POLITICS FIRST, LAUGHTER SECOND?

President Trump's border wall and the popular geopolitics of televised late-night political satire in the United States

by

K W Ho

S1274104

July 2019

MASTER'S THESIS

MA International Relations: Culture & Politics
Faculty of Humanities
Leiden University

ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to explore the ways in which coverage of President Trump's border wall in late-night political satire challenges geopolitical representations of Latin America and Mexico. In doing so, it establishes the border wall as a product of securitization practices that were fueled by a constructed geopolitical imagery of Mexico and Latin America. However, the case study shows that televised political satire reshapes this threatening image by desecuritizing the issue of migration. Bringing together critical geopolitics, political satire, and critical security studies, this thesis fills a gap in literature by demonstrating that political satire can, and should, be taken seriously as an object of study for the field of critical geopolitics and International Relations, more broadly.

Keywords: political satire, critical geopolitics, Donald Trump, border wall, securitization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

When President Trump announced his run in 2015, he stated that "[w]hen Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best … [t]hey're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Lee, 2015). Whilst blatantly misinformed, what he communicated was an idea about a place and its people.

Ideas of places and people beyond our borders can be conveyed in a variety of ways ranging from a personal level via sagas or tales, to on a large scale via print or broadcast media. Watching television can be crucial in raising public awareness since it presents information – in the shape of a news story – about distant events and places to those predominantly in the North. But this is hardly ever a neutral process. Time is limited and therefore precious, especially in broadcast media. Dedicating coverage to one place or event is often at the cost of another: in the 1990s, television coverage of Bosnia and Iraq outweighed that of the civil wars and humanitarian crises in Angola, Chechnya and Kashmir, prompting media observers to "conclude that television coverage … often unwittingly follows or helps to shape the foreign policy agendas of powerful states such as the USA, France, Russia and the UK" (Dodds, 2005a, p. 73; Ô Tuathail, 2002) for example, by reinforcing a hegemonic liberal ideology, or constructing a strong association between terrorism and Islam in a post-9/11 world (Dodds, 2005a).

The study of these constructed imaginaries or narratives of peoples, places and cultures abroad has been at the heart of the field of critical geopolitics (Dalby & Ó Tuathail, 1996; Dodds, 1996; Kuus, 2017; Menga, 2017; Ó Tuathail, 2002; Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). Departing from traditional geopolitics, the goal of critical geopolitics to explain that the spatialization of international politics is the result of a discursive construction. It sees geopolitics not as a domain of hard truths, but as "a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics and represent it as a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, peoples, and dramas" (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). It is not just about the representation itself, but also about how these portrayals inform policy decisions: "[c]ritical geopolitics is not simply about storytelling in terms of narratives but also about how those narratives inform the practices of diplomats" (Pamment, 2014, p. 49).

Given that critical geopolitics aims to "challenge hegemonic representations of global politics… we need to be attentive to the interconnections with popular culture and the way in which newspaper and other media forms might either reinforce or contest geopolitical images

and or representations" (Dodds, 2005a, p. 74). So, popular geopolitics, as a branch of critical geopolitics, studies how media and political elites construct a consistent representation of the world, since "[a]ll contribute in an interrelated manner to the construction of geopolitical life-worlds of citizens of states and to the wider global polity" (Dodds, 2005a, p. 76). In doing so, popular geopolitical scholars have studied Hollywood movies (Dodds, 2008; Löfflman, 2013; Power & Crampton, 2005), news media (Holland & Levy, 2018; Mawdsley, 2008; Sharp, 1996), public diplomacy (Pamment, 2014) as well as televised cartoons (Thorogood, 2016; Thorogood, 2018) and even stand-up comedy (Purcell, Scott Brown & Gokmen, 2009). But, to date, there seems to be little research to date on televised political satire.

That is a shame. Over the last decades, entertainment and satirical news programming have increased in popularity in such a way that it has, especially for a younger audience, overtaken hard, traditional news programs in terms of viewership (Dodds, 2005a; Hill, 2013; Rill & Cardiel, 2013). Particularly in the United States, there has been a shift in the relationship between politics and TV as new political entertainment shows (or *politicotainment*) have challenged network news programming (Jones, 2010). In a post-truth era where 'truthiness' (objectivity based on gut feeling) and 'alternative facts' permeate a media landscape that is increasingly divided among party lines, it seems that more and more people rely on political satire to be a trustworthy source of news; so much so, that both in 2000 and 2004 *The Daily* Show won a Peabody Award for its election coverage, and a few years later online audiences even awarded comedian Jon Stewart with the honor of being *Time'*s most trusted newsperson in the post-Cronkite era (Dagnes, 2010; Feldman, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2007). As such, political satire has become an increasingly important source of information on foreign affairs.

This thesis fills this gap by studying televised political satire from the framework of critical geopolitics. It does so by exploring the ways in which late-night political satire's counternarrative undermines geopolitical representations constructed by the Trump administration. The main research question this thesis addresses, then, is as follows: How does coverage on President Trump's border wall in late-night political satire challenge geopolitical representations of Latin America and Mexico?

