

‘Brexit is what states make of it’: Brexit, Canada, and the diplomatic ties that bind

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Major Research Paper submitted to fulfill the requirements of API6999

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21 March 2018

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ABSTRACT

The 2016 referendum results on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union were surprising to many and widely hailed as yet another example of rising protectionist sentiments around the world. As the UK now prepares to exit the EU, states are undertaking diplomatic offensives to approach 'Brexit' and frame it according to their own understandings. This paper will explore how a foreign state, external to the main players, is diplomatically navigating Brexit. Using Canada as a case study, I will investigate the tools, techniques, and channels used by authoritative Canadian diplomatic actors as they engage with the UK and the EU on Brexit; I seek to understand how Canada uses diplomacy to construct and produce ideas and identities embedded within a Brexit context. Employing a constructivist conceptual framework throughout, this paper will use discourse analysis to elucidate how Canada is positioning itself in the shifting global climate and to assess the implications of Brexit for modern diplomacy. The first chapter frames Brexit within the UK-EU context and provides a brief literature overview. The second chapter defines the relationship between Canada and the UK, justifying Canada's selection as the case study focus for this paper. The third chapter assesses the construction of modern diplomacy, considering the significant evolutions of diplomatic practices and tools and subsequently examines Canadian diplomatic efforts on Brexit. The final chapter analyzes how Brexit is constructed through diplomacy and how, in turn, Canada uses Brexit to produce identities and constrain behaviour. I conclude that Canada employs a tightly unified diplomatic narrative that constructs Brexit in three ways: first, to reaffirm the strength and identity of the UK-Canada relationship; second, to promote trade interests and multilateral partnerships; and third, to produce its own identity as a democratic state that rejects protectionist ideals and upholds liberal-democratic values.

Introduction: “With but not of”

After expressing condolences for the severe and lengthy illness that kept his Foreign Secretary away from the House of Commons that day, Winston Churchill explained that, as Prime Minister, he was, “always to watch the course of foreign affairs with close attention”, and as such, he would continue taking charge of the Foreign Office.¹ It was 1953, and he was speaking on foreign affairs in the Westminster Lower Chamber in the absence of his ill Foreign Secretary. The significant concerns of the day for the United Kingdom encompassed Korea, Egypt and the Suez Canal, communism, and, of course, France, Germany, and the rest of the European Community. Speaking about the continental European countries, Churchill famously admonished, “We are with them but not of them...we have our own Commonwealth and Empire.”² Fast forwarding to 1980, the European Community remained a vibrant theme of discussion. The classic British television sketch, *Yes Minister*, poked fun at the UK’s commitment to the “European Ideal”, disparagingly arguing that the UK joined, “to break the whole thing up.”³ And on June 23, 2016, the people of the UK came full circle and voted to leave the European Union in a tense referendum. The exit negotiations, which officially commenced in 2017 with the invocation of Article 50, stir memories of Churchill’s speech as the UK once again becomes, “with them but not of them.”⁴

Negotiating ‘Brexit’, as the UK departure from the EU has been termed, is a, if not the, priority for the British government. It is an unknown situation and an unprecedented process, meaning the UK and the EU have a significant amount of work to do if they want to ensure

¹ W. Churchill, 1953, Hansard, HC Deb 11 May 1953 vol 515 cc883-1004

² Churchill, 1953

³ *Yes Minister*, “The writing on the wall.” Season 1, Episode 5. Directed by S. Lotterby. Written by J. Lynn and A. Jay. BBC. 24 March 1980.

⁴ Churchill, 1953

minimal disruption to their respective governments and citizens. As the UK and Brussels continue formal exit talks and prepare for the impending exit of the UK from the EU, the international community is paying attention to the shifting roles, potential fallouts, and possible opportunities. Brexit is a diplomatically sensitive event, as evidenced by the different positions taken by EU member states, the language used on the public stage by primary actors, and the disordered UK government that appears to be struggling to maintain a united and coherent message.

In this paper, I will be exploring how a foreign state, external to the main players, is diplomatically navigating Brexit. Using Canada as a case study, I will investigate the diplomatic tools, techniques, and channels used by Canadian actors to approach Brexit, and evaluate how Brexit and related identities are constructed and produced from Canada's perspective using diplomacy. I will subsequently explore what Brexit can tell us about the nature of diplomacy in 2018, as it is a pertinent event that aids to illustrate how states use diplomacy in perceived protectionist conditions. This exploration is both interesting and important in the current global climate, as it is not only a historic and unexpected situation in which the UK, EU, and the rest of the diplomatic world find themselves but is also relevant to the dialogue surrounding a seeming rise in protectionism.⁵ Brexit, like the American administration's push to renegotiate the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is a conceivable protectionism minefield that compels diplomatic expertise to diffuse. Investigating what Brexit reveals about diplomatic efforts is valuable because diplomacy demands, at minimum, two-sided cooperation and a willingness to peacefully negotiate, and the diplomatic offensives being undertaken by states will

⁵ K. De Gucht, "EU Trade Policy in Times of Protectionism", Roundtable with the Centre for European Political Practical Excellence (Brussels, 28 March 2012); L. Halligan, "'Hard Brexit' is best way to fight global protectionism", *The Telegraph* (1 October 2016), retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/10/01/hard-brexit-is-the-best-way-to-fight-global-protectionism/>

be imperative weapons to combat any protectionist sentiments that may be in tension with liberal-democratic values. I will be using a constructivist conceptual framework to evaluate Canadian diplomatic efforts in the context of Brexit for three primary reasons: first, and most basic, Brexit is a constructed, malleable idea that depends heavily upon the meaning ascribed to it by users and audiences, including the UK and the EU;⁶ second, the concept of identity is a common thread in both Brexit and diplomacy discussions, and as I will later demonstrate, diplomatic engagement on Brexit is used to construct or reaffirm identities of states; and third, diplomacy focuses on norms, conventions, and rules in the realm of relationship-building, which encourages a constructivist structure for analysis.

The first chapter will provide the context of Brexit. Within it, I will explore academic literature published since the referendum to establish the general themes analyzed by scholars on this nascent topic. I will then chart the road to Brexit, contextualizing the UK's relationship with the EU. To round out the foundation, I will briefly assess the domestic messaging surrounding Brexit, drawing on speeches and statements from British government officials to explore the complexity of ensuring consistent, cohesive messaging and positioning on Brexit in an unprecedented, unforeseen situation. By the end of the chapter, I will have demonstrated the complex, unknown frontier that Brexit offers to the world and set the stage for the case study.

Chapter 2 will define the relationship between Britain and Canada, the country selected for a case study of Brexit diplomacy. I will justify the Canadian example by examining the historic relationship between the two states and assessing the current impacts on Canada of the UK's decision to withdraw from the EU. Canada is uniquely positioned to diplomatically

⁶ T. Oliver, "Theory and Brexit: can theoretical approaches help us understand Brexit?", *London School of Economics* (blog), (14 March 2017), retrieved from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/03/14/theory-and-brexit-can-theoretical-approaches-help-us-understand-brexit/>

maneuver in the Brexit discussions because of its status as a large Commonwealth country, a member of the Anglosphere, its like-minded membership in numerous multilateral treaties and organizations (including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Group of 7), and the fact that it recently ratified the most ambitious and extensive free trade agreement with the EU. The intent of this chapter is to demonstrate the importance of the UK-Canadian bilateral relationship, the significance of Brexit for Canada and its interactions with Britain, and the impact of Brexit on foreign states, as it is not just domestic reverberations that are being felt.

Chapter 3 digs into Canada's position on and use of Brexit. I will begin by exploring the concept of diplomacy, particularly in the modern age, because this provides a foundation for Canada's diplomatic actions involving the UK and Brexit. Using discourse analysis, I will then investigate the Canadian government's diplomatic efforts as related to Brexit, delving into official speeches, statements, social media use, and official visits to identify the language used and the techniques applied. These data sources will enable me to establish Canada's diplomatic standpoint on Brexit because they are directly tied to Canadian diplomatic officials who act as formal representatives of the Canadian state; the text and actions of the Canadian officials are particularly authoritative because these officials, including the Prime Minister and his high commissioners, speak and act on behalf of Canada in the international sphere. By the end of the chapter, I will have established Canada's diplomatic positioning on Brexit and provided a foundation on which to examine the impact of Brexit on one example of state diplomacy.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I will examine the implications of Brexit for modern diplomacy, using the Canadian case study to assess how Brexit is constructed through diplomatic efforts and how Canada uses Brexit to shape identities and advance particular types of behaviour. This chapter will argue that Brexit's malleability and unknown quantity necessitates states invoking

coordinated, consistent messages about Brexit that frames the constructed word in a manageable manner. More specifically, I will break it down into three areas: first, how Canada has constructed its diplomatic strategy concerning Brexit; second, how Canada has framed Brexit and used Brexit to frame identities within its diplomatic efforts; and third, what this tells us about the nature of modern diplomacy. The full capacity of modern diplomacy can still be utilized with a situation like Brexit, but governments must ensure consistency – as much as is possible in a democratic state – to provide stability to an otherwise unsteady path forward. This chapter will conclude that Canada has developed a strongly unified diplomatic narrative, using tools of modern diplomacy, to construct Brexit as an identifier of the stable Canada-UK relationship, to promote trade interests and partnerships, and to produce its own identity as a democratic state that supports due process but stands against protectionism and behaviour that might be interpreted as such.

This paper is studying a relatively new topic, Brexit, against the backdrop of a firmly-established concept, diplomacy. *Yes Minister* sarcastically posited that Britain’s foreign policy objective over the last five hundred years was, “to create a disunited Europe”; when the Minister questioned this, “appalling cynicism”, the response from his top advisory bureaucrat was, “Yes... we call it diplomacy, Minister.”⁷ I trust this paper will not be appallingly cynical about Brexit and its related diplomatic efforts, but I leave it to the reader to make one’s own observation.

Framework and Methodology

I will be using a constructivist framework to approach Brexit diplomacy. Within this framework, this paper will undertake a critical discourse analysis of Canada’s diplomatic efforts

⁷ *Yes Minister*, “The writing on the wall.” Season 1, Episode 5. Directed by S. Lotterby. Written by J. Lynn and A. Jay. BBC. 24 March 1980.

concerning Brexit. An examination of academic literature focused on the Brexit referendum (Chapter 1) will reveal that Brexit is a socially constructed term that varies in meaning depending on the user and the audience. Brexit is what states make of it, and how Canada behaves diplomatically towards it depends greatly upon the meanings ascribed to Brexit.⁸ The UK's impending exit from the EU is a new concept that will be shaped by pre-existing ideas, as will be illustrated through the role of state identities (e.g. Commonwealth memberships, democratic values) and interests that stem from those identities (e.g. free trade within a specific configuration of states).⁹ These ideas, identities, and interests are reflected in Canadian diplomatic practice, as discourse analysis will illustrate (Chapters 3 and 4).

Diplomacy relies heavily on discourse; verbal and written communication is essential to diplomatic interactions, meaning considerable discursive material is actively produced throughout diplomatic initiatives and undertakings. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method of analysis in the field of International Relations and will be used in this paper to evaluate Canadian diplomatic texts and speeches to assess how Canada is approaching Brexit and structuring its interactions and relationship with the UK as it moves towards a post-Brexit world. Discourse analysis is particularly apt in the Brexit diplomacy discussion because much of Canada's actions and words are predicated upon the key component of identity, whether of a state (e.g. Canada as a Commonwealth member) or an authoritative individual (e.g. the Prime Minister as a diplomat) (Chapters 3 and 4).¹⁰ Discourse, such as that found in diplomacy, "constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given

⁸ A. Wendt, "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics", *International Organization*, 46 (1992): 391–425

⁹ I. Hurd, "Constructivism", *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 303

¹⁰ L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 1, 7-8, 53

situation...but it cannot determine action completely.”¹¹ How ideas and identities are constrained within the Brexit context will help to elucidate the implications of Brexit for modern diplomacy and shed light on how states like Canada are positioning themselves with issues like protectionism in the shifting global climate.

