MacKay, Alexandra (2017) *Bridging the past, present and future: Transgenerational collective guilt and responsibility in Australian politics of reconciliation.* [MSc]

http://endeavour.gla.ac.uk/210/

Bridging the past, present and future: Transgenerational collective guilt and responsibility in Australian politics of reconciliation

School of Social and Political Sciences
Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
M.Sc. in Human Rights and International Politics

University of Glasgow
September 2017

Matriculation: ████████

Word Count: 13,581

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Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Naomi Head, for her guidance and ability to keep me focused throughout the development of this dissertation.

I would also like to thank my Mum, Yvonne Strachan, for her support and for all her work proof-reading and editing.

Abstract:

This paper examines theories of collective guilt and collective responsibility for past injustice, emerging from post-war Germany, and analyses how these theories have been engaged with through political apology by settler Australian politicians within the politics of reconciliation. Australia is a settler society, whose history and national identity has been built upon the foundations of the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous Australians. This paper analyses how this historic injustice has been viewed through a lens of collective guilt by settler Australian politicians, which insinuates Australian settler society are to blame for this historic mistreatment, which in turn, creates a barrier to reconciliation. This paper argues that instead that this history be framed through a collective responsibility approach, as demonstrated in the official apology given to the Stolen Generations in 2008, which entails a connection to the past which does not encompass blame but has restorative and forward-looking connotations. A collective responsibility approach encourages the acceptance of the past and promotes collective action to end the enduring injustice, allowing for the necessary political change needed for reconciliation.

Introduction

> *'All politics is always and inevitably about the past … What matters is the*
> *horizon against which the past is viewed; how forward-looking is the political*
> *pursuit of the past?'* (Torpey,2003, p.26).

Australia's colonial history is characterised by the dispossession and marginalisation of Indigenous Australians[1]. In Australia, there is a long-standing debate about whether or not the current inequality between Indigenous and settler Australians[2] should be viewed as a legacy of past injustice inflicted upon Indigenous Australians through colonial policies of land dispossession, forced removal of Indigenous children and forced assimilation.

There is a wealth of research and data that suggests that the current socio-economic inequality suffered by Australian Indigenous communities is inextricably linked to this history of dispossession and discriminative treatment. Despite this research and 'hard' evidence, a causal link is still widely disputed by settler Australians. When the subject is broached, it is often met with anger and defensive language or behaviour.

The 'Reconciliation Barometer' is an Australian wide research survey undertaken by Reconciliation Australia to monitor the attitudes towards reconciliation. The results are not overly positive. In 2016, it indicated that only 64% of settler Australians 'accept' that historical injustices occurred to Indigenous Australians with 28% feeling that the wrongs of the past must be rectified for all Australia to move on (Reconciliation Australia,2016). This latter figure represents a 5% increase from the 2014 Barometer, which suggests a positive shift is taking place in attitudes towards the legacy of historical injustice (Reconciliation Australia,2014).

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[1] The term 'Indigenous Australians' has been used throughout this paper and it refers both Aboriginal Australians and the Torres Strait Islanders. This is the most appropriate and respectful terms used at time of writing.
[2] The term 'settler Australian' and 'settler society' is used instead of the broader term 'non-indigenous' as this paper is focused upon Australians descended from early/colonial settlement, who make up mainstream Australian society.

This leads to the further question of whether Australia needs, as a nation, to address this past injustice in order to achieve reconciliation and "Close the Gap" in inequality between Indigenous and settler Australians in areas such as access to services, employment opportunities– incarceration rates, life expectancy, infant mortality participation in public life and representation.

Interestingly, this year Australia has been competing against Spain and France for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council, a race which France has recently dropped out of therefore securing Australia's likely win for one of the two seats (Feng,2017). The campaign to sit on the international regulatory body for the implementation of Human Rights has brought Australia's poor Indigenous rights record under scrutiny and has received international criticism from international organisations such as Amnesty International (Amnesty International,2017).

Australia's traumatic history has had an impact on the social and economic conditions facing its Indigenous Peoples today. The opposition leader, Bill Shorten, in a speech to parliament spoke of 'two Australias'; the Australia that mainstream/settler Australian society recognised as full of opportunity and the other Australia, the lived reality for its Indigenous Peoples.

'In this other Australia [Indigenous Australia] life is harder and shorter, poverty and disadvantage are rife and illiteracy, depression, addiction and suicide are common (Shorten,2015, p.467)'.

There is compelling evidence and argument that points to the need for Australia to acknowledge its colonial past and for the Australian government to take responsibility for the current effects and legacy of those colonial policies. The lack of acknowledgement and rectification of past wrongs prevents community healing and blocks the potential for reconciliation. However, this push for recognition and responsibility is largely rejected as the majority of settler Australians ask: 'why should we feel guilty when we are not guilty?' (Williams,2000, p.137). The question that Williams imposes on the psyche of Australia is crucial to the debate over historical injustice and collective responsibility. Can a nation feel guilt collectively? Should an individual feel guilt over the past actions of that individual's state of which they are a member? How should present governments handle the injustice committed by governments of the past?

The issues of collective guilt and collective responsibility have become critical questions in the discourse around historical injustice and mass atrocities. These concepts have their genesis in the aftermath of WWII, most notably in the writings of Jung, Jaspers and Arendt, who sought to explore these issues in the context of the atrocities of the Holocaust. At the same time, the idea of universal human rights was being embraced as nations sought to ensure that such atrocities would never happen again. This discourse fuelled a sense that wrongs of the past, no matter if they were deemed acceptable at the time, must be denounced as illegitimate and redressed accordingly (Torpey,2003, p.4).

The central question of how notions of collective guilt and collective responsibility have impacted and continue to impact Australia's ability to reconcile and remedy its relationship with its Indigenous people will be approached in three stages:

The first chapter will focus on the unique historical context of settler societies and why this would bring us to the questions of guilt or responsibility for present day settler society. The foundations of settler colonial nations were built upon the dispossession and attempted removal of Indigenous presence, identity, culture and history. The settler colonial project in Australia was aimed at the replacement of indigenous peoples, with their own settler society and this required the creation of a new colonial narrative that supported the settler claim to land as legitimate and grounded their sense of national identity. Therefore, the very existence of Indigenous Australians constitutes a challenge to settler Australian identity and their sense of belonging.

This past has not been properly addressed which impacts not only Indigenous Australians, who suffer from the institutionalised racism of the colonial narrative, but also settler Australia. With new generations beginning to question this narrative, settler Australians are having to confront this history and what it means for their own sense of belonging and their connection to Australia. It is significant then, if Australia is to progress with a policy of reconciliation between settler and Indigenous Australians, how this history is approached. Whether it is framed through attributing guilt to settler Australians or in some way blaming them for historical injustice or instead whether it is framed through developing an acceptance of collective responsibility as a means to help to repair this injustice.

Having set the historical context that leads us to a question of guilt or responsibility for settler Australia, the second chapter will develop these concepts in further detail and engage with the discourse around them. It will consider the body of work that emerged from post-war Germany and the development of the concepts of collective guilt and collective responsibility for mass atrocities, particularly in the writings of C.J. Jung, Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt. Through their theories, it is possible to explore the term 'guilt' and the perspectives on its collective application. Importantly these scholars also give us insight and compelling arguments on the collective responsibility of nations.

The discussion is brought forward to the present then with the development of their theories by more contemporary scholars who focus more on the transgenerational aspect of collective responsibility. The focus here will be on the models through which responsibility for injustices of the past can be attributed or accepted by the present polity for example through their sense of national identity and by virtue of their membership in a community.

The final chapter will analyse how these theories of collective responsibility and collective guilt apply to Australia and how settler Australian politicians engage with the concepts through political apology. The medium of political apology has been chosen as these are viewed as the 'crowning gesture of reconciliation' (Moses,2011, p.146) and they are the modern form of engagement with the concepts of collective emotions, such as guilt and responsibility. Apologies themselves are integral to any reconciliation process, but in the approach to an apology the framework of guilt or responsibility is important. As an instrument, apologies can aid reconciliation as they build a bridge to the past and offer acknowledgement and a sense of closure for victims or their descendants. The approach to a political apology can be framed by either the concept of guilt or of responsibility and it this that will explored in this chapter.

In our case study, a political apology to the 'Stolen Generations' in 2008, by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, has formed a pivotal moment in Australian Indigenous affairs. This was a particularly interesting apology because it was the first act of a newly elected government where the former government had been openly against a public apology. This apology, the lead up to it and the politics behind it will be

explored in this chapter. This chapter will look at the use of political apologies as an instrument in the reconciliation process.

