreements.<sup>169</sup> Another insightful image that backs this problematic integration process into the EU is that BiH has aligned itself with only 39 of the 70 European Union declarations and decisions.<sup>170</sup>

The international community foresaw a quick and steady post-conflict mission. However, twenty years after the end of the war, the international community still needs to commit presence in BiH, because of the ambiguous outcomes of the peacebuilding effort. A UN document stated an assumption that the first one-year mandate of the OHR would be sufficient to solve the problems, whereas the mission of the OHR is still ongoing.<sup>171</sup> Since the end of the war, the OHR has been tasked with the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Its mandate would stop when the country would be on track towards the EU and NATO. However, with the negative outcome of this process in several accounts, the international community has not seen plausible reasons to stop its mandate.<sup>172</sup>

### *Critique to the Dayton Accords and the ICTY*

The Dayton Peace Agreement is an obliged point of reference in the post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in BiH. It is intriguing to discover throughout the literature that there are significant points of criticism to this agreement, especially on the question whether it brings self-sustaining peace. The EU affirms that the agreement did end the war; however, the transitional process established a

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<sup>165</sup> Fule, Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy, ‘*Time to deliver*’ (10 Oct 2012)

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/fule/docs/articles/20121010\\_bih\\_article.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/docs/articles/20121010_bih_article.pdf) accessed on april 4, 2014

<sup>166</sup> European Union, EU police Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Monthly Assessment Report for the month November 2004, 16241/04 17 EUPM21 COSDP 829 (15 Nov. 2007) 4.

<sup>167</sup> European Union, Commission Staff Working Document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010 Progress Report, SEC (2010) 1331 (9 Nov. 2010) 8.

<sup>168</sup> SEC (2010) 1331, 8.

<sup>169</sup> European Union, Commission Staff Working Document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012 Progress Report SWD (2012) 335 (10 Oct. 2012) 4.

<sup>170</sup> SWD (2012) 335, 5.

<sup>171</sup> UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 11.

<sup>172</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, 55.

complex administrative and political structure, which accumulated serious challenges concerning contemporary decision-making and consensus-building.<sup>173</sup> The framework of the Dayton Agreement has been used by some local actors to legitimize ethno-nationalistic agendas since it over-emphasizes ethnic and religious affiliations. Furthermore, it promotes the 'false notion of hermetically sealed communities and encourages segregation policies'.<sup>174</sup> This affirmation is backed by Mirza Kusić, BiH Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, who states that the topic of reconciliation in BiH is still very controversial and difficult, as it brought peace but failed to distinguish between aggressor and victim.<sup>175</sup> Also scholars and political analysts express their worries and criticism about Dayton. Purvis argues that tensions are rooted in the agreement itself, because it created a Muslim-Croat Federation and a Serb Republic, with as a result two ethnically-based entities within BiH. More than a decade later, the two entities appear to be separate countries, with their own parliaments and Prime-Ministers, and their own religions.<sup>176</sup> While certain aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreements are considered successful, the implementation of others, like transitional justice and refugee return, remains problematic.<sup>177</sup> There is an important and influential Annex in the Dayton Agreement, which states that only members of the Constituent Peoples, that is to say being Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs can be elected president. Therefore, the other fourteen minorities in BiH, such as Roma, Jews, Albanians or Montenegrins, do not enjoy the same political rights. The European Court of Human Rights, in its *Sejdic and Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina* ruled that this exclusion is discriminatory and that the BiH-Constitution needs to be amended to reflect the ruling.<sup>178</sup>

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has been criticized in the wake of local Bosnian efforts towards post-conflict reconciliation. According to the UN representative for BiH, a shortcoming of the ICTY is that it did not identify representatives from the media. The media had a vital role in the process of brainwashing and manipulation that shaped ethnic intolerance and violence.<sup>179</sup> Also, the ICTY is perceived by the Serbian people as a political tool of the international community. Instead of bring perpetrators to justice, the ICTY is perceived to be a political issue on domestic agendas, which overshadow its core tasks.<sup>180</sup> Barkan points out that the concepts of accountability and justice do not have universal meaning. Only in a local

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<sup>173</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/25/49/Add.1, 4.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>175</sup> UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 10.

<sup>176</sup> Purvis, Can Bosnia's Peace Survive?, <http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/article>  
Assessed on April, 8th

<sup>177</sup> Baker, Catherine, Prosperity without security post-conflict Bosnia: The precarity of interpreters in postsocialist, Postconflict Bosnia-Herzegovina, *Slavic Review*, vol. 71, no. 4 (2012) 849-872; 849.

<sup>178</sup> Sarajlic-Maglic, 53. For a fuller description of the *Sejdic and Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case, I refer to: European Court of Human Rights, *The Sejdic and Finci vs. Bosnia Herzegovina Judgement*, Applications nos. 27996/06 and 34836/06 (Dec. 22, 2009)

<sup>179</sup> UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 10.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 30.

context can these concepts become specific.<sup>181</sup> The Serbian UN representative has also argued that domestic judiciary systems are better equipped and positioned to seek justice for victims on the long run, and that domestic verdicts will be accepted much easier than those given by foreign courts.<sup>182</sup>

#### *Ambiguity on culturally-sensitive efforts*

Official documents on the role that cultural sensitivity and society-specific measures have within peacebuilding efforts in BiH, such as the Commission for Enlargement and the European Neighborhood Policy, state that: “The path of every country towards EU membership is one of dialogue and compromise.” However, for the Commissioner “there is no viable alternative future EU membership.”<sup>183</sup> This image has been confirmed in another official EU-document, the Enlargement Strategy Paper; “BiH can only fully become a member state when it has met the fully-fledged criteria.”<sup>184</sup> Analysts and scholars argue that this approach does not empower local agency in the long term, and thus “extension of external regulation could make international withdrawal problematic and lead towards the development of an international protectorate rather than facilitating the creation of a stable self-governing democracy.”<sup>185</sup> For instance, Yordan argues that sustainable peace in BiH has been resisted by Bosnian political leaders, among other things, because they do not agree with the provisions of the Dayton Agreement, nor on the insistence of the international community that the agreement needs to be fully implemented.<sup>186</sup>

Kappler and Richmond describe that after a promising reception by national and international actors, the Stabilisation and Association Process has not lived up to the high expectations of the international community. Local actors have voiced their concerns that the EU and other external actors have fixed standards and little contextual awareness. What the EU has to offer to the Bosnian people is not modifiable and only works if the policy prescriptions of the EU are fully adopted by local actors.<sup>187</sup> An account that compliments the imperious character of these normative commitments, is that few Western countries would accept some of the more intrusive policies imposed on Bosnian society, as emphasized by Sharp.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Barkan, (2006) 6.

<sup>182</sup> S/PV.4903 Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of United Nations, 30.

<sup>183</sup> Fule - ‘Time to deliver’ – Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy 10 Oct 2012 [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/fule/docs/articles/20121010\\_bih\\_article.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/docs/articles/20121010_bih_article.pdf) accessed on april 4, 2014

<sup>184</sup> 14293/05 ELARG 74 COWEB 188 NT 29, 2.

<sup>185</sup> Chandler, *Democratization in Bosnia*, 81.

<sup>186</sup> Yordán, Carlos L., Society Building in Bosnia: A Critique of Post-Dayton Peacebuilding Efforts, *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2003) 59-74; 63.

<sup>187</sup> Kappler, Richmond, *Peacebuilding and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 262-263.

<sup>188</sup> Sharp, D.N., *Addressing Dilemmas of the Global and the Local in Transitional Justice*, 28 Emory Int’l Rev. (Forthcoming, 2015) 1-49; 48.

Furthermore, the Report of the Secretary General on transitional justice in post-conflict societies is explicit about the shortcomings:

The international community has not always provided assistance that is appropriate to the context. The emphasis has been on foreign experts, foreign models and foreign-conceived solutions. Both national and international experts have a vital role to play.<sup>189</sup>

### *Who is to blame for the failing progress?*

The international community mainly blames the local host society for obstacles to the reconciliatory and democratization processes, and these are identified at the level of Bosnian society. First, there is the problem of an ethnic mentality: “the passive acceptance of prejudices which must be overcome for real and psychological barriers to inter-ethnic reconciliation to be dismantled”.<sup>190</sup> Secondly, the problems stemming from a lack of awareness of a democratic society, make informed choices at elections very difficult:

The elections served as the basis for the establishment of democratic institutions, yet more efforts are required to increase citizen’s awareness of the working and roles of their authorities, the rule of law, and democratic rule and procedures.<sup>191</sup> The OHR has perceived this failure purely as the result of the passivity of civil society, the fragmented nature of the state structure and failing local politicians.<sup>192</sup>

In this context, localized peacebuilding agency is often seen as resistance, while these local actors feel the urge to reclaim the state from external interests. According to Zoran Jorgakieski, the OSCE Democratization Branch Co-ordinator for Dialogue and Reconciliation:

These groups are run by intellectuals but they have very little influence. During the war they stayed aside and withdrew from politics. These are the people we have to focus upon. They are a minority, but the cream of Bosnian intellectual society. They have good relations with their colleagues across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. They are top intellectuals; you can’t expect ordinary people to understand them. The language they use is too complicated. People doubt they are good patriots.<sup>193</sup>

The overqualified Bosnians active in Bosnian civil society are seen as elitist, whereas political parties have a popular base on the ground who know how to articulate commonly held fears and problems.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> UN Doc. S/2004/616, 6.

<sup>190</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Democratization Branch, *Monthly Report*, 1, Feb. 1997, 3.

<sup>191</sup> OSCE, 3.

<sup>192</sup> Kappler, Richmond, 262.

<sup>193</sup> Chandler, 86. Interview with Zoran Jorgakieski, OSCE Democratization Branch Co-ordinator for Dialogue and Reconciliation.

<sup>194</sup> Chandler, 85.

The EU peacebuilding framework is based on the principles of the *liberal peace* model, which is the sum of uncoordinated constituent parts. The local interests in BiH are bypassed by the historical character of the EU in social, economic and political terms.<sup>195</sup> As a result, a seemingly paradoxical dynamic is emerging, where localized peacebuilding has become resistant to EU peacebuilding efforts.<sup>196</sup> Chandler states that research point out that the top-down approach of international regulation and the bottom-up approach of empowerment of developing civil society overall may have a conflicting, rather than complimentary, impact on Bosnian society, unlike what is assumed by internationally-led peacebuilding efforts.<sup>197</sup> The statement made by local politicians in the Focus Group on EU Accession Parliamentary Commission in the Bosnian Parliament on 3 September 2009 is illustrative of this complicating dynamic: “It has been suggested that the EU and international stance on Bosnia has imprisoned or even disabled local agency in unintended ways”.<sup>198</sup> International actors tend to back a specific cultural discourse that fits into their goals and gives the label of authenticity to that particular strand of local culture. In the EU peacebuilding context this means civil society that has access to international actors is automatically linked to specific normative prescriptions on what the ideal civil society looks like.<sup>199</sup> Tobias Flessenkemper, Senior Policy adviser of the EU Police Mission stated in an interview in 2014;

There is a growing awareness of exclusive tendencies, where the EU tends to ignore individual actors, collectivities or other groups that somehow do not fit into their market-economy and liberal-rights framework.<sup>200</sup>

An illustration of these worsening circumstances, and of the contested nature of the peacebuilding efforts, are the 2010 protests which did not benefit Bosnian civilians. The notion is based on a liberal peacebuilding framework, where the individual is seen as a consumer, worker and producer, where in reality the individual is first and foremost part of a social framework, embedded in contextual and cultural networks.<sup>201</sup>

#### *Critique on state-centric post-conflict peacebuilding*

In theory, state-building efforts serves as a mechanism to promote social cohesion and integration. However, this can only be a long-term goal, because short-term results show that these practices are met with resistance and possibly even disrupting local dynamics.

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<sup>195</sup> Kappler, Richmond, 262.

<sup>196</sup> Richmond, O., Resistance and the post-liberal peace, *Millennium*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (2010) 665–692: 683.

<sup>197</sup> Chandler, 80.

<sup>198</sup> Kappler, Richmond, 264.

<sup>199</sup> Linnekin, J., “Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity”, *American Anthropologist*, Vol 93, No. 2 (1991) 446-449; 447.

<sup>200</sup> Kappler, Richmond 265.

<sup>201</sup> Zuvella, M. and M. Jelenek, Police battle Bosnians protesting IMF-imposed cuts’

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/04/21/us-bosnia-protest-veterans-idUSTRE63K4I120100421> , accessed on April 4, 2014.

Cohen et al. argue:

Increasing central state claims for resources intrude into and compete with preexisting structures of rights and obligations which tie those resources to sub-national collectivities, in which conflict, resistance and violence or often the result.<sup>202</sup>

This insight is backed by the UN-High Commissioner, who stating that “transitional justice is built on the assumption that social, economic and political changes are possible when significant negotiations of power are taking place in a state. Nevertheless, transitional justice emerged to deal only with a limited dimension of those changes: the legacy of large-scale atrocities and preventing their reoccurrence.”<sup>203</sup> Kappler and Richmond further deliberate on this feature by explaining that the EU builds upon a state-centric approach, with the goal of encouraging dialogue between government and civil society will take place. This assumes that local actors will eventually share the principles and vision of the peacebuilders. In practice however, a very critical stance has been taken towards the free trade principles, especially in a post-communist society such as BiH, where capitalism has so far failed to take root both economically and culturally.<sup>204</sup> According to a 1998 World Bank report on the international community’s peacebuilding efforts, there was a rather astounding discovery that in post-conflict peacebuilding processes, the social fabric of the concerned society is virtually ignored.<sup>205</sup> DeGreiff brings forward another noteworthy argument that contemporary peacebuilding and transitional justice efforts, both in literature and in practice, have an institutional bias, where the focus lies almost exclusively on empowering strong institutions and hardly focusing on individual or cultural dimensions.<sup>206</sup> The Bosnian case study shows that self-sustaining peace cannot be imposed by the international community, but needs to be embraced and constructed by Bosnian citizens and officials. However, Yordan states that the international community has shown little support for alternative peacebuilding approaches.<sup>207</sup> The next chapter discusses, amongst other features, alternative approaches that have emerged locally.