Chapter 1 – Framing Brexit

On the morning of June 24, 2016, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced to citizens of the United Kingdom that they had, the day before, “taken part in a giant democratic exercise, perhaps the biggest in our history.”¹² This exercise was, of course, the referendum on whether or not to remain a part of the EU. After reassuring his fellow countrymen and women, along with the international community who was watching closely that “Britain’s economy is fundamentally strong”, he announced first that preparations must now begin for negotiating the EU exit, and second, that he was resigning his post as Prime Minister.¹³ Since then, politicians, journalists, and academics have heavily assessed the build-up to the referendum, evaluated the results, and made predictions for the future of British foreign policy. Tracing the implications has preoccupied many scholars, who wonder where it all went wrong.¹⁴

In the short twenty months since the referendum was held, the academic literature concerning Brexit has blossomed. William Outhwaite has gathered sociological responses to Brexit, compiling essays that examine the, “how did it happen” question, the political discourse, and future possibilities and challenges of the unprecedented situation in which the UK and the

¹¹ I.B. Neumann, “Discourse Analysis”, in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. A. Klotz and D. Prakash (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 62

¹² D. Cameron, Resignation Statement (24 June 2016), retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36619446>

¹³ Cameron, Resignation Statement

¹⁴ W. Outhwaite, *Brexit: Sociological Responses* (London: Anthem Press, 2017); A. Banks, *The Bad Boys of Brexit* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2017)

EU find themselves.¹⁵ Legitimacy, protectionism, identity, globalization, sovereignty, nationalism, immigration – all are topics assessed by the authors as causes of the unlikely result.¹⁶ Drilling down, Jonathan Hearn focuses on the British dynamic of balance of power between elites and the general population, arguing that Brexit is the culmination of a disengaged political system.¹⁷ In comparison, Stephen Auer, referring to Brexit as a, “political earthquake”, frames it as an illumination of the importance of sovereignty and the competing understandings surrounding it, while John Holmwood reminds readers that UK has always been an uncomfortable member of the EU and traces the causes of Brexit back to the UK’s entry to the European Community in 1973.¹⁸

The unknown nature of Brexit, helpfully illustrated through Theresa May’s, “Brexit means Brexit”, soundbite, provides a blank slate on which scholars can posit the future of the UK and the EU. Janice Morphet summarized options for future UK/EU institutional relationships in a table, hypothesizing different avenues the UK could take in terms of future treaties or agreements with other states.¹⁹ Simon Susen lays out six EU-related options for the UK, all variations on how the British could remain tied to the EU without being an official member.²⁰ Former Foreign Secretary David Owen and former diplomat David Ludlow focus on post-Brexit British foreign policy, arguing that, “Britain’s global role and influence can be enhanced, rather than diminished”, identifying challenges – Russia, the Middle East, China, and managing the

¹⁵ Outhwaite, 2017

¹⁶ Outhwaite, 2017

¹⁷ J. Hearne, “Vox Populi: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Balance of Power in the Making of Brexit”, in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. W. Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017)

¹⁸ S. Auer, “Brexit, Sovereignty, and the End of an Ever Closer Union”, in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. W. Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017); J. Holmwood, “Exit from the Perspective of Entry”, in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. W. Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017)

¹⁹ J. Morphet, *Beyond Brexit?* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017): 51

²⁰ S. Susen, “No Exit from Brexit?”, in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. W. Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017): 172-173

European fallout – but concluding that a post-Brexit UK will be able to establish a strong, mutually-beneficial relationship with the EU-27 and the rest of the world.²¹

What all these extensive yet incohesive perspectives in literature show is that the implications of Brexit are many, the full impacts yet unknown, and the reasons behind it widely varying. This is important to remember when engaging with Brexit as a topic because it affects the way in which international actors can and will approach the UK and the EU: full of potential and opportunity against a backdrop of increasing national populism and anti-globalization movements.

The Road to Brexit

The European integration project began as a proactive attempt to prevent future armed conflict between European states following the Second World War.²² At first a purely economic community that promoted a single internal market, the union evolved into a political organization that covered a variety of policy realms, and was subsequently renamed the European Union in 1993.²³ A unique body that combines supranational and intergovernmental dimensions, the EU is a constructed regional institution, uniting sovereign states with common cultures, values, and ideas together under one European identity and one European Parliament. As an economic, political, and social union, the EU is a fascinating achievement because it requires nation-states to voluntarily consent to surrendering full, individual sovereignty over their policies in pursuit of a formal collective community that shares common goals and objectives.²⁴ Consequently, since

²¹ D. Owen and D. Ludlow, *British Foreign Policy After Brexit* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2017)

²² The European Union, “The EU in Brief”, *Europa.eu*, 2 December 2017

²³ Ibid.; S. Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe: Centre Formation, System Building, and Political Structuring between the Nation State and the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 199

²⁴ S. Sift, M. Bruggemann, K. Kleinen-V. Konigslow, B. Peters, and A. Wimmel, “Segmented Europeanization: Exploring the Legitimacy of the European Union from a Public Discourse Perspective”, *JCMS* 45, no. 1 (2007); B. Rosamund, “Supranational Governance as Economic Patriotism? The European Union, Legitimacy and the Reconstruction of State Space”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 19, no. 3 (April 2012): 334-337

its formation, the EU has had to legitimize itself, both internally to its member states – including the United Kingdom – and externally to the international community.

Described by scholars as, “uncomfortable”, “difficult”, and “reluctant”, the UK’s relationship with the EU has never been smooth.²⁵ The nature of its island geography has served to provide physical separation from the rest of Europe, and this has reinforced both a cultural and institutional separation.²⁶ Culturally-speaking, it is not altogether unsurprising that when the UK eventually decided to apply for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC), as the Union was known at the time, its first attempt at accession was blocked by France’s Charles de Gaulle in 1963.²⁷ Throughout the rest of the 1960s and early 1970s, France repeatedly stood in the Britain’s way, and it was not until 1973 that the UK succeeded in joining the integration project.²⁸

Sustainable membership did not come easily for the UK, however. Just two years after joining the EEC, the British government held its first national referendum; described as an “illustration of British discomfort”, the 1975 referendum asked British citizens, “Do you think the UK should stay in the European Community (Common Market)?”²⁹ In contrast to the 2016 results, 17 million Britons voted to remain, a total of 67%.³⁰ The UK’s pattern of gaining exceptions from the EU and its predecessors began in earnest nine years later, when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher achieved the “UK Correction”, an annual rebate on British financial

²⁵ C. Pecastaing, “Please Leave”, *Foreign Affairs* (21 June 2016); Morphet, 12; Auer, 41; M. Fletcher, “Schengen, the European Court of Justice and Flexibility Under the Lisbon Treaty: Balancing the United Kingdom’s ‘Ins’ and ‘Outs’”, *EuConst* 5 (2009)

²⁶ Morphet, 12-13; B.G. Peters, “The United Kingdom”, in *Politics in Europe* (3rd ed.), eds. M.D. Hancock, D.P. Conradt, B.G. Peters, W. Safran, S. White, and R. Zariski (London: Chatham House Publishers, 2013): 1

²⁷ M. Westlake, “The increasing inevitability of *that* referendum”, in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. W. Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017): 3

²⁸ Westlake, 4; D. Shaw, C.M. Smith, and J. Scully, “Why Did Brexit Happen? Using Causal Mapping to Analyse Secondary, Longitudinal Data”, *European Journal of Operational Research* 263, no. 3 (December 2017): 1020

²⁹ I. Bache and A. Jordan, “Britain in Europe and Europe in Britain”, in *The Europeanization of British Politics*, eds. I. Bache and A. Jordan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 6; D. Butler and E. Kitinger, *The 1975 Referendum* (London: Macmillan Press, 1976): 1

³⁰ D. Butler and E. Kitinger, *The 1975 Referendum* (London: Macmillan Press, 1976): 1

contributions to the EU.³¹ This remarkable negotiation was followed by the decision to not sign the 1985 Schengen Agreement, which abolished many of the internal EU borders and promoted freedom of movement amongst citizens of EU member-states.³² While the UK was not the only EU member-state to remain outside of the Schengen Area, it was one of two – the other being Ireland – who actually chose to do so.³³

Perhaps more significant were the UK's decisions regarding the 1992 Treaty on the EU (also known as the Maastricht Treaty), where the country, in the words of Prime Minister John Major, “won” three opt-outs: “the social protocol,” “the economic and monetary union,” and “the Schengen community”.³⁴ This, “Europe à la carte” style of integration continued into 1997 with the negotiations surrounding the Treaty of Amsterdam. Described later in the House of Lords as a, “multi-speed pick-and-mix Europe” strategy, the British Prime Minister made it clear that he favoured “multiple opt-outs” for the UK and he succeeded in formally opting out of the Schengen Area once it was incorporated into the Amsterdam protocol.³⁵

These EU treaty opt-outs were highly politicized and have contributed strongly to the UK's status as the awkward relation of the European family; while there are other member states with special opt-out privileges, the UK's penchant for à la carte selection, its isolated, island borders, and its prominent role in the international community – a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, for example – have placed it in a unique position within the

³¹ A. Barker, “Margaret Thatcher's prized ‘rebate’ dragged into Brexit talks”, *Financial Times* (18 July 2017), retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/083dd8b6-6bf4-11e7-bfeb-33fe0c5b7eaa>; Morphet 8

³² European Commission, “Schengen Area”, *Europa.eu* (6 December 2016), retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en

³³ European Commission, “Schengen Area”

³⁴ R. Adler-Nissen, “The Diplomacy of Opting Out: A Bourdieudian Approach to National Integration Strategies”, *JCMS* 46, vol. 3 (2008): 664; United Kingdom, *House of Lords Debate*. 12 March 1998 (Baroness Williams of Crosby), retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199798/ldhansrd/vo980312/text/80312-21.htm>.

³⁵ United Kingdom, *House of Lords Debate*, 12 March 1998; European Commission, “Schengen Area”

EU.³⁶ It is within this context that the Brexit referendum and results must be considered, as the UK's EU membership has never been smooth sailing for either side.

On October 3, 2017, Sir Alan Duncan, British Foreign Minister, gave a speech in Chicago, where he claimed that “blue-collar, urban, traditional Labour [voters]” were, “stirred up by an image of immigration, which made them angry and made them throw a bit of a tantrum.”³⁷ This, he claimed, was one reason that the Brexit vote went the way it did. He is not alone. Immigration, sovereignty, globalization, and nationalism are four big words that have been thrown about by politicians and pundits, both critically and lightly, as justifications for the “Leave” result.³⁸ However, in this paper, I am less concerned with “why” and “how”, and more concerned with the “what”, or the language being used by British leaders and their staff – and in the later chapters, the Canadian diplomatic officials – surrounding Brexit post-referendum, as language is a key component of diplomacy and a critical producer of meaning. The language used on the public stage by political actors foreshadows the priorities and strategies of the British government, and provides an idea of its willingness to engage certain international players on specific issues in the months and years to come. It will also provide a picture of the limits of control and consistency in British Brexit messaging, against which Canada's example could be juxtaposed.

A Domestic Brexit

Before one can consider foreign engagement on Brexit, it is helpful to situate Brexit in order to illustrate the state of the nation that is to be diplomatically engaged by exploring

³⁶ Adler-Nissen, 2008, 664

³⁷ Anonymous, “Alan Duncan says migration 'tantrum' led to Brexit”, *BBC News* (3 October 2017), retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-41492353>

³⁸ Hearn, 19; M. Gordon, “The UK's Sovereignty Situation: Brexit, Bewilderment and Beyond”, *King's Law Journal* 27, no. 3 (September 2010): 333

national efforts to control the political fallout and stabilize the political message. There is no precedent for exiting the EU, and consequently, the process is both chaotic and challenging. The UK is not only negotiating its future but also steadying its present and reviving its past. While discussing the European integration project in 1953, Prime Minister Churchill asked, “where do we stand?”, and it is this question that the British find themselves answering once again.³⁹

To begin, it would not be an exaggeration to state that the domestic efforts to stabilize the Brexit conversation have been a chaotic mess. In order to develop a coherent message on Brexit, the British government has to know what Brexit means. May’s, “Brexit means Brexit”, is both confusing and unhelpful if one wants to gain understanding of the situation, but in reality reveals a significant characteristic of Brexit: it is malleable.⁴⁰ Brexit is a new concept without a firm definition, and as such, it can be constructed in a myriad of ways in the eyes of the beholders. In their analysis of Brexit performance, Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Charlotte Galpin, and Ben Rosamond assess different ways in which Brexit has been articulated and its constructed potential for framing domestic and international discussions on diplomacy and globalization.⁴¹ “Speaking about Brexit does not simply describe a given reality”, they write, “it also constructs it.”⁴² Brexit’s malleability is both an opportunity and a challenge for the elected British Government; on the one hand, they have the chance to frame Brexit negotiation efforts in a politically beneficial way, but on the other hand, they must run a tight ship to ensure the messaging is cohesive, controlled, and consistent – there is much room for alternate constructions, even within one political party.