In answering this question, this thesis is set up as follows. Chapter 2 starts with an introduction to critical geopolitics and synthesizes current academic literature in this field of study. In doing so, the gap that this thesis aims to fill becomes clear: in our field of International Relations, and more specifically the literature in critical geopolitics, there are

hardly any studies that devote attention to political satire. By drawing on literature from other disciplines, most notably Communication Science, it becomes clear that this lack of literature on political satire is unjustified. If critical geopolitics have studied journalism (for example, Sharp's (1996) study of *Reader's Digest*), and humor (Purcell, Scott Brown & Gokmen's (2009) analysis of Jeff Dunham's *Achmed the Dead Terrorist),* why have scholars not studied this increasingly popular type of comedic journalism that young audiences value more than traditional news outlets? Borrowing from Communication Science literature, this chapter demonstrates that political satire helps shape political understanding, and therefore it can be read as a geopolitical text that is worthy of being subject to critical geopolitical analysis and should not be dismissed as simply a form of entertainment.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology of this research project, discussing the use of discourse analysis in International Relations research. It also presents some background information on the political satire shows that were used as a sample in this research project. Using discourse analysis this thesis studies samples of late-night political satire sketches and monologues in order to uncover the underlying political practices that shape their audiences' political understanding. It does so, by analyzing segments of seven popular political satire shows in the United States: *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Late Night with Seth Meyers, Saturday Night Live (SNL), Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* and *Real Time with Bill Maher.*

Chapter 4 then focuses on President Trump's border wall a means to construct a geopolitical image of Mexico and Latin America. The case study illustrates how President Trump's securitization of the movement of people, culminating in his border wall proposal, was inspired by a geopolitical representation of Mexico, and Latin America more broadly. Late night-satire, with a function of subverting dominant discourses, actively desecuritizes the issue by mixing critique with comedy. Looking at a variety of shows, this case not only illustrates how political satire's discourse presents an oppositional narrative and contradicts official accounts of Mexico, immigrants, and the border wall's efficacy, it also shows how political satire follows a theoretical approach to desecuritization. All in all, the case study illustrates that, next to Hollywood movies and television, political satire deserves to be taken seriously within the field of IR.

The final, and concluding chapter 5 will then return to the main question of the thesis: How does coverage on President Trump's border wall in late-night political satire challenge geopolitical representations of Latin America and Mexico? The answer to the question is important in two ways.

First, by analyzing President Trump's border wall it provides the reader with a geopolitical analysis of a current event. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in answering the question, this thesis shows that President Trump's border wall policy proposal was a result of the securitization of migration. The president's securitizing discourse was fueled by the constructed geopolitical image of Mexico and Latin America as places that were dangerous and full of crime – therefore its citizens, and those migrating to the United States, were perceived as a threat. This narrative was challenged by political satirists, not just by simply opposing it, but by desecuritizing the issue of migration in the process of joking about it. By showing how political satire is intertwined with critical geopolitics and critical security studies, it makes a contribution to IR literature by demonstrating that political satire can, and should, be taken seriously as an object of study for the field of critical geopolitics and International Relations, more broadly.

2. Theoretical framework & literature review

This chapter lays out the connection between critical geopolitics and political satire. Starting with a discussion on the origin of critical geopolitics, it goes on to introduce the subfield of popular geopolitics and synthesizes the academic literature in this field. In doing so, the gap this thesis fills becomes clear: despite the influence of political satire on how individuals perceive the world, critical geopolitical literate on the genre is scarce.

Drawing on the field of Communication Science, where televised political satire has been studied for its effects on citizens' perceptions of politics and political knowledge, this chapter argues that political satire can, and should, be studied by those in critical geopolitics.

2.1 The origins of critical geopolitics

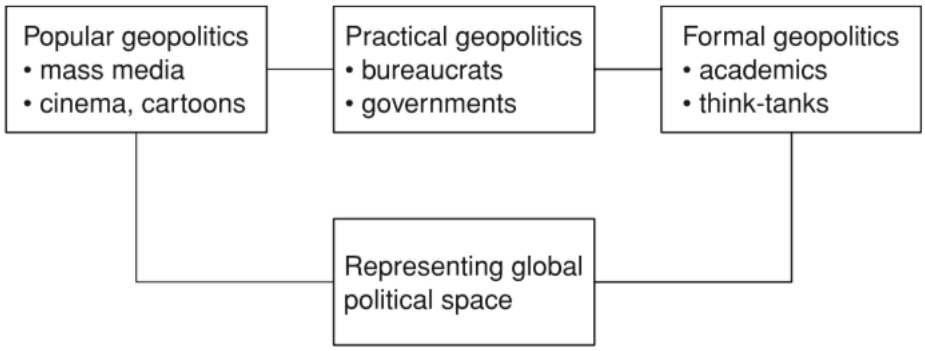
Geopolitics studies state behavior as a product of its geographical factors, and analyzes how factors such as location, natural resources, population and physical terrain dictate a country's economic and military capacity, and foreign affairs since "[a] state that is landlocked between two other states is likely to have very different foreign policy objectives from one that is surrounded by sea or other natural barriers" (Griffiths, O'Callaghan, & Roach, 2014, p. 129).

This conventional understanding of geopolitics implies that geopolitics are a given, a set domain based on facts and hard truths. However, Ó Tuathail and Agnew argue that geopolitical writing "was always a highly ideological and deeply politicized form of analysis … the practice of producing geopolitical theory has a common theme: the production of knowledge to aid the practice of statecraft and further the power of the state" (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 192). Thus, the authors propose a critical re-conceptualization of geopolitics using the concept of discourse, since "[g]eography is never a natural, non-discursive phenomenon which is separate from deiology and outside politics. Rather, geography as a discourse is a form of power/knowledge itself" (Foucault, 1980 & Ó Tuathail, 1989 cited in Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 192). As geographical descriptions, and imaginations, are essential to foreign affairs and security (Dodds, 2007), the field of critical geopolitics examines the ways in which this (geo)political knowledge is produced.