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<sup>202</sup> Cohen, Y., B.R. Brown and A.F.K. Organski, “The Paradoxical Nature of State Making: The Violent Creation of Order,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 75, no. 4 (1981) 901-910; 902.

<sup>203</sup> UN, *Transitional justice and economic, social and cultural rights*, 6.

<sup>204</sup> Kappler and Richmond, 268.

<sup>205</sup> Colleta N.J, M.Cullen and J. Mendelson Forman, *Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Perspectives and Prospects*, Workshop Report, World Bank Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (Washington 1998) 11.

<sup>206</sup> De Greiff, 13.

<sup>207</sup> Yordan, *Society Building in Bosnia: A Critique of Post-Dayton Peacebuilding Efforts*, 72.



### 3.4 Culture-sensitive and society-specific Bosnian peacebuilding framework

*“Effective and sustainable approaches begin with a thorough analysis of national needs and capacities, mobilizing to the extent possible expertise resident in the country.”*<sup>208</sup>

- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2004

Statements and comments from official UN and EU documents have been used to discuss the role of both agencies in post-conflictual reconciliatory and peacebuilding efforts in general and in post-civil war BiH in particular. The following section discusses ways to focus on more culture-sensitive and society-specific peacebuilding efforts with the example of Bosnia in mind. This does justice to the victims of mass atrocities, the problematic features of post-conflict societies and the questions about empowerment of local agency.

#### *The importance of a culturally-sensitive approach*

De Greiff states that the concepts of cultural, individual and social transformations are still currently being debated within philosophy, sociology and political science.<sup>209</sup> Lederach proposes an approach in which former adversaries explicitly use their own cultural context as a resource to best use their problem solving abilities. This approach takes the atrocities endured seriously and keeps in mind that while the pre-war inter-communal relations have been affected by violence, there are still shared common values, shared ideas, discourses and institutions, which might be the first step toward sustainable reconciliatory processes.<sup>210</sup> The definition of redress, where culturally and historically sensitive components of post-conflict peacebuilding are taken into consideration, are relevant for the analysis. Implementing universal standards that encompass human rights in a ‘local setting’, negotiated among opposing parties, characterized by attention to grave violations of human rights during the conflict and ‘history of the conflict and consistent with the needs of the particular society’ is paramount.<sup>211</sup>

Victims of war and other atrocities become visible when culturally-sensitive and context-specific interventions take place in transitional justice and post-conflict societies. It is not statistical data from official truth commission or tribunals, but rather cultural interventions have the potential to help understand the complexity of problems and understandings of the victims.<sup>212</sup> In an attempt to deconstruct the very ethnic identities that were one of the main causes for the disruptive

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<sup>208</sup> UN Doc. S/2004/616, 6.

<sup>209</sup> De Greiff in: Ramirez and Barat, *Transitional Justice, Culture, Society: Beyond Outreach*, ICTJ Advancing Transitional Justice Series (New York, 2014) 11.

<sup>210</sup> Pouligny, B., Promoting democratic institutions in post-conflict societies: giving diversity a chance, *International peacekeeping*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (2000) 17-35; 19.

<sup>211</sup> Barkan (2006) 4.

<sup>212</sup> De Greiff, 18.

outbreak of violence, new dialogical processes could be taken into consideration. For a successful application of conflict resolution to de-escalate conflict and to transform attitudes, Benjamin Broome introduced a concept that encompasses a new 'third culture'. This approach emphasizes a working relationship by reconciling opposing interests and building a culture of cooperation and trust.<sup>213</sup> International actors within peacebuilding projects should be focused on the local needs and cultural logics of the particular society, what Pouligny described "fulfilling the dual function of both political socialization and permanent renegotiation of the rules of the game."<sup>214</sup>

### *Reconsidering contemporary reconciliatory concepts*

It is suggested by scholars that self-sustaining peace to become a reality in Bosnia, can be achieved by reconsidering traditional peacebuilding conceptions and practices.<sup>215</sup> Recent research to that effect indicates that international actors in peacebuilding efforts prioritize humanitarian relief, democracy-building, the mobilization of armed forces and economic reconstruction, rather than inter-ethnic reconciliation. This is intriguing, because peacebuilding missions are only successful, when former foes are willing to change their relationships towards cooperative interaction.<sup>216</sup> In the case of Bosnia, the success of the peacebuilding project should not be mainly viewed and measured by how many bills have passed the legislature, how many Dayton-supporting politicians are elected or how the economy grows. An equally important aspect includes the active empowerment of the process of former enemies burying their hatreds toward one another.<sup>217</sup> Post-conflict societies need a reconciliatory process, tailored to the specific needs of the country, one that takes into account the culture and history, and the circumstances that triggered the violence in the first place. A key role on this road is a genuine internal process where local actors take responsibility for pushing forward ethnic divisions and the violence that has occurred.<sup>218</sup>

### *The need for the empowerment of civil society*

It has been argued that perhaps more than anywhere else in the former Yugoslavia, it is important to rebuild tolerance and pluralism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without these two vital aspects a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina will be problematic in the future. Accountability, legitimacy and competence in public life are essential and these can only be achieved "through activating the electorate and a well-functioning and plural base that is characterized by cultural and social

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<sup>213</sup> Yordan, 65.

<sup>214</sup> Pouligny *promoting democratic institutions*, 19.

<sup>215</sup> Yordan, 59.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>218</sup> UN Doc. S/PV.4903, 29. Quote from Serbian and Montenegrin UN representative Sahovic.

relationships which can act as a counterbalance to the market and the state.”<sup>219</sup> Smilie, from the NGO CARE active in BiH, argues that without these fundamental features, an alternative would be paternalism corruption, exploitation, and ultimately war. Chandler supports this statement by arguing that the emergence of a strong civil society in Bosnia will be instrumental for a pluralistic and democratic society. Civil society plays an important role, because it has the potential for transcending on the problematic features of post-conflict Bosnian society, by creating new partnerships and alliances that not always lie within the realm of the state.<sup>220</sup> More specifically, without civil society, economic reconstruction aid will have little impact on combating the political and social divisions within Bosnia.<sup>221</sup>

To make a clear parallel between reconciliatory processes and a well-functioning civil society, the definition of Yordan of self-sustaining peace as “not only the cessation of aggression and atrocities, but it is also empowering of individuals in post-conflict and post-settlement, which represents the needs and interests of Bosnian citizens by creating new social orders, without worries of the renewal of fighting”, is used.<sup>222</sup> Additionally, the European Union extended its peacebuilding operations over a long period of time, leaving troops and officials functioning in the area well after the Dayton Peace Agreement. “The policies conducted over the twenty-year period of peace resulted in a drop of the Bosnian refugees living abroad, a clear sign of the post-conflict recovery.”<sup>223</sup> However, this shows that lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina are multidimensional: identity-based conflict needs solid efforts at all levels of society, seeking improvement for each sector, through political and economic stabilization, and capacity building and establishment of civil society.<sup>224</sup>

From an international perspective it is a challenge to truly understand what justice and peace mean for the everyday Bosnian people. These efforts involve examining agency from a local perspective, without external preliminary frameworks, and preselecting partners within the specific society.<sup>225</sup> Wolfgang Petritsch, the third High Commissioner for BiH, envisioned an ‘ownership approach’, which focuses on citizens participation in the peace process.<sup>226</sup> Petritsch’s idea is in line with those championed by Broome, Lederach and Pouligny. For all those authors, post-conflict state-building has priority, but society-building mechanisms are embraced. Nevertheless, in practice Donais provides a sobering account explaining that the political reality of

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<sup>219</sup> Smilie, I., *Service Delivery or Civil Society?: Non-Governmental Organisations in Bosnia & Herzegovina*, CARE Canada (1996) 13.

<sup>220</sup> Chandler, 80.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>222</sup> Yordan, 59.

<sup>223</sup> Filipov, 27.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>225</sup> Kappler, Richmond, 270.

<sup>226</sup> Speech by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch at the Steering Board Ministerial Meeting, 1999 [http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/in-memoriam/default.asp?content\\_id=7176](http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/in-memoriam/default.asp?content_id=7176) accessed, 12 June, 2014

BiH has been coined by critics as a 'protectorate democracy',<sup>227</sup> a situation in which the international community promotes local ownership and democratic governance, while at the same time the same international actors reserve the most important decision-making positions for themselves:

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, outsiders do more than participate in shaping the political agenda - something that has become the norm throughout Eastern Europe, as governments aspire to join the European Union. In BiH, outsiders actually set that agenda, impose it, and punish with sanctions those who refuse to implement it.<sup>228</sup>

Finally, on the dynamics for a well-functioning civil society and the level of success in reconciliatory processes, the *EU Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014* serves as illustration: "An empowered civil society is not only a crucial part of a democratic system, it enhances political accountability, deepening understanding and social cohesion."<sup>229</sup> In accordance with the critical analysis presented throughout the chapter, the same report described deliberately that "a more supportive and enabling environment needs to be developed that improves the conditions for policy dialogue and non-partisan input."<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Donais, T., Empowerment or imposition? Dilemmas of local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding processes, *Peace & Change*, vol. 34, no. 1. (2009) 3-26; 4.

<sup>228</sup> Donais, Empowerment or imposition? Dilemmas of local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding processes, 4.

<sup>229</sup> 14942/13 ELARG 136 COWEB 145, 9.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

### 3.5 Preliminary conclusions on Bosnia case

In official documents related to the reconciliatory process in BiH, there are several examples of diverging political culture, in which ethnic divisions at the political level are different from the mentality of the younger generation. Youths seem more open for dialogue and sustainable reconciliation. Another factor complicating reconciliation is the hijacking of cultural and educational institutions. Furthermore, diverging narratives are due to opposing historical views of 'the Other'. Those politicians who had adopted a reconciliatory tone, are now questioning the peace agreements and supporting the possible secession of the Serb Republic from BiH. The international community foresaw a quick solution to the conflict, but the problems are multi-dimensional and the Office of the High Commissioner is still mandated with interventions.

The difference in political cultures between the international actors and the local actors has a particular dynamic. However, while official documents suggest that dialogue is part of this process, there is no alternative for BiH than the implementation of EU policies. This directive approach does not encourage local agency, according to critical analysts. Moreover, it implicitly showcases a lack of a cultural and context-specific approach. For example, the Dayton Agreement contains problematic features since ethnic affiliations are overemphasized. Furthermore, a diverging political culture between the international community and the host country are expressed in fixed standards with little contextual awareness in the peacebuilding efforts. Even the UN Secretary General admits that the international community has not provided enough context-specific assistance. Local interests have been bypassed by the dominant working mentality and culture of the international community.

The civil society in BiH has a perception problem, because it is seen as elitist by the general population, whereas nationalist parties are in contact with the average person, and purport to know the needs of the people on the street. This is another example of diverging political culture between national parties, civil society, and the people. Research has shown that the top-down approach of international regulation and the bottom up approach of empowerment of civil society has had a conflicting impact on BiH society. Analysts state that a hybrid form of peacebuilding efforts that focuses on the local and with a more inclusive mentality on the part of international actors would be a step in the right direction. Another more culturally-sensitive approach includes less state-centric strategies, because in that case the state intrudes and competes with already-existing community-driven structures in society.

## 4. The *Vertriebenen*

*"Hitlers letzte opfer"*<sup>231</sup>

The second case study in this research is that of the post World War II German *Vertriebenen*, and the process of reconciliation and apologies between them, the Polish and Czech people and their governments. In a similar setting to the previous case, an attempt will be made to further understand the dynamics of this complex reconciliatory process. First an effort is made to present the necessary preliminary knowledge clearly, before further delving into the case. In order to keep a clear vision of the comparative character of the two case studies, this part also will research the concept and importance of historical origins and identities in the case of the *Vertriebenen*, as done previously for Bosnia. The reconciliation process after the expulsions of the *Vertriebenen* from East-Central Europe in the immediate postwar is one of the most intriguing historical cases. It is one of the least widely known episodes in European contemporary history, while it concerns one of the largest forced population transfers in human history.

### 4.1 Historical background *Vertriebenen* case

German occupation of Central Eastern Europe had been particularly brutal. The Nazis had enslaved or murdered ten million Russians, Poles, and Czechs. In Czechoslovakia for example, 300,000 mostly Jews, of a population of 12 million, suffered this fate.<sup>232</sup> Poland lost six million of its citizens, roughly 22% of its total population, and the highest ratio of losses-to-population of any country in Europe.<sup>233</sup> The Russians advanced towards Berlin from the east at the end of World War II. Their defeat in the war and the Potsdam decisions drastically reversed Germany's position. By the time German rule collapsed, in May of 1945, the Czech population was urged by Prime Minister Edvard Beneš to be ruthless in their revenge. Sudeten Germans were driven out of their homes in a brutal mass expulsion.<sup>234</sup> After instigating great displacements, the Germans themselves now became the largest national group of forced migrants.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>231</sup> From K.E. Franzen's work titled; *Der Vertriebenen: Hitlers letzte Opfer*, (Berlin 2001). It can best be translated English as; 'Hitler's last sacrifice'.

<sup>232</sup> Bard, R., *Historical Memory and the expulsion of ethnic Germans in Europe 1944-1947*, Diss. University of Hertfordshire (Hatfield 2009) 4-5.