³⁹ Churchill, 1953

⁴⁰ R. Adler-Nissen, C. Galpin, and B. Rosamond, “Performing Brexit: How a post-Brexit world is imagined outside the United Kingdom”, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2017)

⁴¹ Adler-Nissen et al., 2017

⁴² Adler-Nissen et al., 2017

Under May, the common theme has been ‘strong and stable’. In her almost-seven-minute General Election announcement speech, she used the word, “strong” or “stronger”, eight times.⁴³ Three of those times, it was accompanied by the word, “stable”, while the remaining times saw it partnered with words like, “leadership”, “conviction”, and “successful”.⁴⁴ The Prime Minister’s discourse was identity-producing, establishing both herself and her government as capable, dependable leaders who could navigate the UK through the tumultuous, unknown waters of Brexit. The fact that these words were announcing her decision to call a snap election in the following months only served to communicate her confidence and certainty that her government was going to, “make a success of Brexit”.⁴⁵ The people voted for Brexit in a referendum, and now they would be given the opportunity to confirm their referendum results by supporting her Conservative government in a parliamentary election. It was a calculated risk. However, in her statement, she was constructing Brexit to be inevitable but manageable, mandated by the British people, and, most importantly, full of opportunity. In one sentence, she positioned Brexit as the opportunity to take back sovereign control, appealing to a sense of British patriotism: “we will regain control of our own money, our own laws, and our own borders, and we will be free to strike trade deals with old friends and new partners around the world.”⁴⁶ It is significant to note that there is a public lack of clarity on how the UK will regain all that May referenced; the tension and disagreements that are aired in the press reveal the muddled ongoing negotiations between London and Brussels, including the recent policy conflict on the future type of border

⁴³ T. May, General Election Announcement Statement, 18 April 2017, retrieved from, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39630009>

⁴⁴ May, General Election Announcement Statement, 18 April 2017

⁴⁵ May, General Election Announcement Statement, 18 April 2017

⁴⁶ May, 18 April 2017

between Northern Ireland (UK) and the Republic of Ireland (EU), as well as the consuming talks concerning the Customs Union and Single Market.⁴⁷

In comparison, May's Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, has been rather inconsistent with his public messaging concerning Brexit. Almost immediately following the referendum, he published an article in the Telegraph that was rife with platitudes and opinions on Brexit.⁴⁸ Calling it, "the most extraordinary political event of our lifetime", Johnson positioned Brexit as historic, monumental, grueling, passionate, and confusing.⁴⁹ He argued that Brexit was being wildly misconstrued domestically and internationally, and that its potential opportunities were being ignored. He zeroed in on the economy, assuring people that it was, "in good hands", and that it would continue to grow.⁵⁰ With words like, "proud" and "positive, "achieve" and "golden opportunities", Johnson constructed ideas of Brexit as an ultimately positive phenomenon, despite existing apprehensions.⁵¹ In this way, his opinion editorial was similar to May's later election statement, in that both government officials were emphatically positioning Brexit as full of opportunities and the Government as stable and committed to carrying the UK through to full sovereign control. Johnson also appealed to democracy and the role of the British people, predicting that, "the verdict of history will be that the British people got it right."⁵² This discourse, as used by Johnson, directly supports Adler-Nissen et al.'s argument that Brexit "promises a particular future and it constructs a past."⁵³

⁴⁷ J. Hopkin, "Theresa May's Impossible Vision for Brexit", *Foreign Affairs* (12 March 2018), retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-kingdom/2018-03-12/theresa-mays-impossible-vision-brexit>

⁴⁸ B. Johnson, "I cannot stress too much that Britain is part of Europe – and always will be", *The Telegraph* (26 June 2016), retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/26/i-cannot-stress-too-much-that-britain-is-part-of-europe--and-alw/>

⁴⁹ Johnson, 26 June 2016

⁵⁰ Johnson, 26 June 2016

⁵¹ Johnson, 26 June 2016

⁵² Johnson, 26 June 2016

⁵³ Adler-Nissen et al., 2007

While May and Johnson both targeted messages of stability, future opportunity, and dependability, evidence of the Government's struggle to maintain a consistent storyline on public platforms is revealed in conflicting statements from Amber Rudd, Home Secretary, and David Davis, Brexit Secretary, in late 2017. While lacking in details, Davis posited that Brexit could occur with no deal, while Rudd put forth that having no deal was "unthinkable".⁵⁴ Liam Fox, International Trade Secretary and a member of the UK Brexit negotiations team, has also publically weighed in on the possibility of 'no deal', insisting that it is no bluff, and, that while not preferable, it was not out of the question.⁵⁵ This discourse, even if off-the-cuff and unplanned, is significant in the public domain for the simple reasons that Brexit is an unknown and that the speakers are authoritative due to their role in social hierarchy (this idea is discussed further in Chapter 3). May can emphatically assert that her government is strong, stable, and capable of carrying the UK through the Brexit process, but if her Cabinet is accidentally or unintentionally contradicting itself in public, it weakens the trust May's discourse demands. In the case of Davis, Rudd, and Fox's word choice regarding the EU negotiations, it could have ripple repercussions on other future options for UK relationships because other foreign states are observing the discussions.⁵⁶

As Brexit is a malleable concept, Britain's leaders are seeking to construct their Brexit narrative around an image of political and economic stability and strength, building on historic exceptionalism and the confidence that the British people made the right decision, thanks to the exercise of democratic rights. This is challenging, as they encounter serious obstacles with the

⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Amber Rudd calls Brexit without a deal 'unthinkable'", *BBC News* (17 October 2017), retrieved from www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-41655195.

⁵⁵ P. Walker, "Britain not bluffing on no-deal Brexit, says Liam Fox", *The Guardian* (22 October 2017), retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/oct/22/britain-not-bluffing-on-no-deal-brexit-says-liam-fox>

⁵⁶ C. Morris, "Brexit: what would 'no deal' look like?", *BBC News* (14 October 2017), retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39294904>

tense Brussels-London negotiations that impact the strength of their message. For example, despite May championing, “the decision of the British people”, during a presentation to the EU on the UK’s exit strategy, EU President Donald Tusk responded shortly afterwards, almost contradicting May’s position that the UK and the EU have a shared interest in the negotiations by arguing that the UK’s proposal, “limit[s] the depth of such a future partnership”.⁵⁷ In addition, ensuring a consistent message is no easy feat in a world with social media, real-time news updates, and instant diplomatic initiatives. The complexity of the EU exit process, made challenging because no state has ever attempted it, is compounded by the fact that the British government is struggling to maintain an unswerving narrative. For the international community, the malleability of Brexit and its potential impacts on the EU offers opportunities for new or alternative agreements and treaties – or further fodder to undermine the legitimacy of the EU and that type of regional supranational organization in pursuit of protectionist ideals. Brexit, therefore, is a seismic event not only for the UK and the EU but also for the rest of the global village – the tectonic shifts could be felt everywhere, depending on how Brexit is acted out.

Chapter 2 - Defining the Relationship: Canada & the UK

It is, perhaps, an oversimplification to say that Canada and the UK share a historic partnership. This historic partnership is accompanied by centuries of nuanced interactions that helped to build the Canada and the bilateral relationship that exists today. The UK’s relation to Canada has evolved from exploration of new territory and establishment of a new British colony for the British Empire to the birth of a confederate Dominion in 1867 and Canada’s eventual full sovereignty in the twentieth century. In this chapter, I will explore the significance of the UK’s

⁵⁷ Hopkin, 2018

relationship with Canada and establish why Canada uniquely positioned to diplomatically manoeuvre Brexit discussions. To do so, I will first present the commonalities between the two sovereign states, investigating the bilateral and multilateral interests and ties that serve to bind the UK and Canada together. I will then justify the worth of investigating Canada's diplomatic positioning on Brexit.

A Commonwealth of Nations

Sitting on the veranda of Ottawa's Rideau Hall in 1959, Queen Elizabeth II addressed her Canadian subjects on the anniversary of Canada's Confederation. "Dominion Day," she said, "commemorates the birth of Canada as a nation and the first independent country within the Empire. It also," she continued, "marks the beginning of that free association of states, which is now known as the Commonwealth of Nations."⁵⁸ This 1959 tour was to be the second of her twenty-two official tours of Canada as Queen, and, at forty-five days, the longest royal tour in Canadian history.⁵⁹ It was also during this tour that she visited the United States in her capacity as Queen of Canada, rather than Queen of the United Kingdom; the Diefenbaker government at the time was emphatic that the world view her as Canada's Head of State.⁶⁰

These 1959 anecdotal snapshots provide a glimpse of Canada's relationship to Britain in the mid-twentieth century, and are significant because they illustrate the light tension caused by states sharing a sovereign but co-existing as post-imperial, sovereign states. Canada, which became a Dominion in 1867 but gained full sovereignty in 1931 through the Statute of Westminster, shares a Crown and a colonial history with Britain but has had to vigorously

⁵⁸ Queen Elizabeth II, 1959 Dominion Day Message, *CBC Digital Archives* (1 July 1959), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1595552670>

⁵⁹ Government of Canada, "Past Royal Tours", (12 September 2017), retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/past-royal-tours.html>; C. Willetts, "The 1959 Tour of the Queen", *Canadian Royal Heritage Trust* (2018), retrieved from <http://crht.ca/the-1959-canadian-tour-of-the-queen/>; P. Buckner, "The Last Great Royal Tour: Queen Elizabeth's 1959 Tour to Canada", in *Canada and the End of an Empire*, ed. P. Buckner (UBC Press, 2000)

⁶⁰ Buckner, 69

remind the world of its independence from the Empire and its choice to remain a parliamentary democracy.⁶¹ Canadian citizenship has only been separate from British citizenship since 1946 with the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act, and the Canadian Constitution remained under the purview of the British Parliament until 1982, with the signing of the Canada Act.⁶² Much of Canadian government structure today owes its foundation to the British Westminster parliamentary system, as seen in the mirrored Upper and Lower Chambers of Parliament and the role of the sovereign.⁶³ As highlighted by Queen Elizabeth II, Canada is also a member of the Commonwealth, “one of the world’s oldest political association of states”.⁶⁴ While all fifty-three Commonwealth members have an equal voice within the political association, Canada holds a special place in British imperial history because it became the first colony to peaceably gain independence from the British Empire upon the first Dominion Day in 1867 through the British North America Act.⁶⁵ Following Australia, Canada has the second highest GDP per capita within the Commonwealth, and the third largest economy after the UK and India.⁶⁶

The Remaining Ties That Bind

Canada’s relationship with Britain is also marked by their mutual, informal association with the, “Anglosphere”, an idea that, “dates back to the collapse of the British Empire”, and refers to countries sharing a mutual Anglo-Saxon culture: Canada, the UK, the United States,

⁶¹ Buckner, 69; D.E. Smith, "Empire, Crown and Canadian Federalism", *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne De Science Politique* 24, no. 3 (1991): 451-73

⁶² Citizenship and Immigration Canada, “Forging Our Own Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration 1900 – 1977”, *Government of Canada* (1 July 2006), retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20110610200013/http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/legacy/chap-5.asp>; *Canada Act, Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* 1982, retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/11>

⁶³ G. Schmitz, “The Opposition in a Parliamentary System”, *Library of Parliament* (1988), retrieved from <https://lop.parl.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/bp47-e.htm>

⁶⁴ Commonwealth Secretariat, “Our History”, *The Commonwealth* (2018), retrieved from <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-history>

⁶⁵ *British North America Act, Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* 1867, c. 3, retrieved from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/30-31/3/enacted>

⁶⁶ The World Bank, *World Bank Open Data* (2018), retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/>

Australia, and New Zealand.⁶⁷ Identity is integral to the Anglosphere idea, and according to Srdjan Vucetic, can be conceptualized as a discourse on, “who we [the Anglo states] are”.⁶⁸ The Anglosphere, while unofficial and imagined, is making a resurgence in discourse surrounding Brexit. It is being positioned as one trade alliance option for the UK to pursue following Brexit, as seen in statements from pro-Anglosphere British government officials David Davis and Boris Johnson; Ben Wellings and Helen Baxdale go as far as to label May’s Cabinet as an, “Anglosphere dream team”.⁶⁹ The Anglosphere idea is another brick that paves the path between Canada and the UK, and provides an additional foundational layer to their bilateral relationship. While it has been called a, “work of political science fiction”, the Anglosphere’s renewed presence in discourse illustrates the importance of cultural connections and historic commonalities, including language and political system, to talks about a Brexit future.⁷⁰ Although the Government of Canada has not officially endorsed formalizing the Anglosphere, it will be able to use the links embodied in the concept to construct a narrative on Brexit that benefits Canada. This will be explored further in Chapter 3.

Canada and the UK are also allies within contemporary multilateral organizations, promoting shared values, priorities, and interests. From the United Nations to the Group of 7 (G7) to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), among others, Canada and the UK have been actively allied since multilateralism took off with great force following the Second World

⁶⁷ E. Campanella and M. Dassù, “A Future of the English-Speaking Peoples”, *Foreign Affairs* (21 February 2017), retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-02-21/future-english-speaking-peoples>

⁶⁸ S. Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford University Press, 2011): 9

⁶⁹ H. Baxendale and B. Wellings, “Anglosphere cooperation given a surprise boost after the Brexit vote”, *London School of Economics Blog* (26 July 2016), retrieved from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/Brexit/2016/07/26/after-the-brexit-vote-a-formalised-anglosphere-alliance-remains-unlikely/>

⁷⁰ Baxendale and Wellings, 2016

War.⁷¹ Security, defence, and economic interests are historically intertwined between the two states. Economically, Canada is the top Commonwealth trade partner for the UK, and the UK is Canada's third largest trading partner.⁷²

“Brexit’s first victim”: Canada’s Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

The UK's exit from the EU is still being constructed, defined, and negotiated, but it is fairly clear already that it will not have access to existing free trade agreements freely entered into by the EU with external states.⁷³ Canada's CETA is one such agreement, and thus, for Canada, the most immediate, obvious impact of Brexit concerns economics and trade.⁷⁴ For seven years, Canada had been negotiating with the EU to create, ratify, and implement CETA, an agreement born out of a 2007 joint study between Canada and the EU where they sought, “to examine and assess the costs and benefits of a closer economic partnership”.⁷⁵ Termed “Brexit’s first victim”, CETA is an ambitious, 1,598-page push for free trade of goods and services between the EU and Canada; it is currently being ratified by the EU member-states in their national parliaments, but came into force provisionally on September 21, 2017.⁷⁶ As a member of the EU, the UK had been part of the lengthy trade negotiations. The UK is a market in which Canada is deeply interested; however, with Brexit, CETA will no longer open those trade borders

⁷¹ Government of Canada, “Canada-United Kingdom Political Relations” (23 June 2016), retrieved from http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/political-politiques.aspx?lang=eng

⁷² D. Workman, “United Kingdom’s Top Trading Partners”, *World’s Top Exports* (14 January 2018), retrieved from <http://www.worldstopexports.com/united-kingdoms-top-import-partners/>

⁷³ D. Webb and L. Booth, “Brexit: Trade Aspects”, *House of Commons Briefing Paper* 7694 (9 October 2017)

⁷⁴ European Commission, “EU-Canada: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement”, *Europa.eu* (11 October 2017), retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ceta/>

⁷⁵ Anonymous, “The EU and Canada sign historic CETA trade treaty”, *Euronews* (30 October 2016), retrieved from <http://www.euronews.com/2016/10/30/the-european-union-and-canada-sign-the-landmark-ceta-trade-pact-after-seven-years-of-negotiations>; European Commission, “EU-Canada: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement”, *Europa.eu* (11 October 2017), retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ceta/>

⁷⁶ Anonymous, “Canada-EU trade: Brexit’s first victim.” *The Globe and Mail* (6 July 2016); P. Blekinsop, “Canada, EU launch free trade agreement while Britain eyes its own deal”, *Financial Post* (20 September 2017), retrieved from <http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/canada-eu-launch-free-trade-agreement-while-britain-eyes-its-own-deal>; Government of Canada and the European Commission, *Assessing the Costs and Benefits of a Closer EU-Canada Economic Partnership* (Canada & the EU: 2007), retrieved from http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/october/tradoc_141032.pdf

as expected. Now, Brexit is forcing Canada and the UK to consider what type of deal might be struck between a post-EU UK and Canada.