Underlying critical geopolitics is the idea that geopolitical knowledge is not a neutral reality, but that the spatialization of international politics is produced; intellectuals of statecraft construct imaginaries of places and peoples and frame these "within discourses of power,

space, and territory" (Mawdsley, 2008, p. 510; Menga, 2017; Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). This group of intellectuals of statecraft consists of those who "comment upon, influence and conduct the activities of statecraft" (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 193), a group of political elites including state leaders and foreign policy advisors. However, as mentioned in the introduction, and illustrated in Figure 1, the representation of international politics is influenced by both political and media elites. As Dodds (2005a) described it, "the diplomatic conference room and the battlefield are not considered disconnected and/or divorced from public culture" (2005a, p. 75). For representations to take shape, political elites, operating in the realms of formal and practical geopolitics, have to work together with media elites to present a consistent narrative. The study of how these representations of foreign people and places are shaped in the media is central to popular geopolitics.

Figure 1 – The link between formal, popular, and practical geopolitics (Dodds, 2005a, p. 76).



2.2 Popular geopolitics and political satire

Critical geopolitics challenges hegemonic representations of global politics. Since these hegemonic representations of politics are disseminated via the media, "we need to be attentive to the interconnections with popular culture and the way in which newspapers and other media forms might either reinforce or contest geopolitical images and or representations" (Dodds, 2005a, p. 74) as the media plays an important role in agenda setting by framing narratives in certain ways (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016).

Popular geopolitics studies these representations that are found in popular culture. For example, studies of Hollywood blockbusters such as the James Bond movies (Dodds, 2005b) or action-thrillers that addressed the War on Terror (Dodds, 2008) showed how geographic space was never simply a backdrop for the story, but rather a crucial element for the action

and resolution in these action movies. Löfflman's (2013) analysis illustrated how the US Department of Defense played a role in the cinematic production of national security in Hollywood movies.

Studies that examine political humor, however, are harder to find. Thorogood's (2018) research examined the controversial decision by *Archer'*s creators to remove ISIS from episodes of the satirical cartoon; Dodds (1996) made a case for studying political cartoons by looking at how Steve Bell's *If...* cartoons were an expression of dissident thinking and critiqued the 1982 Falklands War. Holland and Levy (2018) analyzed the representation of global events in *The Onion*, an online satirical news outlet, and found that the satirical newspaper's headlines implicitly critiqued the media and how it covers international events.

The lack of critical geopolitical literature on political humor may be attributed to the fact that, at first sight, humor may seem trivial for the study of international affairs. But if authors can agree that political cartoons can "be deployed as 'geopolitical texts', which illuminate or even subvert particular political practices such as foreign-policy decision-making" (Dodds, 2005a, p. 93), then so can – and should – political satire shows be regarded as such since they both contribute to public understanding of foreign affairs by mixing humor with an informative aspect. Considering that the main goal of satire is to offer a counternarrative and to uncover the lenses that society sees with, it is surprising that this particular genre has been studied by few – if not none – working in critical geography, specifically those in popular geopolitics.

In our era of the 24-hour news cycle, more and more people seem to be getting their information by watching TV (Feldman, 2007). But traditional news is no longer the only medium through which information about the places beyond our borders is disseminated to audiences at home – over the years, "for many young Americans, Jon Stewart's humorous *The Daily Show* [has become] their most important source of 'news'" (Dodds, 2007, p. 146). And it is not just *The Daily Show* – televised political satire has increased in popularity, with more political entertainment shows emerging in the last few years, and late-night talk show hosts often discussing the day's political events in their opening monologue (Brewer & Marquardt, 2007). Thus, by explicitly addressing political issues, the humoristic remarks of televised late-night satire (talk) shows are just as much, if not more, of a geopolitical text as one found in other forms of popular culture.

Political satire as a genre "exposes and ridicules the absurdities of its subject in order to affect (or prevent) change. It is typically subtle, relying on irony and deadpan delivery" (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2007, p. 313). Though satire might evoke connotations with humor, laughter and entertainment, Hall (2014) argues that it can serve a more serious purpose, namely that of education. In making his claim, he works off of Richard Ned Lebow's 2003 book *The Tragic Vision of Politics*. In this book, Lebow argues that realists should ground their thinking in a tragic vision of the political, as the realities of political life are best presented through tragedy since, regardless of our well-intended efforts, we will never achieve our ideals. In response, Hall argues that satire is equally capable, if not better, of providing political education and grounding international theory. Making use of irony, wit and ridicule, satirists aim to expose inconsistencies or contradictions in educating through playfulness and can either sustain or subvert a "dominant social order" (Griffin, 1994, p. 2 as qtd. in Hall, 2014, p. 223).

In fact, political satire inherently acts as a counter narrative to a dominant master narrative in society (Hill, 2013; Holbert, 2013). It is in these taken-for-granted understandings of the world that political satirists base their jokes, as they aim to disturb "what a culture deems normal by exposing hypocrisies and inequalities that master narratives attempt to conceal" (Hill, 2013, p. 328-9). Similar to tragedies, satire appeals to emotion and reason, affecting the way an individual perceives political actors, but also how one understands and evaluates the political sphere (Hall, 2014).

That being the case, it is surprising that critical geopolitical literature has not looked at the genre of televised political satire. So, in adding to the existing body of literature this thesis will focus on the geopolitical representations of president Trump's border wall and the US-Mexico relationship that are found in televised political satire in the United States. In order to do so, this paper draws on other disciplines that have studied political satire before, most notably Communication Science.

