



Masters thesis:

Balance of Power at Vienna: how was this idea perceived by the European Powers? A perspective of the Historical Actors

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Abstract

This master thesis examines the concept of the balance of power during the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). The ideas outlined by the balance of power played a significant role during the negotiations in Vienna, aiming to create a peaceful and stable Europe to prevent future conflicts. This thesis focuses on the key figures who represented the Great European Powers. These were Viscount Castlereagh from Britain, Klemens von Metternich from Austria, Emperor Alexander I from Russia, Karl August von Hardenberg from Prussia, and Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand from France. Initially, France was not welcome at the 'Inner Circle' of Vienna, but after many conversations led by Castlereagh and Metternich, France was eventually given a seat at the table. The actors came to Vienna with their goals and motivations to empower during the meetings but overcame their differences. The thesis explores the actor's goals and examines how they perceived the idea of balance of power and how this played a role during the Congress of Vienna. To define this concept, it explores different variants of it and provides an overview. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the social dimension of Vienna, such as the city itself, the people, and the interactions among the actors and others, played a crucial role in the outcome of this settlement. The common people perceived Vienna as a spiritual and significant event and had high expectations for the conference's success. The actors were often worshipped to make this happen. This recognition helped the 'Inner Circle' to understand that peace and cooperation were necessary to create a new stable order, which was vital to prevent future wars and domestic revolutions. Although the term 'balance of power' was not explicitly mentioned, it influenced how the actors in Vienna looked at the future of Europe, leading to the creation of a new order based on alliances and strong nation-states to counterbalance one another.

Keywords: Balance of Power, European Order, The Congress of Vienna, Historical Actors, Negotiation Process in Vienna.

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and Balance of Power

To ensure that Europe would never fall victim to a dominant force, it was necessary to have multiple strong and sovereign states that could keep each other in check. The idea of balance of power was utilized to restore the old system with Kings and Queens and create stronger security to prevent future wars. The balance of power construction established after the Vienna settlement played a significant role in bringing back balance in a European world that had seen revolutions, like in France and the Napoleon Wars. This restoration and balance in Europe would eventually only last for a while with the year of the revolutions in 1848 and later the age of wars.

One can argue whether a balance of power still exists today, considering the United States spending more on defense than the next nine countries combined.¹ The idea of balance of power differs from when it was forged at the Congress of Vienna, where sovereign states were created to ensure the restraint of other European powers. Today, this idea aligns, for instance, with the rationale behind nuclear weapons, as their existence serves to avoid wars. But, even though the U.S. has the most weapons and power, it still will not interfere, aside from the extensive military and financial aid, in the war in Ukraine.² One could argue that the idea of balance of power is at play in this conflict, raising questions about whether the war would have occurred if Ukraine were a member of NATO. The present European Order is based on a different type of balance of power compared to the Congress of Vienna; it is balanced on nuclear power in contrast to the system of alliance and strong individual nation-states. The success of the Congress of Vienna has changed over time. Still, it is most positively remembered in times of crisis, such as how historians and politicians saw the Peace of Versailles (1919) as inferior to the Congress of Vienna after the Second World War. This treaty is often debated as one of the contributing factors behind the eruption of the Second World War.³

This thesis focuses on the Congress of Vienna and how the European powers perceived this significant event in European history. How did the important historical actors view this event? Was the concept of balance of power central to their understanding, or did they perceive it differently? This thesis aims to determine whether the idea of balance of power is still relevant for examining the Vienna settlement and whether our understanding of this concept aligns with the actual actors in Vienna. In addition to the political aspects of Vienna, the thesis explores the festive side of the event and its importance in achieving its ultimate success. The relevance is to find out if we can still use this idea or if Schroeder's view about this in his works is more compatible and to focus on the actors' view and the role of the social (festive and spiritual) side of Vienna. Schroeder's view, discussed later, was that the idea of balance of power was more in the form of two hegemonic powers than the traditional alliance-

¹ Peter G. Peterson Foundation, "U.S. Defense spending compared to other countries," May 11, 2022. https://www.pgpf.org/chart-archive/0053_defense-comparison

² BBC News, "War in Ukraine," <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60525350>

³ James J. Atkinson, Julián Casanova, "The Treaty of Versailles and its Consequences," University of Notre Dame, 2002. <https://jimmyatkinson.com/papers/the-treaty-of-versailles-and-its-consequences/>

based system. These powers were Great Britain and Russia. On top of that, the thesis provides a newer analysis of the Congress of Vienna.

The main research question: *how did the European powers perceive the idea of balance of power at the Congress of Vienna?* To answer this question, the thesis discusses four sub-questions. The first one is: what is balance of power? Introducing this concept and its variations is crucial in arguing whether Vienna was founded on this idea or something else. Instead of using theory to answer the research question, the concept serves as a framework to approach the Congress of Vienna. This thesis does not use theory to answer the research question. Instead, this concept functions to approach the Congress of Vienna. Next, what was the Vienna settlement? The next chapter discusses the Congress of Vienna and its negotiation process. The third question is: how did Britain, France, Prussia, Russia, and the Habsburgs conceive of the European balance of power at Vienna? This question will not only introduce some of the major players behind the congress, such as Talleyrand (France) and Metternich (Austria) but also focus on how they viewed the idea of balance of power. Additionally, this chapter explores the festive side of Vienna, apart from the political one, focusing on the actors. The research questions are answered based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, in which the primary sources focus on specific historical actors who had a significant role at the Congress of Vienna. In the appendix of this thesis are included portraits of each discussed historical actor.

1.1 Methodology and source criticism

The qualitative methodology describes the Congress of Vienna in detail and focuses on the historical actors. The approach also focuses on the concept of balance of power and how the European powers perceived it. On top of that, it examines the role of the Vienna settlement. To perceive how the European powers in Vienna thought about this concept, the thesis focuses on the historical actors present at this conference. On top of that, it examines how the representative actors from the European powers thought about their ideas on Europe after the wars and the balance of power. It uses primary and secondary sources to answer the research questions.

This thesis aims to look at the perspective of the historical actors and their views on the balance of power. For this research, I have collected a couple of relevant primary sources. The first one is a document about the general treaty of Vienna.⁴ This document describes the outcome of the Congress. Some familiar names like Metternich and Talleyrand (two actors I want to discuss) are mentioned as actors behind this treaty. The document is a translated version (it is translated into English). Most of this document is irrelevant since it details specific events, but it represents the outcome of this critical meeting in Vienna. The references in this document contain other helpful primary sources. The first one is a book that Hansard comprised. It includes much information but is only relevant from pages 71 to 113. These pages are about Vienna and provide information about its outcome and some of its actors,

⁴ Intlaw, "Final Act of the Congress of Vienna/General Treaty (1815)," Derecho Internacional Público, September 24, 2010. <https://www.dipublico.org/100513/final-act-of-the-congress-of-viennageneral-treaty-1815/>

which is appropriate. The second book is about British foreign state papers in French, but the English section contains documents from Viscount Castlereagh.⁵ Castlereagh is one of the actors I want to discuss in the research.

Another primary source focuses on Prince Klemens von Metternich.⁶ He played an essential part at the Congress of Vienna and represented the Austrian Empire, a major European power at that time. The primary source contains his memoirs and conversations with other important players, like Talleyrand (French foreign minister, who is also an actor and will be discussed in this thesis). The Vienna Congress becomes the focus from page 570 of the document and contains conversations between Metternich and Talleyrand and other individuals. It is a relevant source because it contains thoughts and information about specific pertinent individuals in Vienna.

The book by Pradt, written in 1816, is also a useful primary source since it described the events of Vienna in detail, and in doing so, he mentioned many of the actors.⁷ The limits of this book are that, at least for the thesis, it is not entirely relevant. Nevertheless, it provides insight into Vienna and its consequences. Primarily since it was written only one year after the conference took place.

Another primary source is the book by Frederick Freksa, who compiled a lot of personal memoirs of the important participants during the Congress of Vienna. It was published in 1919, so I am unsure if it can be seen as a primary source, but it contains information about all the relevant actors for this thesis.⁸ The limitation of this source is that while it provides much information, the author also includes information about the actors apart from Vienna, which is irrelevant to the thesis.

The book by Sophie de Tisenhaus, published in 1904, contains historical memoirs of the emperor Alexander I of Russia. Although the book focuses on most of his life, chapter XIX is dedicated to his part in the Congress of Vienna, which is relevant to this research.⁹

The last primary source discussed is anecdotal recollections of the Congress of Vienna by Chambonas, who cited a lot of important actors at this congress and traveled with the Austrian Prince. This document is a translation to English (original French), which Albert Dresden Vandam did.¹⁰ The introduction of this document by Fleur gives a bit more information about the author. The document contains much information about Vienna's historical actors and the Congress. This primary source (the

⁵ T.C. Hansard, "The Parliamentary Debates from the year 1803 to the present time: vol. XXXII comprising the period from the first day of February to the sixth day of March 1816," London, 1816. Compiled by the Librarian and Keeper of the papers, foreign office, "British and foreign state papers, London: James Ridgway and sons, Piccadilly, 1815-1816.

⁶ Clemens Wenzel Lothar, Fürst von Metternich [Prince Richard Metternich ed., M. A. de Klinkowström ed., Ms. Alexander Napier trans.], *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1773-1815* (New York, 1880-82). <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924088023415&view=1up&seq=1>

⁷ M. Pradt, "The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)", Philadelphia, M. Carey, 1816.

⁸ Frederick Freksa, "A peace congress of intrigue, a vivid, intimate account of the congress of Vienna composed of the personal memoirs of its important participants," New York, the Century co. 1919.

⁹ Sophie de Tisenhaus, "Historical memoirs of the emperor Alexander I. and the court of Russia," London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1904.

¹⁰ Comte A. de la Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna with introduction and notes by the Comte Fleury," London: Chapman & Hall, limited 1902, January 27, 2017 (e-book). <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/54061/54061-h/54061-h.htm>

version of this document is from 2017) can be relevant for the thesis since it contains conversations and information about the actors in Vienna. A limitation of this source is that it includes much information often irrelevant to the research. It requires some reading to extract the important bits.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This thesis is not using any of the significant international relations theories. Still, it focuses on the idea of a balance of power and how the European powers in Vienna perceived it. This idea that a nation could protect itself by matching its power with other nations was crucial behind the outcome of the Congress of Vienna. For instance, the kingdom of the Netherlands was ‘created’ to have a strong border north of France to balance this power. The idea of balance of power is used as a guiding line in the background of the historical actors in Vienna. This concept is explained in chapter one of this thesis.

Another concept that is used in this thesis is that of the European Order. Since the Congress of Vienna’s main goal was to create a new European Order. In addition, to ensure that wars like those of the Napoleon era would never return, there needed to be a balance of power with strong sovereign borders. The Congress of Vienna made clear that the European Powers wanted to ensure that wars like those during the Napoleonic Era must never happen again on an international level. To do so, they created a new European Order based on ideas of the *ancient regime*, yet the idea of sovereignty and the respect of one’s borders and the newly created ones were central to this idea. Both these concepts are used as the theory for this thesis, but the research primarily focuses on the complexity of the Congress of Vienna.

1.3 Historiographic debate: The idea of Balance of Power and the Congress of Vienna 1814-1815

This chapter focuses on a variety of literature about the topic of this thesis. The idea of balance of power in this thesis comes in three variations. Balance of power as defined by Schroeder (that of hegemonic stability), the alliance idea of balance of power in Europe during Vienna and before that, and a multipolar balance of power system in which this system defends the power system. The central question in this debate is: *To what extent did the Vienna settlement rest on a Balance of Power construction?* This question was the title of Schroeder’s work.¹¹ This essay was written in 1992 and sparked a debate with multiple reactions from other scholars. In this period, there was a lot of interesting literature about the idea of balance of power and the relation of Vienna to this. Was the Vienna settlement based on a balance of power construction, or was it based on another system? The debate focuses on a balance of power and its limitations.

The historiographic debate focuses more on Schroeder’s work and balance of power and its limitations, while the thesis looks at the perceptions of the historical actors of this concept. It is relevant to note that each of the “popular” historical actors had their own goals and ideas on how the conference’s

¹¹ Paul W. Schroeder, “Did the Vienna settlement rest on a Balance of Power?” *The American Historical Review* 97, no.3 (1992): 683.

outcome should be, but one thing was clear: they all wanted to create stability and an era of peace. The restoration process after Vienna is often criticized for its return to the era of the *'ancient regime,'* for which the monarchs at that time paid a heavy price with the many domestic problems in the form of revolts from masses of people. This happened only a couple of years after the conference in Vienna had ended. Still, their goal of international peace was, opposite to the domestic situation in the European powers, successful.

The literature that focuses on this specific topic varies from articles about the goals of each major player, to, for instance, articles that identify and provide historical background about who each of those historical actors were and why they were relevant. This thesis focuses on these specific authors and looks at their goals and perception of the idea of balance of power.

How was the link between Vienna and the balance of power viewed before Schroeder's works? Two examples were Wright and Kissinger, who wrote about this. Wright wrote an article in 1943 about the idea of a balance of power. He states that the traditional view of Vienna can find support among most historians. This traditional view is that of the balance of power as an alliance system that laid the foundation of the European System after Vienna. Schroeder does not discard this concept but argues that Britain and the Russian Empire were the hegemonic powers that influenced this system.¹² Wright states that it is interesting to read that some have nostalgic feelings for this balance of power construction. He argued that this idea would return after World War II. Writes does not deny its success at Vienna but does not see it work in the twentieth century.¹³ He concludes that the idea of a balance of power is relevant to the current international order because it is hostile to international trade, the free economy, democracy, and liberty. It is not surprising that Churchill and Roosevelt 1941 understood that the conditions of the world made this a system of the past.¹⁴ This article focused on how the international order should look after World War II.

Kissinger's work on the Vienna settlement, whose approach was to describe the historical context and the "outcome" of the settlement.¹⁵ He used this event to state that this success at Vienna is significant in a time of nuclear threats. He concluded that since the international order did not contain an ideological superpower, its relations became based on avoiding war, which was successful for the rest of the century.¹⁶ This reappraisal (1956) was based on comparing Vienna and the at-times crisis between two superpowers. Kissinger called the settlement a success because 'major wars' did not occur.

¹² Quincy Wright, "International Law and the Balance of Power," *The American Journal of International Law* 37, no. 1 (1943): 97-98. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2192846>.

¹³ Wright, "International Law," (1943): 98.

Nicholaas J. Spykman, *American Strategy in World Politics*, New York, 1942; Arnold Wolfers, "Anglo-American Post War Cooperation and the Interest of Europe," *American Political Science Review*, August 1942, Vol. 36, p.665; Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Principles of Power: The Great Political Crisis of History*, New York, 1942.

¹⁴ Wright, "International Law," (1943): 101-102.

¹⁵ Henry A. Kissinger, "The Congress of Vienna: A Reappraisal," *World Politics* 8, no. 2 (1956): 264-80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2008974>.