<sup>233</sup> Bard, *Historical Memory and the expulsion of ethnic Germans in Europe 1944-1947*, 31.

<sup>234</sup> Ahonen, P., Domestic constraints on West-German Ostpolitik: The role of the expellee organizations in the Adenauer era, *Central European History*, vol. 31, no. 1 & 2 (1998) 31-64; 32.

<sup>235</sup> Stola, D., Forced Migrations in Central European History, *International Migration Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1992) 324-341; 336.

*The politics behind the resettlement*

Some knowledge of the German borders and ethnic German settlements before the treaty of Versailles is necessary to understand the evolution of *Vertriebenen* studies. After the World War I, close to 3.5 million Germans from the Sudeten region suddenly found themselves within the borders of the new state of Czechoslovakia. This state discriminated against them and treated them as secondary citizens, which caused resentment among ethnic Germans. Both the Polish and Czech governments saw the ethnic German minorities as a potential threat, because their true loyalty would be to the German Reich.<sup>236</sup> It has been argued by De Zayas that the discrimination against the ethnic German minority by the Czechoslovakian and Polish states drove them into the hands of the Nazis.<sup>237</sup>

The effect of the treaties of Versailles (1919) and Potsdam (1945) on ordinary German civilians was great. They woke up one morning, and found themselves in a part of either an artificially constructed Poland or a newly formed Czechoslovakia. The new borders were decided without consulting the defeated Germans, and were based on political, rather than ethnic considerations.<sup>238</sup> The victorious Allies implemented the resolution that established which parts of Eastern Germany were assigned to Poland. Ethnic German minorities in other Eastern European countries were driven out of their homes and had to find a place in the ruined society within the new borders of postwar Germany.<sup>239</sup>

*Character of the expulsions*

Both Poland and Czechoslovakia were products of German defeat at the end of World War I. Millions of ethnic Germans who had previously co-existed with their Slav neighbors for many centuries lived in these countries. After World War II however, ethnic Germans were perceived by these neighbors to have collaborated with Nazi-Germany. Russians, Poles and Czechoslovaks now sought revenge, and thus triggering the largest forced expulsion in recorded history.<sup>240</sup> These expulsions were accompanied by great violence; hundreds of thousands died of starvation, ill-treatment and disease in internment camps before their departure. Others perished during their journey to their new homeland, in expulsion trains without food and water. Ethnic Germans also died while being driven to the new borders. After arriving in Germany, many more died of hypothermia and malnutrition.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Bard, 18, 20.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>238</sup> For the full version of the Versailles Treaty see: 'The Treaty of peace between the Allied and associated powers and Germany' [http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth10\\_doc\\_1919.pdf](http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth10_doc_1919.pdf) Accessed on May 21, 2014.

<sup>239</sup> Douglas Ray M., *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, 2012) 1.

<sup>240</sup> Bard, 4.

<sup>241</sup> Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 1.



Expulsions were carried out before the organized transfers began. About 3.5 million ethnic Germans were uprooted from Polish territory, 3.2 million from Czechoslovakia and about 225,000 from Hungary.<sup>242</sup>

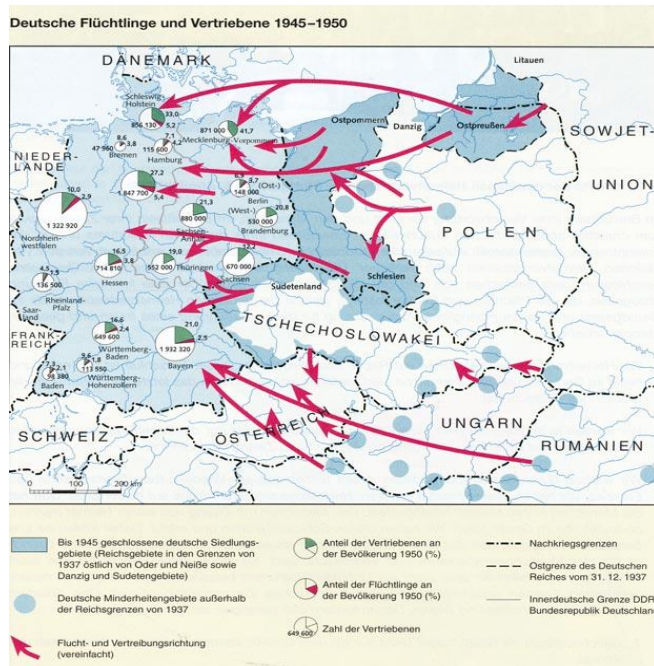


Figure 3. Map titled 'German refugees and displaced 1945-1950', showing the original regions where the *Vertriebenen* came from.<sup>243</sup>

Bard states that somewhere between 8 and 16.5 million ethnic Germans fled to the west, and between 2 and 3 million perished in flight.<sup>244</sup> According to Ahonen approximately 12 million ethnic Germans either fled or were displaced.<sup>245</sup> Concrete examples of the sadistic and cruel nature of the expulsion are the Prerau case, where Czechoslovakian soldiers killed between 265 and 2700 Germans in June of 1945,<sup>246</sup>

or the massacre of at least 1000 Germans in the city of Aussig in July of that same year.<sup>247</sup> Twelve million people were forcibly expelled westwards, and a further one million ethnic Germans was deported east, to the Soviet Union. There they had to endure forced labor, and what the Allied powers euphemistically called 'reparations in kind'. Just 55% of them survived the ordeal.<sup>248</sup> Millions more who fled west, away from the advancing Red Army in the last days of the war, were unable to return to their places of origin and became lifelong exiles. Czechoslovakia and Poland had gone from multicultural and heterogeneous countries to ethnic monoliths in less than ten years.<sup>249</sup>

### *Silence on ethnic cleansing*

The expulsions of ethnic Germans from East-Central Europe were paid little attention when they were carried out. For example, the content of the 2001 curriculum for the history exam titled *Germany from 1945-2000* at Dutch secondary schools, shows the fate of the *Vertriebenen* in a

<sup>242</sup> Stola, *Forced Migrations in Central European History*, 336.

<sup>243</sup> Pommersche Landsmannschaft 'Nach Potsdam' <http://www.pommersche-landsmannschaft.de/Vertreibung/index.html> Accessed on 14 October 2013.

<sup>244</sup> Bard, 4.

<sup>245</sup> Ahonen, *Domestic constraints on West-German Ostpolitik*, 33.

<sup>246</sup> Bard, 25.

<sup>247</sup> Ahonen, *After the expulsion*, West Germany and Eastern Europe 1945-1990 (Oxford 2003) 21.

<sup>248</sup> De Zayas, 'Theses on the expulsion of the Germans' <http://alfreddezayas.com/Books/theses.shtml>

<sup>249</sup> Douglas, 1-2.

meager seven sentences. Not only was there a rather minimal description of the events, the typology and used words seem to show a somewhat distant interest.<sup>250</sup> In most history books in English-speaking countries the episode receives disproportional little attention as well. Fulbrook's *History of Germany 1918-2008* has one hardly impressive paragraph on the *Vertriebenen*. Another remarkable example is the *Cambridge Illustrated History of Germany*, which does not mention the expulsions at all, a rather common occurrence.<sup>251</sup>

### *Germany after the expulsions*

The post-war situation for Germany was a recipe for disaster. Not only was the population impoverished, traumatized and unable to feed, Germany also lost one third of its territory. Moreover, it was faced with the challenge of resettling and assimilating more than twelve million people. The influx of such a massive number of expellees, made the total population larger than it had been in 1939. To make matters worse, economic life had come to a standstill. This was in part derived from Allied policies that sought to dismantle a great number of German factories because of fears that they may be used for future German war efforts.<sup>252</sup> Policies concerning the admission of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe into Germany were a positive aspect on the post-expulsion experience for the *Vertriebenen*. Their acceptance in German territory was guaranteed by the Federal Expellee and Refugee Law. These special provisions were introduced to provide a homeland for ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, who had experienced forced resettlement and expulsion.<sup>253</sup> Considerable integration took place, and expellees found their place in German society, despite Allied post-war policies. Douglas even argues that this should not be seen as “a retrospective vindication of Allied policy.” It should rather be attributed to the German industry, good sense and a relatively highly-educated population.<sup>254</sup> Nowadays it is not hard to find expellees in Germany. It has been estimated that one quarter of the German population or their immediate descendants are expellees.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Seriese R.C., & Blok, W.H., *Examenbundel VWO Geschiedenis voor 2001* (Leiden 2000) 171.

<sup>251</sup> Douglas, 2.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>253</sup> Dietz, B., East West Migration Patterns in an Enlarging Europe: The German Case, *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (2002) 29-43; 30.

<sup>254</sup> Douglas, 302.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

## 4.2 The reception of historical memory in the *Vertriebenen* case

*"Any attempt to impose a single version of history could also be counter-productive, and risk provoking a backlash of competing narratives that celebrate or negate the past, rather than condemning the past."*<sup>256</sup>

The article on reconciliation efforts between Germany and East-Central Europe written by Phillips describes that the 'Auschwitz paradigm' has been the dominant filter to view Germans including ethnic German expellees.<sup>257</sup> It is remarkable that an event which took place seventy years ago is still perceived in the same way as in the immediate postwar. In general, both popular and scholarly discourse treat this episode in European history with the Holocaust as departure point, to contextualize the discussion of the expulsions. For Douglas, however:

In no other case has the argument been advanced that acknowledging the fact of its occurrence should be discouraged for fear that doing so might tend to diminish the horror that properly ought to be felt in respect of a still greater crime.<sup>258</sup>

A clear and contemporary example of hatred from Germans towards Poland comes from a 19-year-old German friend who enlisted for voluntary work in Poland in 2001. She shared with a group of international youngsters that she had difficulties and became emotional about the very idea of helping Polish people, because of strong feelings of hatred. It is intriguing to see that heartfelt agony and pain are preserved, 50 years after the expulsions, and passed on to the second and third generation.

### *The pre-war situation*

Ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe historically claimed that culture could only come from the German culture. Most aristocracy from the 11th century and until the end of World War I was of German origin. The German minorities abroad tended to maintain their own communities, speak German as their primary language and having their children attend German schools.<sup>259</sup> The 700-year relationship between Germans and Slavs has been described as a close co-operation with periodic confrontations. What potentially buttresses the legitimacy of the *Vertriebenen* cause is an early account that supported by British historian Arnold Toynbee.

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<sup>256</sup> Lind, 519.

<sup>257</sup> Phillips, A.L., The Politics of Reconciliation Revisited: Germany and East-Central Europe, *World Affairs*, Vol. 163, No. 4 (2001) 171-191; 172.

<sup>258</sup> Douglas, 347.

<sup>259</sup> Bard, 19.

In 1937, after a trip to Czechoslovakia, long before the Munich Agreement, he noted in an article in *The Economist*:

The truth is that even the most genuine and old-established democratic way of life is exceedingly difficult to apply when you are dealing with a minority that does not want to live under your rule. We know very well that we ourselves were never able to apply our own British brand of democracy to our attempt to govern the Irish. And in Czechoslovakia today the methods by which the Czechs are keeping the upper hand over the Sudetendeutsch are not democratic.<sup>260</sup>

This attitude changed after World War I, where both ethnic groups were seeking self-determination. It has been argued that the logical solution would have been to redraw frontiers along ethnic lines.<sup>261</sup> At the beginning of the 20th century the Czechoslovakian population initially had more positive experiences with the German minority. This mutated into bitter animosity when Sudeten Germans voted in large numbers to join the Third Reich in 1938.<sup>262</sup>

#### *Narrative in the immediate aftermath of World War II*

In the final two years of the war, when an Allied victory was an almost-certainty, the question of German collective guilt was a much discussed topic. A British opinion poll showed that the large majority of the people saw no difference between Nazis and ordinary Germans.<sup>263</sup> In the aftermath of the war, the need for food rations was inevitable for the hungry and starving Germans in East-Central Europe. Not much sympathy could be found to feed the mothers and children of the ethnic Germans, even among the British. In September of 1945 the Daily Herald condemned those who would give food to this “race of murderous white savages.”<sup>264</sup> There were even officers attached to the Allied Military Government of Germany, who were of the opinion that “mass death among the expellees were of no great significance when set against the overriding objective of avoiding giving unnecessary offence to the Soviet Union.”<sup>265</sup>

However, there were also other voices, the Anglican bishops of Chichester, Canterbury and York, for example denounced the expulsions as a “violation of the principles of humanity that the Allies are pledged to uphold.”<sup>266</sup> Another example of a critical stance towards the expulsions is related by De Zayas, who states that while the Allied powers were responsible for the overall decision of the resettlement, the British and Americans repeatedly protested in Warsaw and Prague about the inhuman treatment of the expelled German population and that

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<sup>260</sup> Toynbee, A., “Czechoslovakia’s German Problem”, *The Economist*, Vol. 128, No. 4898 (10 July 1937) 71-74; 72.

<sup>261</sup> Bard, 20.

<sup>262</sup> Phillips, *The Politics of Reconciliation Revisited: Germany and East-Central Europe*, 173.