2.3 Political satire in Communication Science literature

Within the field of Communication Science, existing literature on political satire can largely be divided along two lines: one focusing on the effects of political satire assessing its persuasive impact on citizen's perceptions (Hill, 2013), and another pinpointing the understanding of political satire and whether knowledge generated through consuming political satire affects democratic outcomes either positively or negatively (Hill, 2013; Holbert, 2013)

The first line of research asks the question whether the message put forward in political satire changed individuals' attitudes or behaviors, and thus focuses on the persuasion of political satire (Balmas, 2014; Boukes, Boomgaarden, Moorman & de Vreese, 2015; Holbert, 2013; Rill & Cardiel, 2013). Overall, the effects of political satire on attitudes are mixed, not in terms of level of impact but rather in the variety of outcomes. In general, there seems to be little effect of political satire on changing individuals' attitudes or political efficacy (i.e. citizens' trust in government, and faith in one's own capacity to understand and participate in politics), regardless of the type of political satire consumed[1]. Also, despite an alleged increase in cynicism, there is little empirical evidence for a shift in volume of news consumption (Faina, 2012; Holbert, 2013; Jones & Baym, 2010).

The second line of research in Communication Science focuses on the understanding of satire and posits the question of whether political satire offers a positive or negative contribution to democracy. One recurring note in this line of research is that for an audience to understand political satire and to be able to laugh about it (that is, interpret it in the 'correct' or 'intended' way), the audience must first possess contextual knowledge. The largest gains in political knowledge by watching political satire are amongst those who customarily do not show much interest in politics; an effect that can be attributed to "political comedy's ability to generate enhanced subsequent attention to news content (i.e. the gateway hypothesis)" (Xenos and Becker, 2009, as cited in Holbert, 2013, p. 308). In other words, the consumption of political satire encourages those who lack background knowledge to seek information from traditional news outlets in order to help themselves (better) understand the jokes. As a result, oftentimes, those who watch political satire often do so as a supplement to traditional news, providing them with the ability to interpret and process political humor as this often consists of subtle, implicit political statements (Boukes et al., 2015; Holbert, 2013; Tsakona & Popa, 2011). Whilst it is widely accepted amongst these scholars that

[1] Political satire is commonly classified into one of two types: Horatian and Juvenalian. Borrowing from literary studies, Horatian satire is classified as mimicking comedy, whilst Juvenalian satire mimics the literary genre of tragedy (Lamarre, Landreville, Young & Gilkerson, 2014). Of the two, Horatian satire is the 'lighter' version, a less serious form of humor, whilst Juvenalian satire is often considered more bitter or even cynical (Boukes et al., 2015; Hill, 2013; LaMarre et al., 2014). Since Juvenalian satire has a more serious undertone, it is regarded as the more persuasive form of satire, emphasizing the educational aspect over the entertaining one, but does require its audiences to have more knowledge about the subject than Horatian satire does (Boukes, 2018; LaMarre et al., 2014).

entertainment media plays an important role in shaping political perceptions and understandings (Balmas, 2014; Young, Holbert & Hall Jamieson, 2014), entertainment media, and political satire in particular, is aimed at a certain audience that consists mainly of young adults (Boukes et al., 2015). Political satire is particularly effective for shaping the political understanding of emerging adults, as it provides commentary and interpretations that demonstrate prevailing ideas in critical discussions, more so than traditional news does (Boukes et al., 2015; Niven, Lichter & Amundson, 2003). Thus, if there is any effect of political satire on political knowledge, it mainly concerns this demographic.

The results of this line of research are, similar to the first, mixed. Empirical evidence to date indicates that political satire is neither good nor bad for democracy as a result of three associations: (1) mixed effects of the persuasiveness of political satire; (2) a weak but positive relation between political knowledge and political satire; (3) a negative connection between self-efficacy and political satire effects (Holbert, 2013).

According to Tsakona and Popa (2011), it is the exact nature of political satire and the actors within this realm that challenge research findings as it seems to recycle mainstream political views rather than critique. Pop culture is inherently complicit in maintaining hegemony (Dalby & Ó Tuathail, 1996), and since political satire shows are seen as part of popular culture, it risks reinforcing hegemonic narratives, rather than opposing them. This would best be resolved by minimizing production constraints on creative terms, taking into consideration that by nature political satire goes against normative ideals and should offer new knowledge and alternative ways to approach politics (Young et al., 2014), or, as Holbert (2013) described it, satire should live up to its principles and be an "equal opportunity attacker" (Holbert, 2013, p. 314), expressing opposition by satirizing those in power regardless of their political views.

Televised political satire brings geopolitics and humor together. Where the two may seem incompatible at first, the media can "enable particular geopolitical scripts and identities to be mobilized, circulated, and consumed within public spheres" (Dodds & Kirby, 2013, p. 49). They provide audiences with information that they, as citizens, use to shape their ideas on global politics and influence how they perceive foreign policy. The use of humor can reframe information by making "the familiar seem fantastical, especially through particular spatial imaginations and representations" (Dodds & Kirby, 2012, p. 56). Since the humorous remarks in satire mirror the ways in which normal citizens discuss politics, humor is essential

for an engaged public debate (Faina, 2012; Hariman, 2008 cited in Bailey, 2018; Niven, Lichter & Amundson, 2003; Purcell, Scott Brown & Gokmen, 2009). Especially in the era of 'alternative facts' and 'truthiness', satire is apt to point out the differences between what is happening in society and what politicians tell us is happening around us; "highlighting inconsistencies in political rhetoric, satire programs humorously demonstrate where the politician or the political system more broadly is dysfunctional" (Boukes, 2018, p. 3), and can educate viewers about politics, policy issues, and foreign affairs (Brewer & Marquardt, 2007).

Political satire, and political humor more broadly, can therefore be seen as powerful tools to communicate political ideas that enable citizens to shape their own understanding of foreign affairs. If critical geopolitics aims to understand how political views of international affairs are constructed, it should aim to study all sources that citizens rely on to get their information. As the synthesis above has illustrated, if political satire is an increasingly popular and trustworthy source of news, then it is no more than logical that this genre can and should be studied by scholars in the field of critical geopolitics, and International Relations more broadly.