CETA is significant not only for its historic characteristic as Canada's most ambitious trade agreement to date, but also because it is considered the most advanced and ambitious trade agreement for the supranational EU as well.⁷⁷ "The provisional application of CETA will benefit consumers and provide opportunities for British businesses with 98 per cent of all Canadian tariff lines being eliminated," International Trade Secretary Liam Fox informed the British Parliament in September 2017, fifteen months following the Brexit referendum.⁷⁸ He prefaced these tariff details with, "Canada is one of the world's most developed economies and a significant trading partner for the UK"; in other words, the British government recognized the significance of CETA, its benefits, and the need to stay partnered in free trade with Canada one way or another.⁷⁹ Despite this, the fact remains that there is uncertainty ahead in terms of a free trade agreement between Canada and the UK, as, "terms and conditions of trade may have to be redefined", and certainly will not be as immediate as CETA would have been.⁸⁰

Canadian Reverberations

The intent of this chapter has been to illustrate the ties that bind Canada and the UK together. Canada, as a significant Commonwealth player, a member of the unofficial

⁷⁷ Global Affairs Canada, "Trade Negotiations and Agreements", *Government of Canada* (10 June 2016), retrieved from http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/eu-ue/policies-politiques/trade_agreements-accords_commerciaux.aspx?lang=eng; The European Commission, "CETA – an EU free trade deal fit for the 21st century", *Europa.ca* (5 July 2016), retrieved from <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1525>

⁷⁸ J. Watts, "CETA: EU-Canada trade deal to kick in next week amid claims it could increase inequality", *The Independent* (14 September 2017), retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-canada-trade-deal-ceta-uk-european-union-transatlantic-inequality-a7946221.html>

⁷⁹ Watts, "CETA"

⁸⁰ Business Development Bank of Canada, "Brexit: What will the impact be on Canada's economy?" *Monthly Economic Newsletter* (2016), retrieved from <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/publications/monthly-economic-letter/pages/brexit-what-will-the-impact-be-on-canadas-economy.aspx>; J. McGregor, "A Hard Brexit creates uncertainty for Canada on what's next for trade", *CBC News* (29 March 2017), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/brexit-canada-impact-article-50-1.4043926>

Anglosphere, and an ally to the UK in numerous multilateral organizations and agreements, is well-positioned to approach Brexit with strong cards and a confident diplomatic strategy.

Building on the firm historical foundation is the importance of trade to both the UK and Canada, and the fact that CETA will soon no longer apply in its current iteration to the UK. This will likely have a significant impact on both countries, and features strongly in Canada's diplomatic efforts. The positive historic ties between Canada and the UK provides a solid foundation on which diplomatic relations can be conducted and joint initiatives be proposed. The intertwined nature of their respective heritages allows for similar interests and priorities, which makes for a remarkable stage on which the Brexit drama can be played, and Canada emerges as a principal case-study of which to assess foreign diplomatic efforts concerning Brexit.

Chapter 3 – Constructing Diplomacy

Leading up to the Brexit referendum, the Canadian government's position was clear: the UK should remain a part of the EU. "I've made no bones about the fact that I always believed that we are stronger together", Prime Minister Trudeau emphasized in a press conference on the eve of the vote, pointing out that Canada required the UK's support to move the CETA forward, as CETA was intended for the EU28.⁸¹ With the results of the referendum, however, Canada had a curveball to hit. CETA was negotiated by Canada and the EU-28, meaning the terms included the UK; with the Brexit vote, Canada must now tread carefully between moving forward on CETA and considering its impending trade position with the UK post-Brexit. It is this diplomatic curveball that I intend to analyze in the following section. I will use a constructivist framework, as constructivism, "emphasizes the social and relational construction of what states are and what

⁸¹ M. Blanchfield, "Trudeau makes 'no bones' about his wish for Britain to remain in EU on eve of referendum", *CBC News* (22 June 2016), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/brexit-trudeau-remain-vote-1.3647807>

they want”, and diplomacy is one such relational tool used by states to achieve their interests.⁸² Therefore, I will begin by defining diplomacy so as to provide a background for Canada’s strategies, and highlight two areas in which it has evolved in the 20th and 21st centuries: technology and multilateralism. I will then explore the actions and words of the Trudeau government following the referendum, looking at the nature of the Canadian diplomatic initiatives concerning Brexit, including the actors involved and how initiatives are conducted. Building on these results, I will draw out the diplomatic priorities and highlight the diplomatic techniques used by Canada to produce identities and legitimize behaviours. By the end of this section, I will have established Canada’s diplomatic Brexit positioning and be well-situated to investigate the way in which Brexit and foreign diplomacy inform and construct one another in the following chapter.

Modern Diplomacy

Within the context of this paper, diplomacy is defined as, “the conduct of relationships, using peaceful means, by and among international actors, at least one of whom is usually governmental”.⁸³ Much of the current literature on diplomacy is focused on its evolving nature as caused by the perfect mix of technological development, globalization, and rise of non-governmental organizations.⁸⁴ According to the editors of *The Oxford Handbook on Modern Diplomacy*, diplomacy is seeing changes in five areas: the “numbers and types of actors”, “domain and scope”, “levels at which diplomatic engagement and activity take place”, “apparatus and machinery”, and “modes, types, and techniques of diplomacy”.⁸⁵ To prepare for

⁸² Hurd, 299

⁸³ A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur, “Introduction: The Challenges of 21st-Century Diplomacy”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 2

⁸⁴ Cooper et al.; P. Seib, *Real-Time Diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); D. Copeland, “Digital Technology”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A.F. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

⁸⁵ Cooper et al., 6

examining Canada's diplomatic efforts surrounding Brexit, I will first present the broad changes of diplomacy over the last few decades in order to contextualize the Canadian government's actions and actors. For the purpose of this paper, I will explore two main areas that are relevant to Canada's current endeavours: technology (digital diplomacy) and multilateralism.

The proliferation of technology has profoundly changed the way states can and do undertake diplomacy in two major ways. First, written communication can happen in real time, with someone from Ottawa reading breaking news in Tokyo. Not only is a time lag removed from the equation, but so is any real ability to control or monitor the information being shared. Unfiltered information is readily available for consumption.⁸⁶ This increase in availability of communications technology tools and platforms has resulted in more complex and visible diplomacy, manifesting on the world stage in a very public way.⁸⁷ The rise in so-called, "fake news" is one such consequence of the communications revolution, while the ability to respond immediately to international crises is an opposing benefit.⁸⁸ Targeted messages are now harder to control but easier to share.

A weighty example of this, "digital diplomacy revolution", is the explosion of social media accounts within the government sphere.⁸⁹ Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, like his Cabinet Ministers, has a Twitter feed, Instagram account, and Facebook page easily found online, all facilitating his communication with members of the Canadian and global public at the click of a mouse. While Roland Paris argued in 2013 that the Canadian civil service is significantly behind

⁸⁶ O.S. Adesina, "Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy", *Cogent Social Sciences* 3 (2017): 3

⁸⁷ J. Heine, "From Club to Network Diplomacy", in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); A. Cooper, "The Changing Nature of Diplomacy", in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); G. Mills, "Trade and Investment Promotion", in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

⁸⁸ Adesina

⁸⁹ R. Paris, "The Digital Diplomacy Revolution", *Open Canada* (19 June 2013), retrieved from <https://www.opencanada.org/features/the-digital-diplomacy-revolution/>

when it comes to digital diplomacy based on the number of active social media accounts, the ones that do exist are using the platforms to communicate Canadian government priorities, including CETA.⁹⁰ For example, on September 21, 2017, the Deputy High Commissioner of Canada to the UK, posted a BBC interview video to the High Commission's Facebook page in which she spoke about, "why Canada's progressive trade agreement with the EU is a reason to celebrate #CETA".⁹¹ Not only did this video show up on the newsfeeds of the 84,000 people who follow the page, but the use of the hashtag, #CETA, connected those who were interested in both the video and other information posted on the social media platform.⁹² This use of Facebook by the High Commission illustrates the increasingly important field of, "public diplomacy", a facet of international relationship-building that involves daily communications, strategic communications, and development of lasting foreign relationships through experiences like academic exchanges and conferences.⁹³

The rapid evolution of communications technology has also been instrumental in the way states have wielded soft power and productive power in a globalized community. Using Joseph Nye's famous definition, soft power is defined in this paper as, "[how] one country gets other countries to want what it wants".⁹⁴ In other words, soft power is, "the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own."⁹⁵ Related to soft power is productive power, which is, "the constitution of all social subjects with various social powers through systems of knowledge and discursive

⁹⁰ Paris (2013)

⁹¹ High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom Facebook page, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/CanadaintheUK/videos/2070816503139562/>

⁹² High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom Facebook page, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/CanadaintheUK/videos/2070816503139562/>

⁹³ J. Nye, "Hard, Soft, and Smart Power", in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 570-571

⁹⁴ Nye, "Soft Power", *Foreign Policy* 80 (Fall 1990): 166

⁹⁵ Nye, "Soft Power", 168

practices of broad and general social scope.”⁹⁶ It is also relevant to note in the context of diplomacy that, “productive power concerns discourse,⁹⁷ the social processes and the systems of knowledge through which meaning is produced, fixed, lived, experienced, and transformed.”⁹⁸

The ability of soft power, productive power, and their respective normative authority to affect change or influence depends strongly upon credibility and authority of the wielder.⁹⁹ Credibility is linked not only with believability – that is, a lack of manipulation – but also legitimacy. Legitimacy is an important concept for all states because it is, “a prerequisite of successful political government”, connecting those who govern with those who are governed.¹⁰⁰ A supranational organization like the EU might have mixed sources of legitimacy, as evidenced by the extensive discussions ranging from democratic institutions to decision-making governance to cultural cohesion, but they all whittle down to the fundamental relationship between the “ruler and the ruled”.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, using Janet Mather’s definition, for a state or an organization to have legitimacy means it has: a normative dimension; “demonstrable popular consent”; the ability to “enable its citizens to identify with it”; authority; success in meeting popular expectations; and the “idea that one’s government [has] the right to rule.”¹⁰²

Understanding this definition of legitimacy is important because with the rapid development of communications technology and the plethora of platforms and tools generally available for digital diplomacy, governments and their representatives have not only new ways to

⁹⁶ M. Barnett and R. Duvall, “Power in International Politics”, *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (Winter, 2005): 55

⁹⁷ Note: “discourse” in this context refers to the quotidian, not communication. See Barnett and Duvall for further information.

⁹⁸ Barnett and Duvall, 55

⁹⁹ T.C. Warren, “Not by the Sword Alone: Soft Power, Mass Media, and the Production of State Sovereignty”, *International Organization* 68 (Winter 2014): 112; Barnett and Duvall, 56

¹⁰⁰ J. Mather, *Legitimizing the European Union: Aspirations, Inputs and Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 10

¹⁰¹ Mather, 11-13; Bartolini, 396; E.G. Heidbreder, “Governance in the European Union: A Policy Analysis of the Attempts to Raise Legitimacy through Civil Society Participation”, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 17, no. 4 (August 8, 2015)

¹⁰² Mather, 12

communicate their legitimacy and credibility to the public but also new reasons to do so; it comes back to message control and the need to pre-empt or respond to attacks on their credibility. With an event like Brexit, states can use their diplomatic tools to produce a discourse that either legitimates or de-legitimizes the meaning of Brexit. Diplomacy is, in some instances, a “struggle for legitimacy”, and technological tools at the disposal of diplomats are both concrete methods to communicate with the public and also new frontiers to manage and control.¹⁰³

For example, a state government might have challenges with asserting its authority with the advent of instant communication, such as seen with the Arab Spring in 2011; likewise, it may have greater success in meeting popular expectations, if those expectations include seeing a Prime Minister tweet her condolences to a tragic event within short hours of the occurrence.¹⁰⁴ In this way, communications technology is expanding the capacity of the international system to network, promote, and respond.¹⁰⁵ “Complexity management”, a phrase used by Jorge Heine in his analysis of the transition from club to network diplomacy, illustrates the, “increased democratization”, facilitated by contemporary communications technology, but a significant component of this complexity is the ability to maintain credibility and legitimacy as a cohesive government with a consistent message in the face of massive media machinery.¹⁰⁶ This was evidenced in the Brexit campaigns, which capitalized on technological platforms.