¹⁶ Kissinger, "The Congress of Vienna," *World Politics* 8, no. 2 (1956): 280.

While this is true to some extent, there were a lot of domestic revolutions soon after the conference.

Schroeder wanted to change the uncontested view of Vienna and its success. He starts by saying that the idea of balance of power was essential in Vienna. What else were they doing in Vienna, if not restoring the peace? Especially after the era of French revolutionary expansion and Napoleonic imperialism.¹⁷ Vienna's balance of power interpretation appears so obvious that it is hard for historians to deny. He does not want to challenge the idea of balance of power interpretations at Vienna but argues that exactly this approach is wrong and misleading. In his view, the essential power relations in Vienna were not based on a balance of power construction but on hegemonic relations. The eighteenth-century balance of power construction was transformed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.¹⁸ The idea of hegemony, in this case, was defined by Schroeder when he looked at both Britain's and Russian power and their influence on continental Europe.

Interestingly, his argument of hegemony is that the idea of balance of power was used to disguise this goal. He argued that after the defeat of France (Napoleon), a real chance of balance of power was lost. No matter how historians try to talk about alliances, balances, and ideologies. It cannot disguise that great hegemonic powers like Britain and Russia could impose their will on Europe.¹⁹ Schroeder uses examples of revolution or other events to show that the balance of power construction helped to strengthen the hegemonic powers. He concludes that he expects reactions from critics but wonders why so many scholars have adopted the balance of power interpretation when arguments against this (in his view) are so clear.

Schroeder's essay and argumentation marked an important turn in the abovementioned debate. His 'radical' turn resulted in many reactions from different scholars, especially shortly after Schroeder's article was released in 1992. One was Robert Jervis, who mentioned his work in his article. He reacted to the article and immediately said that political scientists sometimes treat historical scholarship like Sergeant Friday treated witnesses: "Just the facts, ma'am." This attitude is, in Jervis's view, comparable with the writings of Paul Schroeder.²⁰ Jervis finds that political scientists often are too abstract in their thinking. Jervis states that the balance of power is built on stability and restraint arising through conflict. He compares it with Smith's invisible hand.²¹ He argues that the argument made by Schroeder about a community of nations with shared responsibility, or the desire and need to preserve the system, makes little sense. He argues (that other political scientists agree as well) that this view is inconsistent with Vienna and international politics. On top of that, he states that the wars in the Napoleonic Era forged unusual bonds between them to avoid the long wars on the European continent. Whether or not this was the case with the idea of balance of power or merely working with others' interests remains the question.

¹⁷ Schroeder, "Did the Vienna settlement rest on a Balance of Power?" (1992): 683.

¹⁸ Ibid, 684.

¹⁹ Ibid, 692.

²⁰ Robert Jervis, "A Political Science Perspective on the Balance of Power and the Concert," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992): 716. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2164776>.

²¹ Jervis, "A Political Science Perspective," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992): 718.

Another valid argument is that the Congress of Vienna required states to think outside their interest and rely more on others. The concert system's national leaders must have wider concerns, a longer-run perspective, and greater wisdom.²² According to Jervis, Schroeder's system is interesting but has too many inconsistencies. If the hegemonic powers were Russia and Britain, what about Prussia? Prussia had many ambitions but lacked the power to be compared with the other two powers. Nevertheless, according to Jervis, the theory of balance of power in this context is not fully applicable. It is intriguing to read how these two authors agree but simultaneously disagree.

The argument by Schroeder that the balance in Europe after the Napoleon Era was not based on a balance of power but on a 'shared hegemony' is seen as a new approach within the context of Vienna. Gruner reacts to this idea presented in Schroeder's article from 1992 in his work. The essay starts with a reflection on Schroeder's article.²³ The title of this article is a direct response to Schroeder's idea of a great power hegemony. The articles were published quickly after one another and provided a different view on the balance of power. Gruner starts his article by stating that Paul Schroeder's essay touches on two major fields of research: the distribution of power, the system's operation, and the practices of the Vienna settlement.²⁴ Schroeder concluded that the case against Vienna's balance of power interpretation is clear: "Eighteenth-century balance of power rules and practices produced predatory, destabilizing hegemony."²⁵

On the other hand, Gruner would argue that the international system of 1815 could be seen as a reformed, multipolar, and balance of power system. He states that the Vienna system was not designed for a hegemonic great power system, even though the great powers played a leading role in this new European system. It was a balanced multipolar system composed of different states with distinct sizes, power, and financial resources. In other words, the driving forces and influences that led to this functioning international system are far more complex than Schroeder argues.²⁶ Gruner argues that if we want to apply the balance of power concept in historical research and not place it "on the shelf," then we have to keep the limitations and the boundaries of when this concept can be specifically used in mind. In his article, he uses a citation from Richard Rosecrance: "A balance of power apparatus could not function without the existence of a state system ... [I]t could not operate without a minimal homogeneity of political attitude among the participating state units and a common concern to protect the system; it could not maintain itself without a limitation of warfare to preserve the constituent state components."²⁷ This characterization applies to superpowers as well as other sizes of state powers.

²² Jervis, "A Political Science Perspective," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992): 724.

²³ Wolf D. Gruner, "Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony?" *The American Historical Review* 97, no.3 (1992): 725.

²⁴ Gruner, "Was there a Reformed Balance of Power system?" no.3 (1992): 725.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 725.

Schroeder, "Did the Vienna Settlement Rest," 702.

²⁶ Gruner, "Was there a Reformed Balance of Power system?" no.3 (1992): 725-726.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 726.

Richard N. Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective* (Boston, 1963): 25.

Charles Ingrao reacts in his article, published in 1994, on the ‘pessimistic view’ of Schroeder’s eighteenth-century international politics, who stated that the balance of power system invited new hostilities.²⁸ Ingrao agrees with Schroeder’s view that the role of geography within Europe is not something to ignore. Especially regarding the locations of Russia and Britain (whom he identifies as ‘flanking powers’). Even though his emphasis on geopolitics is justified, his characterization of eighteenth-century diplomacy is not. Schroeder states that the post-1763 generation was mostly about ‘the use of force and the violation of others’ right and independence’; this hardly viewed eighteenth-century diplomacy.²⁹ It also did not represent the balance of power politics even before the Congress of Vienna. Even though Ingrao accepts that early modern diplomacy was far from ideal, he cannot deny that the balance of power reduced the overall aggression.³⁰ Ingrao continues using examples of events before Vienna. Still, it is interesting to read that, while he accepts some views of Schroeder, he cannot accept that the balance of power was viewed as a disguise for the hegemonic system. The underlining definition of this concept is a well-documented problem in this debate.

The concept of balance of power can be confusing when comparing it through different periods. Kraehe starts his article by saying that Schroeder, “in the bold and incisive language that we have all come to admire in his work,” argued that he aimed to disregard the idea of balance of power at Vienna altogether.³¹ Before he starts by challenging Schroeder’s thesis, he acknowledges that it is important to note that Schroeder’s broad picture of hegemonic politics is understandable. Schroeder’s critique of the idea of relative stability is justified. The general argument of war weariness, as reasoning for creating the international system, was present but unevenly distributed, according to Kraehe. He starts by pointing out the wars’ consequences for the European powers. Britain was not harmed physically and financially; it was healthy. Russia, in 1815 was reaching the peak of its military build-up, which depended heavily on British subsidies and foreign enlistment, Prussia favored war over Saxony, and Austria was bankrupt.³² Kraehe argues that war weariness is not enough to explain peace after 1815. Kraehe concludes that the Congress of Vienna was ‘uncommonly attentive to the balance of power no matter how that term is defined.’³³ This is not to challenge Schroeder’s argument that each power pursued its kind of hegemonic goal within its sphere of influence. Kraehe challenged his view that Britain and Russia were the hegemonic powers, while these powers were not that powerful to withstand a hostile coalition from the other European powers.³⁴

Blanning reflects on Schroeder’s book: *The Transformation of European Politics*. He argues that the approach by Schroeder that the international politics of the eighteenth century was based on a balance

²⁸ Charles Ingrao, “Paul W. Schroeder’s Balance of Power: Stability or Anarchy?” *The International History Review* 16, no.4 (1994): 681-682.

²⁹ Ingrao, “Paul W. Schroeder’s Balance of Power,” *The International History Review* 16, no.4 (1994): 683.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 684-685.

³¹ Enno E. Kraehe, “A Bipolar Balance of Power,” *The American Historical Review* 97, no.3 (1992): 707.

³² Kraehe, “A Bipolar Balance of Power,” *The American Historical Review* 97, no.3 (1992): 707.

³³ *Ibid*, 714-715.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 714-715.

of power changed to a system based on concert and political equilibrium.³⁵ There is a great deal to be said about this approach, but according to Blanning, ‘it does bring a sense of purpose to a branch of historical scholarship which has suffered more than most from the positivist narrator.’³⁶ The bibliography, the footnotes, and the detailed information about the subject make it an excellent work and show that Schroeder has complete mastery of the literature. A point of critique from Blanning is that Schroeder has no time for critiques on the Vienna settlement. Even the United Netherlands was viewed as a success instead of a failure. Blanning concludes that the small negatives should not get in the way of the excellence of this craft.³⁷

Besides Blanning, Sluga also mentioned Schroeder’s work in her argument that 1814 could be seen as the start of the International Order.³⁸ In her article, she discusses where the international order began. Apart from 1814, she also discussed dates like 1945. European historians long assumed that this order started when the French hegemony was brought down and the other states formed the idea of sovereignty as part of the “Congress System.”³⁹ At its most basic, this system introduced cooperation in the interest of permanent peace with the help of ambassadorial conferences.

According to Schroeder, in 1814, statesmen learned that war and revolution made an ordered society vulnerable and could be easily overthrown.⁴⁰ His view shows that the statesmen felt the need to cooperate for peace so that the fear of war would be a thing of the past. Sluga argues that there is a lot to say about 1814 as the beginning, especially since only some years later, there were wars again on the European continent, such as the Crimean War (1853-1856). Sluga concludes that the international order and society were always a work in progress. The exact starting date of this order is hardly important. It is more important to realize the lessons the last two hundred years taught us about the role of diplomacy and conferences.⁴¹

Another scholar who reacts to Schroeder’s book is Harris. He starts by saying that Schroeder’s work can be seen as an excellent product of the historian’s craft. On top of that, the sources, the complete bibliography, and the notes he made regarding his sources are valuable.⁴² Schroeder’s argument about transitioning from a balance of power to a system of equilibrium is not new. Harris states that Schroeder’s weaker point in his work is using post-1815 developments to prove his claims.⁴³

There are also other approaches, such as looking at the historical actors. Jarrett writes about

³⁵ T. C. W Blanning, “Paul W. Schroeder’s Concert of Europe,” *The International History Review* 16, no. 4 (1994): 701-702. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40107382>.

³⁶ Blanning, “Schroeder’s Concert of Europe,” (1992): 702.

³⁷ Ibid, 713-714.

³⁸ Glenda Sluga, “The Beginning(s) and End(s) of the International Order, *E-International Relations*, May 22, 2017: 1-2.

³⁹ Sluga, “The Beginning(s) and End(s) of the International Order, May 22, 2017: 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 2.

Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994) p. 802.

⁴¹ Sluga, “The Beginning(s) and End(s) of the International Order, May 22, 2017: 2.

⁴² James F. Harris, “*Central European History*,” 30, no.1 (1997): 110.

⁴³ Harris, “*Central European History*,” 30, no.1 (1997): 111-112.

Vienna and the lessons the politicians learned for the future of international relations. He starts his article by saying that the actors in Vienna were compared to the actors in 1914, not blind to the horrors of revolution and war.⁴⁴ His article links the Congress of Vienna and its actors and the League of Nations' creation after the First World War. This article is also helpful in mentioning the historical actors in Vienna. It helps the thesis to find more information about these actors.

Wirtschafter's book chapter is about the Congress of Vienna. She starts by saying that the peace settlement that ended the Napoleonic Wars has always been a topic of interest among scholars.⁴⁵ In her work, she focuses on this event and discusses several other works about what the Vienna settlement changed for international relations. It neither represented the old regime nor the prerevolutionary international order. Rather, it composed new legal principles and procedures for organizing European society. This argument was persuasively set forth by Schroeder and other scholars who interpreted that the treaties produced at Vienna replaced the eighteenth-century balance of power idea for a new system. This system was based on mutual restraint, multilateral cooperation, and respect for treaties, laws, legitimacy, and the right of states and nations.⁴⁶

Wirtschafter's chapter also included scholars such as Adam Zamoyski, who emphasized the emergence of great power politics and the domination of five European states (Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia). Wirtschafter concludes that the efforts of the post-Napoleonic peacemakers succeeded in some respects and failed in others. The European continent after great powers dominated Napoleon in pursuit of empire and riches, resulting in a lot of violence and exploitation. On the other hand, they led their states into a process that accommodated liberal democratic change. In other words, European society expanded and became a bit more civilized.⁴⁷ The chapter by Wirtschafter is useful since it discusses the impact of Vienna and reflects on other scholars and the historical actors at that time. The work from Katherine B. Aalesstad also provides an interesting review essay about the Congress of Vienna. This article reflects on this event and how other scholars viewed this event after two hundred years.⁴⁸ In her work, she reflects on many different views from others, like that from Jarrett, who suggested a "levels-of-analysis approach" to better understand the interactions among the leading actors in Vienna.⁴⁹

After discussing the concept of balance of power and the role of the Vienna settlement, the other

⁴⁴ Mark Jarrett, "No Sleepwalkers: The Men of 1814/15. Bicentennial Reflections on the Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy," *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 13, no.4 (2015): 429.

⁴⁵ Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, "Chapter 1. Pacification and Peace (1815-17)," In *From Victory to Peace: Russian Diplomacy after Napoleon*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020: 20-51.

⁴⁶ Wirtschafter, "Chapter 1. Pacification and Peace (1815-17)," NY: Cornell University Press, 2020: 20-23.

⁴⁷ Wirtschafter, "Chapter 1. Pacification and Peace (1815-17)," NY: Cornell University Press, 2020: 20-21.

⁴⁸ Katherine B. Aalesstad, Review of Serious Work for a New Europe: The Congress of Vienna after Two Hundred Years, by Maartje Abbenhuis, John Bew, Heinz Duchhardt, Anna Ehrlich, Christa Bauer, Wolf D. Gruner, Mark Jarrett, et al. *Central European History* 48, no. 2 (2015): 225-37.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43965147>.