This paper will argue that the term 'guilt' is problematic when applied to a collective and transgenerational context. It is not a useful or productive concept. The negativity surrounding the term 'guilt' can alienate parts of civic society from engaging positively with finding resolutions to the inequalities faced by Indigenous People. In turn, this negativity is used by politicians to shut down the discourse on change and remedy and the acceptance of Australia's collective responsibility. The paper recognises the significance of differentiating between 'guilt' and 'responsibility' particularly as they are used in the political and collective context.

The central thesis of this paper is that notions of guilt and collective guilt in the Australian context are counter-productive in the resolution of Indigenous People's inequalities and rights. Unless Australia makes a move to acknowledge its collective responsibility, there remains a barrier for any real political change for Indigenous Australians. The history of Australia and the creation of a national identity based on the removal of Indigenous identity is a source of shame and this needs to be addressed. Applying the theories of collective responsibility that are discussed, this paper will set out a theory that allows for the recognition of that responsibility without the acquisition (attribution) of blame or any feelings of guilt. Australia has this history and enduring injustice and it is not resolving it – apology has taken the debate so far, but it has not gone far enough.

Chapter I: Historical context and the fragility of settler national identity

The acceptance of human rights discourse and international accountability saw the rise of minority voices on the international platform and which resulted in the creation of an unprecedented space for indigenous voices. As part of this process, the international community was becoming more aware of indigenous struggles across the world. This rise of international pressure and new political movements also provoked controversy over past injustices, and in turn forced settler societies to face the nature of their colonial histories (Attwood,2005, p.243). For Australia, faced with the task of portraying itself as a moral democracy on the international platform, this history of continued inequality and human rights violations faced by Indigenous Australians has been a point of contention (Amnesty International,2017).

This pattern of colonial genocide and oppression have been repeated around the world, in many cases reducing the indigenous peoples of new colonial territory to a very small minority, often to the verge of extinction (Barkan,2000, pp. 159-160). It is worth noting here that there is not simply a settler/indigenous polity within Australia but also a large non-white/non-European migrant community. The ideological commitment to a mono-racial polity that formed part of the settler colonial project lasted for the majority of the twentieth century. The ideology was upheld through the implementation of various 'White Australia' policies of immigration (Lovell,2007, p.7). These policies ran up to the 1960s and 1970s, when the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975 made discrimination on racial grounds illegal (Lovell,2007). This resulted in a huge change in the cultural demographic of Australia with an influx of migrants from South and Eastern Asia.

The attitude towards immigration in Australia is famously strict, however these relatively 'recent' migrant populations do not challenge or provoke questions of settler Australian identity or legitimacy. For the purpose of this paper, the analysis is upon settler Australians and the state of Australia, in which a settler colonial mentality is institutionalised and the norm. The inclusion or effect of this migrant population upon the settler identity or on the relationship with Indigenous Australians will not be discussed here.

Attwood has argued that confronting the colonial history of a nation and the impact of that history on present-day society is enormously unsettling for the settler majority (Attwood,2005, p.243). By questioning the historical narrative of their nation, settler societies question the legitimacy of their national identity and identification with the nation-state. Indeed, the very foundation of settler societies was premised on the elimination of indigenous societies and therefore, the continued existence of these indigenous societies is a source of instability for the settler population (Wolfe,1999, p. 2).

It is this history, and the unstable identity that it creates, that brings us to the question of collective guilt and collective responsibility in Australia. The uncertainty of a nation's moral worth deeply affects the sense of national identity and this is especially so for settler societies (Attwood,2005, p.243). This chapter will aim to demonstrate the unique historical context of settler societies and why this context has brought about the concepts of collective guilt and collective responsibility as prominent issues for settler Australians.

It will look at how Australia has created a distinct settler narrative that masks the reality of the formation of Australia, to avoid the concepts of guilt or responsibility. This narrative has been contested over the last few decades as indigenous rights have garnered more attention and Indigenous Australians have told their own histories. We will then look at why it might be that interacting with this colonial history poses a threat to the legitimacy of Australian settler national identity and to how they perceive their national identity as legitimate. This chapter will argue that how this interaction with the past is framed - whether through collective guilt or collective responsibility - is important for the progress of reconciliation with Indigenous Australians.

Dating from the First Fleet in 1788, the story of Australian settlement is laden with massacres, wrongful incarceration, land dispossession, human rights violations and an Indigenous child removal policy that had genocidal intentions (Furniss,2006, p.172). The landmass of Australia was forcefully claimed for Britain, without treaty or acknowledgement of the Indigenous Peoples, who had resided there for thousands of years (Reynolds,1996, xii). The British declared the territory of Australia as *terra nullius* or 'a land or earth that is empty or null and void' and by doing so, the British

denied the very existence of Indigenous Australians and enshrined this into legal doctrine (Behrendt,2010, p. 2-3). This makes the colonisation of Australia quite distinct. Although Australia shares commonalities with other settler colonies, such as the United States or New Zealand, in an attempt to 'legitimately' gain land these other settler societies all entered into treaties, of some form, with indigenous inhabitants: Australia did not (Short,2003, p.492). This has a lasting impact on Indigenous Australians currently, as there was no legal doctrine that acknowledged Indigenous Australian sovereignty and it was only in 1992, after the pivotal *Mabo vs. Queensland* decision, that Indigenous land rights were recognised through Native Title (Cunliffe,1997, p.752).

 Australia can be understood as a settler society as it has a history of settlement and colonisation but also, and more importantly, its governance and politics continue to be substantially based on settler colonial institutions and ideas (Lovell,2007, p.2). Settler colonial forms of governance, economics and society replaced those of Indigenous Australians, to the benefit of the settler society. A central aspect of the settler-colonial project requires the active and forceful domination of an invaded territory's original inhabitants, through the repression of their culture, identity and history (Rouhana,2008 in Maddison,2012, p.700).

The nature of their nation's formation and its legacy haunts Australia. It is a source of unease that has been masked by the creation of a colonial narrative that portrays a history of settlement as a largely peaceful and morally acceptable process. There is a focus on 'nation building' and the hard-work of the first settlers, conquering nature and creating a home and a civilised nation out of this wild, Australian land. That 'nature' was inclusive of Indigenous Australians (Russell,2001).

The creation of this colonial narrative leaves a distorted relationship with history, that is passed down through generations and institutionalised. As a result, forgetting can be understood as a trait of settler societies. Indeed, historical obscurity is one structural feature of the settler colonial mentality (Veracini,2007, p.272). Therefore, there is left a situation in which there is a dominant society which portrays itself as a proud and equal nation and 'whitewashes' its colonial history to strengthen the connection of the settler to the colonised land (Wolfe,1999).

This narrative, the so-called 'white blindfold' history, has been challenged over the last two decades through the findings of several official inquiries into indigenous inequality, particularly through indigenous testimony and truth-telling. This indigenous memory is putting forward a contradictory version of Australia's history to that of the institutionalised official narrative, a so-called 'black arm-band' view of history. This has resulted in a widespread debate over the portrayal of Australian history which has included academics, politicians and the public - dubbed the 'history wars'. This process has seen the 'white blindfold' narrative being challenged and widespread calls for reconciliation and restitution for these injustices were made (Maddison,2011, p.56-58).

Not surprisingly, the 'black arm-band' view was met with angry rejection, fuelled by denial of the imposed blame that this history placed on settler Australians. This response to a more critical version of Australian history was not solely voiced from conservative academics and politicians, but mainstream settler Australians rejected the idea that they are 'invaders' or the beneficiaries of violent or genocidal practices. The reassertion of a historical narrative for which they can feel proud has been their preference (Curthoys,2003 in Maddison,2011, p.63). Reliance on the colonial narrative avoids the uncomfortable feelings of blame or guilt that arose from within the 'history wars'.

As recently as August of this year, we can see the historical colonial narrative remains strong in the voice of the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull:

"Our achievement is so remarkable, we should be so proud of Australia and its history and on Australia Day, we celebrate all of our achievements" (Turnbull,2017 in Murphy,2017).

It is reflected very topically in the current debate over calls to change the date of the 'Australia Day'. Australia Day is celebrated on the anniversary of the European invasion of the territory, which conflicts with the desire to erase that part of the nation's settler colonial history and celebrate only the positive, nation building aspects of it (Maddison,2012, p.701). Protestors want this date to be moved to enable the inclusion of all Australians to celebrate their country, Indigenous Australians included (Clure,2017). Simultaneously, there is a rising movement to remove or alter statues that commemorate British governors and colonial heroes such as Lachlan

Macquarie, who committed various human rights abuses against Indigenous Australians (Daley,2017). Turnbull has compared the amending of colonial statues to 'Stalinism' and rejects the 'attacks on Australian history' (Murphy,2017).