3. Research methods & design

Rather than focusing on the effects of political satire like previous works have done, this thesis will concentrate on the message that is put forward in political satire – using the framework of critical geopolitics this thesis will explore *how* and which geopolitical representations are portrayed in coverage of the border wall in late-night political satire shows.

This chapter starts with a discussion on the research method that this thesis employs. Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992) pointed out that geopolitics is often seen as being "first and foremost, about *practice* and not discourse" (1992, p. 191, italics original). To some extent, this is true: implementing sanctions against other countries, invasions, and the deployment of military force are all practical matters. But, from the perspective of critical geopolitics, it is only through the use of language and discourse that decisions to interact with other countries – whether peacefully or in times of conflict – take shape: "[i]t is through discourse that leaders act, through the mobilization of certain simple geographical understandings that foreign-policy actions are explained and through ready-made geographically-infused reasoning that wars are rendered meaningful" (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 191). Said differently, words inform actions, and therefore should not be seen only as "units of meaning, but also units of power" (Gray, 2006, p. 39). Critical geopolitics, thus, is not about the end result; but studies *how* these actions come about. It analyses and deconstructs the carefully employed discourses by intellectuals of statecraft, seeing discourse a form of power/knowledge itself (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 192; Pamment, 2014). Thus, it should come as no surprise that this thesis uses discourse analysis to study the geopolitical construction of meaning.

The second part of this chapter, then, introduces the seven shows were sampled for the case study: *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Late Night with Seth Meyers, Saturday Night Live (SNL), Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* and *Real Time with Bill Maher.*

3.1 Discourse analysis in IR

Since the purpose of this thesis is to uncover the political practices that lie behind the representation of US foreign policy in political satire, it is concerned with the interpretation of information provided – in this case, the discourse of televised political satire.

Within International Relations, discourse analysis has mostly been aimed at explaining how dominating or hegemonic discourses produce and reproduce meaning, a discursive practice also referred to as the 'play of practice' (Milliken, 1999). Four main methods, building on each other and often used in conjunction, to review this play of practice can be identified: (1) a *deconstructive method*, revealing the contingent nature of discourse by showing a lack of foundation and presenting alternative interpretations; (2) a *juxtapositional method* that sets the orthodox meaning of a discourse side by side with events and issues previously unmentioned in order to reveal the political nature of discourses; (3) a method concerning *subjugated knowledges*, which builds on the juxtapositional method by not simply comparing discourses, but an in-depth examination of conditions of resistance or dominance inherent in discourse; and (4) the *genealogical method*, emphasizing that discourses' power relations with the past are "artificially conserved and order is created from conditions of disorder" (Milliken, 1999, p. 242-3, italics in the original).

All four methods can be used to study the discourse of televised late-night political satire, but the last two approaches using subjugated knowledges and genealogy are most suitable for this thesis: not only do these approaches illustrate how discourses can and have been interpreted differently, they encourage audiences to question what they usually take for granted by showing "that the world has been and is being interpreted (judged, enacted) in different ways in a routine and regular fashion by various groups and cultures as part of their everyday being-in-the-world" (Milliken, 1999, p. 243-4). Since satire expresses opposition by ridiculing the normalcies constructed by hegemonic narratives, it overlaps with the approach using subjugated knowledge as a discourse of resistance; and the genealogical method corresponds with critical geopolitics' preoccupation with the production of (geo)political knowledge as an expression of power.

3.2 Sample selection & data

As an important segment of the mass media, TV plays an important role in shaping audience's imagined geographies and world views. This is not to say that watching TV is a crucial activity that empowers individuals with the knowledge and capacity to save democracy – rather, as Jeffrey P. Jones said, "popular culture [not only] humanizes, simplifies, and embodies complex issues, concepts and ideas … [it also] can support a civic culture when both producers and audiences make or find programming or other cultural practices politically meaningful and engage them as such" (Jones, 2010, p. 38-9). Televised political satire offers a combination of entertainment and information that wraps an important

informative message in laughter, and may offer a helping hand in creating an educated civil society particularly with a young demographic (Gottfried & Barthel, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2012).

To explore the geopolitical representations of satirical shows I will rely on widely available short videos that are posted by these shows on their YouTube channels. A selection of shows is sampled from both cable and network TV: *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Late Night with Seth Meyers, Saturday Night Live (SNL), Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* and *Real Time with Bill Maher.*

Perhaps the most well-known political satire show, *The Daily Show*, reports on the day's headlines and political affairs four nights a week 'from Comedy Central's world news headquarters in New York'. It is known as a 'fake news show', satirizing both the substance and form of traditional news programming (Brewer & Marquardt, 2007). On air since 1996, its popularity skyrocketed during the reign of former host Jon Stewart, the show has won 24 Primetime Emmy Awards. Its popularity has also prompted scholars in Communication Science or Media Studies to analyze the show, oftentimes together with its companion *The Colbert Report*, launched in 2005 (Baumgartner & Lockerbie, 2018; Baym & Jones, 2012; Brewer & Marquardt, 2007; Hmielowski, Holbert & Lee, 2011; Rill & Cardiel, 2013; Young, Holbert & Hall Jamieson, 2014).

Whilst the last episode of *The Colbert Report* aired in 2014, Stephen Colbert now hosts *The Late Show*. Despite the fact that he no longer plays a political pundit by parodying Fox News' Bill O'Reilly, Colbert kept most of his former staff from the *Colbert Report* (Weprin, 2015), and politics are still central to his opening monologue. Besides *The Late Show*, Brewer & Marquardt (2007) found that two other late-night talk shows often covered politics: *Late Night*, and *Politically Incorrect*, hosted by Conan O'Brien and Bill Maher, respectively. Whereas *Late Night* is no longer hosted by O'Brien, current host Seth Meyers has kept the political commentary in place by introducing his signature segment called 'A Closer Look', a desk piece following the monologue in which Meyers provides an in-depth explanation – and ridicule – of a complex political issue. Meyers' 'Closer Look' normally takes about twelve to fifteen minutes, and appears, on average, once a week.