⁴⁹ Aalesstad, "Review of Serious Work for a New Europe," *Central European History* 48, no.2 (2015): 237.

part of this essay focuses on the earlier mentioned research question. Just like Wirtschafter and Jarrett's work about the historical actors are examples of secondary sources that are used. On which actors are this thesis focusing, and which country did they represent? Austria was represented by Prince Klemens von Metternich, the Emperor of Vienna Francis was closely informed. Metternich was one of the actors who reconstructed the idea of balance of power in Vienna. Great Britain was represented by Viscount Castlereagh, who was like Metternich, a conservative. Tsar Alexander I represented the Russian interest but was formally led by the foreign minister, Count Karl Robert Nesselrode. Prussia was represented by Prince Karl August von Hardenberg, a liberalist, but his diplomacy skills did not match Metternich's.⁵⁰ Metternich is often remembered as taking the lead during the Vienna meetings. France, the last of the great powers at Vienna, was represented by its foreign minister, Talleyrand. He also negotiated the Treaty of Paris (1814) for Louis XVIII of France. On top of that, he was a major player at Vienna.⁵¹ These actors are identified as important players, representing one of the Great European powers. The actors are used as a guiding point to describe how the European powers perceived the idea of balance of power in Vienna.

This chapter about the literature review showed that this topic has a significant debate among scholars. The first discussed works in this chapter showed that the idea of Vienna was mostly aligned, apart from the consequences of the balance of power construction on a political level. The work of Schroeder was a change since he not only walked away from the balance of power idea but also downplayed its significance. He stated that the period was marked by a lot of aggression and hegemonic powers who dominated the continent with their will. His work received much attention from other scholars. On the other hand, Kraehe acknowledges Schroeder's view of hegemonic powers but states that Schroeder oversimplified what exactly happened in Vienna and mostly downplayed the situation the superpowers found themselves. He talked about 'war wariness' and the economic situation of the different European powers.

Then there is Gruner, who argued that the international system of 1815 could be seen as a reformed, multipolar, and balance of power system. He states that the Vienna system was not designed for a hegemonic great power system, even though the great powers played a leading role in this new European system. Ingrao, on the other hand, argued that Schroeder underestimated the amount of diplomacy that happened during the Congress of Vienna. He agrees with Schroeder that the diplomacy was far from ideal but that the congress did result in lesser aggression. All the reactions to Schroeder's work have one thing in common: the quality and mastery of the literature that is present in his work.

The year 2015 (anniversary) resulted in new articles with a renewed focus on the event. Aalesstad provided an overview of the different authors who discussed the topic. On top of that, there is

⁵⁰ Walter M. Simon, "Prince Hardenberg," *The Review of Politics* 18, no.1 (1956): 98.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1404942>.

⁵¹ History of Western Civilization II: Participants of the Congress, *lumencandela*
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/participants-of-the-congress/>

the more recent work from Wirtschafter, who looks at the actors in Vienna, among other things. Jarett and Wirtschafter provide information about this approach, which is helpful for this thesis to look at how European powers perceived the conference. Was this viewed on a balance of power construction or something else?

Overall, when looking back at the central question of this debate, it becomes clear that the idea of balance of power in Vienna is contested. Even though scholars do not wish to discard the concept altogether, apart from Schroeder. Scholars view the importance of the Congress of Vienna for the international system in the same way. The significance of the diplomacy and the outcome of Vienna is not what is causing debate; it is mostly the political system surrounding it. Was it indeed a balance of power construction, or was it something else? The thesis examines how the European powers perceived the idea of balance of power in Vienna. It is critical to create a clear definition and boundaries for this concept. The Congress can be viewed in many different ways; therefore, providing an in-depth analysis of this event is relevant. The thesis approaches this by also looking at the historical actors. This chapter gave a brief overview of the different actors, which are the focus since they played an important role in the conference. Additionally, they appear frequently in the literature about this important event.

Chapter 2: The Idea of Balance of Power and the European Order

This chapter focuses on the main concept of this thesis: the idea of balance of power. The question of this chapter is: what is balance of power? This chapter primarily focuses on this concept and its meaning from a historical point of view in which it discusses different types of this concept. The reason for this is that it is helpful to provide a clear definition, and on top of that, it can be helpful to give clear boundaries to this concept. How did European leaders think about this concept at the beginning of the nineteenth century? As Wolf Gruner stated and discussed in the historiography chapter, giving this concept a clear boundary is important. Otherwise, it becomes hard to use for historical research. This thesis uses this concept to look at the Congress of Vienna (1815) from a different approach.

The primary source used to define this concept is the book: *Political Discourses* by the Scottish philosopher David Hume. *Discourse VI* is the chapter of his book that focuses on the concept of balance of power.⁵² He starts in this chapter by stating that the question is whether this idea of balance of power is owed to current policies or if this concept has been invented in the last ages.⁵³ Hume argues that the concept of Balance of Power has been created through policies or general development in the last ages.

Hume refers to various ancient Greece policies in which one can “see the utmost refinements” on this principle of balance of power. He looks at the wars between Sparta and Athens and how Athens always sought a balance between war and peace.⁵⁴ Hume states that the balance of power was efficiently secured in Greece compared to other ages. The reason is that the republic and its people worked with extraordinary bravery and discipline to secure it. In this chapter, he works through important monarchs, historical periods, and the concept of balance of power. In the example of Greece, he states that the Ptolemies first supported Aratus, the Achaeans, and later Cleomenes, King of Sparta, to counterbalance the Macedonian monarchs.⁵⁵ This can be seen as an example of this balance of power idea. And on top of that, it shows that the Ptolemies did not support out of loyalty but out of their safety. It becomes apparent that in this chapter, he looks at important events from history in which conflict was central and how leaders dealt with them. Was it comparable with the balance of power ideas?

How does Hume define this concept? He states that, in short, the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he states that if this idea were not so acknowledged as at present (his book was published in 1752), it would at least influence the wiser and more experienced princes and politicians. However, this idea is generally known and acknowledged; it has little influence. This is an interesting way of looking at this concept. Especially since Hume states that this idea is effective for the “wise” and the “reasoners.”

In this chapter, Hume discusses the wars between France and Great Britain, shedding light on

⁵² David Hume, “Political Discourses, Chapter VI of the *Balance of Power*,” Edinburgh, 1752: 100.

⁵³ Hume, “Chapter VI of the *Balance of Power*,” Edinburgh, 1752: 100.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 101-102.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 103-104.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 108.

how the other European nations, in an effort to counterbalance France's power, always formed alliances. On top of that, he also states that the wars with France, as an example, and the public debts created by Britain, are more the result of our incompetence than the ambition/threat of our neighbors.⁵⁷ This is an intriguing statement, since this is not only about the idea of balance of power (making sure that France does not get too much power) but also a different thought about wars in general. Does the real ambition of the "enemy" create the need for public debts (investment in wars) or our own "imprudent vehemence"⁵⁸ when it comes to spending? This is an interesting way to look at wars and the idea that the ambition of our neighbors needs to be checked by other countries. Another argument he made is that in war, we lose all concern for ourselves and our prosperity and consider only how we may annoy the enemy. Think about the costs of war and the policies of a nation guilty of this spending. Hume also writes that this funding is not a remedy but poison.⁵⁹

As discussed in the historiographical debate, giving a certain boundary to this concept is also important. Just like Hume discussed, this concept can also be seen as an incentive or reason to invest more in war (to stop the domination of ambitious neighbors) and give the motive to invest a lot in war. At Vienna, the important historical actors wanted to return to the idea of neighbors (strong European Powers) to keep each other in balance. Next, this chapter discusses different authors.

Pollard wrote an article exactly 100 years ago in which he wanted to ask what the balance of power means and use the work from Hume as a primary source. He quotes Hume: "Whether the *idea* of balance of power be owing entirely to modern policy, or whether the *phrase* only has been invented in these latter ages."⁶⁰ During the different eras, there have been three ways in which power has been used to maintain peace. The first is a monopoly; think about the current idea of hegemonic powers in the world. The second is in the form of a balance (the balance of power idea). The third is that of a community (think about institutions like NATO). The three variants of using power to maintain peace followed each other chronologically.⁶¹ Wilson used the latter conception of power for the first time when he, among others, created the League of Nations.

Monticone also looks at the concept of balance of power and focuses in his article on the changes this concept makes during the ages. He starts his article with a definition of this concept, and he states that: "the struggle for power by the nations where each nation tries to preserve or overthrow the *status quo* leads to what is sometimes referred to as the balance of power."⁶² To identify this system, the system must be composed of several independent parts, according to Morgenthau. He also mentioned that the word 'equilibrium' is synonymous with 'balance' and was important for stability in this system of

⁵⁷ Hume, "Chapter VI of the *Balance of Power*," Edinburgh, 1752: 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 111.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 112.

⁶⁰ A.F. Pollard, "The Balance of Power," *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no.2 (1923): 51-52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3014464>.

⁶¹ Pollard, "The Balance of Power," (1923): 51-52.

⁶² Ronald C. Monticone, "The Changing Balance of Power," *Revista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 75, no.4 (300) (2008): 498. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42740755>.

independent parts. He stated that without this equilibrium, one of the independent parts would rise and ultimately destroy the entire system. He continues by stating that stability in Europe could have been maintained if Hitler or Napoleon had overwhelmed and conquered system components. Still, the idea of balance of power is stability through preserving all the system components. Each system component (nation) must be able to pursue its own goals.⁶³ The Congress of Vienna was set up to restore this equilibrium in all the system components. Each component (nation) that France treated destroyed the entire system by becoming undoubtedly the greatest military force until it lost battle after battle and eventually the war.

The balance of power system has been kept active through alliances between the great European Powers. There were three different types of alliances to preserve the balance of power. In one type of alliance system, two alliances and nations within both alliances tried to change the *status quo* in their favor. In another type, nations within alliances tried to change the *status quo*. The third and final type is where the balance of power consists of two alliances of equal strength. To perceive this system, a balancer was not allied with either side until one became weaker. Between 1648-1939 Great Britain fulfilled this role. Therefore, one of the alliances could not gain power over the other nations.⁶⁴ Britain fulfilled this role because political scientists often noted that this nation had no territorial ambitions in Europe. It was a sea power with territorial ambitions on other continents. Therefore, it was never affected by the outcome of the balance of power in Europe since it was a sea power. Eventually, this role from Great Britain disappeared after the end of World War II and the start of the two great power block systems (U.S. and Soviet Union).⁶⁵

The importance of alliances for this balance of power construction was also noted during the Congress of Vienna, at which alliances and borders were created to create opposing sides. A system of alliances was crucial to preserve the idea of a balance of power, especially on the European continent, which has many nations with their own goals and power.

Gruner mentioned in his article that it is important to set clear limitations/boundaries on the idea of balance of power since it can be used in many different contexts. Just like was mentioned in the historiography, it is important to explain the balance of power concept and what it means in the context of Vienna. In chapter 3, when analyzing the historical actors and their goals/visions for a new Europe, they do not specifically mention the idea of balance of power but certain elements that can be interpreted. The aim is to find other (key) words on how the actors view the issue of creating a stable Europe.

⁶³ Montincone, "The Changing Balance of Power," no.4 (2008): 498-499.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 499.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 500-501.

Chapter 2.1 The European Order Post-World War and after the Congress of Vienna

When considering the European Order, one also thinks about the post-World War and even the post-Cold War period when the West (including the United States as a unipolar power) started declining according to different theories and events.⁶⁶ Soutou, in his article, looks at the idea of a European Order in the twentieth century and tries to explain this order by looking back at the Concert of Europe. He starts by stating that many historians during the age of the two World Wars disregarded these ideas of a European Order. However, recently there has been a more positive understanding of the European system created during the Congress of Vienna. He cites the work by Paul Schroeder in which he mentions that he has shown that the negotiations at Vienna were not only guided by national interest from the European Powers but also by a nation of solidarity. He means by this that the European powers rested on shared values to restore the European Order.⁶⁷ Later in this thesis, the primary sources about the historical actors also refer to this ‘solidarity,’ especially in the later stages.

Joffe looks at the European Order from a military perspective. Modern Europe always suffered from war periods except for the decades of peace after the Napoleonic Wars.⁶⁸ The European Order, which has a strong connection with the Congress of Vienna, when the European powers sought to create stability on their continent. Nevertheless, was this idea of a European Order unsuccessful when looking at what happened from 1848 and onwards with the age of revolutions? The European Order in this article is based on the military strength of Europe. The order is based on three premises. First, Western Europe is not strong enough to counterbalance the power of the Soviets. Second, Western Europe depends on the United States and its security. And third, that security is based on the United States’ nuclear force.⁶⁹ Even though this article is dated, it is still interesting to read how the idea of balance of power is transformed from powerful nation-states to how many nuclear weapons are enough to balance out the opponent’s nuclear weapons. It shows how the idea of balance of power changed through time.

The European system, as it was after the period of the Napoleonic wars and domination, was centered around the ancient institution of the monarchy. The monarchs were seen as a symbol of resistance against the bloody period of the Revolutions, especially the one in France. The monarchs, especially after the war, were soon the representatives of stability and international law.⁷⁰ This made

⁶⁶ Ivan Krastev, “Reinventing the European Order,” *The Crisis of the Post-Cold War European Order: What to Do about Russia’s Newfound Taste for Confrontation with the West*. German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2008: 9-11. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep18954.6>.

⁶⁷ Georges-Henri Soutou, “Was There a European Order in the Twentieth Century? From the Concert of Europe to the End of the Cold War,” *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 3 (2000): 329. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20081758>.

⁶⁸ Josef Joffe, “Nuclear Weapons, No First Use, and European Order,” *Ethics* 95, no. 3 (1985): 606. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2381040>.

⁶⁹ Joffe, “Nuclear Weapons,” *Ethics* 95, no.3 (1985): 606.

⁷⁰ R.B. Mowat, “*The English Historical Review* 40, no. 159 (19245): 446-447. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/551878>

sense, as it was widely known that the great royal houses shared a level of interconnectedness. The bloodlines of the houses had a certain link with one another. It can be concluded that the idea of the European Order and how it has developed in modern times changed from what it was shortly after the period of the Congress of Vienna. This chapter examined the idea of balance of power and how it has changed over time. What was also shown is how Hume pointed out that the underlying thought behind this idea did not only change over time but also how it was perceived and named. Chapter three of this thesis looks at the historical actors in Vienna and how they perceived this idea.

Chapter 3: The Vienna Settlement

This chapter focuses on the Congress of Vienna (1815) and dives into this event. It provides a historical background and why this event was important in European History. This chapter focuses on background information about this event and why it is relevant in European History for the idea of balance of power. This event was a direct response to the period of the Napoleonic wars. The conference lasted between September 1814 and June 1815 and was attended by various important political figures. Such as monarchs, rulers, diplomats, ministers, and others were there to negotiate political matters after the European continent was freed of Napoleon. The Vienna settlement was important since the stability of the European continent was a sincere goal of the different European powers. The political figures knew that what happened in the past with Napoleon and the other revolutions was a horrendous situation and something that needed to be resolved. The ideas central to the French Revolution and other revolutions during the Enlightenment were considered bad. Even though the ideas were formed to help improve people's lives and create a fairer society, the radical turns convinced the leading figures of the "old societies" that they were dangerous.