These recent debates demonstrate that the 'history wars' are not over in Australia and that the way in which the nation was formed is still a prominent but disturbing issue for Australian society. The feeling of moral disgust that may be promoted by the recognition of historical injustice jars with Australian national identity and the official nationalism that is propped up by a more celebratory telling of the Australian national story (Maddison,2012, p.701). This also demonstrates that settler Australia has not come to terms with its past and most attempts to address this history have been met with a melting pot of emotions.

Self-esteem of individuals is derived from the status of the groups of which they are members. They feel proud to be a member of those groups as it is an important part of how they see themselves (Klandermans et al.,2008, p.331). If the integrity of that membership group is challenged, which the history wars and current debates on the 'realities' of Australian history have, this can result in a defensive response from a feeling of personal shame, responsibility and arguably guilt. The willingness to maintain a positive social national identity leads many Australians to rationalise colonialism as just, inevitable or ultimately for bringing civilisation to a 'primitive race' (Maddison,2012, p.696). This harps to the unsteady ground that all settler nations have in their national psyche – a question of legitimacy.

The settler colonial narrative of a passive colonisation of the land and the 'terra nullius' myth has a two-fold effect on the Australian national identity: simultaneously reinforcing the settler identity of the prosperous pioneers, whilst destructing Indigenous identity that is closely tied to place and country.

Australian concept of national identity is based on settler colonial principles that create and reinforce a dichotomy between settler and indigenous peoples (Lovell,2007, p.4). Settler colonial ideology relies on the assumptions of indigenous inferiority and settler superiority (Lovell,2007, p.4). These principles became normalised and influenced the state policies over decades, resulting in the racist and genocidal policies like Indigenous child removal. This derogatory view of Indigenous Australians was incorporated and adopted by the polity.

In a settler-situation, cultural unity is achieved by emphasising the settler foundations of the state however, the very existence of Indigenous Australians is a source of instability for Australian settler society (Moran,2002). In the colonial mindset, Indigenous Australians were expected to either be bred out through interbreeding with settlers or succumb naturally due to 'biological inferiority' and an inability to adapt and function in modernity (Moran,2005, p.169). However, Indigenous Australians have maintained their culture and identity despite attempts by early colonial policies to dissolve both. They have continued to survive, which has not only challenged the colonial historical narrative as demonstrated previously, but their existence delegitimises settler Australian identity.

Lorenzo Veracini, a prominent post-colonial theorist, notes that the settler colonial form is particularly dangerous for Indigenous alterities, because it does not attempt to maintain the racist coloniser/colonized distinction; on the contrary, it tries to overcome it by 'closing frontiers, extinguishing Indigenous autonomy and establishing nationhood' (Veracini,2007 in Moses,2011, p.150). Australian historian, Patrick Wolfe argues that the dominant feature of settler colonialism was the intention of replacement of indigenous peoples not their exploitation (Wolfe,1999, p.163). The reason for this is that the resource that was valuable in the colonisation of Australia was not the labour of the indigenous population or a natural resource, but the land itself (Moran,2002, p.1019).

The very form of 'otherness' in Indigenous Peoples is rooted in their aboriginality and their irrefutable connection to the land. This aboriginality is profoundly disturbing for the settler national identity as it points out that the settler is in fact 'foreign'. The prior occupation of the land that separates Indigenous Australians highlights that the settler is a stranger in the land they call home because they are un-aboriginal (Moran,2002, p.1025). Settler societies do not have a 'natural' claim on the land. In a colonial context, cultural unity is achieved by emphasising the settler foundations of the state, however the existence of Indigenous Australians casts a doubt or shadow on the legitimacy of settler societies. The powerful claim of Indigenous Australians to land is the root of instability for the settler state.

National identity is vitally important when looking at how a nation state handles the emotion of the collective. In understanding the history and context of settler

societies, it is easier to understand why accepting their colonial history is so uncomfortable. The simple act of acknowledgement shatters a foundation column that holds up the Australian national psyche of settler identity. National identity is complex in any state, however for settler states especially, there is a sense of illegitimacy that underpins their past, present and future. Understanding this illegitimacy can help to understand why the politics of that state have developed in such a way.

With a colonial narrative that tells of individual perseverance in conquering a hostile land, the politics of liberal conservatism has grown to strength in Australia. There is a very individualistic view of society, in keeping with classic liberal beliefs in the rights of the individual, this is further demonstrated in the Australian mantra of 'a fair go for all'. The politics of liberalism and the individual however are an extension of the settler colonial mentality. The principle of equality is undeniably an important one, however when it comes to Indigenous policy, equality is assimilationist at heart (Chaney,2014). The history of colonialism, that has been argued above, has left a legacy of dispossession, inequality and trauma that only a minority of the Australian population suffers from, predominantly Indigenous Australians. The principle of equality restricts this from being properly addressed, as it limits the support offered to Indigenous Australia in fear of being viewed as 'special treatment'. Instead, Indigenous Australians are encouraged to assimilate into mainstream society to live a 'good life' (Moran,2005, p.193).

Modern indigenous polities exist based on a political legitimacy that comes from their aboriginal status, which in itself is a challenge to the liberal belief system. There is a duality to indigenous peoples in terms of their political rights; they are both citizens of the nation state as well as being their own polity as an indigenous people. This creates an unstable situation for liberal democratic states, such as Australia, as they attempt to grapple with their historical situation that delegitimises their sovereignty whilst there exists an international legal, moral and political framework that accepts the legitimacy of the sovereignty and political rights of 'indigenous peoples' (Moran,2002, p.1017).

This chapter has argued that for settler societies, colonisation is not just part of their history but very much part of their present. It remains a source of unease for

the settler community as much as for Indigenous Australians that the legacy continues to disadvantage. The violent beginnings of their nation are not solely an issue for Indigenous Peoples but are unsettling for settler society also. The settler view of their collective identity as 'Australians' seems to be illegitimate and their moral groundings as a nation are questioned. If balance is to be restored for all Australians, then this must be acknowledged and there must be forms of restitution made before reconciliation can be a realistic goal.

Largely, this narrative of Australia's colonial past has been framed through a sense of guilt of and the legacy that this holds. In turn, this imposed guilt conjures up a defensive reaction from the population and from the leaders of the nation. Any insinuation of blame is rejected and therefore, any attempts to redress these injustices are cast aside. If the approach to history is framed another way, through collective responsibility, it allows for the separation of a sense of shame or sorrow over what has happened and the implied blame. This separation allows for an open and honest dialogue to occur and the responsibility for historical injustice can be freely accepted.

The differentiation between collective guilt and collective responsibility and the result each of these approaches conjures is of incredible importance. This chapter has explored the importance of historical context in the debate between collective guilt and collective responsibility - the following chapter will delve into the theory around these concepts to better understand their application in a settler society context.

Chapter II: Theoretical discussion on collective guilt and collective responsibility

In the previous chapter, it has been considered how the nature, history and evolution of settler societies are relevant to understanding the questions of guilt and responsibility in the context of addressing the inequalities faced by indigenous peoples.

This chapter will explore the concepts of and theoretical discourse around collective guilt and collective responsibility and to consider their application in the transgenerational context. It will look at why a better understanding of these concepts and the distinctions between the underpinning emotions of guilt, responsibility, shame and regret are important for modern day Australia. In particular, it will examine the extent to which these concepts are helpful or not in the process of reconciliation and redress of past acts of atrocity and injustice and what they might offer in terms of future resolution of inequality and discrimination in Australia. It will be my contention that a clearer approach based on collective responsibility rather than notions of collective guilt could open new possibilities for change and progress in Australia.

The extent to which a state should be answerable for its past actions and the extent to which citizens should assume collective responsibility and hold collective guilt for atrocities perpetrated by their state, remain controversial and are growing political issues around the world. This is particularly so in countries like Australia and South Africa, where there is a promotion of the political project of 'reconciliation' (Schaap,2001, p.749). For Australia, like South Africa and other settler societies, the issue is intensified due to the part colonial violence played in the founding of the nation and the national identity.