<sup>263</sup> Douglas, 286.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

there had not been sufficient observance of basic human rights.<sup>267</sup> Another compassionate account on behalf of the *Vertriebenen* cause came from a Jewish camp survivor who wrote about the new German inmates in Theresienstadt, an account that is frighteningly similar to concentration camps:

The majority were children and juveniles, who had only been locked up because they were Germans. Without a doubt, this a horrific scene, where 'Jews' are replaced with 'Germans'. Only about ten percent of these Germans were member of the Nazi party.<sup>268</sup>

An account with a less sympathetic case for the fate of the *Vertriebenen*, shows an alarming feature related to historical memory in Germany after the World War II. Bourke states that in 1949 close to 60% of Germans backed the view that National Socialism had been "a good idea badly carried out" while more than 40% insisted that there was "more good than evil in Nazis".<sup>269</sup> In the immediate postwar, the atrocities of the Holocaust showed its full character and the dominant Holocaust discourse overshadowed the expulsions of ethnic Germans. The organizations for expellees therefore had to design a specific expellee memory in order to reconstruct their history in the immediate postwar. Much of the expellee history and their quest for justice and reparations is based on the narrative that they were never offensive towards their host countries.<sup>270</sup> However, a problematic feature in expellee history is the unsavory nature of German behaviour in Polish territory between 1939 and 1945. One example is the *Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz*, originally organized for self-protection, but which soon turned out to be a violent group of collaborators with the SS.<sup>271</sup> Another difficult episode in expellee history is that of Henlein, who was both leader of the ethnic Germans and member of the Czechoslovak parliament. He commenced secret negotiations with Hitler and thus undermined the Czechoslovakian state.<sup>272</sup>

#### *Revitalized post-Cold War debate on the Vertriebenen*

In contrast to Germany's policies towards Western European countries, the reconciliatory process with East-Central Europe was hindered until 1990, because of the 'Iron Curtain' that divided Europe.<sup>273</sup> In 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Sudeten Germans stepped forward and tried to bring their case to the attention of the Czechoslovakian government, but this was shrugged off, because nobody was eager to justify the expulsion after more than forty years.<sup>274</sup> A

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<sup>267</sup> De Zayas, Theses on the expulsion of the Germans <http://alfreddezayas.com/Books/theses.shtml>

<sup>268</sup> Barkan (2000) 131.

<sup>269</sup> Bourke, J., 'Remembering' War, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39 (October 2004) 473-485; 475.

<sup>270</sup> Bard, 23.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>273</sup> Phillips, 171.

<sup>274</sup> Barkan (2000) 132.

more contemporary example of a protagonist stance on the *Vertriebenen* case comes from Jose Ayala Lasso, the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who expressed in a statement to the Assembly of German expellees in 1995 that:

I submit that if in the years following World War II the states had reflected more on the implications of the enforced flight and the expulsion of the Germans, today's demographic catastrophes, particularly those referred to as 'ethnic cleansing' would, perhaps not have occurred to the same extent.<sup>275</sup>

The Sudeten Germans were able to revive their demands, because of their active role in Bavarian politics and their strong representation among the local electorate there. German politicians also made certain statements in line with the Sudeten Germans, which have complicated Czech-German relations and the reconciliation process.<sup>276</sup> In 1996, the German finance minister Theo Waigel compared the atrocities of the expulsions with the horrific events in the Bosnian civil war and called upon the Czech government to revise the decrees that sanctioned the expulsions. Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus stated point-blank: "I am very much surprised that anybody should wish us to speak about World War II with regret. I have the feeling it is the German side which should speak about the whole matter very quietly."<sup>277</sup> A renewed debate on the question of who was victim and perpetrators in German society was prompted by NATO bombings in former Yugoslavia in 1999, where the Serbian refugees from Kosovo mirrored the *Vertriebenen* and their fate.<sup>278</sup> Another example of controversial historical memory coming back with a vengeance to haunt contemporary politics was the demand of Czech President Klaus in 2009 that the rest of the European Union members would go to any lengths to legally secure the Czech state against compensation claims by ethnic German expellees.<sup>279</sup> The always-present claim of Sudeten Germans amounts to the right to return to their homeland in Bohemia, where they would be allowed to settle as a German community with minority rights. The explicit demand to seek the recognition of them as an old minority is a crucial demand.<sup>280</sup> Finally, it is intriguing to see that the *Vertriebenen* have mobilized a great deal of international political power, but face great domestic and international hostility on the other. Thus, they find themselves in the middle of a confusing situation, where they are either victims or perpetrators.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ayala Lasso, Jose, 'Statement of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the German Expellees', 28 May, 1995.

<sup>276</sup> Barkan (2000) 133.

<sup>277</sup> Ryback, T., Ryback, 'Dateline Sudetenland: Hostages to History', *Foreign Policy*, No. 105 (1996-1997) 162-178; 163.

<sup>278</sup> Barkan (2000) 132.

<sup>279</sup> Douglas, 2.

<sup>280</sup> Barkan, (2000) 134.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.



*German history and expellee memory*

Stackelberg proposes that German history since World War II has known three phases: The first took place in the period 1945-1960, with the demonization of Hitler and his regime. In that phase, the citizens of Germany were seduced and Nazism was considered a particular distortion of German history. The second phase started in the 1960s and lasted well into the 1970s. It was characterized by a young generation, with left-wing political orientation, who wanted to know what had happened when its history obviously deviated from the norms known by a civilized and democratic tradition.<sup>282</sup> A strong example of reconciliation towards its Eastern neighbors in this phase of German history can be seen during the chancellorship of Willy Brandt, with his *Ostpolitik*. A UN-document characterized his policy in the General Assembly in 1973 as follows;

His imaginative *Ostpolitik* opened a new era in East-West relations. His speech at this meeting provided impressive evidence that the Federal Republic, under his wise leadership, considers the promotion of peace, security and political detente as its primary aim."<sup>283</sup>

The third phase, from the late 1980s onwards, is known for comparing the Holocaust with the sufferings experienced by the expellees when the Russian advanced westwards in the final phase of the war. A revival of national pride has seen a self-confident and unified national identity rejecting the perceived liberal-leftist paradigm of German guilt.<sup>284</sup>

What follows is a closer look at the phases of expellee memory. According to Schulze, in the period between 1950s and 1980s, the German collective memory was characterized by a critical assessment of the country's Nazi era. This was mainly due to figures like West-German chancellor Willy Brandt who focused on repairing relations with the East. These new policies were an important reason why the expellee cause faded into the background. The dominant mindset was that underlining the hardships the expellees underwent would potentially threaten the vulnerable dialogue with the Eastern neighbors.<sup>285</sup> In the 1980s however, the historical memory on behalf of the *Vertriebenen* took a more assertive character. Expellee organizations regained political momentum with the Christian Democrats coming back into power, and they found themselves more connected to mainstream German political discourse.<sup>286</sup> The third phase in expellee historical memory began in 2002, with Gunther Grass' book *Im Krebsgang* ('Crabwalk'). It described the origins of the Nazi era in 1933, the events in the immediate postwar, and the legacy for the present. This book sparked nationwide interest on the question of the

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<sup>282</sup> Stackelberg, R., *Hitler's Germany: Origins, Interpretations, Legacies* (London, 1999), quoted from 'Writing the History of Nazi Germany: The Historikerstreit', [www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Historians\\_Controv.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Historians_Controv.html) Accessed 2 June, 2014.

<sup>283</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Twenty-eighth session, Official records, (26 September 1973) 11.

<sup>284</sup> Stackelberg, R., *Hitler's Germany: Origins, Interpretations, Legacies* [www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Historians\\_Controv.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Historians_Controv.html)

<sup>285</sup> Schulze, R., The Politics of Memory: Flight and Expulsion of German Populations after the Second World War and German Collective Memory, *National Identities*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (December 2006) 367-382: 372.

<sup>286</sup> Schulze, The Politics of Memory, 372.



expulsion.<sup>287</sup> Kansteiner called for a critical view on historical memory, because this could originate from traumatic events. In the context of expellee memory, the dramatic events the *Vertriebenen* had to endure may be legitimated within German society, as it does not refer to a wider historical reference for other societies. However, a danger looms on the background, that other collective memories such as the Holocaust, become part of the debate, and the dynamic that can surface evolves into a political vehicle, rather than to the particular trauma experienced.<sup>288</sup>

### *Reconciliatory efforts*

One of the first compelling examples of rapprochement between Germans and Poles came about with the publication of a letter by the Evangelische Kirche publishing in 1965. It was titled '*The situation of the Expellees and the Relationship of the German People to its Eastern Neighbours*'. The letter stated that a dialogue between the two societies had to be the start of a reconciliatory and healing process. Polish bishops responded with a striking message of asking and granting forgiveness.<sup>289</sup> After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a unified Germany became possible in 1990 and a fresh restart of relationships towards the East became a priority. In the 1990s, the governments of Germany and Poland signed a treaty ensuring the integrity of both countries.<sup>290</sup> Another positive reconciliatory attempt concerns the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister Václav Havel, who in 1990 offered a personal apology to the Sudeten Germans for the crimes committed after the war.<sup>291</sup> Yet another stepping-stone in a sustainable reconciliatory process was when Germany signed Treaties of Friendship with Poland and the Czechoslovakia in 1991 and 1992, respectively.<sup>292</sup> In 1991, a German-Polish foundation for retributive reconciliation was established. The foundation received more than 700,000 claims that were evaluated by a joint German-Polish committee.<sup>293</sup> Furthermore, the German president Roman Herzog and chancellor Helmut Kohl offered apologies to the Czechs, with regards to the Germans asking for forgiveness, and offering forgiveness in 1997.<sup>294</sup> A statement by the Polish delegate of the Committee of Ministers in 2004, is another positive gesture of reconciliation:

In order to achieve reconciliation in Europe, it is essential to overcome prejudice, negative stereotypes and resolve disputes rooted in the difficult experience of the past. Fruitful, compromise-minded discussion seeking a common view of certain painful historic events is not easy but certainly possible.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Schulze, 376.

<sup>288</sup> Kansteiner, Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies, *History and memory*, Vol. 41 (2002) 197-197; 187-188.

<sup>289</sup> Phillips, 174.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>291</sup> Nagengast, E., The Benes decrees and EU Enlargement, *European Integration*, Vol. 25, no. 4 (2003) 335-350; 347.

<sup>292</sup> Phillips, 175.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>294</sup> Barkan (2000) 135.

<sup>295</sup> European Union, Council of Europe, Corrigendum 'Priorities of the Polish presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe' CM/Inf (2004) 41 (19 November 2004) 5.

Later, in 2005, the German representative in the UN General Assembly backed the gestures of atonement from the German state towards Poland, when he expressed that “Poland was a victim of particularly brutal Nazi aggression, we are all more grateful that our relationship with Poland has developed into a truly European friendship.”<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, *Official records*, UN Doc. A/59/PV.96 (9 May, 2005) 12.

### 4.3 Complicating features of reconciliation in the *Vertriebenen* case

The particularities of this case make it an intriguing subject of analysis: First, there is the dynamics of the *Vertriebenen* as victims, who are powerful at the same time. Then, the case of the *Vertriebenen* as victims is being undermined by their refusal to acknowledge their own responsibilities, such as collaborating with the Nazis, is worth of research. Thirdly, the *Vertriebenen* position themselves in a rather insensitive, and to some extent offensive way, by not accepting their share of responsibility of the mutually-experienced rupture in Czech history and fully blaming the Czechs for the conflict.<sup>297</sup> Moreover, for Czechs and Poles the national narrative of Germans as perpetrators, and themselves as victims, is supported by the majority of the population.<sup>298</sup> Another interesting aspect is the ambiguity of the Czechs in the reconciliation process; Czech leaders have acknowledged the injustices of the expulsions and offered apologies, but refuse the possibility of restitution.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, the Czech-German reconciliatory process has been characterized by German economic power and the potential political influence of especially the Sudeten Germans. The Czech public opinion is therefore very reluctant to being strong-armed by *Vertriebenen* influence in European politics. Historians, like Ahonen, state that some claims of the Sudeten Germans are somewhat plausible, but false; that Sudetenland was never part of Germany before the infamous Munich agreement of 1938, which was the only diplomatic document that supports the Sudeten German case and one that was imposed upon the Czech government by the European powers.<sup>300</sup>

#### *The dynamics of restitution*

According to Barkan, the legal construction of policies concerning restitution in Czechoslovakia was not build from abstract principles and jurisprudence, but came from a particular political discourse. Its construction was limited to only taking restitution claims for the confiscation of properties that occurred after 1948. Therefore, the Sudeten Germans were automatically excluded from restitution claims.<sup>301</sup> In general however, transition to prosperity was the primary goal after the collapse of the Communist system and retribution for the past was not a priority, which quickly led to an impasse.<sup>302</sup> Moreover, the 1990s restitution in East-Central Europe had a regional and conservative character, together with the revival of the middle class. These policies privileged a specific ethnic group and rewrote the 'traditional' national composition as liberating

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<sup>297</sup> Barkan (2000) 140.

<sup>298</sup> Douglas, 3.

<sup>299</sup> Barkan, (2000) 136.

<sup>300</sup> Ahonen, *After the expulsion. West Germany and Eastern Europe 1945-1990*, 34.

<sup>301</sup> Barkan, (2000) 135.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 115.

the people and returning to its historical pre-communist, idealized past.<sup>303</sup> By re-writing the historical, not only the validation of a present identity was underlined, but the narrative also proved to be a useful, albeit inconsistent tool to analyze rationally who was to benefit from restitution and who should be kept out. In this context, those who survived forty years under the communist regime were considered the 'in-group', unlike the ethnic Germans who had lived in the region for centuries, before the expulsions.<sup>304</sup>

However, on the other side of the German government, controversial compensation claims were handled by introducing a unique policy. The compensation for victims of the Nazis was linked with compensation for expulsions victims. This decision caused some consternation, which was not completely overcome after the 1996 joint Czech-German declaration on reconciliation. In the Polish *Vertriebenen* context, the German government separated the question of compensation for victims of the Nazis from that of the expulsions. First the victims of the Nazi regime were compensated, and Warsaw was not pushed to mitigate entitlements for compensation for much of the 1990s. In 1998 however, Silesian German expellees voiced their conditions for Polish membership in the EU. They based this petition on the similar policy of compensation established with the Czech Republic, and provoked new irritations in German-Polish relations.<sup>305</sup> The Sudeten Germans see themselves primarily as victims of the Czechoslovakian Beneš Decrees, which cannot be taken as a serious legal policy by international standards, whereas the character of the debate with the Poles has a more conciliatory tone, since half of the Polish population thinks that the expulsions were wrong. Moreover, the conversation is conducted at the nongovernment level, and there are no German threats of economic retaliation.<sup>306</sup>

#### **The Beneš Decrees**

The decrees implemented the announced policies of confiscating all German and Hungarian property, and condemned these minorities to expulsion from Czechoslovakia. These policies came to full effect after the Allied powers approved the decrees. The Beneš Decrees were named after the exiled Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia during the World War II, Edvard Beneš. He said that "We must get rid of all those Germans who plunged a dagger in the back of the Czechoslovak state in 1938."<sup>307</sup> Another quote that illustrates the determination of Beneš was pronounced in October 1945: "I declare categorically, we must get rid of our Germans, and they will go in any case."<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Barkan, (2000) 118.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>305</sup> Phillips, 187.