The central question for this chapter is: what was the Vienna settlement? This chapter also explores the Vienna settlement apart from its political and diplomatic perspective, which is the dominant way to look at this conference for obvious reasons. For instance, the work from La Garde explores a lot of the festive side of this conference and the meaning it holds to see all the different monarchs and important political figures for the common people. Especially after a period of wars and chaos among the people. This chapter mostly focuses on the other sides of the Congress of Vienna.

The Congress of Vienna was constructed by an article in the treaty signed in Paris. This happened on May 30th, 1814, after Napoleon was crushed by an army created by a coalition composed of England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The conference started on October 1, 1814, and was responsible for transforming the city of Vienna. The city went into chaos because of the mass gathering of people for this event. According to Freska, about ninety people took part in the Congress, which was for meetings. When the Congress was assembled, it was Czar Alexander of Russia, also known as "the dream prince," that was seen as its dominating figure; his armies were the dominant force behind Napoleon's defeat. This resulted in the Czar being ready to collect the spoils of war.⁷¹ However, at the end of the Congress, it was found that Talleyrand had been its most influential figure. He had slit the allies by driving a wedge between Austria and Prussia and formed an alliance of defense against Russia and Prussia with Austria, England, and Bavaria. In terms of what Talleyrand achieved for his country, he might have been the most successful. Still, in terms of creating the new European order and the

⁷¹ Frederick Freksa and Harry Hansen, "A peace Congress of Intrigue (Vienna 1816): A vivid, intimate account of the Congress of Vienna," New York, 1919, Foreword: XI.
<https://ia800301.us.archive.org/12/items/apeacecongressi00harrgoog/apeacecongressi00harrgoog.pdf>

conservative order in general, it is widely claimed that Prince Metternich was successful as the ‘coachman of Europe,’ which he called himself.⁷²

Alexander I was always one of the historical actors in Vienna with a lot of ambition; one could argue the one with the most ambitions/ideas for the future of Europe, especially regarding his view on the new European Order. His dream, which first came to light in 1801 as instructions to his envoy in London, was similar to Wilson's idea of the League of Nations.⁷³ It was to form a bond between the European Nations and to aid one another in case of need. Yet, Freska argues, it may be seen as a noble idea, but it was meant to be a creation of princes to maintain their power.⁷⁴ The idea of balance of power was the undertone by this idea in which it was important that each nation could maintain its power and was able to aid other European States when it was needed. While it could be seen as a forerunner of the idea of the League of Nations, this view was nowhere as dominant and important as during the Peace at Versailles in 1919. Much like the League of Nations, Vienna placed significant emphasis on international conventions, making it an important focus point. It was stated in the final act of Vienna in 1820 that there was the idea of an international court to talk about disputes instead of using means of arms against one another.⁷⁵ While this court was never organized, its underlying idea was important for the current European Order. It is important to note that conferences, like Vienna or Versailles, are first and foremost based on the power of one's nation and the interests/ambitions that come because of one's power. For instance, the men at those conferences speak with authority. Alexander I, for instance, had a massive army behind him. But, what made Vienna unique is that the forces served the institutions of nobility and divine right, something that was unexpected to return as a certain authority after the Enlightenment period.⁷⁶

While it is well documented that the princes/arbitrary rulers had their own ambitions/ideas, the conference's goal was to achieve restoration and return to pre-Napoleonic times. The prominent European princes' primary objective was to achieve stability and mitigate the likelihood of a resurgence of domestic revolutions, which had occurred in the years leading up to this meeting. Political entities became larger and more powerful, and the day of strong nationalist groups was very close. This threat was new and a force to be reckoned with by all the European Nations. And there was no shortage of different nationalities in Vienna. The mass gathering in the city made the conference more special than just a diplomatic event.

It is an interesting conclusion to his article that the monarchs in Vienna, with their policies,

⁷² Stephan Gruber, “Metternich: ‘coachman’ and ‘rock,’ The World of the Habsburgs.

<https://www.habsburger.net/en/chapter/metternich-coachman-and-rock#:~:text=Prince%20Clemens%20Wenzel%20Lothar%20Metternich,networks%20for%20himself%20throug hout%20Europe>.

⁷³ Khan Academy, “The League of Nations,” <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/us-in-wwi/a/the-league-of-nations>

⁷⁴ Freksa and Hansen, “A peace Congress of Intrigue,” foreword: XVI.

⁷⁵ Ibid, XVI

⁷⁶ Ibid, XVII

inflicted the public revolts by themselves, which is the case. In the sense that the ones who wanted to avoid the revolts were the ones who were responsible for it. It is always connected to the Vienna story, the aftermath of its many chaotic revolutions. The Vienna story, with its peace and ideas about a new European Order, is tarnished by the implementation of the old ideas from the different monarchs, such as returning to 'divine legitimacy' and removing political representation by the people. The urge to work together on solving this problem made this conference one that had to succeed. Not working together to fix these issues was not an option.⁷⁷ The necessity and desire to restore the old ideas of the balance of power onto the continent by creating new sovereign borders made this conference one of Europe's most important. The desire to create peace and the longing for it resulted in new ways of thinking about international relations.

De Graaf describes this event and emphasizes in her article the importance that the conference created a sense of experiencing one's own historical time in which one lived. Meaning that the common people understood that the Napoleonic Wars were at an end and that this conference in Vienna would be the first step toward peace. The period of wars created a longing for peace not just by the political figures but also by the common people who understood that their daily lives were affected by something historically significant.⁷⁸

3.1 Reflections on the negotiation process at the Congress of Vienna

Meerts, in this article, discusses persuasion in the context of Vienna as one of the most successful diplomatic events in history. He starts by article by stating that Vienna created long-lasting peace and set the basic rules of multilateral diplomacy and protocol. (Both points can be argued against, I especially cannot agree with the "long-lasting peace" argument since it did not stop domestic revolutions.) He also states that this conference and its success were unique since the more actors you have around the table, the less effective those negotiations are. While negotiation can be successful if they are not indirect and think through written messages, they wanted to listen to one another in the case of the Great Powers. On top of that, they only wanted (the previously mentioned actors in Vienna) to listen to each nation's most important political figure. They did not want to be pursued by middle and minor monarchs; only the 'great five' who made the conference's decisions were in the circle. This resulted in some countries being allowed to be decision-makers, and others just had to follow; in other words, the Great Powers dictated the meetings.⁷⁹

This article views Vienna and its conference with a different approach, which can be helpful. The nineteenth century witnessed multiple interstate negotiation processes, with Vienna being the

⁷⁷ Beatrice de Graaf, "Bringing Sense and sensibility to the Continent: Vienna 1815 Revisited," *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européene Contemporaine* 13, no.4 (2015): 447.

⁷⁸ De Graaf, "Vienna 1815 Revisited," *Journal of Modern European History*, 2015: 450.

⁷⁹ Paul Meerts, "Persuasion through negotiation at the Congress of Vienna 1814-1815," *Diplomacy.edu*, 2013: 21. <https://www.diplomacy.edu/resource/persuasion-through-negotiation-at-the-congress-of-vienna-1814-1815/>

greatest and most remembered example.⁸⁰ The negotiation process for a party to join this conference was based on two criteria. The main criteria for the negotiation process at Vienna were twofold: did the party belong to the anti-Napoleonic alliance, and was it powerful enough to threaten a peace treaty if it did not sign it? For instance, France was seen as this side, but because of its power and political reasons, it was granted a seat at the table. In the case of this example, three of the four Great Powers eventually saw the benefit of having France enter ‘the Inner Circle.’⁸¹ France joined this group because of Talleyrand’s use of the idea of legitimacy. He questioned the authority of the ‘Inner Circle’ to make decisions involving the sovereignty of other nations. He stated that such decisions could only be made by the Congress as a whole. This tactic delayed the opening of the Congress and convinced the other powers that France needed to join, which happened on January 9, 1815.⁸² However, France was included mainly because of power and political reasons. The British believed that France was vital for a stable Europe, the Austrians needed France’s power to counterbalance Prussia, and the Russians saw it as a benefit to counterbalance Great Britain. Only Prussia disagreed with the inclusion but was overruled by the other three powers. As soon as Talleyrand, and therefore France, could join the meetings, he dropped his wish to deal with territorial issues in Congress with all its members.⁸³ It can be argued that Talleyrand was only using this tactic not to benefit the “lesser powers” but to gain enough attention to convince the other actors to let France join the ‘Four,’ now called the ‘Five.’

The inclusion of France provided the necessary push to hasten the meetings successfully. Middle powers, such as the Kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, were excluded to ensure the conference was completed within a certain time; more participants meant longer discussions. The Final Act was signed nine days before Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from the Island of Elba. The Great Powers did not know immediately of this escape, but it did result in France being excluded from the negotiations of the Second Treaty of Paris in 1815. This time France did not even get a chance to persuade the other powers; they were excluded.⁸⁴ Being excluded, especially in Vienna, meant no influence on the decision-making. Hundreds of representatives were present in Vienna, and many prominent figures were close to one another. Conversely, the Inner Circle had to control the middle and lesser power to keep them at a distance. This was done by creating social activities to ensure they were kept busy, and a ‘two-tier system’ was created. This meant that one group of the excluded parties was given a more or less consultant position. Middle-power states were tasked to control smaller states’ representatives, like the small states in Germany and Italy, in check.⁸⁵ It is interesting to argue that the festivities at Vienna, while no expense was too great for them, also had a political reason: to be able to control the smaller nations. It makes sense to make sure that the other nations, while excluded from the ‘Inner Circle,’ still needed

⁸⁰ Meerts, “Persuasion through negotiation,” 2013: 22-23.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 22.

⁸² *Ibid*, 28.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 28.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 24.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 24-25.

to be felt that they mattered and could experience all the elements the Congress had to offer, apart from a seat at the high table.

Another reason was that having an uneven number proved to help avoid tie-breaks.⁸⁶ Power politics dominated Vienna and opposed the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 when the other powers had kept out the enemy (Germany). This was later on seen as a mistake by historians. This did not happen in Vienna in a comparable situation which was unique to let an enemy still a seat at the table while they were responsible for a lot of misery.

The treaties which were the result of this long conference were very detailed and were important for many different European sovereign countries.⁸⁷ The final Act of the Congress of Vienna/General Treaty 1815 document shows a lot of new treaties and rules regarding the European sovereign territories. On top of that, it also revoked some older treaties, such as the Treaty of Paris of 30th May 1814.

The congress was never meant to take place in Vienna in the first place its original location was Paris, right after the established treaty in 1814. After the Treaty of Paris was signed, the original idea was to create a conference, like it did in Vienna, but then in Paris. This failed among the Great Powers due to the French people, the distracting city, and the boasts of Tsar Alexander and his success against France and Napoleon. He decided to banish Napoleon Bonaparte on the Island of Elba with his honors intact.⁸⁸ The second attempt was to create the London Congress, which failed when Tsar Alexander alienated the prince Regent and much of the English parliament. Eventually, Vienna was seen as a logical place for it to take place since it was the home of the ancient Hapsburg Monarchy.⁸⁹

3.2 The Congress of Vienna: different perspectives

The Congress of Vienna was a series of events and meetings. The focus is and will always be on the political/diplomatic side. Meaning that the Napoleonic Wars, and even the short return of Napoleon when this conference was happening, made the need to solve the issue of a new peace in Europe more than ever desired and required to create a new order. Another aspect is the emotion and remembrance of people and how they looked at all the kings and queens, and political figures to help them find joy again and think about peace.

De Graaf focuses in her article on the element of the different emotions and sensations that the Congress of Vienna provided instead of the only idea that it was a stone-cold political conference. Brian Vick points out that at this conference, all people from different ranks were expected to engage and participate in this event. That resulted in different emotions, such as pride, passion, and gratefulness for creating a new European Order. This was apparent in how public eyewitnesses described the entrances

⁸⁶ Meerts, "Persuasion through negotiation," 2013: 22-23.

⁸⁷ Final Act of the Congress of Vienna/General Treaty (1815)
http://www.hlrn.org/img/documents/final_congress_viennageneral_treaty1815.pdf

⁸⁸ Nathan D. Curtis, "Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna: Maintaining the Peace, Political Realism, and the Encirclement of France," *Digitalcommons*, May 2014: 10.

<https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1336&context=masters>

⁸⁹ Curtis, "Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna," May 2014: 10-11.

of the different monarchs in Vienna.⁹⁰ De La Garde also describes these descriptions of the festive side of Vienna in his recollections of Vienna. This source is used in the next chapter about the historical actors in Vienna. It was even the case, according to a Viennese work, “*Pages of Peace*,” that these three monarchs were not only particularly worshipped by their people but also blessed by all the citizens of Europe. With their different backgrounds, these monarchs were seen as friends who shared the same fate, through suffering and now the period of joy.⁹¹ A new beginning, not only to remember the times of war but also to celebrate a new era of peace.

There was not a lack of celebration at Vienna during the conference, not only the iconic ball and dances for which historians often remember this event but also the masses of people who celebrated. These could vary from traditional musical celebrations to spiritual celebrations.⁹² In short, the Congress of Vienna, especially for the local common people, was more than a political gathering. It was more of an event in Vienna to help people celebrate a new era. On top of that, it helped people find comfort in getting over the era of suffering from the many wars on the European continent.

Apart from the longing for peace, the people and the rulers obviously wanted to improve the security in Europe to ensure that the days of war on the continent were over. While the actors behind creating the new European Order wanted to return to the ancient regime, the people wanted something new. It needed to be based on post-revolutionary ideas. The need and the call for a new, historically grounded order were present at the Congress of Vienna.⁹³ It was an order based on the older ideas of balance of power, but where sovereign countries were created or expanded to ensure that the balance was upheld.

De Graaf states in her article that the idea of balance of power was not invented in 1815, which is something that can start a debate. The Congress of Vienna did many new things, but it did not invent the idea of balance of power, while it did create new borders to ensure that the balance was upheld. De Graaf refers to F. von Gentz, who wrote about the idea of balance of power before the Congress of Vienna started.⁹⁴

The Congress of Vienna officially ended when the participants signed the second Treaty of Paris on November 20, 1815. One of the most important elements of the Congress of Vienna was that it remained a basis for international politics and how it worked until the beginning of the First World War. According to Langhorne, the Vienna settlement's success and significance greatly changed. Its reputation, for instance, increased in the 1930s. When the Versailles settlement after the First World War

⁹⁰ Beatrice de Graaf, “Bringing Sense and Sensibility to the Continent: Vienna 1815 Revisited,” *Journal of Modern European History* no.4 2015: 450. <https://journals-sagepub-com.eur.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.17104/1611-8944-2015-4-447>

⁹¹ De Graaf, “Bringing Sense and Sensibility, 2015: 451.

⁹² Ibid, 451.

⁹³ Ibid, 452-453.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 453.

was viewed by many as a failure.⁹⁵ The congress's outcome helped distribute power and restore the status quo. The states accepted this new system because they knew that internationally the states did not have a fear of anyone. After 1814 their greatest fear was that of revolutions. Before 1789 all seemed well for the European states, but domestic revolutions were the new common enemy for the states.