The genesis of contemporary discussion of collective guilt and collective responsibility, can be found in the post-World War II period and particularly around the German experience. This period generated a discourse on collective guilt and collective responsibility as the German nation, along with the western world, were coming to terms with the widespread atrocities committed during the Holocaust. This

discourse became a significant feature of post-war German national identity (Olick,2003, p.109-110).

Immediately after the second world war and in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Germany was brimming with introspective debate and discussion upon whether Germany, as a nation, could be 'guilty'. The official statements of the conquering Allies were not of collective guilt, as demonstrated when Chief Prosecutor Robert Jackson rejected such notions in his opening statement at the Nuremberg Tribunal, 'We would also make clear that we have no purpose to incriminate the whole German people…' (Jackson as quoted in Olick, 2003, p.109).

However, this 'official' approach was not reflected in reality. In the early days of the post-war occupation of Germany, local military authorities created posters with pictures of the concentration camps with slogans like, 'These Atrocities: Your Fault' (*Diese Schandtaten: Eure Schuld*!) (Olick, 2003, p.110). These explicit statements of culpability appeared throughout occupied Germany, alongside implied notions of German collective guilt, through the anti-German public discourse of the United States and Britain around reparations and the calling for heavy handed repercussions on the German economy and infrastructure (Olick,2003, p.110).

There was currency in the view that a sharp distinction could not be drawn between the German people and the Nazi regime. This was expressed latterly by President Roosevelt, and in February 1945 the Swiss psychoanalyst CG Jung was quoted in a Zurich newspaper as saying, 'the popular sentimental distinction between Nazis and opponents of the regime was psychologically illegitimate' (Jung,1945 in Olick,2003, p.109).

Following this, Jung, who is credited with introducing the concept of collective guilt, published an essay that described the nature of collective guilt:

> 'it cares nothing for the just and the unjust, it is the dark cloud that rises from the scene of an unexpiated crime. It is a psychic phenomenon and it is therefore no condemnation of the German people to say that they are collectively guilty, but simply a statement of fact' (Jung,1946, p.54).

Jung acknowledged the irrational nature of the concept of collective guilt but believed that the collective guilt of Germans was 'for psychologists a fact and it will

be one of the most important tasks of therapy to bring the Germans to recognize their guilt' (Jung,1945 in Olick,2003, p.110). Although Jung was clear that there was a distinction between psychological, moral and criminal guilt and that he was referring to psychological guilt, his views added to the affront felt by those Germans who had not supported or identified with Nazism. They found the charge of collective guilt deeply wounding. Increasingly, and understandably, it was met with indignation and cynicism from the German people (Schaap,2001, p.749).

 A central feature of Jung's proposition is that it is necessary to recognise guilt in order to move forward as a society. This is an idea that is shared by others. George Fletcher, a leading scholar on international criminal law, makes a strong case for the existence and the relevance of collective guilt. Fletcher argues that, 'the recognition of guilt provides a bridge for the victims and those who identify with the victims to enter into normal social relations' (Fletcher, 2002, p.1569). There can be no doubt that for a society to progress, to remedy its past mistakes and to avoid them in the future, it must understand and come to terms with its past and it must determine its responsibilities. The point at issue here is whether that process is well served by notions of collective guilt or better served by the acceptance of collective responsibility.

Although Jung is credited with introducing the term 'collective guilt', it is the work of two scholars who wrote in the post-WWII period, Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt, upon whose work much of the contemporary discussion has been based.

Both Arendt and Jaspers were responding to the twofold 'German question' which resonates with the contemporary discussion of politics of reconciliation. In what sense should members of a 'perpetrating community' acknowledge a share of collective responsibility for wrongs they were not party to nor directly supported? To what extent should a collective sense of atonement fuel a politics orientated towards reckoning with the past and making amends with those wronged? (Schaap,2001, p.750). The theories that Jaspers and Arendt created in response to these questions will form the central structure of the analysis.

Karl Jaspers, a German sociologist, gave a series of lectures on *Questions of German Guilt*, originally written in 1945-46. This lecture series has become known

as one of the 'most penetrating articles ever written on collective guilt' (Fletcher,2002, p.1530).

Jaspers categorised guilt into four groups: criminal, moral, metaphysical and political, each of which entails a different form of accountability (Olick,2007, p.124). These categories prove incredibly useful in our understanding of what guilt is, the forms it can take and importantly, how it can be attributed and to whom. This is relevant because, as Jaspers argues, guilt is not a singular, flat emotion but instead a multi-dimensional concept. We will briefly look at all of Jaspers categories of guilt but it will be the category of political guilt that we will focus on most as this form of 'guilt' is arguably the most relevant to our discussion on Australia.

'Criminal guilt' is the simplest form of guilt and is arguably the form that many would think of when we hear the term 'guilt'. Criminal guilt is the guilt that is directly associated with an act that violates unequivocal laws to which jurisdiction rests with the court (Jaspers,1947, p.25). It is inextricably linked to the wrongful act itself and to those who carried it out and were present. Therefore, it does not fit into a collective or transgenerational framework. It does not, Jaspers argues, have a vicarious application.

'Moral guilt' is closely related to criminal guilt in that it is applicable to those who were present when the wrongful act was committed or who committed the act themselves. The difference lies however, in the motivation of the act and the choice the individual has made. Moral guilt is applicable to those who acted under duress or personal necessity but in Jaspers view, are still morally guilty if the act could have been avoided. The justification for this category is that as individuals, we are responsible for all our deeds, including the execution of orders which we have a choice whether to follow or not (Jaspers,1947, p.26). There is not a convincing argument for this form of guilt to be applied to a collective or to a transgenerational context as the guilt is held by the individual who made the choice resulting in the wrongful act, therefore having a direct causal link not transferable to others or across generations.

Jaspers' concept of 'metaphysical guilt' is the most existential category and is about the guilt a survivor and/or innocent person may feel towards those who have suffered and died. This category of guilt is based on a universal sense of human solidarity that

makes each of us co-responsible for each other (Clark,2008, p.684). It has been argued that it is more appropriate to talk of what Jaspers is referring to as 'metaphysical responsibility' (Gordy,2003, p.3). Jaspers argues the existence of a solidarity that makes each human being responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world but especially for wrongs the individual has witnessed or had knowledge about, but played no part in the cause of the wrong (Jaspers,1947, p.26).

Jaspers explains that we all hold a metaphysical guilt as we do not treat every person in an 'unconditioned' way as we treat those most closely tied to us, friends and family, and in this 'lies the guilt of us all' (Jaspers,1947, p.26). Although Jaspers himself states this category is more poetic and philosophical with more of a universal application than that of the other categories, it holds a grounding that is based on the sympathetic identification of a shared humanity and the co-responsibility that we all have as human beings (Schaap,2001, p.752).

In crafting a new conception of guilt, Jaspers had to avoid the problematic creation of the collective 'subject' – an entity modelled on the modern individual and endowed with all its attributes such as intention and the capacity to act which is superimposed onto the nation (Celermajer,2006, p.165). Hence emerged Jaspers' concept of political guilt. This category refers to the 'guilt' that is borne by each person in a political community, by virtue of being present and being governed (Fletcher,2002, p.1531). Just as Gordy has argued that it might be more accurate to describe metaphysical guilt as metaphysical responsibility, the use of the term political guilt here may also be deemed misleading. Jaspers here is not referring to guilt but referring to political *responsibility* without personal blame, from which he differentiates from criminal, moral or metaphysical guilt (Schaap,2001, p.750).

'Guilt, therefore, is necessarily collective as the political liability of nationals, but not in the same sense as moral and metaphysical, and never as criminal guilt' (Jaspers,1947, p.56).

Jaspers was aware of the dangers of blaming an entire nation as an undifferentiated collective. His categories and argument were consistent with the liberal conception of justice, in which only individuals could be held directly liable for wrongful acts (Celermajer,2006, p.164). Jaspers adamantly opposed treating a state or nation as an

individual especially in relation to guilt and responsibility: 'A people as a whole can be neither guilty nor innocent' (Jaspers,1947, p.35).

However, Jaspers' rejection of the notion of a national guilt did not include a blanket rejection of collective responsibility. His writings conveyed that there was truth in the intuition that responsibility for massive and systemic wrongs went beyond the individual actors whom were directly responsible.

Hannah Arendt, a student of Jaspers, furthers his argument that there can be collective political responsibility while resisting identifying individuals as guilty subjects. Arendt argues that collective guilt and collective responsibility are two concepts that appear similar but should not be conflated. In her essay on collective responsibility, Arendt points out that, 'collective responsibility is always political… every government assumes responsibility for the deeds and misdeeds of its predecessors and every nation for the deed and misdeeds of the past' (Arendt,2003, p.149).