<sup>306</sup> Barkan, (2000) 134.

<sup>307</sup> De Zayas, A. M., *Nemesis at Potsdam: the Anglo-Americans and the expulsion of the Germans : background, execution, consequences* (London 1979) 33.

<sup>308</sup> Ryback, *Dateline Sudetenland*, 175.

A peculiar characterization of the Czech-Sudeten reconciliatory processes comes forward in that formal agreements are made between official representatives and historians from both the German and Czech sides. The German government has reached agreements in the name of its minority, the Sudeten Germans, most of whom oppose the agreements.<sup>309</sup>

The rhetoric used and the insistence of both sides, implies that a deeper reconciliatory process has come close to a virtual standstill. Czech government officials are not eager to advocate possible restitutions, because public opinion tends to reject the demands of the Sudeten Germans. Moreover, the Sudeten German rejection of compensation for Czech victims of Nazism and their pressure for the German government to reject the German-Czech Friendship Treaty have not helped the reconciliation process.<sup>310</sup> The crimes of National Socialism color the postwar German identity. This dynamic is explained by the fact that historical memory relates to identity and the very legitimization of states. Historical memory varies among social groups and among countries. In the specific case of the *Vertriebenen*, the experiences during the war and the expulsions will be remembered differently by Germans, Czechs and Poles.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>310</sup> Barkan, (2000) 138-139.

<sup>311</sup> Bard, 41.

#### 4.4 *Der Spiegel* media analysis on the role of culture

##### *Introduction*

To explore the relation between the concepts of reconciliation and apology, and the role of culture in the context of the *Vertriebenen* a media analysis is performed next. Close to forty articles from the German weekly *Der Spiegel* pertaining to the relations between Germany and East-Central European countries have been carefully examined. Given the time and space limitations of the present research, the articles span from 1958 until 2013, and the most substantial part comes from the period of 2006-2013. This time period was primarily chosen because it showcases the contemporary implications of the reconciliatory efforts in German-Polish and German-Czech relations with a variety of historical references. Furthermore, the articles describe a number of relevant domestic and international political developments that help characterize the relations between the countries involved. The analysis is constructed by subdividing the information from the total number of articles into the themes that appear dominant. Three strands of culture stand out to understand the dynamics of the *Vertriebenen* case study; *historical culture*, *political culture* and the *culture of fear*. These concepts have been discussed in the introduction of this thesis. The chapter is structured first with a subdivision in the abovementioned strands of culture which will then be covered in a chronological manner whenever possible. This approach will keep in line with historical developments.

##### 4.4.1 Positive examples of reconciliation

The first steps towards German-Polish reconciliation after the fall of the Berlin Wall, took place in the early 1990s, and involved German chancellor Helmut Kohl and the first democratically elected Polish prime-minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The consensus among Poles in the aftermath of the communist regime was that Germans were normal and warm-hearted people; anti-German tendencies were marginal.<sup>312</sup> In 1996, *Der Spiegel* published an opinion poll that showed the German population believed only a minority of the Sudeten Germans needed to be compensated. Most displaced persons had come to terms with the loss of the old *Heimat* and were neither seeking revenge nor redress. Other surveys show that the vast majority wanted to draw a line on the 20th century, known for both the Nazi-atrocities, and the expulsions.<sup>313</sup>

Another hopeful account comes from the *Vertriebenen*, where the younger generation of enthusiastic Sudeten German youth sought to build bridges regardless of past bitterness and

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<sup>312</sup> SS Vergangenheit: Steinbach fordert Grass zu Spenden für Polnische NS-Opfer auf“ (An SS-past: Steinbach suggests that Grass’ revenue goes to Polish Nazi-victims), *Der Spiegel*, 08-18-2006.

<sup>313</sup> “Tu oma den gefallen” (Do grandma a favor), *Der Spiegel*, 20-05-1996.

injustices: “I have no claim on anything, I want to be a mediator.”<sup>314</sup> One thing however is beyond dispute: “Expulsions are always wrong, whether they happened in the aftermath of World War II, in Czechoslovakia or now in the Balkans.”<sup>315</sup>

In the last two decades, local politicians met, student exchanges flourished, and Germans spoke in favor of Polish EU membership.<sup>316</sup> German-Polish reconciliation has become a project of developing a common narrative in history textbook for high-school students on both sides of the German-Czech border. These textbooks are identical in their historical treatment of the sufferings, and mutual recriminations. One point that is particularly complicated in this project is the terminology used by the Germans to refer to the event of violent movements of ethnic German westwards. ‘Expulsion’ is used to describe the flight of ethnic Germans by Germans, where the Poles prefer to call this ‘resettlement’.<sup>317</sup>

These examples of steps towards reconciliation show the, at best vulnerable and generally complicated, dynamics that touch upon a process with seven-decade old roots. This chapter further analyses which strands of culture play a decisive role in the understanding of the particular reconciliatory dynamics in the *Vertriebenen* case.

#### 4.4.2 The role of historical culture on reconciliatory processes

The first article of *Der Spiegel* under analysis concerns a 1958 interview in which the border changes after 1945 are a highly emotive subject for both the Germans and the Poles. From the German side, the new Oder-Neisse border is considered ‘high treason’ against Germany and its lands in the East. From the Polish perspective, this border is also considered treason, particularly after Germans sought to renegotiate the post-1945 German-Polish border.<sup>318</sup> This article titled “Reconciliation or sellout?” published in 1970, stands out because it characterizes German-Polish relations in that decade as ‘uptight’ and ‘superficial’, especially among the older German and Polish generations.<sup>319</sup> The misinterpretations in the conversation is of relatively little importance, compared to the heavy weighing issues like guilt felt, hatred and prejudice and demands for retribution. ‘Psychological pseudo-truths’ and ‘popular babbling’ on historical features have deformed the image of the other, in the view of the weekly. A historically and politically balanced image of the events seems hopeless, according to the article.<sup>320</sup> A chauvinistic Polish view of the

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<sup>314</sup> “Revanchisten? Eine junge funktionarin kampf gegen den schlechten ruf der Heimatvertriebenen” (Revenge-seekers? A young functionary fight against the bad reputation of the expellees), *Der Spiegel*, 01-06-1999.

<sup>315</sup> “Revanchisten? Eine junge funktionarin kampf gegen den schlechten ruf der Heimatvertriebenen”, *Der Spiegel*, 01-06-1999.

<sup>316</sup> “A history of betrayal”, *Der Spiegel*, 06-18-2007

<sup>317</sup> “Can a jointly written history erase centuries of German-Polish strife?”, *Der Spiegel*, 06-20-2011.

<sup>318</sup> “Von der familie zur volkerfamilie” (from our own family to a family of nations), *Der Spiegel*, 21-05-1958.

<sup>319</sup> “Aussohnung oder ausverkauf?” (Reconciliation or sellout?) *Der Spiegel*, 16-11-1970.

<sup>320</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 16-11-1970.



events that comes forward in the same article, is openly biased: “Saxony, Mecklenburg and Prussia are colonial lands and the country has been a result of conquest and not original German lands. Mecklenburg is inhabited by a population whose culture has Slavic roots.”<sup>321</sup> Polish historical memory has seen German expansionism as an ever-present image, at least since the Middle Ages, when the German Order was beaten by a Christian Polish and Lithuanian army in 1410. Moreover, a Polish communist leader in the 1960s was quoted describing the “wolf like nature of German imperialism did not change until the times of Konrad Adenauer”, who was the first postwar West-German Chancellor.<sup>322</sup>

Chronologically, a leap is taken to show how historical culture and its influence on collective memory and diverging narratives are still omnipresent. Two *Der Spiegel* articles one from 11 April 2005, and another from 12 February of the same year describe how anti-German sentiments regarding Nazi atrocities and the expulsions, were utilized by candidate Kaczynski in the Polish election campaign. Politicians from both the German and Polish sides fuel the heated debate on how the expulsions should be seen.<sup>323</sup> On the subject of German-Polish relations *Der Spiegel* comments that “there is something wrong, where the tone is sometimes so hostile that it resembles a bad movie.”<sup>324</sup> The Poles see themselves exclusively as victims and heroes, according to a *Der Spiegel* article in 2007, particularly since a nearly constant struggle for existence and identity has characterized their history. Poland has been divided up three times by Prussia, Russia and then Austria-Hungary; defeated in the uprising of 1848; reborn in 1918; attacked by Nazi-Germany in 1939; attacked and betrayed by Stalin in 1939 and 1945. For centuries, Poles were not been ruled by Poles, but by Prussians, Hungarians, Prussians, Nazis and Communists in that order. Nevertheless, Poles were the ones to herald the end of communism in the 1980s by founding the *Solidarność* (‘Solidarity’) movement.<sup>325</sup> After a thousand years of living as neighbors, it seems that Poles and Germans still have a complicated relationship, one in which trust is not necessarily a given. The tormented history between the two countries saw its darkest episode with the attack of Nazi-Germany on Poland in 1939. Just six weeks after the start of the invasion, SS-commander Reinhard Heydrich announced the liquidation of the Polish leadership. Not only the well-documented Nazi-victims, among which Jews, Sinti and Roma, but also Polish politicians and intellectuals were exterminated.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 16-11-1970.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> “Polish-German relations can’t get any worse” *Der Spiegel*, 11-04-2005, and; “Can Berlin and Warsaw get along?”, *Der Spiegel*, 12-02-2005.

<sup>324</sup> “German expellee leader hurts her cause with Polish ‘NPD’ comments”, *Der Spiegel*, 03-02-2007.

<sup>325</sup> “A history of betrayal”, *Der Spiegel*, 06-18-2007

<sup>326</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 06-18-2007.

In a *Der Spiegel* interview, Erika Steinbach, leader of the *Bund der Vertriebenen* (BdV) explains the complicated dynamic concerning German-Polish relations lays purely at the feet of the Poles, and the leftist politicians in Germany.<sup>327</sup> She explicitly states that the *Bund der Vertriebenen* is not to blame: "The post-communist countries haven't completed their process of self-discovery yet. They are still holding onto their trauma."<sup>328</sup> Another example which pushes the narrative toward a certain direction, is the comment made by Steinbach about the Polish accusation that her organization was rewriting the history surrounding World War II: "If they accuse us, as victims' rights organization, of having no interest in reconciliation, if there is no evidence of sympathy, and if the Poles constantly ignore our outstretched hand, then I don't know what else I can do",<sup>329</sup> and perhaps an even harsher statement: "The poles aren't afraid of the reinterpretation of history, but of it being examined in the first place."<sup>330</sup>

The German view regarding the use of the word 'expulsion' to denote the fate of the *Vertriebenen* shows the different framing of the historical German-Polish dynamics concerning the violent immediate postwar period. As previously mentioned, the Polish use the term 'resettlement'. The Polish historian Ryszard Ruchniewicz distinguishes three different migratory processes of *Vertriebenen*: the flight of the German population ahead of the advancing Soviet Army in the spring of 1945; the expulsions that took place between May and August of 1945; and the resettlement that was decided during the Potsdam conference in August 1945.<sup>331</sup>

A 1992 *Der Spiegel* article describes how Czechoslovakian president Havel condemned the expulsions of three million Sudeten Germans as a "deeply immoral act". The apology by the highest Czechoslovakian official actually caused fear in the Czechoslovakian Republic that "they all had to leave their homes, because the Germans would be coming back." Czech officials were seen as "collaborators and traitors by selling out the border area in exchange for *Deutsche Marks* to arch-enemy Germany". Similarly, some were of the opinion that: "What Hitler did not succeed militarily, some try to do so economically nowadays."<sup>332</sup> A complicating feature is that the image of the expelled has largely been determined by the Sudeten Germans veterans. They determine the course of discussion and therefore the state of the relations with the Czech Republic almost exclusively. The Sudeten Germans are morally supported by the Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU) from where they exercise political influence regarding their social and cultural issues.<sup>333</sup> In the another *Der Spiegel* article, which appeared on 13 March 2006, the delicate issue appears when Czech president Vaclav Klaus does not recognize anti-German sentiment in Czech political

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<sup>327</sup> "I want the truth, and nothing but", *Der Spiegel*, 03-09-2009.

<sup>328</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 03-09-2009.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> "Relations shouldn't be a one-way street", *Der Spiegel*, 02-18-2011.

<sup>332</sup> "Um vieles gebessert" (Much to be improved) *Der Spiegel*, 27-01-1992.