The pace of information in current times is coupled with the second technological change significantly impacting the diplomatic capabilities of states: transportation technology. The ability of world leaders to board a plane and fly halfway around the world in hours, rather than having to undertake month-long diplomatic visits, is revolutionary. With this fundamental

¹⁰³ Cooper, 47

¹⁰⁴ M.M. Adi, *The usage of social media in the Arab Spring: the potential of media to change political landscapes throughout the Middle East and Africa* (Berlin: Lit, 2014)

¹⁰⁵ Adesina, 3

¹⁰⁶ Heine, “From Club to Network Diplomacy”, 62-63

change comes the evolving role of diplomatic envoys living in foreign states for a posting. Diplomats are no longer undertaking, “labour in exile”, isolated from quick visits from the government at home.¹⁰⁷ The combination of fast-traveling ideas and knowledge with fast-traveling heads of state and government has begun to decrease the autonomy of ambassadors and high commissioners.¹⁰⁸ Andrew Cooper posits that, “the boundaries of participation...and the very definition of diplomats”, has changed, largely as a result of globalization and technological evolution.¹⁰⁹ A Foreign Minister can simply video-call her High Commissioner in the UK to provide instantaneous instructions concerning Brexit, rather than leaving the High Commissioner in a position to navigate the situation on her own, at least in the first few weeks or months. In this way, digital diplomacy has transformed conventional diplomacy because it now operates in real time on two levels: through the sites of a state’s foreign ministry and through the sites of a state’s embassies around the world.¹¹⁰ This is not to say this change in definition of diplomatic roles is a negative alteration. Rather, it highlights the evolution of control in terms of both strategy and messaging, and at the same time, reinforces the significance of social authority and credibility.¹¹¹

One of the most apparent changes of twentieth century diplomatic relations has been the appearance of multilateral diplomacy, thanks in part to the birth of the United Nations and its offshoots.¹¹² In 2001, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan addressed the American Academy of Diplomacy, touching on this evolution when he said, “diplomacy has expanded its remit, moving far beyond bilateral political relations between states into a multilateral, multi-

¹⁰⁷ Heine, “From Club to Network Diplomacy”, 62

¹⁰⁸ N. Bloom, L. Garicano, R. Sadun, and J. Van Reenen, “The Distinct Effects of Information Technology and Communication Technology on Firm Organization”, CEP Discussion Paper No. 927 (2014), retrieved from <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp0927.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Cooper, 36

¹¹⁰ Adesina, 3

¹¹¹ Heine, 63; Cooper, 36

¹¹² Cooper et al., 19

faceted enterprise encompassing almost every realm of human endeavour.”¹¹³ In contrast to bilateral diplomacy, “the basic building block for relations among states”, multilateral diplomacy involves two or more states using diplomatic relationships, “to achieve solutions to supranational problems.”¹¹⁴ Two prime examples of multilateral diplomatic initiatives, which have grown exponentially since the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions, are the Group of 20 (G20) and Group of 7 (G7) summits.¹¹⁵ These summits, in which both Canada and the UK take part and are members, are multilateral conferences dedicated to economic and political collaboration, and the discussion of critical world issues.¹¹⁶ Further illustrating the significance of multilateral diplomacy are the lists of twenty-two multilateral partners, along with eighteen multilateral forums, summits, and organizations, provided on the Government of Canada’s official website. Multilateralism offers Canada platforms through which it can advance multifaceted international priorities in a cooperative and consensus-building manner.¹¹⁷ The importance of multilateral diplomacy is crucial to recognize in the current global climate because of its relative incompatibility with protectionist ideas.

It is worth mentioning one other significant area of multilateral diplomacy: trade. As a topic, trade diplomacy is not a new concept. “International trade diplomacy is as old as trade itself”, writes Diane Tussi.¹¹⁸ Trade is important to modern diplomacy, however, because it has taken on a multilateral character with the advent of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

¹¹³ K. Anan, speech upon receiving the Excellence in Diplomacy award (28 November 2001), retrieved from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2001/sgsm8048.doc.htm>

¹¹⁴ A. Rozental and A. Buenrostro, “Bilateral Diplomacy”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 229; K. Mahbubani, “Multilateral Diplomacy”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A. Cooper, J. Heine, and R. Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 248

¹¹⁵ Mahbubani, “Multilateral Diplomacy”, 251

¹¹⁶ Government of Canada, “Canada and the G20”, (11 July 2017), retrieved from http://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/g20/index.aspx?lang=eng;

¹¹⁷ Government of Canada, “Partnerships and Organizations”, (11 December 2017), retrieved from http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/partnerships_organizations-partenariats_organisations.aspx?lang=eng&menu_id=132

¹¹⁸ D. Tussie, 625

(GATT) in 1947, followed by its 1995 successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the plethora of multilateral free trade agreements under negotiation and in force.¹¹⁹ The recently ratified CETA, the tenuous North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the re-named Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) are examples of multilateral free trade endeavours in which Canada is participating.¹²⁰ Bilateral free trade agreements, such as the ones in force that Canada has with Israel, Ukraine, and Honduras, among others, and the ones in exploratory discussions or negotiation, including Singapore, Turkey, and China, remain essential to states, but are now complemented by the larger multilateral agreements.¹²¹ Diplomatic efforts, therefore, are not simply focused on bilateral opportunities, but also the wider multilateral opportunities like CETA and NAFTA.

This twentieth century shift towards multilateral diplomacy, and within that, multilateral trade, is helpful to contextualizing Canada's diplomatic efforts concerning Brexit because while Canada and Britain have a strong bilateral relationship, they are also partners in multilateral forums and organizations and share collective international interests. Multilateralism is also a critical opponent to protectionism.¹²² As I begin to analyze Canada's diplomatic actions around Brexit, both bilateral and multilateral engagements will be important to consider because of the nature of Anglo-Canadian history.

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¹¹⁹ World Trade Organization, "Overview" (2018), retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/wto_dg_stat_e.htm

¹²⁰ Global Affairs Canada, "Trade and Investment Agreements" (17 November 2017), retrieved from https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/index.aspx?lang=eng&menu_id=285

¹²¹ Global Affairs Canada, "Trade and Investment Agreements"

¹²² R.E.N. Harte, "Multilateralism in international trade: WTO achievements and challenges", European Parliament briefing (12 July 2017)

The day following the Brexit referendum, the Prime Minister's Office released a statement addressing the results, affirming that, "the people of the UK have chosen to leave the EU", emphasizing a strong bilateral partnership, and maintaining that Canada would, "weather global market uncertainty", successfully.¹²³ The Prime Minister shared this statement, posted to his official website, very early in the morning on Twitter, where it garnered numerous views, reactions, and retweets.¹²⁴ This was the first Brexit-related action taken by a member of the Canadian government following the referendum, and is a suitable preview of the pattern that emerges from the Canadian government in the weeks and months to follow.

Canadian Diplomatic Efforts

There is no argument now that public diplomacy, along with both soft and productive power influence through the use of communications and transportation technology, is a vital component of international diplomacy. Therefore, it bears investigating the Canadian government's use of technology when it comes to Brexit. This use ranges from official government websites to social media pages and everything in between. The evidence will show that the Government of Canada's Brexit messaging appears to be tightly controlled with little space for contradicting or dissenting views from officials despite a great capacity for them. Canada uses its public narratives to structure identities and constrain the meaning of appropriate behaviour, both of itself and in contrast to its own positions. "Discursive processes and practices," Burnett and Duvall note, "produce social identities and capacities as they give meaning to them."¹²⁵ As I evaluate the discourses emerging from Canadian officials, it is critical to be aware of the importance of not just their words but also their positions; what one *says*

¹²³ Prime Minister of Canada, Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada regarding the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union (24 June 2016), retrieved from <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/06/24/statement-prime-minister-canada-regarding-referendum-united-kingdoms-membership>

¹²⁴ J. Trudeau, Twitter Post. 24 June 2016, 6:23 AM <https://twitter.com/JustinTrudeau/status/746332820092530688>

¹²⁵ Burnett and Duvall, 56

matters, but also of great weight is from where one speaks – the social hierarchy lends authority to messaging.¹²⁶

Government Statements

First, an important observation to note is that the Government of Canada stayed relatively silent following the Brexit referendum. By relatively, I mean that given the ease with which a political figure or diplomat could publicly comment to a wide audience, they said remarkably little. In fact, none of the Prime Minister's Cabinet, including his Foreign Minister and Minister of International Trade, offered statements on the referendum results; the only official statement to appear was that from the Prime Minister.¹²⁷ The Canadian High Commission to the UK's Facebook page, a heavy-hitting tool of Canadian public diplomacy with access to a large audience, shared the Prime Minister's official statement but offered no equivalent post from the High Commissioner; its Twitter feed also remained silent.¹²⁸ The High Commissioner at the time, Gordon Campbell, did not possess his own social media pages. Canadian Opposition Members of Parliament provided some commentary, including an official statement from the Leader of the Opposition, but from the government side of the House, the few posts shared one common thread: the Prime Minister's brief formal statement.¹²⁹

The people of the UK have chosen to leave the EU.

The UK and the EU are important strategic partners for Canada with whom we enjoy deep historical ties and common values. We will continue to build relations with both parties as they forge a new relationship.

¹²⁶ A. Leander, "Thinking Tools", in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*, eds. A. Klotz and D. Prakash (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008):15

¹²⁷ S. Dion, Archived Twitter feed, retrieved from http://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/dion_twitter_archive_archive_twitter_dion-1.aspx?lang=eng

¹²⁸ High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom Facebook page, retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/CanadaintheUK/videos/2070816503139562/>; High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom Twitter, @CanadianUK, retrieved from <https://twitter.com/CanadianUK>

¹²⁹ R. Maloney, "Jason Kenney Tweets Brexit Voters Chose 'Hope Over Fear,' Slams Trudeau", *The Huffington Post Canada* (24 June 2016), retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/06/24/jason-kenney-brexit-eu-referendum-trudeau_n_10654042.html

Canada's connections to our partners around the world are among its greatest assets, and these relationships contribute greatly to the prosperity of all Canadians.

Canada has tremendous economic fundamentals that we are strengthening with key investments in infrastructure and measures to grow our middle class. We are well positioned to weather global market uncertainty as we have done in the past.

Prime Minister David Cameron indicated today that he will resign by the fall. On behalf of all Canadians, I would like to thank him for being such a close ally and good friend to our country. We wish him well.¹³⁰

This statement from Trudeau is a key piece of Canada's diplomatic efforts on Brexit. While hardly a unique action – many world leaders, including President Obama, also released statements on the morning of June 24th – it does several things for Canada and, when combined with the relative media silence from other diplomatic officials, reveals an interesting observation about Canadian diplomacy. First, it immediately affirms the validity of democratic referendums, something Canada cannot afford to challenge due to its own history with referendums. Second, it positions Canada to straddle the middle in the EU-UK tension, an understandable move because of CETA interests but also a curious one because of public comments made by Canadian government officials in the days leading up to the referendum.¹³¹ Third, it makes economic stability a priority by the simple fact that it gets its own paragraph and there is not much else said in the statement other than platitudes.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the fact that it is the key piece of Canadian engagement following the referendum reveals that Canadian social media diplomacy is either very tightly controlled or relatively non-existent, assuming that we accept the premise that Canada is interested in the impact of Brexit. Paris' observation¹³² that Canada was behind,

¹³⁰ Prime Minister of Canada, Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada regarding the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union (24 June 2016)

¹³¹ Blanchfield (22 June 2016)

¹³² Paris (2013)

comparatively speaking, with government social media activity, likely has some relevance here, but there has been an observable increase, even if one just considers the difference between the online presence of Gordon Campbell and Janice Charette. This lends more credibility towards a tightly controlled message. With that in mind, because this is the statement that is repeated through other government online accounts, democracy, removal of bias, and all that accompanies economics and financial stability become the primary Brexit messages of the Government of Canada in the days and months following the referendum.

The next official statement came shortly afterwards. Two weeks following the referendum, Chrystia Freeland, at the time Minister of International Trade for Canada, issued a joint statement with Cecilia Malmström, the European Union's Commissioner for Trade. Titled, "Decision time for EU-Canada trade", the three-page statement referenced, "turbulent political times", and made sure to mention the, "news from the United Kingdom", in the same sentence.¹³³ The apparent purpose of the joint statement was to affirm and promote CETA, but it is clear that it was meant as a hammer against rising protectionism. This statement is significant for several reasons. First, it is an example of Canada using another diplomatic relationship – that with the EU – to respond to Brexit – without explicitly mentioning Brexit. Second, it illustrates Canada's use of passive-aggressive diplomatic techniques to promote its interests while shaming those with whom it disagrees. Third, it is particularly authoritative because of the place of its authors, a Canadian Minister and a European Union Commissioner, in the social hierarchy of the Canadian and EU governments; the production power of their words is bolstered by the roles they represent in their respective power structures.¹³⁴

¹³³ C. Freeland and C. Malmström, "Decision time for EU-Canada trade", *Government of Canada* (8 July 2016), retrieved from <http://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2016/07/decision-time-for-eu-canada-trade/>

¹³⁴ Leander, 15

Fourth, and most significantly, it is a clear push for formal partnerships through free trade while concurrently being a push against isolationist moves. This is identity construction at work. Language like, “[we are] founded on the same set of values”, “we believe the right choice is for partnership and prosperity, not division and isolation...now is the time to build bridges, not walls”, “[we are] plugged in economically to the world”, “we want our borders to be open to trade and to people”, and, “we share a belief that trading and investing with the rest of the world is the clearest path to prosperity for our workers”, are revealing of this identity production and put constraints on beliefs about appropriate behaviour.¹³⁵ Canada’s Trade Minister, along with her EU counterpart, are producing a dichotomy through language in this discourse: on the one side, there are those states that value free trade and open borders, which are then linked to economic prosperity and enabled by partnership, not isolation, while on the other side, there are those states that must not share those values and not seek the same level of prosperity because they are isolating themselves. This paper does not make a judgement call on if this is a true or false dichotomy, although it is likely false; the point is that Canada, together with the EU, is diplomatically engaging in identity formation through its word choice, constraining through discourse a particularly meaning for the UK’s decision to leave the EU – Brexit. In other words, this statement implicitly invokes Brexit as a decision that chooses division over prosperity, isolation over partnership, walls over bridges.