In his article, Longhorn stated that the general opinion of the Congress of Vienna's success (an entire debate by itself) was lifted after the consequences of the Peace Conference at Versailles were clear.

The book: "A Peace Congress of Intrigue (Vienna, 1815)," written by Frederick Freska and published in 1919, starts in his foreword about the legacy of Vienna at the Peace Congress at Versailles.⁹⁶ He starts by mentioning this event and its contrast with the "Congress of princes and arbitrary rulers." Like Gentz, Hansen writes that the aims and ambitions of these princes and arbitrary rulers dictated the conference. It has been well documented in diaries and memoirs. This was the case because the rights of princes and the older rulers had seen the consequences of the revolutions and the Napoleonic régime, which swept the *ancien régime* away like it was nothing.⁹⁷ Also new was that the common people heard stories from sailors and the merchant classes that a new nation was rising across the seas. One without kings or privileged rulers did not help the rulers to restore the old order. This was why Talleyrand focused on his "legitimacy" argument that only a legitimate ruler could ensure a stable government. The motive of putting the Bourbons back into power cannot be denied. Yet, this argument made much sense regarding the period when stability on a national and international level was severely lacking.

Ghervas mentioned the Congress of Vienna and stated that Vienna influenced the creation of the post-war order after World War II. He intends to determine how the Congress of Vienna and this event's diplomatic precedent can help maintain a peaceful European/International order.⁹⁸ He starts by saying that Vienna was successful in creating international peace. This statement is true to some extent because its goal was more likely to create peace on the European continent. Only the newly established peace at Vienna lacked massively in terms of security, which resulted in many public disorders and revolts as soon as 1817 in Germany. This would continue to happen in the 1820s.⁹⁹ All this public uprising resulted in 1848 with different revolutions that had many consequences for all major European powers.

When looking at peace, it is important to distinguish between two aspects of this concept: external (foreign) and internal (domestic). He starts with external peace by referring to the peace of Paris on May 30, 1814. The outcome of the Saxon-Polish crisis helped to four Allied powers to create a new relationship. But even this relationship was tested when Tsar Alexander I of Russia sought to hold on to

⁹⁵ Richard Langhore, "Reflections on the Significance of the Congress of Vienna," *Review of International Studies* 12, no. 4 (1986): 313. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097093>.

⁹⁶ Freksa and Hansen, "A peace Congress of Intrigue," foreword: IX.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, X.

⁹⁸ Stella Ghervas, "The Long Shadow of the Congress of Vienna: From International Peace to Domestic Disorders," *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européenne Contemporaine*, 13, no. 4 (2015): 458-59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26266203>

⁹⁹ Ghervas, "The Long Shadow of the Congress of Vienna," 2015: 458.

his expansion of Poland. This was accompanied by his plan that Prussia gave up its share of this territory for Saxony. The consequence of this plan would have been that Russia's reach extended through central Europe. If this plan had continued, it would have once again resulted in two different power blocks opposed to one another. The plan was withdrawn by Alexander I himself, who wanted to avoid this reef in the European continent.¹⁰⁰ The Tsar, also discussed in the next chapter, was one of the major historical actors in Vienna and had thoughts about this new European order. Still, they became more than thoughts after Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

Ghervas mentioned that the period shortly after Vienna provided a paradox on the European continent since the Great Powers were able to, internationally speaking, create peace and create a new world order. But on the other hand, they had to control their population and the many popular revolts on the European continent. One could say that the seeds from the Enlightenment period and Napoleon's changes were not washed away after Vienna. One of the reasons for this was that the monarchs especially turned the clock back to the ideas of "divine legitimacy" and therefore ignored all the new ideas from the Enlightenment. In other words, they ignored the call for political representation, one of the rights fought for during the different revolutions.¹⁰¹ It was, therefore, not strange that it caused public discourse. The monarch's idea of ignoring an entire period and, to make matters worse, using each other armies to silence the revolts was unsuccessful. To conclude, the Congress of Vienna was important in securing international peace, but it did not stop conflict and turmoil domestically within each of the European powers. The conference is often not seen as successful because of the many revolutions that followed shortly after, while one can argue that this was the fault of the nation's themselves by hanging too much on the ideas of the *ancient regime*.

Ghervas concludes his article by stating that the tale of Vienna also needs to represent how the monarchs failed with their domestic policy. It shows how important political representation is, especially after an age of Revolutions.¹⁰² Naturally, the rift between the monarchs and the population started to become even greater in 1848, but shortly after Vienna, it was clear that the suppression of revolts backfired. It is even the case that the monarchs who created the Holy Alliance at Vienna were also the ones who faced and were responsible for the many domestic revolts. One could say that the monarchs achieved peace with one another and between the states. The returning idea of divine legitimacy and their political doctrine helped create peace between the states, but it had opposite effects on the population.

According to Ghervas, there are two lessons to be learned from Vienna. One: a security policy against the population without political representation can lead to public disorder. To the point that the great powers could no longer control it. Two, the eradication of social injustice could be more successful than using military force on one's subject. Ghervas concludes that these lessons regarding peace versus

¹⁰⁰ Ghervas, "The Long Shadow of the Congress of Vienna," 2015: 459.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 461.

¹⁰² Ibid, 462.

security were very relevant in 2015.¹⁰³

When reflecting on the research question in this chapter, it can be concluded that the Vienna settlement was much more than a diplomatic event. This chapter looked at the secondary literature about the Congress of Vienna, the negotiation process behind this conference, and the social/spiritual side of this event. The social aspect played an important role for the common people to deal with the past. Especially the spiritual dimension of this event was a way for the locals to connect. It makes sense not to ignore the social dimension behind this event since the festivities were the main event in the first couple of months. It was even joked that the actors in Vienna were mostly “dancing at Vienna.” The recollections from La Garde provided a lot of insights into how he looked at all the different monarchs and people from the higher class and how much it meant to be a part of Vienna.

Lastly, this chapter looked at the negotiation process in Vienna and argued why this was key to the success of this conference and what made it unique. The negotiation process was formed using an Inner Circle, which controlled the minor powers utilizing Vienna’s social and festive sides. On top of that, it also ensured that the middle powers, like Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, were in charge of the minor powers. This way, the five Great Powers had control over the rest. The exclusion from the many other states and nation-states proved essential for a relatively quick and successful outcome of the Congress of Vienna. It can be concluded that the negotiation process in Vienna was unique and successful in reaching the primary objective. Establish international peace among the great European Powers of the early nineteenth century. In the next chapter, this thesis dives into the actors who represented the powers in the Inner Circle and their take on the idea of balance of power.

¹⁰³ Ghervas, “The Long Shadow of the Congress of Vienna,” 2015: 462-463.

Chapter 4: The festive side of the Congress of Vienna and the political side. A Perspective of the historical actors

This chapter describes the different historical actors in Vienna, how these actors viewed Vienna and their activities during this event, and finally explores their goals, views, and, eventually, their take on the idea of balance of power in negotiations. While the actors do not explicitly mention the term balance of power, they use other words aligned with this idea, such as Castlereagh's 'peace equilibrium,' but more on this later. The question of this chapter is: *how did Britain, France, Prussia, Russia, and the Habsburgs conceive of the European balance of power at Vienna?* It uses the representatives at Vienna to determine how each European power looked at the negotiations in Vienna, especially related to the idea of balance of power. This chapter starts by selecting which actors are the main ones and briefly explaining their respective goals for themselves and their country. After that, this chapter begins with the social aspects of Vienna, and lastly, it looks at the actor's respective perspectives on the idea of balance of power during the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815).

First off, which actors are the focus of this thesis? Prince Klemens von Metternich represented Austria. Great Britain's historical actor in Vienna was its Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh. He returned to England in February 1815 and was replaced by the Duke of Wellington. Nevertheless, he was the leading actor in Vienna from Britain's perspective. Russia was represented by Tsar Alexander I (he controlled Russia's interests and goals during the meetings), but Count Karl Robert Nesselrode formally led it. Prince Karl August von Hardenberg represented Prussia. France was represented by its foreign minister Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand.¹⁰⁴ At first, the four powers (excluding France) wanted to exclude France from these negotiations since they viewed France as the beaten enemy. The French representative Talleyrand, however, managed to access this inner circle by allying himself with the "lesser powers" in Europe at that time, such as the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Portugal. He left this newly created alliance when he could sit at the high table at the Congress of Vienna.¹⁰⁵ It could be argued that Talleyrand's skill of forming alliances between middle powers saw the actors fit to let him and France, in that regard, enter the 'Inner Circle.'

The question of this chapter is how the leading characters discussed and elaborated on the plans of Vienna and especially the idea of balance of power. It focuses not on whether or not the actors directly mentioned this concept but on whether their thoughts aligned with this idea in Vienna. This chapter focuses on the importance of Vienna outside of its political outcome and on the previously mentioned historical actors and their take on the balance of power. On top of that, it uses recollections of when these actors had interactions with one another or when they were present in Vienna and spoke about

¹⁰⁴ Participants of the Congress, *History of Western Civilization II*. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/participants-of-the-congress/>

¹⁰⁵ Participants of the Congress, *History of Western Civilization II*. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/participants-of-the-congress/>

what they encountered and whether or not they viewed it as a success. And perhaps how they looked at the future of Europe after this event.

4.1 The festive side of the Congress of Vienna

In this section of this chapter, this thesis uses the recollections of the eBook Project by Gutenberg; not only to look for conversations between the historical actors but also to start with another side of Vienna, the festive side. The city of Vienna changed during the conference period which took place there. From all the beautiful fireworks and the arrivals of the many beautiful kings and queens to the absolute chaos of being unable to find a room to spend the night in the city. Or when one could find one, to have to pay the absolute grand prize for a room.¹⁰⁶

In addition, this chapter on the festive side of Vienna uses the source by De La Garde. He made several journeys through Europe and was familiar with being in the presence of people from higher social classes.¹⁰⁷ It is also mentioned that this book, with many recollections, was originally published in 1820 and was quickly forgotten after that. There are additional style changes, but the author's main ideas are untouched unless necessary. The introduction chapter provides a Glance at the Congress with the arrival of the different sovereigns. It describes the first night in Vienna.

It is interesting to read that in the introduction chapter, Vienna, as an event considering its political significance, has never lacked historians. Still, they were so focused on recording its diplomacy phases that almost no thought was about its social features.¹⁰⁸ The political significance is always mentioned when considering this event, such as during the inter-war period when the Treaty of Versailles was unsuccessful in avoiding a new World War compared to The Congress of Vienna. The source by De La Garde also contains a lot of the social elements of this huge event. This element is important since entire kingdoms were cut into bits or enlarged during feasts or a ball, such as the Kingdom of Saxony or the Dutchy of Warshaw. It was a time of incredible social occasions while, at the same time, Napoleon "steps forth to spread fire and flame once more; to make an end of all those dreams."¹⁰⁹

De La Garde arrived towards the end of September 1814 when the Congress had not yet begun. The congress was first expected not to last very long or be a success. He also describes the many sovereigns who joined the conference and states the number of people who joined Vienna for this festive event. Some saw this event as business, and others experienced it as a pleasure to witness the number of special persons in one place. He describes how the different royal companies arrived with all their hospitality and the memorable gatherings to watch this. There were even placed guards of honor on

¹⁰⁶ Auguste Louis Charles de La Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna," London Chapman & Hall, Limited 1902, Introduction Chapter: 1-3.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/54061/54061-h/54061-h.htm#INTRODUCTORY>

¹⁰⁷ La Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna," 1902, Introduction Chapter: 2-4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 3-5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 5.

routes that the monarch Alexander I and the King of Prussia traversed. De La Garde also describes the way the remaining monarchs, with all their beauty and beautiful dresses, were cheered on by the massive crowd. After the sovereigns were present in Vienna, the next period was an infinite number of carriages with people from different places to visit Vienna. De La Garde mentioned that the city was filled with noise from music, carriages, celebrities, and soldiers with all kinds of uniforms for over five months. The city was turned into one big festive event where cafes, theaters, and other public places were filled with many people.¹¹⁰

The city of Vienna had an immersive economic growth during the years of the conference. The city was extremely crowded, and all needed a place to stay. They were new customers for the hotels in Vienna. In addition, the Congress of Vienna was not alone a massive event in terms of its diplomatic success but also for its spectacle among the people in Vienna and beyond. It was a festive period after a grim period in European History. It was, in a sense, a celebration after the period of the Napoleonic Wars. The first period of the Congress of Vienna was mostly seen as a celebration, and the diplomatic parts were reserved for later to the point that the women at the congress even joked that they were the most prominent because of all the different ballets. The diplomatic parts were remembered the most in historical writing, while the social aspect is starting to become more popular, especially after the anniversary year 2015, with articles about the social aspects (such as De Graaf, about emotions in Vienna).

Since the city was so overcrowded, the prices for available hotels and private lodging were very high. Many were obliged to find an available spot on the city's outskirts. For instance, Lord Castlereagh's apartments were £500 each month.¹¹¹ This was, at that time, a ridiculous amount of money. But the main historical actors were not short of money, if anything else. The introduction chapter ends with thoughts from A La Garde, who is impressed with Vienna and that sleep will not come after the first night.¹¹² As was expected, Vienna became a very busy city with many people, especially at that time.

It is noticeable how much La Garde was an admirer of Talleyrand and his way of presenting himself at this congress. He described how Talleyrand could 'powerfully attract and captivated everybody's attention.'¹¹³ While he was often in the presence of the actors discussed in this chapter, it shows how these actors were not only very prominent in their political ideas but also how they socially presented themselves at the conference, where many people from all ranks were present.

From the recollections of De La Garde, it becomes clear that he focuses a lot on his personal experience about Vienna, but he also describes the relevant main actors. One could argue that Vienna at that time, viewed in the eyes of La Garde, was way more than just a diplomatic event. It can even be argued that this event's diplomatic side was unimportant for most people.

¹¹⁰ La Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna," 1902, 8-9.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 10.

¹¹² Ibid, 10.

¹¹³ Ibid, 66.

In the first chapter, the authors Freksa and Hansen also mention the festive side of this event. “The Congress dances but accomplishes nothing,” said the old Prince de Ligne.¹¹⁴ Just like de La Garde described, the festive part of this Congress was an entire dimension of itself. In this first chapter, the author describes the various leading figures and how their appearances had some hidden meaning. The customs and how they dressed and acted helped the image among the common people that these figures were here to establish a long-awaited peaceful Europe. He also writes that for people to enjoy the festive spirits of those who only came for entertainment, there were a lot of arrangements. The daily costs for all these hospitalities were 500.000 guldens (240.000 dollars) daily. There were so many cooks and so many royal stables that it was a massive gathering. Everything, especially for the royals, was very luxurious.¹¹⁵

Just like was mentioned by Fleur in the introduction, the historians at that time focused more on the diplomatic side to make sure to get all the ‘facts right.’ For instance, what was the event’ in terms of the meetings and so on, since that was the main thing? This was the normative way of looking at Vienna, while this event meant a lot more to a lot of people. Vienna’s social/festive aspect was, especially in the first months when the political leaders from the five powers did not arrive, the main thing in Vienna. The dancing, the different cultures, the feeling of great importance, and the spiritual communions in the streets all helped put pressure on the historical actors in a good way. The pressure on the shoulders of the figures was mainly to create peace. All the other technical things, such as the creation of borders or the “spoils of war,” were less important in the eyes of the local people.