Arendt argues that there is a problem of attributing collective guilt in the political context. Collective responsibility does not have direct connection to the wrongful act, that is the role of guilt, instead collective responsibility is 'always political'. There is resonance here with the current politics of reconciliation in Australia.

Jaspers argues that it makes sense to hold all citizens of a country liable for the results of actions taken by their state, this responsibility is based on the individual's citizenship of that state. Jaspers does not conceive of the link between the people of the nation and the actions of the state in terms of something they do, but in terms of who they are: their political identity (Celermajer,2006, p.165).

Jaspers argued that all Germans must accept political responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi state, regardless of their particular involvement, 'a people answers for its polity' (Jaspers,1947, p.55). The only common link between criminal and political guilt is that they are subject to public judgement: a criminal must answer for their crimes as a people must do for its polity (Schaap,2001, p.751). This responsibility is justified by Jaspers through several ways: citizens accrue common benefits from their citizenship therefore are similarly liable for common sanctions; common decision-making structures allow for citizens to be held collectively responsible for

the outcomes of these decisions and the 'atmosphere of submission' that keeps a repressive regime in power (Schaap,2001, p.750-751).

Like Jaspers, Arendt insists on a clear and defined distinction between collective responsibility, which is always political, and personal guilt which is legal or moral (Arendt,2003, p.150-151). The distinction is made based on the involuntary and vicarious nature of collective responsibility; involuntary because it results from their membership of a community and vicarious because a citizen may be held liable for something he or she did not do (Schaap,2001, p.752). The notion that an individual would feel guilt without actively participating in the wrongful act is, to Arendt, as morally wrong as the 'we are all guilty' mentality that can relieve, to a certain degree, those who are guilty and who had input to the causes of the misdeed (Arendt,2003, p.147).

The distinction that Arendt makes has resonance to the Australian context, as this distinction has been blurred by Australian politicians in their arguments for and against a political apology, which will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

In her discussion on the attribution of collective responsibility, Arendt explains that this responsibility is linked to membership in a group (a collective) in which you cannot be disassociated from, such as a national identity or ethnicity (Arendt,2003, p.149). She makes the argument that this responsibility cannot be separated from this identity. The only way of escaping that collective responsibility is to leave one community for another – but in doing so you only swap one responsibility for the responsibility of that new community. Arendt argues that the only 'absolutely innocent ones' are those refugees and stateless people that the twentieth century had created in vast numbers who belong to no internationally recognizable community and therefore hold no responsibility (Arendt,2003. p.150).

Whilst Jaspers and Arendt's early writings are relevant to understanding the current scholarly debate, they will only take our discussion so far. Both scholars were writing in the post-Holocaust German context, which was a very specific situation and did not encompass the element of transgenerational guilt and responsibility with which this study is concerned. Arendt's later work did begin to introduce an element of transgenerational reflection, as new generations of Germans were coming into the

world and the question of their guilt or responsibility for the Holocaust was brought into question.

The strength of the connection that Arendt makes between membership of a community and the political responsibility for that membership, brings us towards the more contemporary discussion on the acquisition of collective responsibility in a transgenerational context.

In Australia, many of the wrongful acts were committed long before the lifetimes of present day society – so why should current citizens still hold responsibility? Leaving aside the lasting and 'enduring injustice' (Spinner-Halev,2007, p.575) still felt by present day Indigenous Australians from these acts, there are two models of responsibility that can aid us understand why there is a significant collective responsibility held by settler Australia.

The first model is the model of association or affect-based model, which argues that responsibility is acquired through association with a community or nation and the emotions, such as pride, that individuals feel for the actions of that community. Farid Abdel-Nour tackles this model in his article 'national responsibility', in which he claims, 'national responsibility is actively incurred by individuals with every proud thought they have about the achievements of their nation' (Abdel-Nour,2003, p.703). Abdel-Nour makes the argument that by feeling pride in the actions of their nation, there is an established continuity in the form of an imagined bond connecting individuals to other members of their nation, including members from past generations (Abdel-Nour,2003, p.698). If people identify with their forebears and take pride in their deeds, he argues then they must accept responsibility for the wrongs associated with these deeds (Abdel-Nour,2003, p.694-695). This echoes Arendt's argument that states and governments along with every 'nation' should have responsibility for their past deeds. It widens the application of Arendt's argument, as Abdel-Nour specifically applies this theory to individuals within a society, whereas Arendt's use of 'nation' could be interpreted to mean the nation-state.

Noel Pearson, a notable Indigenous Australian Academic and spokesperson, echoed the foundations of this model in the Australian context. Pearson, speaking at the Reconciliation Convention and sharing the stage with then Prime Minister, John

Howard, stated that Australia is openly proud of its heroic defence of the country at Gallipoli, Turkey and Kokoda in Papua New Guinea so 'by the same token it should feel shame in the atrocities committed against indigenous peoples under same banner' (Pearson,1997). A small number of Australians were present at Gallipoli or on the Kokoda track and yet these events are commemorated as being about all Australians, as moments in Australian history in which all Australians share. This sense has passed down an intangible sense of Australian identity (Maddison,2012, p.699).

But the problem with the affect-based view is the underlying suggestion that divesting oneself of pride and emotional identification with the achievements of one's nation-state, might be sufficient to relieve oneself of responsibility for the consequences of its actions (Parish,2009, p.126)**.**

Political philosopher Janna Thompson argues against attributing responsibility on a concept of association based on emotions, stating that this solidarity is not strong enough to explain why individuals should accept a responsibility and ultimately the reparations or recompense that may be associated with that responsibility (Thompson,2006, p.157). Thompson states that feeling pride for the accomplishments of others in history does not link you with responsibility for that accomplishment, any-more than it would in present day (Thompson,2006, p.157).

The second model is the social connection model of responsibility, coined by Marion Young. Young states that we should understand collective responsibility as being acquired and transmitted through our active – though not necessarily causal – participation in a chain of social connections that helps to create or maintain the negative outcome in question. Young argues that all members who, by their actions, contribute to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to remedy that injustice (Young,2006, p.119).

In her work, Young compares this model with the more standard model of responsibility, which she terms the 'liability model'. The 'liability model' is closely associated with finding guilty individuals and prescribing blame. Through this comparison, Young highlights that the social connection model has four distinct features: it isolates less, in that it is not seeking out to blame one person; the responsibility is shared collectively; it is more forward-looking by focusing on

change and reform as opposed to punishment or blame, and lastly, that this responsibility can only be discharged by collective action to remedy the injustice (Young,2006, p119-123).

Ascribing responsibility through social connection makes that responsibility much more widely available than it would be under a liability model. The social connection model also makes responsibility less evadable and farther reaching than it would be under the affect based model (Parish,2009, p. 127).

Collective responsibility based on social connection has a restorative connotation. The present society is not to blame and neither should they feel guilt; however, they are responsible to make amends for the actions of their society (past or present) and to stop the enduring injustice.

Not only does this model affirm the responsibility that Australians have by merit of their everyday political interaction but it ascribes that this responsibility can be discharged by collective action. Politics of reconciliation requires this form of collective action; not only an internal change of individuals in their attitudes but an outward change in their actions to change the system and therefore, end the enduring injustice towards Indigenous Australians.

As a fundamental part of the social connection model, a key part of Arendt's argument is the potential consequences of the collective attribution of either guilt or responsibility. What is the result of the acceptance of this collective responsibility or guilt? Collective responsibility whilst being firmly connected to the past, refers to intentions and potentialities and therefore, has a strong focus on the future. Viewing collective responsibility through a lens of guilt, however, leaves the focus principally upon the past act and the remedy is a punitive one. It does not translate readily in a transgenerational context and offers no resolution for the legacy of that wrong.

Arendt suggests a further disadvantage to the use of guilt in a collective setting. She argues that it amounts to a plea of personal and political irresponsibility and retrospectively removes outcomes in human affairs from the influence of individual action (Arendt,1977, p.297). Arendt argues that bureaucracy and ideology facilitate the abdication of political responsibility, which in turn allows for 'ordinary' individuals to become functionaries in an oppressive regime (Schaap,2001, p.753). To identify a collective as guilty of wrongs detracts from the fact that those wrongs

are only possible through the actions of individuals, as Arendt often states, 'where all are guilty none is' (Arendt,1977, p.278; 2003, p.28).