<sup>333</sup> "Tu oma den gefallen" (Do grandma a favor), *Der Spiegel*, 20-05-1996.

rhetoric. In his view, the Sudeten Germans played an active role when Hitler invaded Sudetenland; he considers these as facts, rather than some subjective narrative.<sup>334</sup> The expulsions of ethnic Germans by the Czechoslovakian government has been framed in the context of revenge. According to historian Klaus-Dietmar Henke, the Czechoslovakians wanted revenge “for the physical destruction decreed by their Nazi dictator with horrific zeal, and for the six-year bloody suppression of the Czechs”, and that the Germans were: “Hunted down, humiliated, raped, bludgeoned, or carted off as slave laborers. A tempest of reprisal, revenge and hatred swept through the land”.<sup>335</sup>

Another example of historical memory and rhetoric being used in a manner counterproductive to the reconciliation process, comes from the Czech election of 2013, which was won by Milos Zeman. He used populist rhetoric concerning the torturous past of the expelled Sudeten Germans, potentially threatening German-Czech relations and reopening old wounds. The expulsion of the three million Sudeten Germans was turned into a cause for agitation in the tabloid press, and stoked unjustified fear in the Czech population currently living in the former Sudetenland. Moreover, those who courageously endeavored to discuss the historical ties between the two nations were ridiculed in the campaign.”<sup>336</sup> It is striking that historical memory is still omnipresent half a century after World War II and the Germans expulsions in both Poland and the Czech Republic, and that anti-German sentiments still have a significant role in political campaigns.<sup>337</sup> A certain historical sensitivity is a prerequisite for good relations between the nations, according to Janusz Reiter, Polands former ambassador to Germany. Nevertheless, the focus and perception in Germany are shifting; nowadays the displacements of ethnic Germans and the bombings on German cities during World War II have taken a more central place in German historical memory.<sup>338</sup>

Furthermore, an example of the explicit role culture played in German-Polish relations concerning the former German territories, was the process of ‘de-Germanization’ and ‘Polonization’ in the territories of what is now Western Poland that was pursued very deliberately in the immediate post war.<sup>339</sup>

### *Historical culture affecting apologies and exhibition of expulsions*

The suggestion made by the leader of the Sudeten Germans Franz Pany that the Czech government should apologize to the *Vertriebenen* illustrates how historical culture affects the act of apologies in German-Czech relations: “What prevents a republican head of state such as the

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<sup>334</sup> “The past is the past”, Der Spiegel, 03-13-2006.

<sup>335</sup> “Paying with life and limb for the crimes of Nazi Germany”, Der Spiegel, 05-27-2011.

<sup>336</sup> “Czech election won with nationalism and populism”, Der Spiegel, 01-28-2013.

<sup>337</sup> “The past is the past”, Der Spiegel, 03-13-2006.

<sup>338</sup> “Germany and Poland are dependant on each other”, Der Spiegel, 01-09-2008

<sup>339</sup> “Relations shouldn’t be a one-way street”, Der Spiegel, 02-18-2011.

President of the Czech Republic from expressing remorse over the violent past to the expelled Sudeten Germans?"<sup>340</sup> In turn, Czech President Klaus accused Pany of "extraordinary insensitivity" and thoughtlessness, particularly because the remarks were made on the anniversary of the Nazi massacre in the Czech village of Lidice, where 340 people were murdered in 1942. Klaus' accusation were countered by the controversial leader of the BdV, Steinbach, who stated that the "cold-hearted Klaus is unteachable, not the Sudeten Germans."<sup>341</sup>

The next example on historical culture showing how German and Polish narratives have gone separate ways is described in an article published on 12 February 2005, on the issue of building of a memorial dedicated to the millions of ethnic German expellees. This contentious project has been backed by German chancellor Angela Merkel and, as such, it is difficult to digest for Poles in general, and Polish politicians specifically. Therefore, this controversy makes good relations between both countries more complicated.<sup>342</sup> Another article refers to how the same exhibition has repeatedly strained German relations with its Eastern neighbors. Some call it historical revisionism, and say that putting responsibility for World War II into perspective is obviously not in the interest of Poland, according to a declaration of Polish president Kaczynski on Polish radio.<sup>343</sup> The debate is not centered on historical facts. According to opponents of the Center against Expulsions, they worry about the context in which German expellees are portrayed: "It should be adequately presented that the expulsions and resettlement after the World War II were a direct consequence of the aggressive and destructive policies of the Nazis."<sup>344</sup>

*Der Spiegel* also presents in a published article from 10 August 2006, the perspective of the BdV who initiated the project of a Center against Expulsions. It emphasizes the use of historical expertise from experts from several countries, including Czech and Hungarian historians. The Polish expert withdrew due to pressure in his own country.<sup>345</sup> Furthermore, the leader of the BdV addresses the concerns from both sides of the debate: "It is important to understand the fears that Poles have and to respect this. But this shouldn't result in inaction. There is a need in Germany to confront our entire history and a part of that is the story of the expellees."<sup>346</sup> However, the Polish perspective described in the same article, argues that; "the idea of a Center against Expulsions is very suspicious to Poles. The Germans need to understand that there is a large problem in German-Polish relations and she is called Steinbach. If Germans don't see that, it is clear that they aren't all that interested in good relations with their neighbour."<sup>347</sup> Another *Der Spiegel* article informs that the Center against Expulsions has been tied up for years

<sup>340</sup> "Prague refuses apology to Sudeten Germans", *Der Spiegel*, 06-14-2011.

<sup>341</sup> "Prague refuses apology to Sudeten Germans", 06-14-2011.

<sup>342</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 12-02-2005.

<sup>343</sup> "Remembering German Victims", *Der Spiegel*, 08-10-2006.

<sup>344</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 08-10-2006.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*

because it upsets many Poles. They say the narratives used by Germany rewrite history in this museum. The article however also mentions that German Minister of culture Bernard Neumann has won Polish politicians over, so that they at least would not actively oppose the new museum, and would allow Polish historians to participate.<sup>348</sup> Subsequently, Manfred Kittel, Director of the government-backed Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation Foundation, which is in charge of the project for the museum on the commemoration of the displaced ethnic Germans in post-war Eastern Europe, stated in another *Der Spiegel* article, that the controversy of possible rewriting history is slightly misplaced. The foundation has appointed a scientific advisory council, including experts from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.<sup>349</sup>

A strong case of historical culture is further illustrated by a proposal to establish a commemoration day in honor of the expelled ethnic Germans from East-Central Europe, has rekindled the debate on German contemporary history. Sixty eight leading historians have blasted the whole idea in an open letter, arguing that this would be “an incorrect, historical-political signal”<sup>350</sup>, because the commemoration day is linked to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ‘Charter of German Expellees’. In the charter, no word is used to describe the causes of the war and the mass crimes of the Nazis, the ethnic cleansing of the Jews, Poles, Russians, Roma and Sinti.<sup>351</sup> The open letter argues; “instead, the expellees see themselves as the most affected group of the period, which is a grotesque distortion of the historical reality.”<sup>352</sup>

#### *The Bund der Vertriebenen and their Charter of Expellees*

The *Bund der Vertriebenen* (BdV) represents the interests of two million ethnic Germans who were forcibly removed from the former German territories in East-Central Europe. Media commentators frequently ask themselves if the BdV and its cause represents a hopeless group of German revanchists looking for a place among the long list of victims of World War II, or a forgotten group whose persecution in the post war years has been minimized and ignored. What does come forward is that, in its ongoing struggle, the BdV has never shown any sense for nuance in the debate. The expellees have long refused to recognize the newly established German-Polish border, the *Oder-Neisse* line; they opposed Polish accession into the EU; and have sparked much tension with their initiative to create a museum for the history of displaced persons. They have also been accused of historical revisionism, by depicting themselves as the true victims of the war.<sup>353</sup> In addition, it is interesting to see how the head of the BdV has framed her organization as

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<sup>348</sup> “German government approves expellees museum”, *Der Spiegel*, 03-19-2008.

<sup>349</sup> “Expellees paid a higher price for crimes of Third Reich”, *Der Spiegel*, 12-30-2009.

<sup>350</sup> “Historians condemn commemoration day proposal”, *Der Spiegel*, 02-15-2011.

<sup>351</sup> ‘Charter of German Expellees’ <http://www.bund-der-vertriebenen.de/derbdv/charta-en.php3> accessed on 12 May, 2014.

<sup>352</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 02-15-2011.

<sup>353</sup> “Nowhere is there a line condemning the Nazis” *Der Spiegel*, 08-05-2010.

a 'non-profit victim's organization', while pushing for their own perspective in order to influence the common narrative.<sup>354</sup> The expellees proudly point out that the *Charter of Expellees* from 1950 is a groundbreaking document, because of the sentence "we the expellees renounce revenge and compensation",<sup>355</sup> which proves their peaceful nature and desire for reconciliation.<sup>356</sup> The presumption is however that the expellees have a natural right to revenge. Another point of criticism is that Russians, Jews and Poles must feel mocked by claims that the expellees are the 'most affected by the agony of that era'. It should also be mentioned that the charter doesn't mention anything condemning the Nazis.<sup>357</sup> The Charter of German expellees is arguably a particular and subjective framing of events and while it makes explicit reference to its efforts for reconciliation, it "doesn't serve the interests of German-Polish reconciliation",<sup>358</sup> according to a spokesman of the German Foreign Minister.

#### *Hierarchy in narratives and suffering*

In the immediate postwar, conservatives aggressively ignored Germany's guilt in World War II and placed their own suffering in the foreground. This happened before the general public knew the full account of the atrocities of the Holocaust. *Der Spiegel* rightfully argues that "when the expellees would like to earn some more respect, they have to recognize that, after 'Auschwitz', there simply is a certain hierarchy in discussing crimes committed."<sup>359</sup> Another example of historical revisionism is the heavily criticized comment made by Steinbach on Poland's role in World War II. By stating that she could not change the fact that Poland mobilized its forces in March of 1939, months before Germany invaded the country, she implied that Poland shared the responsibility for starting the war. The view from her own political party, the CSU on Steinbach's comments, came down to the question of why she was dealing with historical issues in a way more typical of certain Balkan countries.<sup>360</sup>

#### **4.4.3 The influence of political culture on reconciliatory processes**

A clear cut example of diverging political cultures in the Polish-German reconciliation process is apparent through 23 individual claims by the *Prussian Trust* (Preussische Treuhand) against Poland at the European Court of Human Rights in 2006. This organization represents expelled Germans from Eastern Europe and risked harming the German-Polish relations with this move. German government officials have officially opposed the claim because "it is poisonous for the

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<sup>354</sup> "I want the truth, and nothing but", *Der Spiegel*, 03-09-2009.

<sup>355</sup> 'Charter of German Expellees'

<sup>356</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 08-05-2010.

<sup>357</sup> 'Charter of German Expellees'

<sup>358</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 02-15-2011.

<sup>359</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 08-05-2010.

<sup>360</sup> "How far to the right can Germany's conservatives go?", *Der Spiegel*, 09-10-2010.



German-Polish reconciliation process.”<sup>361</sup> Moreover, the Poles were obviously displeased with the claims. Polish media backed this statement by arguing that “in Germany, a re-nationalisation of politics is occurring, an exceptionally radical calling into question of historical judgements.”<sup>362</sup> Polish politicians have said that any claims from the *Vertriebenen* should be addressed towards the Allied powers, such as the US, Britain and heirs of the Soviet Union and not towards Poland, because the Polish only accepted the decision of moving the Polish borders westwards, that had been made at the Potsdam conference of 1945.<sup>363</sup> Can a lawsuit instigated by private citizens of a country against another state seriously disrupt the relations between these two nations? According to *Der Spiegel*, the answer is no, otherwise “there could be no normal international diplomacy.”<sup>364</sup> This opinion illustrates the seemingly absurd situation in which the Polish government criticizes its German counterparts, and the German government harshly criticized the claim, but is not allowed to prohibit individual legal claims from private citizens. The legal claim has raised a lot of controversy in Poland, because it does not make sense, even to Polish experts on the *Vertriebenen*, *Der Spiegel* argues. The claim is portrayed by the Polish President Kaczynski as a ‘campaign of lies’ and represents an opportunity for him to present himself as the Defender of Polish-ness. For him the Prussian Trust is not an isolated right-wing group, but a leading movement in Germany that sets a precedent for the near future; “If German elites do not react firmly, the nation could again move in a direction that has already ended once in a great European tragedy.”<sup>365</sup>

The 2007 European Summit in Brussels showed another concrete episode with implications for the German-Polish reconciliation process. Most of Europe was shocked by Kaczynski’s comment on Poland’s suffering in World War II as an argument to propose a different voting formula in the European Union: “We are merely demanding what was taken from us. If Poland not had to live through the years 1939-1945, Poland today would be looking at the demographics of a country of 66 million, instead of 38.” The ultimate taboo was mentioned by dredging up the Nazi atrocities at a delicate stage in EU relations. “Europe cannot continue to live in the past, it’s absurd to base today’s decisions on a very tragic history,” was the response of Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip.<sup>366</sup> German media coverage voiced harsh criticism: “Kaczynski has now shown how little he appreciated the German efforts at making amends. The remains of his political credit with his off-key historical reference are gambled away”,<sup>367</sup> is one of the remarks that serves to illustrate the existing different political cultures. This is backed by the

<sup>361</sup> “Kaczynski demands World War II Reparations Deal”, *Der Spiegel*, 10-30-2006,

<sup>362</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 10-30-2006, and “Furious Poland threatens to re-open German border”, *Der Spiegel*, 12-19-2006.

<sup>363</sup> “Poles angered by German WWII compensation claims”, *Der Spiegel*, 12-18-2006.

<sup>364</sup> “Poland’s adolescent behaviour”, *Der Spiegel*, 12-20-2006.

<sup>365</sup> “Suit evokes ghosts of war”, *Der Spiegel*, 01-02-2007.

<sup>366</sup> “Poland blasted for mentioning the war”, *Der Spiegel*, 06-22-2007.