4.2 The political side. The historical actors and their perspectives on the idea of Balance of Power

This part of the thesis describes/deals with the historical actors with the help of primary sources and discusses how they looked at the idea of balance of power. It is important to mention that the discussed actors do not explicitly mention the balance of power but provide keywords or ideas central to their view on creating stability in Europe. The different cases discussed here, such as the Kingdom of Poland and the German Confederation with the issue of the Kingdom of Saxony, all highlighted how the actors, through trials and errors, eventually realized that it was cooperation and making compromises regarding their initial goals was important to let the conference be a success. The context at the beginning of this meeting was that France, in the beginning, was seen as the ‘enemy’ and, just like any ‘spoils of war’ meeting, would face much trouble. Russia came to Vienna expected to be welcomed as the saviors of Europe and therefore expected to make claims on many territories. Great Britain came to establish peace no matter the cost and to counterbalance Russian aggression. Austria came to Vienna to create stability in Europe and feared for its position between Russia and Prussia. Finally, Prussia wanted to expand as much as possible. The five actors mentioned before are the focal point in this chapter. De La Garde

¹¹⁴ Freksa and Hansen, “A peace Congress of Intrigue,” 3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 5.

created portraits and wrote down some conversations in which the actors were present. That source is also used for this chapter.

In the introduction, Fleur (who was part of creating this document) described la Garde as someone who could best be seen as a ‘witness’ during the conference, who could talk to the important figures and listen to the many rumors.¹¹⁶ An example of a rumor was the departure of Castlereagh from Vienna. Baron Ompteda, a former minister of Westphalia. He had many conversations with de La Garde since they were often placed at the same table during dinners and other activities. La Garde described him as the “most originally clever men I have ever met.”¹¹⁷ The Baron was a higher member in Vienna than La Garde so he could tell the rumor or, in that sense, had more access to information than La Garde. This conversation took place at the theatre of the Carinthian Gate. He stated that this news, the departure of Castlereagh, would help the actors to reach peace. La Garde asked why Castlereagh, of all people, was an obstacle to peace, and the Baron responded: “No, you are wrong. It is not that. For the last four months, they have been debating without agreeing. All at once Lord Castlereagh is called to England for the opening of Parliament. You may easily conceive that he could not return empty-handed; consequently, he put some life into the deliberations and hurried the conclusion of affairs to show some results. What a pity it is the other nations haven’t some parliaments to be opened!”¹¹⁸ This is an interesting quote aligned with other sources about Castlereagh and his indecisiveness. It confirmed that the negotiation process was anything but smooth. This became clear when Tsar Alexander I expected his ideas to change Europe, to lead its army, and to seize many territories since it was his military force that was one of the reasons Napoleon lost, to be met with open arms by the other political leaders.¹¹⁹ This was far from reality, and it can be argued that the idea of balance of power, to ensure that a nation cannot become a hegemon, was present at Vienna from the start.

Another source about the historical actors is from Frederick von Gentz, who became a close partner with Metternich. His work reveals important information about the ideas of the main actors in Vienna and their motives.¹²⁰ Gentz, as a person, is often described as someone who did not have much faith in The Congress of Vienna to restore Europe after what happened to the continent during the Napoleonic wars. Even though he was very pessimistic about the conference, he was fascinated by how the city transformed. He wrote about the society he was in: “clothes, card playing, the idlest gossip become business, important.”¹²¹ The festive side influenced how he perceived the conference, yet the political meetings started when the other Great European Powers arrived in Vienna.

Dilke, in his article, examines how Talleyrand, one of the main historical actors, looked at

¹¹⁶ La Garde-Chambonas, “Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna,” 1902: 156.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 156.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 358.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 313-314.

¹²⁰ Paul R. Sweet, “Friedrich von Gentz: defender of the old order,” University of Wisconsin Press, 1941: preface: vii. https://archive.org/stream/friedrichvongent00swee/friedrichvongent00swee_djvu.txt Preface

¹²¹ Sweet, “Friederich von Gentz: Chapter 14 The Congress of Vienna,” 1941: 194.

Vienna and the other actors. This article is a reaction to the newly found memoirs of Talleyrand and how the information it contains provides a new image of him. This article is useful to determine how the historical actors viewed Vienna as an important event, not just in political and European history, but also for the idea of balance of power. Dilke states that Talleyrand gave much help to France at Vienna during the conference (1814-1815), but he did not restore the Bourbons (French monarchs) so far that a restoration needed to take place.¹²²

Dilke, in his article, follows how Talleyrand is described by himself and others to look at his role at the Vienna settlement. There are two important periods in the life of Talleyrand in terms of politics. One was the period when he was important in the councils of Europe, the period of 1792 with the emergence of the France Empire. The second period was his presence and authority during the Congress of Vienna. Dilke mentions 1800 and 1815 as the years that Talleyrand influenced France's future and policies. In 1800 France, Napoleon was at its greatest power. Even though Dilke gives an interesting insight into this period, the focus of the thesis, however, lies more on the second date: 1815. This period differed from 1815, but Talleyrand was equally important for France's future by ensuring the other actors honored the Treaty of Paris of 1814. It was typical for Talleyrand's character to take credit for this solution to Louis XVIII. Such as that, Talleyrand will doubtless describe his "conversion" of Alexander of Russia within a single night as the "Bourbon solution." It was in his interest, and it was noted that he did not write anymore in his memoirs from 1815 to 1823 until he found out that he was being attacked by his "enemies" over the contents of his memoirs.¹²³

It was a challenging time for France after the fall of Napoleon; it is safe to state that the newly declared Bourbon King who succeeded Napoleon Bonaparte had a lot to fill in.¹²⁴ Talleyrand ensured that the other European Powers did not abuse France's resources during the Vienna Congress. And he uses the legitimacy of the earlier treaty of Paris to do so. According to Dilke, the word legitimacy was key for the policies from Talleyrand at Vienna. When Talleyrand arrived at Vienna, "The Four," England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, were still considering excluding France. This would prevent France from having a seat at the table during important meetings.¹²⁵ In the end, France was placed in the Inner Circle, with the help of Castlereagh and Metternich, who viewed France as crucial for the new European System as a major power.

Talleyrand believed that a legitimate ruler was crucial for a stable government in general; Metternich, for instance, believed in the idea of absolutism because, in his perspective, it ensured equal justice and fair administration for all. He successfully reduced ideas of nationalism to return to conservative ideas, like absolutism. On the other hand, Castlereagh came to Vienna with a dread of Russian ambition on the European mainland. He saw a threat to his 'equilibrium peace' in Alexander I's

¹²² Charles Wentworth Dilke, "The Talleyrand Memoirs," *The North American Review* 152, no. 411 (1891): 158. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25102129>.

¹²³ Dilke, "The Talleyrand Memoirs," (1891): 158.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 167.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 168.

'fantastic character' danger of an attempt at Russian domination. Dilke, just like Gentz, mentions how the Congress itself was a "battlefield" and that the main object was to create a clear division of the spoils of war. But in the end, what they created at Vienna was crumbling in 1830, and the complete disruption happened in 1848.¹²⁶ What should not be forgotten is that much of the nominal work at the congress was already done/completed before the great powers met and discussed specific important topics regarding the future of the European Continent. An example was the difficulty of containing Poland and Saxony to be claimed by Russia, Prussia, or even Austria, which is discussed later.

In the memoirs of Metternich, it is stated that those who were present at the time of the assembling of the Congress at Vienna understood thoroughly the nature of this conference. To the outside world, it was phrased as: 'regeneration of the political system of Europe, or a lasting peace founded on a just division of strength.'¹²⁷ This was mentioned to tranquilize the people, and it also helped to give a sense of dignity to this massive assembly. The real purpose was to divide the spoils of war amongst the defeaters of Napoleon. Dividing the spoils of war among the defeaters of Napoleon would not be easy. This foresight helped acknowledge the fact that the discussions, which took place at the Congress, were expected to be 'difficult, painful, and often stormy.'¹²⁸ It shows a different side to this event and, more importantly, how the actors, in his view, looked at Vienna and its primary goals. The European Powers and their political leaders understood the necessity of creating peace, but self-interest was present even at this conference. The Vienna conference was also ideal for, especially the victors, to claim certain spoils of war left after the havoc of the Napoleonic Wars. Furthermore, in his memoirs, he continues talking about the difference between what was shown to the outside world and what was happening during the many meetings in the conference room.

It is important to note that at Vienna, especially at the beginning of the Congress, France was seen as the enemy, and it was also rumored that the representative ministers of France would not work with the other powers. The reasoning behind this was the fear that France would opt for violence again if it remained strong. This was quickly denied by Gentz, who witnessed this and mentioned that France and Talleyrand did not work against "the general good."¹²⁹ He states that the French government believed peace was the only security means. On top of that, they recognized that a new war would mean revolutions.¹³⁰ It is insightful how the French ministers looked at this issue. It also meant that they knew that working with the other European Powers was in their best interest to ensure that France's finances and resources would be secured.

When Alexander I of Russia came to Vienna, it was as if he came in the first place to be

¹²⁶ Dilke, "The Talleyrand Memoirs," (1891): 170.

¹²⁷ Clemens Wenzel Lothar, Fürst von Metternich, and Frederick von Gentz, [Prince Richard Metternich ed., M. A. de Klinkowström ed., Mrs. Alexander Napier trans.], *Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815* (New York, 1880-82): 553. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924088023415&view=lup&seq=8>

¹²⁸ Lothar and Gentz, "Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815 (New York, 1880-82): 553.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 560.

¹³⁰ La Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna," 1902: 561.

“admired.” Like the other actors, he saw a transformation of the city of Vienna in which the common people almost worshipped the key figures whose goal (in their eyes) was to create peace. After the admiring, he helped direct the necessary arrangements to help the boundaries and positions of the many states who wanted to claim the spoils of war. He did this by acting as a referee to make sure that the rest of the negotiations were going smoothly.¹³¹ He also had three primary goals in mind from the perspective of the Russian Empire. The first was to take claim of the whole, of the Duchy of Warsaw, except for small portions. Second, to prevent Austria from profiting too much from her new position in the system. This was done by making sure that Austria’s goals were kept in check by the presence of the Russian Empire. Third, to enrich the Russian Empire as much as possible regarding territory and resources. Alexander I would quickly understand that his wishes were not met without resistance.

He had already, or pretended, to have a misliking towards Prince Metternich. The reason for that was that he proposed to become the commander-in-chief of the allied armies, which was turned down (not only by Metternich). Not only Metternich clashed with Alexander, but so did Lord Castlereagh, and he did not have a steady relationship with Talleyrand.¹³² Much of this had to do with the idea that it was Emperor Alexander who had ideas to create a new European Order in which the Russian Empire would play a massive part, which was not to the liking of the other actors, who did not want Russia to gain too much influence. Lord Castlereagh proposed that Russian aggression should be kept to a minimum to create a peaceful Europe. In return, he accepted some territorial gains, as long as it did not hurt the stability in Europe

Genz’s reasoning that Alexander I did not like Talleyrand and Metternich is also present in the recollections by La Garde. He states that, while everything was well and all, the “Polish question was more than ever to the fore, and as far as ever from being settled.”¹³³ It was clear that Alexander, whose goal was to incorporate Poland, did not expect this resistance, especially since he wanted to sacrifice Saxony to Prussia for this. Metternich and Talleyrand opposed this plan of acquiring Saxony in the first place. La Garde wrote: “Both Metternich and Talleyrand opposed the overthrow of a prince sincerely beloved by his subjects. These two statesmen hoped that denying Saxony to Prussia would contribute to a rupture between the czar and King Frederick William (of Prussia).”¹³⁴ The aim of Metternich and Talleyrand behind this rupture was that the conference could help to create an independent Poland of both the Czar and the King abandoning the question in the name of peace. Where is Castlereagh in all this, one may ask? He was, firstly, in favor of the pretensions of Russia and Prussia in the name of peace but had “been persuaded by the arguments of the Austrian Minister and his French colleague.”¹³⁵ A day later, Alexander, “addressing Lord Castlereagh, had not scrupled to affirm that at his voice eight millions

¹³¹ La Garde-Chambonas, “Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna,” 1902: 554.

¹³² Ibid, 554-556.

¹³³ Ibid, 313.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 313-314.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 313-314.

of Poles would not hesitate to arise to sustain their country's independence."¹³⁶ Alexander would never forgive both statesmen, especially Talleyrand, for this. This was so deep that after the Second Restoration in Vienna, he kept French diplomatists away from the ministry and other public affairs.¹³⁷ I would argue that the city of Vienna and the expectation from the common people that peace had to be created during the meetings helped to avoid conflicts, while the Polish Question in the beginning almost proved fatal.

Since Prussia initially wanted to acquire as much power as possible without any regard to anything, much less to the idea of balance of power in which new strong sovereign borders were created, the Kingdom of Prussia. It knew that it could not compete with Russia, so they set its sights on Germany.¹³⁸ One of Prussia's goals was to ensure that Austria would not gain too much influence so that Prussia could be ahead of the German Confederation. Prussia was seen as impatient, which caused a matter of offense to the Vienna cabinet and uneasiness among the people.¹³⁹ One of the allies Alexander I had was the King of Prussia, who only wanted to extend their power at the Congress of Vienna at the expense of everything. Gentz even states that their desire was even without regard to any principle created in Vienna or decency.¹⁴⁰ This was because of the general enthusiasm of the nation that it wanted to expand.

On the other hand, England appeared at Vienna "with all the brilliancy which she owes to her immense successes."¹⁴¹ England was very prosperous and strong at the time, and according to Gentz, this country could have been the dominant force in Europe. It could have established an equilibrium in Germany by making a common cause with Austria which would let Prussia fall back. It was also England with its power who was opposite Russia's ambitions. Castlereagh at first did that, being opposite to most of Russia's ambitious schemes. In the case of Saxony, he first favored Austria but, according to Gentz, stopped halfway. He stated that he could have been the arbiter for Europe, but he failed.¹⁴² Unlike the other actors at Vienna, Castlereagh did not use his nation's might to his advantage when it came to making decisions. In other words, he did not take the front seat position to make important decisions/calls, which befell mostly Metternich and Talleyrand, especially later during the many discussions in the Inner Circle.