Although Arendt was writing about the German context, the underlying point that she is arguing is not dissimilar to Young's model of social connection. Young's model demonstrates that we all have a responsibility for the negative outcomes of the structural processes that we actively take part in, despite there not being a direct causal link between our actions and the outcome. In other words, it is our everyday actions and arguably attitudes, that enable the injustice to endure.

'We are always held responsible for the sins of our fathers as we reap the rewards of their merits; but we are of course not guilty of their misdeeds, either morally or legally, nor can we ascribe their deeds to our own' (Arendt,2003, p.150).

This passage perfectly encapsulates the theories we have discussed. First, Arendt supports the argument of the affect based model in attributing responsibility through the benefits we receive from the actions of our forebears. She supports the association between the membership of a community and connection to the past deeds of that community, with reference to the language of talking about individuals of the past as though the present and past were the same, i.e. 'we won the war'. Arendt views laying claim to an act or a deed you did not do as equally morally wrong as to accept guilt or profess guilt for an act you were not a part of.

Both models of responsibility can be applied to the Australian context of historical and enduring injustice towards Indigenous Australians. These models can explain the acquisition of responsibility and guilt relevant to Australia as a settler society, but also, they illustrate the crucial difference and distinction between the two concepts of collective guilt and collective responsibility.

From the work of Jaspers, we understand that guilt is a complex emotion that is multi-dimensional, with different categories according to an individual's connection to a wrongful event. However, guilt is not an emotion that has a vicarious or collective application, nor can it transcend generations due to that same connection; an argument which is supported by Arendt. Responsibility can be collective and it can transcend generations. Responsibility is associated with a

wrongful event in the past, however the core element of responsibility is the connection of that past event to the present and to the future.

Australia, as a nation, takes considerable pride in its past achievements, especially the participation in both world wars and the first settlers who forged Australia into the nation it is, as explored in the first chapter. The solidarity that the present generations have for these 'national achievements' and those who achieved them, is also the source of the responsibility for the unpopular and darker parts of the nation history. As Abdel-Nour, Young and others have discussed, individuals of today's society hold a responsibility for the events of the past due to their emotional and unbinding ties of community membership and identity. As Young argues, a responsibility that can only be unburdened through collective action and political change.

Chapter III: Australian political apology: Guilt, responsibility and reconciliation

The previous chapter looked at the concepts of and discourse around collective guilt and collective responsibility and signalled the importance of these concepts in the political arena. In the Australian context, these are brought into sharp relief through the debate surrounding a political apology for actions and injustices against its indigenous peoples. Political apology is Australia's modern form of engagement with theories of collective guilt and responsibility and for this reason it is the chosen focus of study.

This chapter will look at the response of two former Australian Prime Ministers: John Howard and his successor, Kevin Rudd, to calls for an official apology resulting from a report on indigenous child removal policies. It will analyse how the debate between collective guilt and collective responsibility played out in each of their attitudes and action towards a political apology. Howard viewed the idea of an official apology through the lens of guilt and rejected it as a negative and punitive measure. Rudd, on the other hand, responded positively, made an official apology and used it to articulate the intergenerational and collective responsibility of the Australian state.

There has been much scholarly debate since the 1990s around political apology as a growing trend in response to various historical injustices across the world. They are a fairly recent phenomenon in international relations, with more traditional forms of atonement and reconciliation taking the form of reparations and ad-hoc tribunals such as the Nuremburg trials (Daase,2010, p.24). Well-known examples of this apology phenomenon include; Pope John Paul II apologising for the silence and inactivity of the Catholic Church in challenging the Nazi regime; President Bill Clinton apologising to the native Hawaiians and to African American survivors of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment; and Queen Elizabeth II apologising for the British suppression of the Maori in New Zealand; to name only a few (Barkan and Karn,2006, p.7). With acknowledgments of regret and repentance coming from all over the globe for a variety of historical injustice and to agree with Professor of Law,

Roy L. Brooks – it would be safe to say we have entered the 'Age of Apology' (Brooks,1999, p.3).

This emerging global trend is hailed by some as political progress towards a more 'civilised' world; a perceived new interest in genuine political reconciliation (Montville,1993; Cooper,2001). Official apologies alter distorted and oppressive histories and 'set the record straight' by correcting official accounts (MacLachlan,2015, p.442). They represent and at times enact important public moral alteration by asserting the wrong in past norms and policies (MacLachlan,2015, p.442). Apologies for historical injustice in domestic affairs seek to bring the legal and political dimensions of membership into closer conjunction (Thaler,2012, p.268).

An apology, at its most basic, is an acknowledgement of an offense and an expression of remorse, usually coupled with an undertaking by the perpetrator of the wrong not to repeat the wrong committed (Jeffrey,2011, p.608). Matt James has condensed and developed five requirements of an 'authentic political apology', which have been taken from Nicholas Tauvichis' work on intra-personal apologies and further discussions on political apology by legal scholars, Martha Minow and Susan Alter and psychologist Janet Bavelas. James has added three additional criteria to adapt this framework to fit a socio-political setting. 'An authentic political apology', he argues:

'(1) is officially recorded in writing; (2) names the wrongs in question; (3) accepts responsibility; (4) states regret; (5) promises non-repetition; (6) does not demand forgiveness; (7) is not hypocritical or arbitrary; and (8) undertakes – through measures of publicity, ceremony and concrete reparation -both to engage morally those in whose name the apology is made and to assure the wronged group that the apology is sincere' (James,2008, p. 138-139).

Most of these criteria are uncontroversial however on the point of reparations there has been some scholarly debate. Eleanor Bright Fleming argues that it is the apology that can atone for past transgressions as money alone cannot make amends for injustice (2008, p.96). It is largely agreed however, especially by contributors to Mark Gibney's Age of Apology volumes, that some form of 'concrete reparations' reinforce the sincerity of an official apology (de Greiff,2008, p.133; Renteln, 2008,

p72 in Jeffrey,2011, p.609). Political theorist, Mathius Thaler, chimes into this debate by arguing that political apologies must be consequential and their sincerity measured against the consequences that they trigger (Thaler,2012, p.267). Whether that consequence comes from the addition of reparation or not, there must be some effect from the offered apology. Some go further and argue that political apologies must come with a robust commitment to substantial enfranchisement with a goal to enable citizens whose past of victimisation accounts for structural exclusion today, to fully realise membership in the political community (Nobles,2008, p.3).

However, cynical critics argue that political apologies are 'cheap' gestures and are awash in crocodile tears and self-interest (Cunningham,2004, p.53). If the political apology failed to match the criteria set out by James, this could very well be the case as it is a relatively easy way to 'right a wrong' - especially if no reparations are made or, returning to Thaler's argument, the apology is not consequential.

Political apology critic, Michel Rolph-Trouillot, argues that political apologies fail as political acts because they treat the collective as though it was an individual, in the modern/liberal sense, thereby committing a category mistake unacceptable to modern subjects (Rolph-Trouillot,2000, p.179). Danielle Celermajer who has written extensively on political apologies in Australia, has interpreted the answer to the question 'what type of act is an apology' in a very useful way. In agreement with critics like Rolph-Trouillot, Celermajer argues that collective apologies are 'aberrations' when viewed as individual acts, where the words of the apology reflect internal regret and are offered as a way of making up for the past wrong. Against this basic template, collective apologies are 'mistakes' as they substitute nations for individuals and prove inadequate in the face of gross injustice (Celermajer,2006, p.154).

Instead, her argument offers an alternative framework to view apologies as a means by which a group recognizes how its collective norms formed the necessary conditions for the wrongful act to occur and express shame for those ethical flaws (Celermajer,2006, p.155). Celermajer argues that political apology is a legitimate attempt to institutionalise a response to collective responsibility.

Political apology has been the route through which Australia has tried to respond to the issue of collective guilt and collective responsibility. However, it has taken the country a long time to reach this point in its journey of response and recognition and that journey has not been easy. Australia's relationship with its Indigenous Peoples has been troubled and turbulent. Although it has been under pressure to improve the lived experience of Indigenous Australians for many years, it was a report instigated in 1997 that finally raised the issue of an official apology to political prominence. This report recommended a range of measures to be taken by parliaments; one of which was a call for an official apology.

The *Bringing Them Home* report, was a national inquiry into the forced removal of indigenous children, which was part of government policy from the late 1880s to the 1970s. The children who were removed under this policy are commonly referred to as the 'Stolen Generations' (Rigny,1998, p.125). The inquiry made many recommendations in this report, but one of the most significant was the recommendation for all Australian parliaments to officially acknowledge the responsibility of their predecessors for the policies of child removal and to make a public apology (HREOC,1997, p.36).