It would be over a year later that the next official news statement from the Canadian government that referred to Brexit would be posted online. Upon the occasion of Prime Minister May’s visit to Ottawa in September 2017, the Canadian Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) released a typical summary of a bilateral visit from a foreign Head of Government. Within it, the same

¹³⁵ Freeland and Malmström (2016)

key ideas were promoted: CETA, mutual values, historic partnerships, and close cooperation.¹³⁶ What was fresh to this particular Brexit-related statement was the espousal of new bilateral initiatives between the two countries. A hefty list of seven, these initiatives notably included the creation of a Canada-UK public policy forum. This forum, unabashedly referencing the shared style of Westminster parliamentary democracies as a foundational piece to bilateral dialogue, would include the creation of four working groups, one of which would be focused on, “Post-Brexit bilateral relations, including to ensure a seamless transition of agreements such as on trade, air services and nuclear cooperation as the UK exists the European Union.”¹³⁷

This September 2017 news statement, another authoritative text because of the social hierarchy of the role of the Prime Minister, reflects one new interesting idea: Canada and the UK are playing – at least publicly – Brexit as relevant but relatively unimportant as far as the bilateral relationship goes. Since Brexit, Canada has had to juggle the potential disintegration of multiple important multilateral free trade agreements, including NAFTA renegotiations and the hiccoughs with the TPP, so it would be understandable if the government views Brexit and free trade with the UK as a secondary diplomatic priority because CETA will cover the Canada-UK free trade for at least a few years. Regardless, the Canadian government has been keeping its public messaging simplistically clear: the UK has voted to leave the EU and Canada will be there supporting both the EU and the UK as a strong, progressive bilateral partner. Canada thus continues to structure its identity, reinforcing the layer of Commonwealth relations and democratic values.

¹³⁶ Prime Minister of Canada, “Prime Minister of Canada announces closer collaboration with the United Kingdom”, *Prime Minister’s Office* (18 September 2017), retrieved from <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/09/18/prime-minister-canada-announces-closer-collaboration-united-kingdom>

¹³⁷ Prime Minister of Canada (18 September 2017)

Media Interviews

Statements shared on official government websites and social media are one diplomatic channel used by Canada to respond to Brexit. The next channel to be explored is media interviews, a common tool available to both diplomats in the traditional sense – Ambassadors – and contemporary sense – politicians, and a relevant source of material for further discourse analysis on identity formation. One of the earliest post-referendum examples of this channel happened at the end of June 2016 when Freeland spoke with Bloomberg News about how Brexit was spurring Europe to ratify CETA more quickly. “Now is a moment when it’s very important for Europe to show that Europe is able to act, is able to do a great deal with a great partner,” she emphasized.¹³⁸ Within a month, she appeared on BBC Radio 4 and revealed that she had been having discussions with the UK’s Secretary for International Trade regarding Brexit and CETA.¹³⁹ She was interviewing ahead of a bilateral meeting with Liam Fox, the aforementioned Secretary, about which a spokesperson for the new British Department of International Trade again referenced the Commonwealth ties and the importance of working together to promote the, “benefits of globalisation.”¹⁴⁰ Through Freeland’s interviews, given credence because of her authoritative role in the Canadian government, Canada continued to implicitly constrain isolationist actions, distinguishing Canada from that type of division, and separating them from ideas like globalisation, which has been a historically important method for spreading liberal-democratic values.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Bloomberg News, “Chrystia Freeland says Brexit vote boosts momentum for CETA ratification”, *National Post* (28 June 2016), retrieved from <http://business.financialpost.com/news/chrystia-freeland-says-brex-it-vote-boosts-momentum-for-ceta-ratification>

¹³⁹ S. Butler and A. Monaghan, “UK turns to Canada for advice on striking post-Brexit trade deals with EU”, *The Guardian* (15 July 2016), retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jul/15/uk-canada-advice-post-brex-it-trade-deals-eu-ceta>

¹⁴⁰ Butler and Monaghan (15 July 2016)

¹⁴¹ K.C. Schwartzman, “Globalization and Democracy”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998)

Canada's Foreign Minister at the time, Stéphane Dion, announced numerous new diplomatic assignments on July 19, 2016, including that of the High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. Janice Charette, former Clerk of the Privy Council, assumed the post from Gordon Campbell.¹⁴² Campbell, who did not have any social media pages other than those associated with the official High Commission of Canada, utilized media interviews to comment on Brexit. It was in an interview with the Canadian Press in the week leading up to the referendum that he made his views on a Brexit known, warning the UK that to leave the EU would have a, "generational impact on the United Kingdom, Europe and the world's economies."¹⁴³ It could also, he went on to say, "Stall the implementation of the Canada-EU free trade deal and imperil the jobs of thousands of Canadians working in hundreds of British companies."¹⁴⁴ Despite these strong words, Campbell said nothing publicly following the referendum results until he left his role, and the High Commission fell back on sharing the Prime Minister's statement. His next public comments were in July, when, in an interview with CBC, he highlighted that the Brexit results appear to have bolstered CETA talks and inspired the UK to investigate bilateral trade relationships external to the EU, including Canadian possibilities.¹⁴⁵

Janice Charette, who succeeded Campbell in September 2017, took a different tactic with the media and her early comments on Brexit.¹⁴⁶ During her first visit to Northern Ireland in an official capacity in November 2016, she was questioned on Brexit and responded that it was not

¹⁴² Government of Canada, *Diplomatic Appointments* (19 July 2016), retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20160720192141/http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1100789>

¹⁴³ M. Blanchfield, "Gordon Campbell, Canadian High Commissioner, Says Brexit Could Cause 'Generational' Economic Impact", *The Huffington Post Canada* (19 June 2016), retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/06/19/canadian-envoy-warns-brexit-could-cause-generational-economic-impact_n_10559490.html

¹⁴⁴ Blanchfield (19 June 2016)

¹⁴⁵ J.P. Tasker, "Gordon Campbell says Brexit makes Canada-EU deal a priority", *CBC News* (26 July 2016), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/gordon-campbell-brexit-ceta-1.3695709>

¹⁴⁶ P. Waldie, "Canada, U.K. weighing post-Brexit trade ties: Meetings have included discussing a deal that goes beyond Canada-European Union agreement, as well as offers of advice, high commissioner says", *The Globe and Mail* (16 January 2017), retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/docview/1858577836?accountid=14701>

her place to have a point of view on it. “Canada has an interest in the future of the UK, given our ties,” she added, “but we also want to see a successful EU.”¹⁴⁷ In other words, while she was there to understand and learn about the perspective and position of Northern Ireland on Brexit, among other issues, she was not going to comment on it; through the High Commissioner, the neutral nature of Canada was again being promoted. Canada’s interests, she explained, were simply to see “smooth, productive, and constructive,” negotiations between the United Kingdom and the EU.¹⁴⁸ She reiterated this position later on in February 2017, reminding the public audience that because the UK had made its decision to exit the EU, “it’s in Canada’s interest to ensure the breakup goes as smoothly as possible.”¹⁴⁹

Charette’s other media interviews encompassed much of the same narrative. The historic bilateral relationship and trade in a post-Brexit world were a consistent focus, including the repetitive message that the UK has always been a strong proponent of CETA and that Canada was holding preliminary talks with the UK about future trade agreements.¹⁵⁰ “We have a deep and comprehensive trading relationship with the UK”, the High Commissioner told the *Globe and Mail* in January 2017, “and so we’ll want to be working very hard with them [during both the CETA years and in a post-Brexit environment]”.¹⁵¹ In May 2017, she added a layer of detail, revealing that there the Canadian interest in a seamless transition includes maintaining the same “preferential access”, so as to ensure that it is the same the day before Brexit as it is the day

¹⁴⁷ J. Mulgrew, “Top Canadian diplomat in appeal for ‘sensitivity’ over Brexit and border”, *Belfast Telegraph* (26 November 2016), retrieved from <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/top-canadian-diplomat-in-appeal-for-sensitivity-over-brexit-and-border-35245547.html>

¹⁴⁸ Mulgrew (26 November 2016)

¹⁴⁹ N. Ayed, “Top diplomat in U.K. says old allies relying on Canada in new ways in age of Brexit and Trump”, *CBC News* (14 February 2017), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/top-diplomat-in-u-k-says-old-allies-relying-on-canada-in-new-ways-in-age-of-brexit-and-trump-1.3982801>

¹⁵⁰ Waldie (16 January 2017)

¹⁵¹ Waldie (16 January 2017)

after.¹⁵² Overall, she has maintained a balanced approach to Brexit in her public statements with the media, matching the narrative constructed by Canadian politicians.¹⁵³

Charette's narrative in her media interviews helps to elucidate the social construction of identities in Brexit from a Canadian perspective. Canada is structured as a democratic Commonwealth state open to beneficial relationships with both the UK and the EU, supportive of all efforts to maintain open borders and trade through the affirmation of common values. Canada is also reaffirmed as respectful of democratic process, electing to support the Brexit negotiations because they were the choice of the British people. By establishing itself with that identity, Canada thus implicitly sets up those states that do not support Brexit negotiations as unsupportive of democratic process – even if that appears to be starkly black and white with little room for nuance. Charette's language choice and authority as High Commissioner also construct Canada as an expert in trade, an important characteristic in the current global context that sees numerous trade negotiations underway.

Political Visits

In addition to formal statements, social media use, and media interviews, the Canadian government has been undertaking political visits that involve discussion of or reference to Brexit. Both bilateral and multilateral in nature, these visits have primarily involved the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade. I will examine three: Prime Minister Trudeau's visit to Strasbourg in February 2017; Minister Champagne's visit to London in March 2017; and Prime

¹⁵² M. Leroux, "Canada pledges swift trade deal with UK after Brexit", *The Times* (27 May 2017), retrieved from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/canada-pledges-swift-trade-deal-with-uk-after-brexit-c25hghn8d>

¹⁵³ J. McGregor, "Canada asked to both help and negotiate with U.K. amid 1st-ever Commonwealth trade talks", *CBC News* (2 March 2017), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/champagne-london-commonwealth-trade-1.4004367>

Minister May's visit to Ottawa in September 2017. Together, all three will illustrate more of the same tight messaging focused on trade, CETA, and maintaining strong and stable relationships.

In Strasbourg, France, on February 16, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau made history by being the first sitting Canadian prime minister to address the European parliament.¹⁵⁴ He was there to commemorate the ratification of CETA, “an enormously ambitious undertaking [that] will prove to be one of our greatest successes.”¹⁵⁵ Throughout his speech, he lauded the remarkable achievements of the trade negotiators, the benefits of free trade, the significance of CETA, and the common liberal-democratic values shared by the EU member-states and Canada. The speech never once mentioned the UK, the referendum, or Brexit, but it did heavily encourage the existence of the EU, citing the supranational organization as, “a truly remarkable achievement, and an unprecedented model for peaceful cooperation.”¹⁵⁶ Trudeau was, of course, not there to talk about Brexit, but it was a clear message nonetheless that Europe is stronger together. “Canada knows that an effective European voice on the global stage isn't just preferable – it's essential”, he emphasized, adding, “the whole world benefits from a strong EU.”¹⁵⁷ When this is compared with his pre-referendum remarks on the UK being stronger united within the EU, it is not difficult to infer that this speech is along similar veins. CETA would not exist without the EU and Brexit exists solely in the context of the EU, and since Canada is heavily invested in both relationships, it is hard to separate Brexit out from a CETA EU speech even if it is not unambiguously referenced.

Trudeau's speech contributes to Brexit-related meaning production in two valuable ways. First, as interpreted by Lene Hansen, foreign policy formulation produces and reproduces

¹⁵⁴ J. Trudeau, *Address to the European Parliament* (16 February 2017), retrieved from <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/02/16/address-prime-minister-justin-trudeau-european-parliament>

¹⁵⁵ Trudeau (16 February 2017)

¹⁵⁶ Trudeau (16 February 2017)

¹⁵⁷ Trudeau (16 February 2017)

identities, just as identities inform foreign policy.¹⁵⁸ Trudeau’s address defines Canadian and EU identities as democratic, transparent, and law-abiding, as well as diverse, inclusive, and globalized – and consequently, their foreign policies, including CETA, would reflect those identity values. States that do not participate in that type of collective identity could therefore lack some of those characteristics. Again, the intention is not to create a false dichotomy but rather to highlight how language can constrain or produce meaning.¹⁵⁹ Second, discourse, “produces preconditions for action”.¹⁶⁰ Trudeau’s reiteration of the key points of Canada’s diplomatic narrative, using action phrases like, “I believe”, “we know that”, and “it will serve to benefit”, demonstrate intent to act and deliver;¹⁶¹ Canada’s diplomacy on issues and ideas implicating Brexit is anything but passive, despite its rather implicit nature.