Both *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* are hosted by former *Daily Show* correspondents and provide an in-depth analysis of the current affairs and politics, but do so on a weekly basis by dedicating a full 30-minute show to the issue at hand. Currently in its sixth season, *Last Week Tonight* has received critical acclaim

and is known for having real-world influence as Oliver's segments often feature a direct call for action or present a viral hashtag (Romano, 2017).

Politically Incorrect broke grounds by presenting a roundtable discussion hosted by a comedian featuring four guests who were often not political experts, but was cancelled after a successful run due to comments that Bill Maher made in response to 9/11 (Jones, 2010). Nonetheless, Maher is now back on air with *Real Time*, which airs once a week and is basically a continuation of the format that made *Politically Incorrect* such a success.

Last, *Saturday Night Live* is a sketch comedy show that airs once a week on – as the name implies – Saturdays. Next to political sketches (for example, during the Trump presidency they had recurring sketches featuring Alec Baldwin as Donald Trump, and other crew members as members of his administration), the show also has a mock news segment called 'Weekend Update' that mirrors a news broadcast, with two 'anchors' presenting the week's events from behind a news desk. Even though the segment usually only takes up 10 minutes of the 90-minute show, it is the longest-running recurring sketch and has become an icon of fake news programming (Day & Thompson, 2012).

Even though all these shows air in the United States, by uploading their videos to YouTube they can be seen by an international, global audience. Each of these programs does satire in their own way: a number of these shows air once a week, others air four or five days a week; some satire is based on sketches whereas other shows use panel discussions/interviews or monologues – yet all discuss politics in an informative and entertaining way.

Although previous studies on late night political comedy found that the majority of jokes was targeted at the personal characteristics of politicians, rather than policy issues (Niven, Lichter & Amundson, 2003), this thesis has chosen a policy issue to focus on because it has come to define the presidency of Donald Trump: his wall on the country's southern border with Mexico. A policy proposal that, as the next chapter shows, would not exist without a carefully constructed geopolitical image of Mexico and Latin America.

4. Case study

The US-Mexico border, as one of the longest and busiest borders between 'first' and 'third' world countries, has for centuries been home to a clandestine border economy. Border apprehensions skyrocketed throughout the 1980s, stimulating heightened control. By the mid 1990s, the US government launched Operation Hard Line to fight drug trafficking and illegal immigration, allocating the US Border Patrol a budget of almost US$ 900 million by the turn of the century, which was used to strengthen the border with new surveillance and fencing equipment (Andreas, 2000 cited in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

Despite these efforts to reinforce the border, illegal immigration remained an issue high on the country's political agenda. So, when he announced his bid for the presidency in 2015, Donald Trump ran on a policy proposal that would stop 'bad *hombres*' from crossing the border: he would build "a big, fat, beautiful wall" (Finnegan, 2016; Fukuyama, 2018). Throughout his campaign, 'build that wall' became a rallying call for his supporters, and almost four years later, crowds at Donald Trump's rallies still chant the phrase, despite – or perhaps thanks to – the little progress that has been made (Haltiwanger, 2019).

This chapter ties together critical geopolitics, critical security studies, and political satire by taking a closer look at President Trump's border wall. First, it will address issues of identity, space, and security, as these are at the core of his border wall proposal: by talking about Mexico and Latin America as a place that consists of criminals, drug lords and terrorists, and having this narrative reinforced in certain media outlets such as Fox News, President Trump and his administration have created a geopolitical representation of the country's southern neighbors that staged an existential threat and justified an extreme measure such as the construction of a border wall. Following that, by analyzing clips from late-night political satire in a case study, this chapter shows how political satire, despite the playful jokes, actually follows a theoretical approach to desecuritization.

4.1 Societal security, ontological security & national identity

Throughout history, walls have been crucial for national security: they were seen as a show of power and establishing security in a straightforward way; the construction of a physical barrier that keeps the enemy out of one's sovereign territory. For long, these kinds of national state interest, military-related issues were at the heart of security studies, a subfield of International Relations. However, in the post-Cold War era a more critical approach towards

this traditional state-centric understanding of security emerged. This school of thought, known as 'Critical Security Studies', departs from traditional security studies in that it advocates for a broader understanding of security that focuses not only the security of people, but also includes the environment and public health as security issues (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998; Griffiths, O'Callaghan & Roach, 2014; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

More specifically, since contemporary societies face threats from a multitude of matters, security analysts should approach security in five distinct sectors: military, environmental, economic, political, and societal (Buzan, 1991). That is to say, whilst the military threat does continue to exist – a contemporary example would be the heightened tension between North Korea and the United States following the 2019 Hanoi Summit – there are a host of other issues that can threaten a nation's security. One of those issues, the societal one, is at the heart of this chapter's case study.