<sup>367</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 06-22-2007.



following comment: “The new EU member states speak a different language. Countries like Poland, Hungary and The Czech Republic are still trapped in transformation and introspection, and to them the European structures are like a corset, and like a rebellious teenager they don’t want to follow the rules of the house.”<sup>368</sup>

Another feature of diverging political cultures comes from the hardline rhetoric of Polish political leadership in the Kaczynski era; on a radio interview in 2007 Kaczynski said that “something very negative” is happening in Germany. He went on to compare the time when Hitler came to power with contemporary Germany by adding that “the large majority of Europeans didn’t have the courage to stand up and the same is happening today.”<sup>369</sup> German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier reacted on these statements by saying that Berlin has the duty to patiently seek dialogue with Poland, especially in difficult times”, given the “terrible 20<sup>th</sup> century that links the two countries.”<sup>370</sup> To illustrate the differences in political culture, the reaction of the BdV leader is useful; “The parties that govern Poland are comparable with the German far-right parties. We can’t expect too much in them taking the tension out of relations with Germany.”<sup>371</sup> By comparing Poland’s ruling party with far-right German parties, she has done herself and the cause of the *Vertriebenen* a disservice. The majority of the Polish population is deeply suspicious of the attempts of German expellees to obtain recognition and minority rights in their former *Heimat* in Eastern European countries. Both German policy makers and the Polish government quickly rejected the comparison made by Steinbach.<sup>372</sup>

Finally, another aspect in the German-Polish reconciliatory process which illustrates a diverging political culture is the support by sections of Polish society that still has considerable prejudices against all things German. According to Reiter, “an elite dictated the tone of the German-Polish dialogue, and this elite has failed to include the voices that were insecure. Those fears, for historic reasons have to do a lot with Germany.”<sup>373</sup> A significant part of the Polish minority is having trouble with the idea of living in an open space without protective borders.

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<sup>368</sup> Der Spiegel, 06-22-2007.

<sup>369</sup> “Polish Prime Minister: ‘Something very negative’ happening in Germany”, Der Spiegel, 06-27-2007

<sup>370</sup> Der Spiegel, 06-27-2007

<sup>371</sup> “German expellee leader hurts her cause with Polish ‘NPD’ comments”, Der Spiegel, 03-02-2007.

<sup>372</sup> Der Spiegel, 03-02-2007.

<sup>373</sup> “Germany and Poland are dependant on each other”, Der Spiegel, 01-09-2008

#### 4.4.4 Considering the culture of fear and resentment

*"The people don't want war, but they can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and for exposing the country to danger."*<sup>374</sup> - Herman Goring during the Nuremberg trials.

The third strand of culture that has come to the fore during the analysis of *Der Spiegel* articles is that of the culture of fear and resentment. The dynamics between Germans, the *Vertriebenen* in particular, and Czechs and Poles, has been characterized by fear especially from the Czech and Polish side, and resentment from both sides of the debate.

The 1970 *Der Spiegel* article analyzed previously also shows an important cause for the fear and resentment on both sides of the conflict. The expulsions are described in a chilling manner: "The hour of revenge on the Germans struck, for the suffering of the Poles, for the destroyed cities, churches and schools. For Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka."<sup>375</sup> Another account reiterated that the culture of fear in the Czech-German relations is still omnipresent after forty years since "many Czechs are still afraid of Germans."<sup>376</sup>

The news in 2006 that much acclaimed German writer Gunther Grass had been a member of the Waffen-SS illustrates the vulnerability of Polish-German relations. Many Poles reacted bitterly and this can be contributed to the underlying culture of resentment; "we always knew it, there aren't any good Germans."<sup>377</sup> In Poland this news was instantly made political as President Kaczynski had been presenting himself and his government as the "steadfast protector of Polish honor, against the pro-German weaklings."<sup>378</sup> Furthermore, the somewhat over-reaction in the debate and a culture of deep distrust is illustrated by the condemnation of German President Horst Köhler by the Poles. President Köhler gave a speech at the Federation of Expellees in 2006. German media defended the president, who in fact urged the expellees to listen to Polish concerns, whereas Prime Minister Kaczynski directly took a firm antagonistic stance, stating: "That's one of these disturbing events taking place in Germany these days", and condemning the very fact of Köhler's appearance at a gathering of expellees as German head of state. German media have described Kaczynski's reaction as "not looking for dialogue, but having the characteristics of a demagogue."<sup>379</sup> A *Der Spiegel* article from 20 June 2007 voiced its concerns about how German-Polish reconciliation had been deteriorating to a level not seen since before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Polish right-wing politicians and a large amount of the population

<sup>374</sup> Mölder, The culture of fear in international politics-a Western dominated international system and its extremist challenges, 241.

<sup>375</sup> "Aussonnung oder ausverkauf?" (Reconciliation or sellout?) *Der Spiegel*, 16-11-1970.

<sup>376</sup> "Tu oma den gefallen" (Do grandma a favor), *Der Spiegel*, 20-05-1996.

<sup>377</sup> "An honorary citizen's fall from grace", *Der Spiegel*, 08-18-2006.

<sup>378</sup> "Der Spiegel", 08-18-2006.

<sup>379</sup> "New setback in German-Polish Ties", *Der Spiegel*, 09-04-2006.

seem to be consumed by a culture of fear by the perceived German threat. The culture they adhere to consists of a small spectrum with only black and white, good and bad. The greatest enemy of these Poles in this particular worldview appears to be the Germans. In September of 2005 during a discussion regarding Poland's biggest threats, Kaczynski answered this question as follows: "Threats? Those are our neighbors Russia and Germany."<sup>380</sup> Moreover, before the 2007 EU-Lisbon Treaty could be signed by all members, the euro-skeptic Czech president Klaus finally conceded and the reforms could be applied. Klaus attacked and stalled the ratification process in the Czech Republic for months, claiming concerns that Sudeten Germans might seek to reclaim their former lands under the Lisbon Treaty.<sup>381</sup> Finally, former Polish Prime Minister Kaczynski brought another compelling example of a culture of fear and resentment. In his bid for new elections he voiced bizarre claims, suggesting that Germany wants to annex parts of Poland and that Angela Merkel came to power with help of the East German secret police. However, this nationalistic paranoid rhetoric of Kaczynski has made Poles tired of him, *Der Spiegel* argues.<sup>382</sup>

#### *Cold War dynamics on reconciliation process*

During the Cold War, Polish-German relations were overshadowed by the East-West conflict, which obscured old national antagonism. In Germany anti-Polish prejudices were tolerated because they were considered anti-communist. According to Reiter, at the same time there has always been a tradition of condescension towards the Poles. For example, the average German does not know, even today, that besides the crimes committed against the 6 million Jews, the Nazis also conducted ethnic cleansing against the Slavs.<sup>383</sup> However, there have been moments of rapprochement and positive reconciliatory steps between the two countries during the Cold War. The first steps towards reconciliation came from the Poles. In 1956 Polish Bishops sent a letter to their German colleagues, granting and requesting forgiveness, at a time when the *Vertriebenen* were still openly demanding that the Oder-Neisse border between Poland and (East) Germany be redrawn.<sup>384</sup> Another step towards reconciliation was the *Ostpolitik* policy of West German chancellor Willy Brandt, who broke with Cold War dogmas and the political culture in that era by visiting Warsaw in December of 1970 and kneeling in front of the monument commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. His gesture caused a scandal within the German political right wing.<sup>385</sup> *Der Spiegel* reiterates that; "By kneeling down, he struck a moral cord and signalled a desire for atonement."<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> "A history of hostility between Poland and Germany", *Der Spiegel*, 06-20-2007

<sup>381</sup> "The war of nerves over EU reform is finally over", *Der Spiegel*, 11-04-2009.

<sup>382</sup> "Kaczynski warns of Germany's imperial ambitions", *Der Spiegel*, 10-05-2011.

<sup>383</sup> "Respect for Poland hasn't always been Germany's strong suit", *Der Spiegel*, 01-12-2010.

<sup>384</sup> "A history of betrayal", *Der Spiegel*, 06-18-2007

<sup>385</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 06-18-2007

<sup>386</sup> "Relations shouldn't be a one-way street", *Der Spiegel*, 02-18-2011.

Brandt seems to be one of the most appealing examples, and a standard for Polish-German reconciliation. The Agreement between the German Chancellor Brandt and the Polish communist party leader Władysław Gomułka has been identified as a historical turning point.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> Der Spiegel, 16-11-1970.

#### 4.5 Preliminary conclusions *Vertriebenen* case

##### *The reception of historical memory in the Vertriebenen case*

The dominant role of historical culture comes to the fore because both the scholarly world and popular discourse treat as the Holocaust as departure point of all suffering during World War II. The fate of the *Vertriebenen* has been contextualized within this framework. An identified diverging culture is the inclusion in expellee history of the treatment of Poles by Germans in World War II, together with their role as (perceived) collaborators with Nazi-Germany during the 1938 annexation of Sudetenland. Another important feature of role of culture distilled from postwar reconciliation efforts mainly being hindered as a consequence of the political culture of the Cold War, which is generally considered problematic. In the 1990s however, the case of the *Vertriebenen* came to the forefront again because of changing geopolitical conditions. The 2007 Lisbon Treaty is an example of the role of history and culture concerning in contemporary European political debate, particularly in the case of the Czech president demanding legal protection from possible future compensation claims from ethnic Germans. Furthermore, complicating dynamics coming along with the heated debate is mainly because the *Vertriebenen* have considerable potential power in German politics, which causes a lot of hostility both domestically and abroad. The *Vertriebenen* have made it hard for themselves in the historical debate, because they take a firm stance concerning their own fate exclusively as victims instead of a mutual responsibility for the crimes and violence that occurred during the war and postwar periods. Another example of political culture and a culture of resentment and fear is the ambiguous Czech role in the reconciliation process, in which apologies and treaties have shown a reconciliatory stance, but retribution towards *Vertriebenen* has been refused.

##### *Der Spiegel media analysis*

The multi-layered and complicated dynamics of reconciliation and acts of apology in the *Vertriebenen* case, shows that a myriad of national politicians and special interest-groups want a say in how the relations and policies that affects their future should be shaped. The sometimes problematic atmosphere in Central Europe concerning their mutually tormented past has enabled strongly opposing political and historical cultures to color the way German officials relate to Polish and Czech officials. Moreover it also shows how the *Vertriebenen* relate to politicians of the German, Polish and Czech governments. This is often characterized by a culture of fear and resentment. Overcoming these fears and misinterpretations from their own narrative and the often difficult path towards reconciliation is a great challenge.

For moving towards 'the other' in this context, it is key to take the role of diverging cultures at several levels (historical, political and social) into serious consideration to

understand why this process is frequently marked by sudden antagonistic outbursts. It is important for the future of Europe and for the people in Central Europe to be informed of these diverging cultural perceptions, that keep having a strong influence on how people feel and live and subsequently influence their future.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis analyzed primary sources, secondary literature, and a performed media analysis, for two case studies. *Bosnia* and the *Vertriebenen* have both been cases that played an important role in further understanding the dynamics on the role of culture in apologies and reconciliation processes. The Bosnia case study has been a showcase on the complex dynamics surrounding the the international community has in contemporary peacebuilding. The Vertriebenen case had a different approach by identifying three strands of culture which influenced the reconciliation process in East-Central Europe in important ways. Furthermore, the Vertriebenen addressed the role of diverging political cultures in the post World War II period, explaining the dynamics of the polarizing geopolitical context of the Cold War, which made steps towards reconciliation difficult. Moreover, the diverging political cultures of left and right-wing German domestic politics during the Cold War era, and the role the *Vertriebenen* had in this as a potentially powerful interest-group were distilled from the conducted research.

The combined efforts of research on both cases have all been a means to find an answer to the problem definition put forward at the start of this thesis and which has been a referencing point. This chapter encompasses the conclusion and is divided in two main sections: First, the most important observations distilled from the research will be presented. They aim to answer the different sub-questions posited, and thus answer the main research question. Finally a template for a culturally-sensitive approach in reconciliatory processes and the act of apology in these contexts is presented.

### 5.1. Observations to answer the problem definition

Eight observations have been distilled from the summary of the thesis, which give new insight on the preliminary answer to the main research question. The four sub-questions have a specific perspective and involve different layers of this problem definition. However, each question is answered separately by the different observations or claims obtained through the research.

#### **1) 'How do culture, apology and reconciliation relate to one another in post-conflict societies?'**

The first observation drawn from the analysis concerns the way narratives in post-conflict settings have significant influence on the outcome: *The culture in narratives and dominant discourse play a key role in reconciliation processes when it comes to depriving 'the Other' of their*



*right to tell their story.* The Bosnian case study shows that there is a strong taboo both within the international community and the non-Serb Balkan region towards seeing Serbs as victims. Perhaps an even stronger example of this particular dynamic is seen in the *Vertriebenen* case study, which depicts a strongly-felt antagonistic stance towards the mere idea of Germans as victims among the Polish and Czech societies. Furthermore, the *Vertriebenen* case shows another complicating feature, that the Holocaust discourse dominates the hierarchy of narratives on victimization. The fate of the expelled ethnic Germans has a strong opposing force within the so-called 'war of narratives' and it is a tough fight to change their place within the discourse of political and historical culture.

*That the role of historical culture is crucial in political rhetoric that frustrates reconciliation. It is influenced by persistent negative imaging of 'the Other' through historical culture,* is the second observation. There is an old historical antagonism in the own narrative towards 'the Other' in conflict and post-conflict settings in both the Bosnian and *Vertriebenen* cases. The heavy weight of the Western Balkans of history, which directly influences the historical culture of the concerned parties and ethnicities, complicates the delicate dynamic of reconciliatory efforts. The violent eruption of the 1992-1995 civil war in Bosnia was kindled by increasingly diverging nationalist narratives that set the other group apart. This was an important explanation for how the situation developed from a multi-layered culture of resentment and hate into eventually an inflammable and highly violent conflict. A similarly strong incentive of historical culture with a strong potential to problematize sustainable reconciliation is seen in the *Vertriebenen* case. Here it is shown how diverging narratives stand in the way of building trust of the belief in coexistence with former foes in the same country.