One month after Trudeau’s address in Strasbourg, his new Minister of International Trade, François-Philippe Champagne, landed in London to represent Canada at the inaugural meeting of Commonwealth trade ministers. One major intent of this two-day meeting was to, “reaffirm the commitment of the Commonwealth member countries to a ‘transparent free and fair multilateral trading system’”, a phrase that reinforces both Canada’s identity as a Commonwealth country and Commonwealth countries as transparent, free, fair, and committed to trading.¹⁶² While research had been conducted back in 2015 on Commonwealth trade and the benefits that could be gained through formal trade cooperation, there was no real movement on it until this year – coincidentally, post-Brexit-vote.¹⁶³ The Commonwealth Secretary-General said

¹⁵⁸ Hansen, 1

¹⁵⁹ Hansen, 17

¹⁶⁰ Neumann, 62

¹⁶¹ Trudeau (16 February 2017)

¹⁶² Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, “Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting” (2017), retrieved from <http://www.cweic.org/event/commonwealth-trade-ministers-meeting/>

¹⁶³ J. McGregor, “Canada asked to both help and negotiate with U.K. amid 1st-ever Commonwealth trade talks”, *CBC News* (2 March 2017), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/champagne-london-commonwealth-trade-1.4004367>

one reason for the renewed focus was, “current global trade instability”, which some might interpret as, at least partially, related to Brexit.¹⁶⁴ Certainly, Champagne’s attendance, while unsurprising given Canada’s involvement in Commonwealth initiatives, demonstrates Canada’s commitment to using multilateral diplomatic channels to further position itself as a trade partner for the UK. While at the meeting, Champagne addressed attendees at a roundtable on Commonwealth trade and investment, where he heavily promoted Canadian industry, the Liberal government’s different economic policies, and the importance of free trade. Again, in a similar pattern to the Prime Minister, he did not mention Brexit once, but he did acknowledge the, “anger and anxiety... washing over the world”, as, “coming from a very real place”, and conceded that it was not going away.¹⁶⁵ One can infer, drawing on the reasons given for Brexit earlier in this paper, that this could be a convoluted recognition of the Brexit results, and relates Brexit to the looming protectionist climate.

A third political visit took place six months later in September across the pond in Canada. This time, Prime Minister May embarked on a whirlwind trip to Ottawa for a brief visit with Trudeau. It was during this visit that the previously-mentioned working group was formed to facilitate a seamless Brexit transition during the ensuing years.¹⁶⁶ Trudeau and May, the latter of whom had triggered Article 50 to begin the EU exit process in March, spoke to reporters during the visit, highlighting ‘shared values’ and bilateral trade talks taking place concerning a future agreement. Trudeau was careful to stress the importance of respecting the rules in place surrounding negotiations with the EU and EU members – including the United Kingdom – as

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous, “Commonwealth to host inaugural Meeting of Trade Ministers”, (2 March 2017), retrieved from <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/press-release/commonwealth-host-inaugural-meeting-trade-ministers>

¹⁶⁵ F-P. Champagne, Address at the Inaugural Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting, *Government of Canada* (10 March 2017), retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/03/address_by_ministerchampagneattheinauguralcommonwealthtrademinis.html

¹⁶⁶ Prime Minister of Canada (18 September 2017)

well as the necessity of respecting the UK's right to determine its own path forward.¹⁶⁷ These reminders were quickly followed up with reference to CETA, which both Prime Ministers used to frame any future bilateral trade relationship between their two countries.¹⁶⁸ Trudeau's words during this visit sustain Canada's identification as a democratic state that respects the decision of citizens, as well as introducing the key idea of sovereignty to his discourse on Brexit.

Overall, the Canadian government's diplomatic efforts on Brexit have been careful. Publicly, they have used three primary channels to conduct diplomacy: statements and speeches posted online; media interviews; and political visits. The actors involved have naturally included the Canadian High Commissioners to the United Kingdom, Campbell and Charette, but in an era of instant communication and fast flights, they have also included members of the Canadian Government. The tone and language of the messaging in the immediate aftermath of the referendum was set by the Prime Minister's official statement, posted to his website and shared on social media by official government accounts. The language and focus were repeated in varying iterations throughout the media interviews done by government officials and the political visits conducted by the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade. In other words, the technique of Canada thus far has been to play it safe, emphasizing strong historic ties, economic stability, and a love for CETA with the same key players – all while respecting democratic processes and the rules surrounding the EU exit process. Canada's behaviour is significant because its discourse reveals two key ideas about Canada's diplomatic strategy: first, that Canada uses diplomacy on Brexit to frame its own identity as a democratic state committed to supporting international cooperation, relationships, and liberal-democratic values in the face

¹⁶⁷ Anonymous, "Trudeau, May strike working group for 'seamless' post-Brexit trade transition", *CBC News* (17 September 2017), retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-theresa-may-meeting-1.4294515>

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous, *CBC News* (17 September 2017)

of rising protectionism; and second, that Canada uses Brexit to position itself against protectionism and inward-moving policy while concurrently supporting the UK's exit process out of democratic respect. My intent in this chapter has been to explore case study examples of Canada's diplomatic engagements on Brexit, positioning my analysis for the next chapter where I will investigate what Canada's words and actions mean for modern diplomacy in the current global climate.

Chapter 4 – A Modern Brexit

For the EU, Brexit sets a dangerous precedent. Weaknesses in perceptions of its legitimacy, including Brexit, have the potential to chip away at its ability to function effectively as both a regional organization and an international actor. At this time, what Brexit means is largely unknown, other than the basic exit from the EU – and 'basic' is a definite oversimplification. This is because, as previously established, "Brexit" is both unprecedented and malleable. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to assess how Brexit is constructed through diplomacy, a highly normative field, and what it tells us about the nature of modern diplomacy. Using the case study of Canada within a constructivist framework, I will show that while Brexit can be molded in multiple ways, Canada's diplomatic discourse has focused on using Brexit as an identity affirmer of Canada, the EU, and the UK, and framing Brexit as an opportunity over a threat. To do so, I will first examine the discourse used by Canada in its diplomatic undertakings. Next, I will take the discourse used by Canada to both frame Brexit and produce identities. Finally, I will examine the implications of what this means for modern diplomacy.

Diplomatic Discourse

Diplomacy relies greatly on language and words.¹⁶⁹ Its function as, “a first line of defence” against conflict and challenges faced by states, as well as the significance of the role of communication within the field, makes discourse extremely relevant.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, the study of how discourse, in the context of diplomacy, is used by states to construct realities of Brexit is the purpose of this chapter. Scholars have spent considerable time exploring the performativity of language and how it is used to construct realities.¹⁷¹ Speech acts are rule-governed, constrained by social context, but at the same time, they are open to interpretation depending on the reciprocal context of the receiver.¹⁷² In their 2017 analysis of Brexit malleability, Adler-Nissen, Galpin, and Rosamond distinguish between two types of speech acts. The first, which they call “Austinian” after J.L. Austin, frames a subject as a promise, a word that is neither true nor false and where its interpretation is heavily determined by its audience.¹⁷³ “Butlerian”, the second, named after Judith Butler, structures a subject as performative, because the “reiterative power of discourse [produces] the phenomena that it regulates and constraints”, defining identity in the process.¹⁷⁴ Of great relevance to this paper, however, is the overarching performativity point they make that, “the very language of Brexit does something politically.”¹⁷⁵ My following analysis will support this observation already made in literature.

Speech acts are performed by various actors.¹⁷⁶ With the Canadian example in the context of Brexit diplomacy, the actors are those with diplomatic roles of importance in the social hierarchy of states or institutions that carry weight: elected politicians and appointed

¹⁶⁹ J. Bátorá, “Does the European Union transform the institution of diplomacy?” *Journal of European Public Policy* 12, no. 1 (February 2005)

¹⁷⁰ Mills, 570

¹⁷¹ T. Diez, “Speaking ‘Europe’: the politics of integration discourse”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, no. 4 (1999); Adler-Nissen et al., 2017

¹⁷² Diez, 601

¹⁷³ Adler-Nissen et al., 575

¹⁷⁴ Adler-Nissen et al., 575

¹⁷⁵ Adler-Nissen et al., 575

¹⁷⁶ Diez, 601

ambassadors. The speech acts they are performing are on the public stage, showcased in official documentation, media, and governmental visits. The discourse they use produces two ideas that I will explore based on my evidence in Chapter 3: first, Canadian diplomatic strategy; and second, how Canada employs Brexit. Canadian diplomatic strategy generally takes a subtle communications approach.¹⁷⁷ British linguist Richard Lewis has studied differences between cultural communication styles, and notes that Canadians are honest and open upfront, consider pros and cons of options, will compromise if provided with alternative views, and then want to act immediately to provide clarity to a situation.¹⁷⁸ An overall steady communications process, this pattern is visible in the Canadian diplomatic efforts on Brexit. Collectively, the actors have affirmed the choice of the British people (“The people of the United Kingdom have spoken”), focused on the pros of Brexit (democratic process, reaffirmation of historic relationships) and have started to look for solutions to the unexpected situation in which they find themselves, particularly concerning trade, the CETA deal, and another brick in a potential protectionism wall. Preliminary unofficial bilateral trade talks, providing negotiating expertise to the new British Ministry of International Trade, and attending an inaugural meeting of Commonwealth Trade Ministers are all actions that Canada has taken to search for an alternative solution.

Canada is constructing its Brexit diplomatic strategy through careful messaging and repetitive positioning of the same key ideas. In doing so, it is also creating a specific set of identities and endeavouring to legitimize a particular set of actions and results while delegitimizing alternative actions in the context of Brexit. On the surface, Canada focuses on trade diplomacy, framing its attention on CETA and its post-Brexit future. Digging deeper, one can see how Canadian diplomatic officials are using Brexit as an identity-producer and

¹⁷⁷ R. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*, 3rd edition (Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2006)

¹⁷⁸ Lewis, *When Cultures Collide*

behaviour compass. With its diplomacy, Canada models examples of Austinian performativity because it is promising something that is neither true nor false yet – there are too many unknowns. Since Canada, based on the words of Trudeau, is cognizant of respecting the negotiation process of Article 50 and thus not entering into any formal bilateral trade negotiations with the United Kingdom, all of its language concerning post-Brexit trade has been carefully considered for different audiences and thus becomes different promises – while defining itself as a supporter of democratic process. For the audience in the UK, Canada’s speech acts are promising a future in successful trade; just as Theresa May promised to make Brexit a success, so Canada’s politicians and official diplomats are promising to make post-Brexit trade a reality – without any details.¹⁷⁹ For the audience in Canada, and particularly the business sector that cares deeply about trade, the diplomatic strategy is promising a stable economy and sustained free trade with the UK regardless of Brexit’s impact on the global economy. For an EU member-state audience, Canada is promising a respect for its rules and authority over the Brexit process. And for the general international community, Canada is promising a strong trade relationship with the UK regardless of outside influences, made possible because of the shared values and historical relationship.

Regardless of the public diplomatic channel used, Canada’s technique so far has been to maintain a steady, measured approach to Brexit. Whether in person, in interview, or online, the Canadian actors are constructing, through power of discourse and a mix of digital and conventional diplomacy, a strategically-neutral position that nonetheless facilitates the framing of particular identities and behaviours. It is necessary to remember that the intention and position

¹⁷⁹ T. McTague, V. Chadwick, and P. Dallison, “Theresa May: We’re going to make a success of Brexit”, *Politico* (12 July 2016), retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/theresa-may-were-going-to-make-a-success-of-brexit/>

of the actor is also integral to interpreting a speech act;¹⁸⁰ for example, when one considers Trudeau's statement, "The UK and the EU are important strategic partners for Canada", one of his possible intentions could be to validate Canada's position as a neutral party in the discussion, particularly following his pre-referendum comments urging the UK to remain in the EU.¹⁸¹ Another possible intention may have been to remind posted Canadian diplomats of their role as neutral representatives of Canada and that they ought to work hard to advance the relationships with both parties. Whichever the case, his rank as Prime Minister accords his discourse substantial authority.

Evaluating Canada's diplomatic approach – promise-making and identity-producing through discourse – matters because it begins to frame the way in which Canada uses productive power and also structures and understands Brexit. The world of diplomacy has largely shifted from hard power to soft power, particularly in western countries, and consequently, Canada's Brexit strategy is oriented towards the latter. Diplomacy plays a large role both in the dispersal of soft power and the use of productive power, and Canada is no exception. "Language is... central to our knowledge of reality", writes Diez, and it is using meticulous wording in careful engagement that Canada constructs its reality, its relationship, with the UK and the EU in the Brexit context.¹⁸² In other words, just as scholars have shown language to be instrumental in the construction and legitimacy of the EU, so Canada is using its diplomatic language – produced speech acts – to define and affirm its relationship with both parties involved in the Brexit debate (as one example).