If societal security depends on self-sustaining identity groups, then societal *in*security arises "when communities of whatever kind define a development or potentiality as a threat to their survival as a community" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998, p. 119). In recent years, immigration and the refugee flows have come to represent the threat to individuals' sense of a shared national identity, especially in rural areas, allowing populist politicians to rise to the top by promising to 'take their country back' from newcomers who call into question their traditional understanding of national identity by bringing in different values and cultures (Fukuyama, 2018; Mudde, 2004; Noble, 2005; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010). By constantly referring to all Mexican immigrants as *'bad hombres'* who bring drugs and crime into the country, he not only "underscore[s] a common public perception that crime is correlated with immigration" (Lee, 2015), he also connects crime with Mexican culture. As such, his voter base has come to see immigrants as fundamentally at odds with the American national identity, an identity that has come to define the U.S.' political spectrum: where the left proclaims a more inclusive understanding of identity that focuses more on protecting the rights of marginalized groups, the right presents itself as a group of patriots safeguarding a national identity that is now often exclusionary by explicitly connecting it to race, ethnicity, or religion (Agnew, 1994; Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998; Fukuyama, 2018; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

For those who understand national identity as based on race, ethnicity, or religion, the arrival of immigrants and refugees is interpreted as a critical threat to ontological security. Ontological security refers to the trust and confidence in day-to-day action and discourse to

stay as they are (Giddens, 1991; Whittaker, 2018). This can be disrupted by a critical threat, or an event that is unpredictable, has a major impact on a large number of people, disrupts routines and distorts self-identities (Giddens, 1979, cited in Eijdus, 2018). A critical threat does not have to be defined as one by researchers or grounded in hard truths – what really matters is that policy makers understand them as such since "they are social constructions produced in the very process of interpretation" (Ejdus, 2018, p. 886; Steele, 2008). Thus, critical threats can be constructed using certain discourses. By describing Central- and Latin-American immigrants as 'rapists' who bring 'drugs and crime' into the country, thereby threatening the 'American way of life' (Lee, 2015), President Trump leveraged a geopolitical imagery of Latin America in the construction of a critical threat that is perceived as jeopardizing the nation's ontological security and national identity. And in staging this threat, he securitized the issue of migration.

4.2 The securitization of migration

Securitization is "a political technique with a capacity to integrate a society politically by staging a credible existential threat in the form of an enemy" (Huysmans, 1998, 577). By securitizing an issue it is given the same degree of urgency as a military threat: state or community leaders can demand emergency action to ensure the community's survival, enabling a type of emergency politics brushes aside deliberation, participation, and bargaining in favor of a militarized mode of thinking (Huysmans, 1998; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010). As such, communities are mobilized against an enemy – an enemy that is the result of political identification practices that are based on an in-group/out-group dynamic. Huysmans fittingly described the mobilization of communities using fear of migration as follows: "[the securitization of migration] reproduces a political myth that a homogenous national community or Western civilization existed in the past and can be re-established today through the exclusion of those migrants who are identified as cultural aliens" (Huysmans, 2000, p. 758).

On top of that, "[t]he emergence of an enemy creates an extreme condition of exception which legitimates an exceptional authority" (Huysmans, 1998, p. 579). This authority was used by President Trump not only to shut down the US government for 35 days, making it the longest shutdown in history (Ballhaus, Peterson & Salama, 2019), but also to declare the situation at the border a national emergency to secure funding for his wall, causing funds that were already spent elsewhere or directed to military construction projects to be recalled (Chappell, 2019; Graves, 2019).

To counter this escalation into emergency mode, issues should be *desecuritized* by placing them back into the normal bargaining processes of everyday politics (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). Huysmans (1995) identified three strategies to 'desecuritize' an migration: the first is the 'objectivist strategy', which desecuritizes an issue by proving that migrants do not threaten 'our' identity; the second, the 'constructivist strategy' aims to undermine the influence of securitizing moves by "developing a broader understanding and awareness of how migrants are constructed as threats"; last, the 'deconstructivist strategy' utilizes the voices and first-hand experiences of migrants to "break down exclusionary notions of 'us' and 'them'" (Huysmans, 1995, p. 66-67, cited in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010, p. 84-5).

In the narrative that is presented by the Trump administration, the wall needs to be built in order to save national identity by marking the jurisdiction of a territorial state and reinforcing the belief that a state can, and should, exercise its right to control the flow of people across its borders, and with that, control day-to-day activities (Finnegan, 2016; Fukuyama, 2018; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010), or as Andreas (2000) put it: "[b]y constructing an impression that the border was 'under siege', local and national politicians could then present themselves as guardians of the nation" (Andreas, 2000 cited in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010, p. 142).

This nation, the key object of study in our field of International Relations, would not exist without a border; yet the goal of critical geopolitics is to problematize this idea of the border as a demarcation of territory and to analyze its symbolic value (Agnew, 1994). As such, Brown has argued that walls are not just material barriers, but "symbolic performances designed to deal with popular anxieties about the loss of sovereign power" (Brown 2010, cited in Callahan 2018, p. 463). It is not so much about the wall itself, or the boundary that it demarcates, but about the socio-spatial differences between Us and the Others that contribute to the politics of identity formation through "signs, identifications, representations, performances and stories" (van Houtum, 2005, p. 675; see also Dodds, 2005a).

For critical geopolitics, the president's border wall represents a symbolic effort to "distance oneself from the other in order to uphold the (fantasy of the) self during feelings of fear or anxiety" (van Houtum, 2005, p. 677). From the perspective of security studies, the wall is an emergency action taken as a result of fear or anxiety. But for political satire, the wall is first and foremost a policy proposal that is worthy of ridicule. The case study below starts by

illustrating how political satire shows ridicule President Trump's border wall proposal for its futile efforts at improving border security and curbing migration. It then continues by showing how, in joking about the president's border wall proposal, late-night political satire shows actually employ all three desecuritization strategies as an expression of opposition.

4.3 The border wall & desecuritization in political satire

In his presidential election campaign, Donald Trump ran on the promise that if he won the election, he would 'from day one' start building a wall and make Mexico pay for it. Establishing himself as a political outsider, his antics soon provided late-night comedians with 'comedy gold'; but polls did show that the then candidate was leading in the Republican primary (Lopez, 2015; Rich, 2015). Thus, refusing to dismiss him out of hand, John Oliver dedicated a full show on President Trump's border wall arguing that "[t]he border wall is one of the few policy proposals Trump has talked about in detail, so instead of mocking or dismissing it out of hand … let's take a series of proposals by a serious presidential candidate seriously" (LastWeekTonight, 2016, March 20, [01:17-01:30]). And in taking the proposal seriously, the comedian pointed out the main reason why the wall would not stop migrants from entering the country.