The French Minister Talleyrand had a difficult time at first. This was because they had nothing to demand from themselves, unlike the other European countries.¹⁴³ The only thing they did and could do was to make sure that the other powers kept within the boundaries of the treaty and to work in good faith with the other countries to establish "political equilibrium," or in other words, the balance of power principle.

¹³⁶ La Garde-Chambonas, "Anecdotal Recollections of the Congress of Vienna," 1902: 314.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 314.

¹³⁸ Lothar and Gentz, "Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815" (New York, 1880-82): 558.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 574.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 557.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 558.

¹⁴² Ibid, 558-559.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 559.

France was in a difficult position, not knowing whether the other powers would honor the Treaty of Paris. They feared that the other powers would exploit France's resources and, indirectly, threaten the balance of power if France was no longer a Great Power. In other words: "fight with the pen and in conferences and would prefer in secret the most detestable arrangements to a fresh explosion, which they feared above all."¹⁴⁴ This citation is a great example of what Gentz mentioned earlier that the conferences and their many discussions were not always as it seemed; the fear for arrangements outside the conferences was to be expected with the many spoils of war and all the politically important figures in one city. The drama can best be summarized as another episode from the popular HBO series *Game of Thrones*, with many conversations behind closed doors and a focus on specific actors. Yet, the powers knew very well, especially later, that progress during the meetings was essential for peace and stability. All needed this after the chaotic period of the French Revolution and the many battles, and it was expected by the common people in Vienna, who expected great things from the actors. To be able to do this, the recognition to not exploit or acquire new territories was in line with the idea of balance of power.

The next great power was Austria, which was in a difficult position among the four other powers. Just as explained earlier, Prussia and Russia had goals to stop Austria from expanding, which was still a powerful kingdom at that time. It was also the case that Austria did not want to be allied with France for fear of getting public opinion against themselves since France did not have the best reputation. Austria faced a challenge regarding important issues, such as interests in Italy and views on Poland and Germany. In these matters, Austria found herself alone against Russia and Prussia since England's primary goal was for peace "at any cost under almost any circumstances."¹⁴⁵ England could have been the one dictating or being more actively involved in the conference, but decided that it was only peace they wanted and therefore tried not to intervene too much.

Austria was, therefore, in a situation in which she was alone without the help of the great European Powers in Vienna. The Affairs of Poland were something that the Emperor of Russia prioritized immediately through Count Nesselrode at the first conference between the Great Powers. This showed the urgency and the ambition of Russia's plans. Gentz also describes how the "negotiations" created bad blood between Talleyrand and Alexander I. The latter was impossible to convince to alter his plans. Castlereagh tried to do the same, but he also failed; Gentz even mentioned that what he did was "useless."¹⁴⁶ Even though Russia did gain a large part of Poland, it was understood that these territorial claims could damage the 'peace equilibrium' in Europe. Castlereagh tried to negotiate with Alexander I privately to limit the territorial gain in the name of peace.¹⁴⁷ While at first, it seemed like Castlereagh failed, Alexander changed his mind in the latter stage of the conference. Some

¹⁴⁴ Lothar and Gentz, "Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815" (New York, 1880-82): 561.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 562.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 565.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 569.

would argue that this change of heart happened because of Alexander's desire for peace; others argued that the negotiations in Vienna and the influence of the other actors played a role. In other words, the balance of power that would be established was threatened in the beginning. This system was needed to counteract domestic revolutions and to create a stable Europe.

During the Congress of Vienna, it was stated by Castlereagh, and in general, that the Saxon question was one of the greatest dangers and difficulties for the Great Powers in Vienna. Castlereagh urgently wanted to establish a peaceful equilibrium in Europe and desired a powerful Prussian state to counterbalance the Russian and Austrian states. His aims were, just like it was mentioned before, bringing peace which he also called "a just division of forces."¹⁴⁸ While he later withdrew from this proposal since it did nothing but inflame the debate, it resulted in letting Metternich and Talleyrand control the rest of the conversations.¹⁴⁹

It was a difficult and time costing negotiation process in Vienna, and it was mentioned that immediately from the start, the important negotiation points were hard to reach an agreement on. Another great negation point was the territorial question regarding uniting all parties in the Germany Confederation; not only would that have consequences for Austria and Prussia, but also for the entirety of Europe. Gentz even states that it was a political subject for several months.¹⁵⁰

The issue of Saxony was central to the relationship between Austria and Prussia during the Congress of Vienna. The future of the Kingdom of Saxony was formed at this conference, which the political leaders of that knew all too well. Prussia wanted to become the strongest power in the Northern German Confederation; to do so, it needed to absorb Saxony.¹⁵¹

Yet, while under Metternich's leadership, Austria was busy with the German Question and had another important challenge, that of the Russian state. Alexander I's massive army and aggressive habits combined to elevate Russia to one of the Greatest Powers. The Austrian Empire was vulnerable to Russian aggression.¹⁵² This vulnerability motivated Metternich not only to take the lead during meetings at Vienna but also to return to conservative ideas with the older alliance-based system/balance of power for the future of his kingdom.

The division of Saxony between Prussia and Russia was finally arranged during the final Treaty of Vienna in 1815, and it would be divided into two parts equally. This negotiation was completed with all the major actors in Vienna. Castlereagh was going to depart for London and did not want to leave without completing this matter, which he completed. Even though the conference did have its differences between each historical actor, the desire for peace was most important to them. They did not wish for

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 575.

¹⁴⁹ C.K. Webster, "England and the Polish-Saxon Problem at the Congress of Vienna," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1913): 64-66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3678416>.

¹⁵⁰ Lothar and Gentz, "Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815" (New York, 1880-82): 570.

¹⁵¹ Lawrence J. Flockerzie, "Saxony, Austria, and the German Question after the Congress of Vienna, 1815-1816," *The International History Review* 12, no.4 (1990): 664-665.

¹⁵² Flockerzie, "Saxony, Austria, and the German Question, 1815-16," *The International History Review*, 1990: 676.

war, and each European Powers worked together in good faith.¹⁵³

The negotiations at Vienna were most difficult and painful, and Gentz predicted when he wrote these memoirs about the congress that the issue of Naples, with the King of Naples, would be the last difficult part. The discussion was about restoring the rightful and legitimate sovereign to the throne of Naples to restore peace and create an equilibrium (balance) within Europe.¹⁵⁴ It was a difficult subject with many different opinions that could upset the newfound peace in Europe. Regarding this issue was the wish that the Congress would accept the King of Sicily as the rightful King of Naples by all Great Powers. It proved to be difficult to reach this aim.¹⁵⁵

Prince Hardenberg was one of the most important figures in modern German History, as the Chancellor of Prussia. Yet, his choices for the future of Prussia were not that effective on a European level.¹⁵⁶ The nineteenth century for Prussia, and Germany as a whole, was characterized by the unification in 1871 and the victory over France instead of the outcome of the choices made by Hardenberg at Vienna. Nevertheless, the Congress of Vienna was the event in his life, just like it was for the other actors. Prussia found herself at the center of the issue regarding the disposition of Saxony and the question of Poland. It was in the interest of the King of Prussia to acquire as much territory as possible to counter the Austrian insistence on acquiring parts of the German Confederation.¹⁵⁷

While Prussia was a nation in hot water, with its ambitions clashing with other powers, this was not the case for Hardenberg; he was in his element. He skillfully used his deafness to gain time and ignore things he did not want to hear. This resulted in irritation by the other actors in Vienna, such as Metternich and Talleyrand. The latter was caught saying the malicious remark that it was that they all had infirmities of one sort or another. As a diplomat, he was less successful regarding Metternich, and his task was doomed to fail since Prussia's power was not comparable with the rest. It was hard for Prussia to claim territory in Germany with Metternich's aim to maintain Austrian ascendancy in Germany. Yet, Hardenberg did not want his king to lose faith in him.¹⁵⁸

Hardenberg was in favor of balance of power tactics, which were used in an early stage by him together with Metternich, the Metternich-Hardenberg agreement of October 22, 1814. This agreement would ensure that Prussia was granted Saxony in return that it would join Austria in a strong anti-Russian alliance over the question of Poland.¹⁵⁹ This agreement was not lasting long when Alexander found out and pressured the Prussian king into denouncing this agreement. On top of that, Alexander successfully ignored all the balance of power arguments and pressure made by Castlereagh. Metternich accepted defeat and sought a conversation with Alexander to ensure that Russia and Prussia would not gain too

¹⁵³ Lothar and Gentz, "Memoirs of Prince Metternich volume II, 1773-1815" (New York, 1880-82): 574.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 583.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 584.

¹⁵⁶ Walter M Simon, "Prince Hardenberg," *The Review of Politics* 18, no. 1 (1956): 88.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1404942>.

¹⁵⁷ Simon, "Prince Hardenberg," *The Review of Politics* 18, no. 1 (1956): 98.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 98-99

¹⁵⁹ Schroeder, "Did the Vienna settlement rest on a balance of power?" (1992): 703.

much at Austria's expense. In the end, this agreement backfired, with Russia, in the final settlement, gaining most of the territory it had claimed, which remained with its location a threat to Austria and Prussia.¹⁶⁰

As mentioned before, France was given a seat at the table, but that did not mean they had a lot of say. At least not in the topics that were specifically discussed in Vienna. Most of the time, the Treaty of Paris of 1814 dictated what would happen to France. It was mostly Talleyrand's task to make sure that the other powers did not extend their power grab to the resources of France. It was also considered that to recreate the balance of power in Europe, France needed to remain a strong European Power, but not too strong. Europe needed to ensure France had strong neighbors to keep them in check.

Castlereagh did not use the Conference of Vienna to share liberal economic ideas or anything regarding his ambition. Even though arguably Britain was the 'greatest power' at the table in Vienna. Castlereagh focused on traditional concerns at the meeting: security, frontiers, dynasties, and restoring the idea of balance of power in Europe to check further aggression from France.¹⁶¹ It was not about economic aspects or incorporating new ideas from one to another but focused on reestablishing peace and stability back into the European continent. Castlereagh, the representative of Great Britain, was seen as successful but could have achieved more. Especially since the United Kingdom at that time was the strongest European Power. Castlereagh had a lot of influence over the Regent's mind and even over King George's mind. It helped that the King was also interested in Europe and regarded himself as a part of this group of monarchs, who were frail after the many revolts after the Enlightenment period.¹⁶²

The idea of peace was central to the other actors in Vienna, but while the goals on this part were aligned, it did not make it much easier. Interestingly, the author wants to alter this idea by stating that Metternich looked from another perspective at the problems that Europe had to deal with at that time. Other than the older idea of balance of power. Sofka argues that Metternich's creation of the Conference System was influenced by progressive ideas from Kant about equilibrium.¹⁶³ In 1813 Metternich was obsessed with creating an order to preserve peace in Europe after Napoleon's defeat. He wanted to establish lasting peace and was influenced by the legal and political theory of the late Enlightenment to guide in this process.¹⁶⁴ Whether or not he was seen as more of a modern figure, the fact remains that he played a big part in the creation of the new order. And this order was still based on conservative ideas.

Each of the historical actors had their own ambitions and goals when they came to Vienna. Yet, after examining the actors, it also showed that their initial agreements at the Treaty of Paris in 1814

¹⁶⁰ Schroeder, "Did the Vienna settlement rest on a balance of power?" (1992): 703.

¹⁶¹ Patrick O'Brien and Geoffery Allen Pigman, "Free trade, British Hegemony and the international economic order in the nineteenth Century, *Review of International Studies* 18, no.2 (1992): 94. doi:10.1017/S0260210500118807

¹⁶² C.K. Webster, "The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh (1815-1822) Britain and the European Alliance", G. Bell and sons, LTD, 1925: 9.

¹⁶³ James R. Sofka, "Metternich's Theory of European Order: A Political Agenda for "Perpetual Peace," *The Review of Politics* 60, no. 1 (1998): 115. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1408332>.

¹⁶⁴ Sofka, "Metternich's Theory of European Order," (1998):121-122.

played a significant role during the Vienna Conference. The sense that while tensions rose high during many meetings, for instance, between Talleyrand and Alexander I, there was a sense of restraint and accepting compromises in the name of peace.

After examining the sources used for this chapter, one can conclude that three major realizations made the Congress of Vienna different from other “spoils of war” meetings in the past. In the sense that the outcome can be connected to the theory of Realism. This is because the discussed states in this thesis all acted with the idea of power in mind. If the states are equal in terms of power (balance of power), it does not feel threatened and can therefore look for alliances, which were central in the Vienna system. Another argument for this was that territories were split up or even newly created during this conference, such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, to counterbalance other powerful states.

What made this event unique is that the major winners after the Napoleonic Era, specifically Russia, did not see her wishes come true, while the loser (France) was not only given a seat on the table with the leading European Powers but could also make claims. France was preserved as a strong sovereign state rather than experiencing significant territorial losses and resource deprivation. In contrast, the conference revolved around the principles of peace and stability. Yet, the five dominant European powers engaged in crucial deliberations and even dismantled kingdoms, such as Poland, which Russia immediately claimed. Additionally, Austria retained control over the Kingdom of Naples and Saxony, with no opposition from the respective kingdoms. This demonstrated that while the "Inner Circle" negotiated, they made decisions concerning other territories without their input or consent.

4.3: Conclusion

The work of Metternich at Vienna was more than restoring thrones with forgotten princes. He founded the structure for a new European state system, which replaced the aggressive international relations of the eighteenth century with an order that achieved what Enlightenment thinkers only could dream of, namely perpetual peace.¹⁶⁵

Upon examining this chapter, it became evident that the festive side of Vienna revealed the complex nature of this event, extending beyond diplomatic meetings. The interactions between individuals, regardless of their social status, the encounters between different cultures, and the connections between people all strengthened the importance of Vienna. This chapter demonstrated how the actors used different keywords when discussing the idea of balance of power. Castlereagh, for instance, referred to it as ‘peace equilibrium,’ while Talleyrand emphasized ‘legitimacy.’ Furthermore, the chapter described the interactions among the actors when discussing multiple cases, such as that of Saxony and Poland, illustrating how the balance of power argument resulted in restraints imposed by the actors.

This chapter focused on the festive side of Vienna and the historical actors from the five European Powers who were part of the Inner Circle in Vienna. Even though it is important to note that France joined this circle shortly after and was not part of the Quadruple Alliance. The inclusion of France, which was eventually accepted by all European powers, was the beginning of the respective idea of each actor’s views on the balance of power. Prince Metternich remembered as the “coachman of Europe,” helped restore the old order. He believed in the principle of balance of power by restoring the princes to their thrones to create strong and stable nation-states which would counterbalance one another. On the other hand, Talleyrand spoke a lot about the idea of legitimacy. For a stable government, there needed to be a legitimate ruler on top of this government. He believed in the idea of balance of power when he supported creating stable governments and strong nations to counterbalance one another.