¹⁸⁰ Adler-Nissen et al., 575

¹⁸¹ Trudeau (24 June 2016)

¹⁸² Diez, 599

Another example would be Canada's speech acts promising a successful trade future between Canada and the UK in front of a variety of public audiences, concurrently constructing our knowledge of reality to include the idea that Canada will successfully negotiate free trade with the UK because they have already successfully produced and managed CETA, and defining Canada's identity as a free trade state with expertise to succeed. Canada is exerting productive power, particularly over trade, through its diplomatic constructions; by saying CETA will remain strong and a new bilateral agreement can be negotiated with the UK, Canada is encouraging the EU and UK interests to align with its own free trade priorities. The trade narrative, evidenced in Canada's Brexit messaging, is a "currency" of Canada's productive power.¹⁸³

Brexit is What States Make of It

The second key analysis that logically follows from Canada's diplomatic discourse is an investigation of how Canada frames "Brexit" within it. Brexit is what states make of it, and I will demonstrate that Canada uses Brexit in three key ways: first, to publicly reaffirm its bilateral relationship with the UK; second, as an opportunity to advance its trade interests; and third, to structure identities and promote specific types of behaviour while discouraging other types.

The ever-present theme of a variation on 'strong, historic relationship of shared values and priorities' weaves in to each public message made by Canadian diplomats on Brexit since the referendum. In a time of status quo disruption, against a backdrop of global uncertainty and the threat of protectionism, Canada, when commenting on Brexit or engaging with the UK, takes the opportunity to affirm its 'strong and stable' bilateral relationship. Brexit is a new occasion for Canada to position itself as a solid partner for the UK; Canada constructs itself as this partner through its diplomatic dialogue and actions. Whether offering trade negotiation expertise to the

¹⁸³ Barnett and Duvall

British Ministry of International Trade or sharing statements on the occasion of a bilateral visit such as, “from mutual values to a shared sovereign, few countries have as much in common as Canada and the UK”, Canada does not hold back from establishing the strength and importance of the bilateral history.¹⁸⁴

Additionally, by referencing the Commonwealth in statements and attending the new Commonwealth Trade Ministers conference, Canada adds another brick to the firm foundation that exists between the two countries. This focus on the Commonwealth is remarkable because while the former imperial countries holds regular gatherings together, the Commonwealth has experienced a decline in importance for the British ever since the UK joined the EU. Now, with the advent of the Commonwealth Trade Ministers conference, there are clear signs that the British have more interest in exploring options their Commonwealth allies.¹⁸⁵

Returning to the idea of Brexit as performative, Canada is using Brexit as a definer of multiple identities – in this case, the identity of the relationship between Canada and the UK. Canada makes Brexit into a chance for renewed, prioritized relationships with the UK, announcing its position on the public stage through consistent messaging from diplomatic actors. This leads into the second construction of Brexit: the focus on trade as an advancement of interests shared by the two countries.

The ratification of CETA was a momentous occasion for the EU, including the UK, and Canada. The fact that the Brexit referendum took place a few short months before the successful

¹⁸⁴ Prime Minister of Canada (18 September 2017)

¹⁸⁵ E. Alini, “As Brexit nears, U.K. ponders fast-tracking Commonwealth visas”, *Global News* (29 March 2017), retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/3342327/brexit-commonwealth-visas/>; J. Blitz, “Post-Brexit delusions about Empire 2.0”, *Financial Times* (7 March 2017), retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/bc29987e-034e-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9>; S. Baker, “Does the UK’s post-Brexit research future lie in Commonwealth collaborations?”, *Times Higher Education* (15 February 2018), retrieved from <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/does-uks-post-brexit-research-future-lie-commonwealth-collaborations#survey-answer>

signing of the agreement was disconcerting, as it was difficult to tell how Brexit could affect the historic trade agreement and all agreements entered into by the EU. It remains difficult many months later, but Canadian diplomatic efforts reveal that Canada is constructing Brexit to be an opportunity to advance its trade interests. To some, this might seem counter-intuitive, particularly because Canada's European trade focus has been so heavily wrapped up in CETA over the last seven years and the UK's exit complicates the ambitious negotiations. However, the UK remains Canada's third largest trading partner, and Canada has thus been using its language around Brexit to construct a strong future trading relationship. This is not to say that it would not have been easier, or perhaps better, for the UK to remain a part of CETA from a Canadian perspective, but Canada's joint efforts with May to strike a post-Brexit-focused working group and its advisory capacity in trade negotiation training for the UK are opportunities that would not have existed without Brexit. Canada has numerous free trade agreements under negotiation – some quite large, like NAFTA – so it is not unsurprising that those with diplomatic voices are framing Brexit as another opportunity for new and beneficial trade prospects.

Finally, Canada employs Brexit to structure its own identity as a liberal democratic state that promotes and supports specific values and priorities. Brexit, as previously established, is one event linked to a perceived rise in protectionism in the West. Canada's support for democratic process, evidenced through language like, 'the people have spoken', reveals that Canada views itself as a state that, at minimum, respects democratic values. "Democratic" is a classification that is representative of productive power, allowing the subject – in this case, Canada – to "generate...social capacities."¹⁸⁶ Further, as examined in Chapter 3, Canada uses Brexit to define what it believes to be inappropriate behaviours from democratic states: inward focused

¹⁸⁶ Barnett and Duvall, 56

protectionism. In emphasizing cross-border cooperation, shared values, and unity over division, Canada's messaging delineates between the encouraged and discouraged behaviour. Canada might respect the Brexit referendum results because it values democratic process, but its diplomatic discourse, originating from some of the highest levels of authority in Canada, makes it clear that Canada does not support actions to withdraw from cooperative institutions. In other words, there is no place for protectionist sentiments.

The Implications of Brexit on Modern Diplomacy

So, what can Brexit, an unstable, convoluted idea, tell us about the nature of current diplomacy, and why is it important? The chaotic characteristic of Brexit and the struggle to understand what it means allows us to look at how diplomacy balances the evolving channels, platforms, and techniques available in the twenty-first century with the need to manage a concise message. In the one hand, the international community is holding an unexpected ball with an unpredictable spin; in the other hand, the community possesses a box of advanced diplomatic tools, primarily concentrated on soft and productive power dispersion through technological advancements (digital diplomacy) and multilateral engagements. The diplomatic developments could help or hinder an attempt to bat this curveball, depending on how a government is able to control the swing and technique.

The Canadian case study reveals what appears to be a closely controlled diplomatic message that illustrates key identities: pro-democracy, anti-protectionism, pro-free-trade, anti-division. Direction flows from the Prime Minister and his office, and despite the proliferation of social media accounts and the likelihood of press interviews, Canada's diplomatic efforts remained heavily concentrated along the same key messages using very similar wording. This close consistency is made even clearer when one considers the pre-Brexit-referendum

messaging, where the Prime Minister and other officials were not shy about their preference for the UK to remain as part of the EU. The quick turnaround after the vote¹⁸⁷, the emphasis on democratic process, the weight placed on historical relationships, the focus on trade – all contribute to a consistent diplomatic message that is communicated on very public stages and that serves to produce identities and promote or discourage particular behaviours.

The ability of Canada to promote and present a tight diplomatic message on a disordered subject in an era of technological revolution and instant news, where political leaders have become diplomats, where everyone and anyone can be a journalist to some degree and share their opinions with the world, and where states are beginning to worry about protectionism, is important.¹⁸⁸ It illustrates that, despite the challengingly fluid nature of the subject, a mixture of digital diplomacy (e.g. websites, social media), network diplomacy (e.g. multilateral conferences, politicians as primary actors), and club or conventional diplomacy (e.g. actions of the High Commissioner) can be used – and must be used – to project a state’s foreign policy in a cohesive manner; for Canada with Brexit, this is a focus on the productive power of historical connections and the emphasis on the future of bilateral trade, all stemming from the core messages of the Prime Minister as published online. Beneath the surface, identity formation simmers as a critical tool that can be used to either legitimate or de-legitimate actions, depending on the authority of the actor involved.

The purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate three ideas: first, how Canada has constructed its diplomatic strategy concerning Brexit; second, how Canada has framed Brexit and used Brexit to frame identities within its diplomatic efforts; and third, what this tells us about the nature of modern diplomacy. Canada has developed a unified diplomatic narrative that

¹⁸⁷ This excludes Members of the Opposition and the general public

¹⁸⁸ Cooper, 38; F. Hanson, “Baked In and Wired: eDiplomacy@State”, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2012: 8; Adesina

advances its productive power, working with other states to promote the same interests and encourage specific behaviours through its calm, consistent, and cooperative messaging. This tight and neutral diplomatic narrative reveals that Canada constructs Brexit in three ways: first, as an assertion of the power and significance of the Canada-UK relationship identity; second, as an opportunity to promote of trade interests and partnerships despite the impending exit from CETA; and third, to produce its own identity as a democratic state that values economic prosperity and free trade, amongst other liberal values, while contrasting its identity against those states that might seek to withdraw inwards – as Brexit can be interpreted.

Conclusion – What Canada Makes of Brexit

When the Brexit referendum results were counted, it is a fair assumption to make that many in the world were surprised by the “Leave” victory. It was the first time an EU member-state had voted to leave the integration project, and while the UK has always had a reputation of being the awkward relation to the continental cousins, it was nonetheless a surprise. Brexit will not only impact the UK and the EU but also other members of the international community, and my goal for this paper was to investigate how Brexit is being interpreted and constructed through diplomacy outside of the EU stakeholders, and what these efforts could tell us about diplomacy in the modern age.

Canada, as a large liberal-democratic Commonwealth country, a member of the unofficial Anglosphere, a multilateral partner in numerous international agreements, organizations, and alliances, and one side of the most ambitious trade agreement in EU history in which the UK took part, is a prime example to evaluate in the context of international Brexit diplomacy. Canada’s approach to Brexit was strategically sensitive; it publicly reaffirmed its bilateral relationship with the UK while taking the opportunity to advance its trade interests and substantiate itself against protectionism – all while acknowledging due democratic process

through the referendum. Canada's use of conventional actors (the High Commissioners) coupled with elected officials (the Prime Minister and his Ministers) demonstrates a modern mix of vehicles through which diplomacy can be undertaken – all with authoritative voices high on the social hierarchy – and the combination of public, digital, and traditional diplomacy in Canada's approach to Brexit reveals supports the flexibility of diplomacy as a concept and foreign policy tool.

The road to a formal Brexit stretches out until at least 2019. Over the next two years, the UK and the EU will continue to negotiate the exit terms, establishing precedence along the way. Concurrently, it is to be expected that the UK will be reaching out to other states and entities, as they are currently doing with Canada, to determine what opportunities might exist for them elsewhere. The irony is that the constant characteristic of Brexit is that it is unknown, free to be constructed how states want. When it comes to Brexit diplomacy, therefore, it would seem that there could be room for state creativity because they are attempting to frame the unpredictable. However, what I have discovered in the Canadian case study is that Canada is managing the unpredictable by being diplomatically contained, ensuring a concise and consistent narrative that is framed to promote Canada's bilateral history with the UK, encourage free trade, both with the UK and with the ratification of CETA, and reaffirm Canada's identity as a democratic state that holds to liberal-democratic values and international cooperation. This is a critical position to recognize as events in the UK and the US, among other places, highlight rising protectionist actions, and Canada's Brexit diplomacy establishes Canada against protectionist behaviour.

Brexit's own nature and Canada's related diplomatic efforts reveals an additional interesting observation about the nature of diplomacy in a modern age faced with protectionism: despite the rise in digital diplomacy and the race to embrace the new methods, when states are

faced with an unknown situation or process, they attempt to filter the information so as to provide stability to the malleable concept. While it is not harkening back to, “the era in which diplomats talked only to diplomats and scheduled those conversations at their leisure”, it is an example of new diplomatic practices attempting to prevent the transient, unfiltered, and unmanaged possibilities presented by digital diplomacy in order to enable a cohesive diplomatic narrative.¹⁸⁹ There is much opportunity with Brexit to match the diplomatic efforts to the nature of Brexit’s instability (despite May’s exultations of ‘strong and stable’), but as is seen in the Canadian example, states are harnessing the potential of digital diplomacy, combining it with traditional, steady, and established diplomatic channels and techniques of the past and transforming the strategies in the process.¹⁹⁰

Academics have been studying in earnest the contribution and implications of digital diplomacy for at least the last decade. It is not the intent of this paper to contribute any groundbreaking discovery, but I would put forth that Brexit remains a fascinating subject for diplomatic studies to consider. Its messy domestic narrative, its malleable nature and the many ways it can be and is being constructed, and its capacity for identity production holds much potential for the study of diplomacy, particularly in an era of prominent digital diplomacy and real-time conversation. The future challenges of diplomacy, artfully laid out in a 2012 Clingendael Institute report, are many, and Brexit combines technology, changing actors, shifting geopolitical tides, and a perceived rise in populism into an untidy but relevant package.¹⁹¹ A next step, beyond the scope of this paper, could be to compare how Canada’s diplomatic strategy and identity production compares with that of an EU country, for example, as an EU member state that is pro-

¹⁸⁹ Seib, 86

¹⁹⁰ Adesina, 13

¹⁹¹ B. Hocking, J. Melissen, S. Riordan, and P. Sharp, “Futures for diplomacy”, *Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations* (2012)

Union would likely frame Brexit in very different terms than a Commonwealth state does. This comparison could shed more light on how necessary a consistent message is from a diplomatic perspective, and if that is simply Canada's strategy or common to other states as well. However, for the time being, Brexit means Brexit for the UK, and Canada, its Commonwealth cousin, is approaching the tumultuous UK without 'appalling cynicism' but rather with careful, conscientious, and consistent diplomatic efforts.

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