The report had an overwhelming reception and some argued a more culturally transforming impact as everyday Australians were confronted with the realisation that Indigenous Australians had suffered this brutal racism in their lifetimes (Attwood,2005, p.252). After the report was released, there began a widespread outpouring of mass apology; a national 'Sorry Day' created; virtual and handwritten sorry books made and public walks organised as 'journeys of healing' (Gooder and Jacobs,2000, p.240).

The *Bringing Them Home* report, despite generating such support, split the public in two: with half supporting the report's recommendation of implementing an annual day of national apology as a form of restitution, whilst the other half opposed an official apology (Barkan,2000, p.247). From this latter half, there was a backlash against the imputation of guilt and responsibility for actions they did not personally commit (Celermajer,2006, p.153).

The lack of acceptance of any transgenerational responsibility or collective responsibility is based on the liberal understanding of guilt and blame supported and

encouraged by then Prime minister, John Howard. Howard's response to the report and the call for a national apology is useful in demonstrating the significance of the differentiation between the concepts of guilt and of responsibility in a settler-society context.

'Reconciliation will not work if premised on a sense of national guilt and shame… Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control' (Howard,1997).

This extract is taken from the opening address Howard gave at the Reconciliation Convention, 1997. This statement demonstrates Howard's belief that the concept of collective guilt can act as a barrier towards reconciliation and current Australians should not be made to accept a guilt that is not theirs to bear. This argument seems appropriate considering the discussions from the previous chapter, where we saw that guilt can only really be applied to an individual with some causal or direct link to a wrongful act.

However, the issue is that Howard understood that an apology could only be articulated through a lens of collective guilt, instead of seeing the opportunity to frame it within the context of collective responsibility, which excludes notions of guilt or blame. This is the key difference between Howard's concept of the apology and the concept articulated within the Stolen Generations report. By framing it through collective guilt, Howard perceives an official apology as punitive and backward in focus, whereas the report is far more concerned with the potential of a national apology to reconstruct social meanings in the present and future and is reconciliatory (Celermajer,2006, p.176).

This approach to the concept of collective guilt, is in line with the findings of studies produced on the impacts of a collective guilt approach. Collective guilt is known to produce resentment and ultimately counterproductive attitudes. A study by Iyer et al. (2004, p.350) found open rejection to the idea that European Australians should feel a sense of collective guilt, as guilt insinuates that there is blame. The use of this term suggests the current society is to blame for historic mistreatment of Indigenous Australians, which creates a barrier to reconciliation and resolution.

Howard attempted to confine consideration of Australia's discriminatory policies and wrongdoing solely to those of 'the past' which illustrates the danger of promoting a

discourse of reconciliation without having first achieved any solid form of restitution (Corntassel and Holder,2008, p.467). In doing so, Howard simultaneously downplays the importance of Australia's colonial past on present society and rejects the notion that the past has an impact on the present. The likelihood of Howard giving an apology, let alone a sincere one, was slim when he refused to engage with the idea of a continuing legacy of historical injustice against Indigenous Australians. Howard referred to indigenous injustice as 'blemishes' on Australia's 'proud history' and rejected any realistic portrayals of Australian colonial history as 'black-armband theory' (Howard,1997). He continued to deny the label of 'genocidal policies' that the Inquiry had given and employed intellectualisation and rationalisation of past policies, resulting in a 'those were the times' mentality (Veracini,2008, p.374).

Howard's opposition to the apology was not simply based on his personal objections to an official apology but was rooted in the ideological principles of the Liberal Party (Nobles,2014, p.125). Classical liberal jurisprudence of responsibility is structurally hostile to collective responsibility. This links with the debate in the previous chapter about the tension between individual and collective responsibility. In a liberal mentality, citizens and leaders can only be held responsible for the decisions that they have the power to affect, therefore, when Howard refused to apologise he was simply employing a commonly held notion from the liberal tradition on the limits of collective responsibility (Thompson,2009, p.197).

Howard used the liberal argument against the existence of a collective identity to challenge and refuse the call for an official apology. In conceptualising the collective responsibility as collective guilt, Howard put forward a solid case against apology or restitution based on the irrefutable fact that present-day Australians were not alive when violence occurred against Indigenous Australians and therefore, cannot be guilty.

Considering the discussion in the previous chapter, collective responsibility can offer greater opportunity for political change over collective guilt. The approach that Howard took, to view historic injustice through the lens of guilt, meant that he was unable to offer an apology and therefore reduced any potential for restitution and reconciliation for Indigenous Australians. An official apology equated acceptance of collective guilt for Howard, something that was incompatible with his believes and

the liberal principles to which he subscribed. His failure to view the apology through the lens of collective responsibility meant he was not able to offer a bridge to the past and therefore no possibility of change to the future. The next section will look at how Howard's successor, Kevin Rudd, who took a different approach, one of collective responsibility, and the significance that this had.

Ten years after the release of the Bringing Them Home report, there was a change of government from a Liberal Coalition to a Labour Government, led by Kevin Rudd. On the first day of parliament, Rudd made good on a promise he had made throughout his election campaign and made an official apology to the Stolen Generations. Choosing to make a political apology as his first official act as Prime Minister, Rudd supported the Labour Party line that they were the 'most sympathetic' party to Indigenous Australians (Nobles,2014, p.126). It gave a clear message too, that Rudd was prepared to change the political approach to Australia's colonial past and to separate with Howard's hard-line stance against an official apology.

Rudd's apology embraced a new approach of collective responsibility. It is clear in the response, both immediate and in the near decade since, that this had a powerful symbolic impact. Not only did his words resonate with those affected and their descendants, but his speech held great promise for reconciliation in Australia. It really began a conversation.

> 'We, the parliaments of the nation, are ultimately responsible, not those who gave effect to our laws. And the problem lay with the laws themselves.
>
> As has been said of settler societies elsewhere, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors; therefore, we must also be the bearer of their burdens as well' (Rudd,2008).

Rudd acknowledges here the transgenerational nature of responsibility and of the continuity of the parliaments of Australia, which both support the legitimacy of the apology.

There was an incredible response to the apology; it was symbolically important and the wording of the speech was well thought through. It had been created with the

help of indigenous advisors, itself an important development. The official acknowledgement of the Stolen Generation was welcomed effusively by Indigenous Australians (Moses,2011, p.152). Tom Calma, then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, stated that the 'national apology will directly benefit members of the Stolen Generations by validating their experiences and the rest of society by building a bridge between all Australians' (HREOC,2008).

Reconciliation Barometer from 2010 recorded an 'overwhelming' response that was virtually unanimous in agreement that the apology was important for Indigenous Australians and for the relationship between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians (Reconciliation Australia,2010). This initial response was incredibly positive.

Going back to Matt James' eight requirements for an 'authentic apology', Rudd's official apology meets at least six of these, including promises of non-repetition and accepting responsibility of 'past mistreatment'. It can be judged that Rudd's apology was sincere in that he engaged with the continuing legacy of historical injustice and connected his apology with reconciliatory practices (Thaler,2012, p.272).

However, although Rudd's apology was hailed for its sincerity, there was criticism from some indigenous leaders for separating an apology from any concrete discussions of restitution (Corntassel and Holder,2008, p.478). Despite his empathy with the Stolen Generation, Rudd did not advocate compensation, instead choosing to focus on future government policies as the means to ensure greater equality for all Indigenous Australians (Nobles,2014, p.127). Rudd vowed in his speech to assist Indigenous Australians in reconnecting with family members and for Indigenous Australians more widely, he introduced the idea of 'closing the gap'. This became the catch-phrase for government efforts in reducing the great inequities between Indigenous and settler Australians - in terms of life-expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities (Nobles,2014, p.127).

Although there some compelling arguments for reparations, it is perhaps not surprising that the idea did not garner wider favour. Equality and egalitarianism is an important part of the Australian psyche and political rhetoric (Halloran,2006, p.4). There was a fear that to give monetary compensation could run the risk of further ostracising Indigenous Australians as a group. Any form of 'special treatment' might

be rejected by settler Australians who did not accept the idea that Indigenous Australians still exist in a colonial relationship with the rest of Australia. Therefore, any such treatment could be viewed as 'reverse racism' in their eyes (Moran,2009, p.798).