It is important to know that the alliance that took charge at the Congress of Vienna and provided the historical actors was the quadruple alliance of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Britain. Metternich was important because he wanted to establish a conservative order but knew this was hard to create after the many revolutions. The goal was not to punish France but to restore the idea of a balance of power; therefore, France needed to have a seat at the table of the “Inner Circle.’ This goal became a reality after many trials and errors. For instance, including the defeated party was not the case at Versailles a century later. The alliance recognized that France needed to be a strong power if they wanted to restore the balance of power idea. Metternich was the Austrian Foreign Minister. Metternich and his conservative order were important to the idea of a balance of power and the new European Order that presented itself after Vienna. Austria was a multi-ethnic empire and thus had a lot of fear from the rising tide of nationalism. The goals of Metternich made sense in that regard. Metternich was commonly seen as a

¹⁶⁵ Sofka, “Metternich’s Theory of European Order,” (1998):115.

reactionary and practitioner of the balance of power diplomacy. This chapter explored the different actors and their changing perspectives on the re-payment of ‘spoils of war,’ the restoration of France, and the plans for a new European Order. An example of an issue regarding the spoils of war was the question of Saxony. This issue created a hopeless division between the four powers (Britain acted as an arbitrary). Initially, there was an informal agreement between Metternich, Hardenberg, and Castlereagh that Prussia should take this territory to counterbalance the growing power of the Tsar and the Russian state. This proved unsuccessful when it became clear that Hardenberg had other schemes for the Prussian state.¹⁶⁶ This matter proved hard to be agreed upon, and because of this, it was needed to create a Congress System, which came out of the Quadruple Alliance, in which Castlereagh also played an important role as one of the founders of this system. It was designed to deal with European security and discuss issues like that of Saxony.¹⁶⁷ It showed how Saxony was used as a ‘gift’ to Prussia to provide a means of counterbalance towards Russian expansion. The compromises reached among the parties involved regarding Saxony exemplified how extensive negotiations led to mutual respect among the actors, ultimately realizing that building a stable Europe required the presence of European powers capable of restraining one another. The idea of balance of power proved to be essential.

During the early negotiations in Vienna, there was another instance of conflict among the actors, specifically regarding the Polish question, the Duchy of Warsaw. However, the concept of balance of power played a crucial role in preventing aggression and ensuring that the objective of establishing a stable Europe was not overlooked. This example is significant as it nearly destroyed the entire negotiation process in Vienna. Alexander I was not only surprised by the opposition to his ideas but went as far as threatening to depart from the city and the conference. Such a move could have had dramatic implications for the future of the European continent. Had Russia chosen to withdraw from the conference, establishing a balance of power in Europe would have been difficult without one of the major powers. The Polish question was the first major clash between the actors and immediately the most vital one. The reason for this was that the outcome of this conflict started the realization among the actors that this meeting was not unlike any regular ‘spoils of war’ meeting. It was for the fate of Europe under rule by the traditional Kings and Queens, whom the actors represented (excluding Russia).

The chapter showed that the many issues in Vienna regarding specific territories resulted in various debates and challenges for each of the powers. This was not surprising, especially when, at the beginning of the era after Napoleon, the powers were divided and afraid of one another, specifically afraid of Russia with its massive army. It made it impressive that the Congress of Vienna, after Paris and London failed, was a successful stage for restoring the old order and creating a new European Order. While the success and longevity of this order are frequently doubted, it can be concluded that the actors

¹⁶⁶ Webster, “England and the Polish-Saxon Problem,” (1913): 53.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 54-56.

Oxford Reference, “Congress system,” 2023 Oxford University Press.

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095632111;jsessionid=45D71F753A8AF16ABE1F41159C8E872C>

overcame their differences and created a stable order that worked in their view.

Alexander I was one of the actors who had a lot of ambitions and demands and did this knowing the power his nation had. While at first, it seemed like he would disrupt the other actors, in the end, he played an important role not only in the victory over Napoleon in battle but also in creating peace after the battles ended. On top of that, he was important in establishing the Quadruple Alliance. Hardenberg also favored balance of power politics in Vienna. This was apparent in the example of the Metternich-Hardenberg agreement created in 1814. Even though this was not a success, it did not stop both actors from working together to establish peace. The last important historical actor in Vienna was Viscount Castlereagh from Great Britain. He came to Vienna with one major goal in mind, to make sure that a long-lasting peace was established. While different scholars often argue that he could take more charge in Vienna, he was a calm person who ensured that the negotiations were going smoothly.

The establishment of the Balance of Power in Vienna, formulated during the conference, resulted from extensive negotiations among the historical actors. This was primarily because the initial objectives for Europe were outlined and mutually agreed upon by the four Great Powers (excluding France) during the Treaty of Paris in 1814. The actors made the concept of balance of power resurface to establish a stable and peaceful Europe, at least on an international level.

In short, the actors came to Vienna with contradicting views and goals about the future of the European Continent. It was the common goal of Vienna, a peaceful and stable European Order, which was dominated by Metternich's "conservative" views that helped to overcome their differences. On top of that, I would argue that the location of Vienna and its influence on the common's people expectations of peace, the negotiation process, and the fear of domestic revolutions also helped the actors to find common ground. It helped the actors understand that their ambitions and goals had to be sacrificed to reach (international) peace. This was exemplified by how the actors in the latter stage came to mutually respect one another to sacrifice their own ambitions, of which there were plenty, to look at the broader picture; securing international peace.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The idea of Balance of Power at the Congress of Vienna

This research addressed Schroeder's argument about the dominance of hegemonic powers, particularly Great Britain and Russia, rather than a balance of power at the Congress of Vienna.¹⁶⁸ While not disregarding the concept of balance of power, Schroeder's perspective received criticism for neglecting the significance of the negotiation process and the presence of compromises. This thesis focused on the actions of the historical actors.

Reflecting on the research question: *how did the European powers perceive the idea of balance of power at the Congress of Vienna?* This thesis explored various aspects of this question through various chapters. The first chapter examined the balance of power theory, drawing on Hume's work to demonstrate its long-standing historical roots and the need to interpret this concept through different periods. The second chapter focused on the Congress of Vienna itself, highlighting the social aspects of the event, such as festivities and spiritual connection, which held greater importance for the common people. While the Congress of Vienna successfully achieved stability and balance in the European continent on an international level, it could never escape the short-lived domestic peace that tainted its reputation as a successful settlement.

The third chapter examined the historical actors who were most influential in the outcome of the Vienna settlement. These were: Metternich (Austria), Hardenberg (Prussia), Tzar Alexander I (Russia), Castlereagh (Great Britain), and finally, Talleyrand (France). It became quickly clear that each of these actors came (unsurprisingly) with their ambitions and interest instead of with the idea of easeful cooperation. The many negotiations in Vienna were painful and took a lot of time. The Tzar's ambitions almost proved fatal for the durability of this Congress, but he changed his mind because of the many negotiations and their significance. Talleyrand, for instance, came with the goal and ambition to restore the House of Bourbon as the main objective. In sum, the image of restoration and restoring the balance of power, which they did, happened not without trouble and was not everyone's first goal in Vienna. These were the spoils of war. Each actor perceived the idea of balance of power differently, but it was clear that all actors stood behind it. This became clear when the decision was made to make sure that France remained a strong European power to balance out the power in East Europe. Something which was painfully forgotten during the Peace of Versailles (1919) was negotiating with the 'enemy.'

It was evident that all the actors were sent in the name of their King or were themselves the prominent figure of their country. They acted on behalf of their nation and, with their approval, negotiated and created a new European order to ensure that what happened with Napoleon and the many revolutions (like the French's) would never happen again. Talleyrand believed a legitimate ruler

¹⁶⁸ Schroeder, "Did the Vienna settlement rest on a Balance of Power?" (1992)

This research and the many reactions sparked not only a debate between scholars, it also was the reason for me to look at a different perspective for this problem.

was needed to create a stable government, while Metternich believed absolutism was the best form of governance. Since this would create fairness and justice for everyone.

So, was there a balance of power at the Vienna settlement, and how do they relate to British, French, Prussia, Russian, and Habsburg conceptions? I would argue that there was, since what was present at Vienna, creating states to counter aggression from neighbors, as Hume mentioned in his work, was present during the congress. On top of that, the idea was to restore Europe to the age of Kings and Queens. One could argue that this was done for power to the noble families, or it could be sincerely since the French Revolution, especially the period of Robespierre's 'Terror' (second stage of the revolution), was for many people reason enough that the enlightenment ideas were not that beneficial. Even though many in Vienna hoped the ideas would fade away, this was not the case. What did not help was that many rulers used the old idea of 'divine legitimacy' and ignored the hard-fought representation of the common people in politics. As a result, the popular public revolts were again spreading on the continent, with 1848 as its highlight. The type of Balance of Power that aligned the most with Vienna was that of the alliance-based system without a hegemonic power. This was especially the case when one of its primary goals was to create as many strong sovereign nations as possible. I understand why Schroeder wanted to look at the perspective of hegemonic powers, which is very interesting and a possible explanation since it cannot be understated enough that military power did give strength to one's voice. However, even this did not hold much truth since the greater military powers (Great Britain and Russia) still made and wanted to make concessions in the name of peace. The fear of the monarchs was not only war between one another but a repeat of bloody domestic revolutions which was impossible to control.

The idea of balance of power was in the context of the Congress of Vienna, formed through intensive negotiations between the actors. Before the conference, the actors mutually agreed upon the initial objectives of the event, which, among others, was the restoration of the balance of power in Europe. This did not initially result in success, hence the various clashes between the actors. This was successful later because the actors could negotiate intensively with one another. This thesis argues that the idea of balance of power was realized because of these meetings and the actors' influences on one another. The festive side of Vienna, characterized by cultural clashes, the transformation of the city, and the interactions between individuals, all helped to indirectly put pressure on the actors to achieve peace through the idea of balance of power and to create the realization that compromises were necessary to facilitate the groundwork for a conservative order that would help to create peace and stability. What is meant by this is that its direct means of communication and the environment of people expecting an era of peace and stability helped settle the disputes between the actors who first came with their ambition and greediness for the spoils of war. There were exceptions, like how Castlereagh focused on 'peace equilibrium' and tried to guarantee peace from the start of the conference. Even though he is mostly remembered for his indecisiveness and departure from Vienna. It can not be underestimated how important Castlereagh was in pressing his idea of 'peace

equilibrium' to ensure that the other actors did not forget the initial main goal: creating a stable and peaceful Europe to prevent future wars. The festive side and the political side were both important.

Even though the Congress of Vienna is often remembered for its failings, it is sometimes seen as a unique and successful settlement by historians who compare it with the Peace of Versailles 1919. After examining this subject, it was noticing how different political scientists and historians view Vienna. I would argue that the side of historians (who mostly focus on the whole picture instead of just the diplomatic side) is essential to understanding this event and why it was important for restoring the balance of power and acquiring peace on an international level. Although it would be naïve to say that the actors came to Vienna to restore peace, it was successful.

This last section of the thesis highlights the research limitations and proposes possible options for future research. Regarding limitations, the amount of literature on this topic sometimes makes it hard to find exactly what you need. Additionally, focusing on all five actors was too much. A more focused approach could have been better. Another area for improvement is that it took a lot of work to find exactly how the actors looked at the balance of power; it remained mostly by interpreting the sources.

For future research, I suggest exploring deeper into the actions of the discussed historical actors; politics is practiced by individuals and not through institutions. On top of that, look more deeply into the festive side of Vienna. Although this research tried to explain its relevance in combination with Vienna's much-discussed political/diplomatic side, there were other perspectives, and it could be interesting to examine this relationship more closely. In light of Friendship theory, how were the actors with different backgrounds, ideas/ambitions able to overcome them? It can also be helpful to explore more into this event and why it successfully created international peace, even though it was very short. Can the negotiation process at Vienna still be relevant for today's international relations climate?

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Appendix:

Portraits of the historical actors in Vienna:

Portraits of the historical actors in Vienna originated from the source of de La Garde-Chombonas, except for the portrait of Hardenberg.



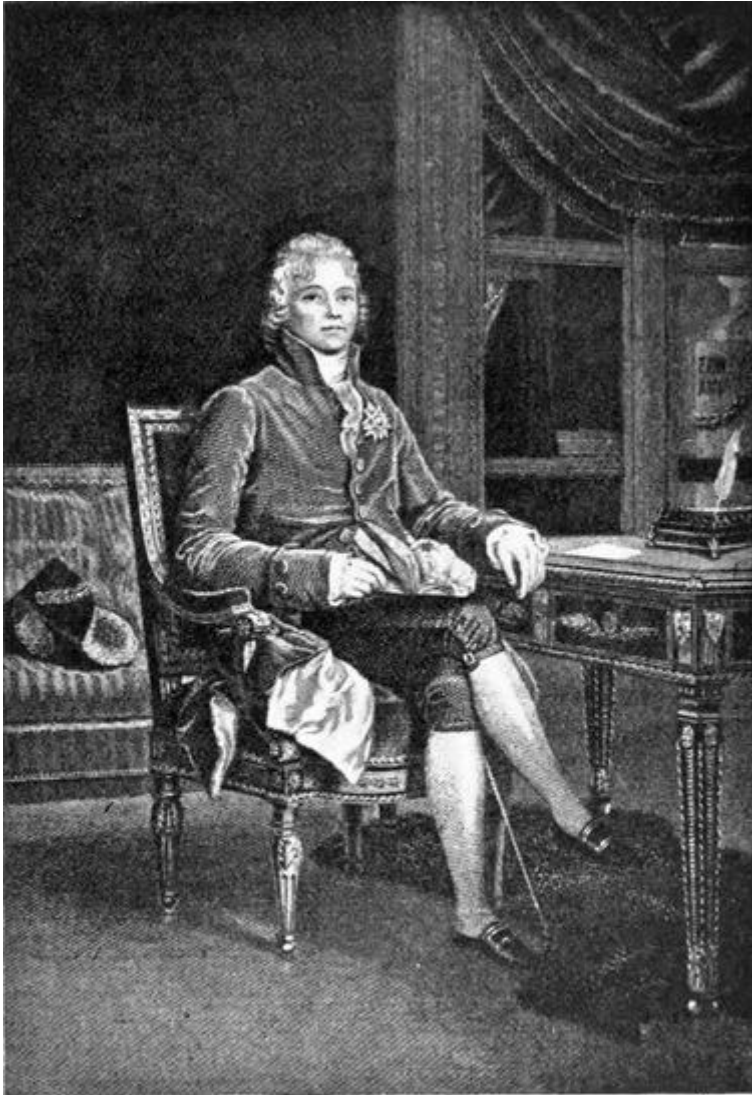
The Russian Emperor Tzar Alexander I



Robert Lord Viscount Castlereagh, Marquess of Londonderry



Prince Metternich of Austria



Ch. Maurice de Talleyrand

Ch. Maurice de Talleyrand



Portrait of Karl August von Hardenberg (1750 – 1822)¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ The Online Portrait Gallery, theonlineportraitgallery.com, 1898.