**2) 'To what extent do reconciliatory processes in the post World War II differ from similar features in the aftermath post-Cold War?'**

The third observation that has surfaced is the temporal aspect of the political culture which complicates reconciliation efforts in the post World War II era, compared to that of the post-Cold war era: *The political culture during the Cold War era was an important reason why reconciliation in Central Europe was generally problematic.* Two positive examples stand out: the reconciliatory efforts of German and Polish bishops in the 1950s and Willy Brandt's *Ost-politik* in the 1970s. The way the major political ideologies stood opposite towards each other during the Cold War era made it increasingly complicated to find rapprochement and commonalities. Such moves were even considered taboo, as the *Vertriebenen* case study has shown, reconciliatory steps towards Germans were not considered helpful to the political cause. From the West-German side, for a long it was considered traitorous to seek amends with Poles and Czechoslovakians after the expulsions. Moreover 'the Others' were framed as communists, and did not make it easier for the

general public to accept anything that seemed an act of reconciliation or an apologetic stance towards political enemies. *Ost-politik* came from the German left wing and faced strong opposition from right-wing politicians. This clearly illustrates a diverging political culture within Germany. The right wing was actively backed by expellee organizations in opposing the new initiatives for dialogue and reconciliation. The discourse in which contemporary peacebuilding is conducted, like in the Bosna case, does not face a similar polarizing geopolitical context. After the collapse of Communism in the early 1990s, a renewed interest came to the forefront in both scholarly and policy-making circles towards concepts such as peacebuilding, reconciliation, human rights, and transitional justice.

**3) *What role does the international community have in the reconciliatory process and acts of apology within post-conflict societies?***

The fourth observation highlights the concept of apology: *The act of apology has too often been a prerequisite imposed by the international community, without careful consultation of culturally-sensitive and context-specific requirements in the host-society.* Leading politicians who have offered apologies have, in time and depending on what audience they were facing, changed their tone or backed from their previous message of remorse and reconciliation. Subsequently, politicians who have offered. The act of apology has too often been an instrument of symbolic politics that has been required from the international community without careful consultation of historically based, culture sensitive and context specific requisites in the host-society. In the Bosnian case for example, some Serb politicians have showed that this process of atonement and a will to change has been complicated, while measures of reconciliation or describing the issue that needs an apology, have been undertaken. This process started without a seemingly genuine motivation and without really touching the core issues. Moreover, leaders do not take the blame for the injustices that were committed by their own people. Apologies by leading politicians have been received ambiguously by their own population, which makes the situation even more complicated, because the politicians are dependent on the electorate, and so have a strong incentive to preempt the outcome of the act of apology, if one has been carried out.

The fifth observation that has reappeared throughout the research; *In theory the international community takes the role of culture and its significant influence into serious consideration. In practice however, a lot of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts fail or at best are partially successful, because there hasn't been enough concern of the needs of the culture and context of the post-conflict host society.* Numerous official UN and EU documents speak explicitly of the important role of context-specific and culturally-sensitive reconciliation approaches, but implementation of the rule of law, a market economy, security and the empowerment of institutions have priority. As a consequence, the social fabric of the concerned society is virtually

ignored. On the contrary, even an increasingly antagonistic stance towards culturally-specific features and peacebuilding initiatives that do not fit in the mould of the international peacebuilding context are ignored. For example, the local interests in Bosnia Herzegovina are bypassed by the historical character of the EU in social, economic and political terms. As a result, a seemingly paradoxical dynamic is emerging, where localized peacebuilding has become resistant to EU peacebuilding efforts, as emphasized by Richmond.

The *sixth observation* that complements the above mentioned claims is that: *The role of diverging political cultures as the complicating dynamic to reconciliatory processes and the act of apologies is recognized at the international level, between countries and their officials, but also at the domestic level, where minority groups and government operate from different angles.* Normative, hierarchical visions have been imposed by the international community, however numerous accounts from literature critical to this approach argue that reconciliation is essentially a local question and that conflict and post-conflict reconciliatory processes are different in every situation. However, the international community has a normative framework that works with institutional and technocratic expertise originating in Western countries. Furthermore, it is important to realize that reconciliation is not an automatic by-product of the sum of international peacebuilding projects; it cannot be decreed from policies or plans. Not statistical data or technical management styles, implemented by the international actors, but culturally-sensitive interventions help understand the complexity of problems in post-conflict societies. Individual, communal and national approaches are needed and local peacebuilding actors need to be involved in an open dialogue with all the concerned parties. The Bosnian case shows that both Bosnian officials and Bosnian civil society do not always have a similar style of peacebuilding, and have a different vision of the future of their post-conflict society. Therefore the international actors involved do not consider the Bosnian actors useful in the peacebuilding and reconciliatory processes that have been orchestrated. On the contrary, they should be focused on the local needs and cultural logics of the particular society, fulfilling a crucial function of both political socialization and permanent renegotiation of political, social and historical issues. In the *Vertriebenen* case this is illustrated with the example that the political culture the *Vertriebenen* have as a political force in German politics frequently meets opposition from the political culture of the German officials, who are also the policy makers. Moreover, this observation is substantiated by the differing and even clashing cultures at the governmental level. Namely German officials on the one side and Polish and Czech politicians on the other are frequently struggling to come to terms with each other through policy-making and speech acts produced within different cultures in general, and political and historical cultures more specifically.

The seventh observation concerns not only the differing approach of the international community and the host country, but an even more alarming dynamic: *A clash of cultures is present in contemporary peacebuilding efforts, between the international community and the host-country, which has significant influence on the outcome of reconciliatory efforts.* First, there is the intrinsic culture of the Western-dominated international community, which has an own technical approach and cultural mores and imposes the implementation of this approach on the culture and context of the post-conflict host society. This obviously leads to miscommunication and the involved actors blame each other for partially failing reconciliation efforts. Second, local actors from the host-country feel that they are outflanked and eventually take an opposing stance towards the internationally proposed reconciliation efforts.

**4) 'In what way do the apologies and reconciliatory processes in domestic Western politics differ from those demanded by the Western-dominated international community?'**

The eighth observation that complements the previous three claims on the particular role of the international community comes down to that; *there is a significant difference between domestic and international policies from Western countries concerning the way the act of apology is perceived.* It was thought-provoking to discover how the motivations behind Western domestic political choices differ from motivations in the international political context. This is particularly related to how political culture and ideology play a role in the enactment of apologies. To be more precise, it has been argued that liberal parties in Western countries generally embrace the importance of individual rights and a limited government and therefore are less willing to support interest groups. At the same time, when the same Western countries view their policies towards the act of apology within the contemporary peacebuilding context for a specific post-conflict host-society, the two political cultures seem to have one voice and support a protagonist stance within reconciliatory processes.

The last observation is ultimately also one of the most important result for this thesis: *When the process of post-conflict reconciliation stagnates, the role of culture, or more precisely, the negligence of culturally-sensitive approaches in this particular process, has appeared to be of key importance to the outcome.* In both case studies reconciliation and the act of apologies have been frequently colored by resentment. When either timing, use of words or the way an apology was demanded as 'the right thing to do', this could become reason to be wary of the apology, either at the giving or the receiving end of the apology act. In Bosnia, the belief in the Western approach to international peacebuilding discourse is that the host-country should adapt to the norms and values of the international actors. This dynamic does not help to understand or become immerse in specific societies and cultural structures or approaches unknown to the Western-style peacebuilding efforts. To be more specific, the case of Bosnia shows that culturally established

structures in the host-country are not utilized enough for local agency to feel involved. The international actors decide what approaches and what policies are implemented in the post-conflict society. The *Vertriebenen* case also distinctly shows that a process of reconciliation between states and their population has the accompanying dynamics that special interest groups and the popular consent bring to the process.

## 5.2 Towards a template for cultural-sensitive reconciliation

### *Introduction*

Kansteiner has been referred at earlier in my research in which he calls upon a critical view on historical memory, because this can originate from traumatic events in the collective memory. In the context of both the post-conflict contexts of the *Bosnia* and the *Vertriebenen* case studies, really understanding the dynamics in what way culture has become part of the debate, and the dynamic that can evolve in a political vehicle, means to understand how either point blank or very subtle features in reconciliatory processes can be identified and addressed. This last part of the conclusion of my thesis will exist of four guide lines that not only advocate culture-sensitive approaches within apologies and reconciliation processes, but has the goal to point towards complimentary facets within the scholarly discussion, and subsequently pass over a change of mentality and focus within the field. However, it is important to note that this culture-specific model does not entail a fit-for-all template, but is differently internalized, has differing degrees of motivational force, vary in distribution and may be applied in other ways according to the context.

### **I. Moving from good intentions to feasible implementation**

Stressing the importance of culturally-sensitive reconciliation efforts asks for a paradigm shift in international relations and peacebuilding circles. The goal of this first principle is to urge the international community to work towards real policy and not leaving 'culture' to be rarely moved beyond the level of rhetoric. Conflict resolution built in accordance with traditional structures within the host country, cultural joint projects help create a broad empowering momentum for sustainable reconciliation. A key role in culturally bound and community-generated initiatives lies in the empowerment of local agency and traditional structures in society by the international community, instead of neglecting and ignoring it, what happens in too many cases. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in which a real effort has been made to understand the other groups' perspective and especially how the historical background and identity-giving narratives have characterized 'the Other'. By proceeding with this approach, the chances of coming to terms out of the conflict or disagreement in a more sustainable manner, will increase. Another way of understanding problematic reconciliatory processes is by not underestimating the differing political culture of another country or group and that this dynamic is an important reason to explain the existing ignorance and incomprehension.

### **II. Reconciling different styles of peacebuilding to obtain reconciliation**

This research has shown that actual culturally-sensitive and country-specific reconciliation asks for another mindset for especially international actors, which only take culture-sensitive features

into consideration when these contribute to their own political project in the region. This approach emphasizes on reconciling opposing interests and concepts within the broad scope of peacebuilding actors and building a culture of cooperation and trust, instead of having a polarizing effect on Bosnian society for example. International actors within peacebuilding projects have the responsibility to be focused on the local needs and cultural logics of the particular society.

Another dynamic to this approach is the collaboration of state-centric, or top-down, and society-centric, or bottom-up approaches, in which the empowerment of civil-society has a central role. State-centric policies are also valued, when they do not harm the social fabric of the host-society. Furthermore, the international community can have a crucial role in encouraging co-existence instead of co-dependence. Analysts such as Chandler and Pouligny, have stated that a more hybrid form of reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts, focussing on the local with a more inclusive mentality from the international actors will be a step in the right direction.

### **III. Working towards a genuine internal process.**

It is essential to make a shift from technocratic Western styled approaches to a reconciliatory process what is characterized by patiently working on implementation of policies that serve both the local and international. This can be achieved by utilizing flexible strategies that carefully fine-tune to the domestic political context. Only a genuine internal process can resolve the ethnic animosity that instigated the violence. Cultural and social relationships are important for accountability and legitimacy. It is important to realize that this process takes time and effort, since Ignatieff insightfully described that an immediate, shared truth about the past is impossible, because the concept of truth is related to that of identity. As an example, the international community should consider it a priority to understand the 'ownership approach' that former High Commissioner Petritsch envisioned, which is a potentially strong case for culturally-sensitive mechanisms. To achieve social cohesion and an inclusive mentality it is important to encourage this dialogue as international actors. Another essential factor is an internal process where local actors take responsibility for pushing forward ethnic divisions and the violence that has occurred. At the same time, a genuine process of rapprochement and redress is a key factor to the way an act of apology in post-conflict societies will be perceived.

### **IV. Putting priority on educating all actors involved in the reconciliation process.**

Informing previous enemies about a broader perspective of the conflict, and likewise presenting the narrative of the 'Other', instead of merely focussing only on the own narrative, is an important tool towards a mentality that increases the chance of opening some kind of dialogue between the two parties or ethnicities. The first two observations from research - that narratives and dominant discourse play a key role in depriving 'the Other' of their right to tell their story, and



that political rhetoric frustrates reconciliation when it constantly portrays 'the Other' through negative imaging - back this suggestion to work towards a culturally-sensitive reconciliation process. The elaboration of this tool can consist of arranging meetings with the leaders of the previously conflicting communities, or a setting where individuals of both groups are able to talk about their own experiences and share their motives, fears and vision of the future.

Next, thoroughly informing and educating international actors before going into the host-society's post-conflict context is another tool to increase the chances for reconciliation efforts to be successful. Early on in the thesis these dynamics have been described, in which cultural elements of the particular society and the specific conflict are rarely understood by international actors. The necessary information is not gathered. Therefore, an obligatory preliminary study on the culture and the historical background on the host-society of the specific peacebuilding effort, will help the peacebuilding actors to have a more contextualized perception of the complicating dynamics that they will be facing. The occurrence of peacekeeping actors arriving in the region and being oblivious to the different conceptions and approaches of the host-country will be tackled with this tool.

Finally, a vital role education can play is in seeking to promote reconciliation through collaboration to produce a shared work on a particular conflict. A good example of this feature has been the aforementioned German-Polish project of developing a common narrative in history textbook for high-school students on both sides of the German-Polish border. While these projects are not without challenges for the outcome of the product, taking this particular approach serious showcases the implementation of different historical cultures coming together and by working together towards a joint narrative implicitly shows a context-specific and culturally-sensitive reconciliation process.

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