The apology was viewed as a pivotal moment in indigenous affairs and for relations between Indigenous and settler Australians. An apology is inextricably linked to the 'membership status' dilemma in the settler Australian context, highlighted earlier in this paper. The reconciliation process involves a revelation of the injuries experienced by Indigenous Australians and these revelations present settler Australians with a vision of a nation improperly formed. They lose their sense of an 'innocent' national identity and a post-colonial apology offers a route to restitution of a 'legitimate' sense of belonging (Gooder and Jacobs,2000, p.243).

The apology provided a means for Australia to potentially shift its political culture. Using the authoritative voice of the Prime Minister, the apology attempted to delegitimise a political cultural norm that said that treating Aboriginal people as less than full citizens and human beings is acceptable (Celermajer,2006, p.176). However, the strength of this attempt is questionable for two reasons: the apology did not encourage nor refer to the acceptance of responsibility from everyday Australians and secondly, it was in reference only to the Stolen Generations and child removal policy. The apology was not for the more widespread enduring injustice of colonial settlement and the many subsequent discriminatory policies that affected Indigenous Australians. An apology can contribute to reconciliation by making it known that a moral norm was violated and to re-establish a 'common moral ground' (Jeffrey,2011, p.608). The underlying and continuing norm of racial discrimination and general prejudice against Indigenous Australians that affects all parts of society, was not referenced in this apology.

'We [Australians] are also a very practical lot. For us, symbolism is important but, unless the great symbolism of reconciliation is accompanied by an even greater substance, it is little more than a clanging gong. It is not sentiment that makes history; it is our actions that make history. Today's apology, however inadequate, is aimed at righting past wrongs' (Rudd,2008).

By viewing the Stolen Generations through a lens of collective responsibility instead of guilt, Rudd could perform a symbolic act of reconciliation, take a step towards 'righting past wrongs'. However, it was a small step and it should have been the first step of many (Peters,2012).

There has been very little change for the lived experience of Indigenous Australians in the near decade since the apology. It is believed that the apology was made with sincerity and was genuine. However, Rudd's government and subsequent governments have failed to deliver effectively on the collective responsibility for the enduring injustice against Indigenous Australians and all that it entails. Being overlooked in shops, refusal of hotel rooms, difficulties renting housing and constant harassment from police and authorities are a typical reality for Indigenous Australians (Moran,2009, p.784). If we take child removal, the subject of the official apology, there has been a 436% increase in care and protection orders issued for Indigenous Australian children between 2004-2013. The figure increased by 65% since Rudd took to parliament to 'make amends' (Behrendt,2015). The prevalence of indigenous children being removed resonates strongly with the Inquiry's report; that the removal of indigenous children was made possible because of the ongoing racially patterned norms, regulating who has a right to what. A norm that is persisting today (Celermajer,2006, p.168).

There is no doubt about the significance of Rudd's apology. With it we see a shift from a political narrative of collective guilt towards a narrative of 'collective responsibility' – Rudd articulates this within his speech many times. However, in taking the social connection approach, this is only the beginning - the first step.

If we accept that the apology made by Rudd was sincere and the promises of action were intended, then the lack of change in the inequalities faced by Indigenous Australians suggests that an apology will only take reconciliation and remedy so far. Collective responsibility is concerned with action and making amends to the enduring injustice. It requires action and change not only in government policy but in the attitudes and actions of its citizens. If all that is forthcoming is fine words and limited action, then only lip-service has been paid to this responsibility - it has not been embraced as it should.

An apology by government may be viewed as addressing a cause that was purely a bad policy, linking with Howard's statements that the policies were made with 'the best of intentions'. However, the problem is wider and goes deeper than that. Settler societies find it particularly difficult to offer apologies for what was entailed within the creation of their state (Manne,2013). The obligation to apologise is grounded in the very fact that the historical injustice is still marring society today. Membership theory further points to the need for dealing with social pathologies and systemic inequities that mark the body politic in its entirety (Thaler,2012, p.270).

This is a reason why an official apology from the parliament about a singular policy falls short of realising and accepting Australia's collective responsibility. Any apology should be backed up with real commitment to changing the systemic inequalities that have become the norm since colonisation. This means acknowledging the issues of inequality, past and present, and being open to change and willing to implement that change across Australian society.

This is what helps to drive political change. If understanding your past is viewed through guilt, there is no acknowledgment of the legacy of that past. The punitive aspect of guilt means that settler Australians reject any attempts to address this history and the ties that connect them to the present-day impact of that history dissolve.

Alternatively, a collective responsibility approach entails a connection to the past that does not encompass blame or a punitive accusation. An official apology, like the one given in Australia, is the beginning of accepting this responsibility. However, responsibility is also about the future and the necessary change that must be made to end the injustice of the past. An apology cannot illicit this change from society, this can only be obtained from collective action from the people and a receptive government. Through collective responsibility, Australia is much more likely to achieve the necessary political change needed for reconciliation.

Rudd changed the narrative from one of guilt to a conception of collective responsibility, which began a much-needed conversation, however his apology did not go far enough. For political change to happen and for a politics of reconciliation to be realised in Australia, the concept of collective responsibility based on the social connection model is the most useful and offers the greatest possibility for change. A

concept of collective responsibility that includes everyday Australians and encourages the acknowledgement and acceptance of their political responsibility for the enduring injustice towards Indigenous Australians.

Conclusion

At the Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, 1997, attended by then Prime Minister John Howard and many other notable academics and politicians, former deputy of the South Africa Truth Commission, Alex Boraine, spoke the following words:

'It is wrong to simply say 'turn the page'. It is right to turn the page, but first you have to read it, understand it and acknowledge it. Then you can turn the page' (Boraine,1997 in Celermajer,2009, p.196*).*

Two decades later, it may be argued that Australia is still on that same page.

As has been demonstrated throughout this paper, the past is very much part of the politics of the present. Australia has a distinctive settler colonial past, the legacy of which permeates modern day society. Not only has it resulted in longstanding and historic injustice and inequality for its Indigenous Peoples, but it has also, by its very nature, made the conditions for remedy and resolution difficult. Australians are proud of their history and settler Australian notions of identity are strongly embedded in this history. This has resulted in individuals having a very personal and emotional reaction to how this history is handled, as we have seen through the 'history wars' debate. As Australians have found justification in this history, the racism and discrimination that has underpinned it has never been fully admitted nor properly addressed and understood.

Dealing with past injustice is not an easy issue and the debate around how present societies should engage with that injustice is both broad and complex. In this process, the underlying emotions of guilt, blame and regret are important to understand. The overarching concepts of collective guilt and collective responsibility, important to any outcome, are themselves difficult and controversial. This paper has sought to examine guilt and responsibility and to draw on the debates of academics over the appropriateness of a collective application of guilt and responsibility in dealing with past injustices, particularly in the transgenerational context. In so doing, this paper is testimony to that complexity.

This paper concludes that the concept of collective guilt is problematic and has posed a continual barrier to settler Australians being able to openly and honestly engage with their colonial past and the legacy of injustice towards Indigenous Australians. A collective application of guilt is not appropriate in this context because of the primary connotations of guilt with blame and the widely held belief in civic society that guilt comes from having a causal relationship with the wrongful act.

Conversely, the paper contends that there is most potential for progress and resolution of past injustices in Australia if advanced through a frame of collective responsibility, as articulated by the theories of Arendt, Jaspers and Young. The collective application of responsibility links back to the past, however it is primarily focused on the future and what action can be taken to remedy the past injustice and therefore discharge that responsibility. Through the same emotion and pride that Australians feel for their country that spurs an accusation of guilt, this emotional tie and membership encourages the acceptance of responsibility and in turn, political change.

Political apology in Australia should have been the opening chapter in the unfolding story of reconciliation – however this has not been the case. It was intended to be the beginning of a new chapter for Australia and there is no doubt that many wished it to be. For some, however it was treated as the end of the tale and far enough on the journey to the resolution of the issues facing Indigenous and settler Australian relations - that no further action needed to be taken.

It can be understood from both the initial impact of Prime Minister Rudd's apology and from the dialogue surrounding it, that there is tremendous potential in political apology. If it is accompanied by deep understanding, strong commitment and intent alongside a plan to act, it can provide a platform on which to build reconciliation, remedy and resolution. To achieve this, both the problem and the solution need to be viewed through the lens of collective responsibility.

If Australia is to make real progress in addressing the past and current issues facing its Indigenous Peoples, it needs to shift its internal debate from a focus on the dichotomy between guilt and innocence to an acknowledgement of its collective responsibility and an acceptance of the need to act. If it does not do so, it will not, as

a nation, be able to create a new shared history and narrative of Australian citizenship.

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