> Trump might well argue having a wall is worth all of this because it will act as a fortress to stop people and drugs flowing across the border, but let's look at that because the most recent authoritative estimate suggests nearly half of the unauthorized migrants in the U.S. entered legally through an airport or a border crossing, usually with visas that they overstayed. A wall can't stop that. It's like wearing a condom to protect against head lice. (LastWeekTonight, 2016, March 20, [12:05-12:32]).

Since the southern border had for long indeed been the place where migrants entered the country (Andreas, 2000 cited in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010), it had come to be associated with (illegal) immigration. Putting up a wall would make sense if the border was indeed still where migrants enter the country, but by drawing attention to the fact that migrants actually enter the country in different ways, political satirists point out that the wall would not stop immigration at all. Yet, the president held on to his claim, reiterating the need for a border wall, because "immigrants have deadly supercars" (the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2019, January 9).

> [clip of Trump speaking from the Oval Office] The fact is that if we don't have barriers, walls, call them what you want, but if we don't have very strong barriers where people can not, any longer, drive right across… They have unbelievable vehicles, they make a lot of money. They have the best vehicles you can buy. They have stronger, bigger and faster vehicles than our police have, and than ICE has, and than border patrol has.
> [Stephen Colbert imitating Trump] I'm telling you these immigrants have unbelievable vehicles. Some of these cars are so big, so long, they have wings on the side, and they carry hundreds of people and they give out little bags of honey roasted peanuts and free coke. Fly right over. (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2019, January 9 [07:05-07:45])

Trump's comments exemplify the resentment at indignities that mobilized his strong rural voter base (Fukuyama, 2018) as it implies a sense of victimhood. By pointing out that the 'unbelievable vehicles' are, in fact, airplanes, Colbert not only asserts that a wall will not stop this kind of 'unbelievable vehicle', he also rejects the notion that immigrants should be feared because they overpower U.S. law enforcement. Even if a wall were put up, John Oliver pointed out another flaw in President Trump's proposal.

> [Al Jazeera commentator] First of all, if you build a 30-foot wall all it's gonna do is create a market for 31-foot ladders
> …
> [Donald Trump] So you take precast plank, it comes 30 feet long, 40 feet long, 50 feet long, there's no ladder going over that. If they ever get up there, they're in trouble because there's no way to get down. Maybe a rope.
> [John Oliver] Yeah. Yes! Maybe a rope! Yes, Yes! Your brilliant plan has been undone by mankind's third invention! (LastWeekTonight, 2016, March 20, [12:48-13:52])

In this, Oliver emphasizes that there are very simple ways to get around the physical obstacle of a wall, something that *The Daily Show* also did by elaborating on a segment from the evening news.

> [Noah] While America is at Home Depot shopping for the border wall it might want to pick up a spare.
> [Evening news segment] Illegal immigration from Canada is soaring. Last year Border Patrol agents along the northern border caught 3,027 people who were in the country illegally.

> Nearly half, 1,489 were from Mexico. Mexican citizens don't need a visa to enter Canada, and one-way flights to Toronto and Montreal only cost about $300
> [Noah] Yeah. You heard that right. Mexicans are coming in through the northern border now. Poor Trump, man. I feel like he's gonna be done with the wall, he's gonna lay the last brick on the wall with his bare hands and he's gonna be like 'finally, my beautiful wall is complete' and then he turns around and there's a bunch of Mexicans saying 'good job, Mr. President! (Comedy Central UK, 2018, August 8, [00:59-01:55]

All the excerpts above allude to the fact that immigrants generally no longer enter the country by crossing the southern border, therefore the wall is a futile effort to stop immigration. Rather, it is the symbolic performance of power that Brown (2010, cited in Callahan, 2018) described, not really "keep[ing] foreigners out, [but instead producing] a xenophobic identity" (Callahan, 2018, p. 457). All these shows mention the alternative ways in which immigrants actually enter the country, opposing the image of migrants storming the border. The wall would not stop immigration because immigration does not happen at the border, or as Stephen Colbert put it

> [Colbert commenting on President Trump's speech in the middle of the government shutdown] Reports say that he was not inclined to give the speech, was talked into it by advisors, saying 'it's not going to change a damn thing but I'm still doing it'. Which would also be a very honest pitch for the wall (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2019, January 9 [04:58-05:17]).

Questioning why the wall would then still need to be built, John Oliver played footage of an interview with a ranch owner near the border.

> [Oliver] That is not to say that the idea of the wall is not still comforting for some people, or as one man who actually lives near the border puts it
> [Ranch owner near the border] This was put up to… illustrate to Joe wherever up in Dubuque or someplace … They see a picture of this and their overstuffed butts in an overstuffed chair looking at a too big TV thinking 'oh yeah, that'll stop them'. Well of course it doesn't (LastWeekTonight, 2016, March 20, [15:51-16:24]).

By having someone who actually lives near the border speak, the show emphasizes that the narrative that is created by the Trump administration stands in stark contrast with the realities

of life at the border. Again, this shows the symbolic function of the wall, but it also indicates that the staged existential threat underlying the securitization only works for a certain target audience that gets their information not from observing the situation at the border themselves, but by having the border *re*presented to them via the media.

Contrary to the president's promises, construction of the wall did not start on day one. A year into the Trump presidency, Executive Order 13767 was signed directing the government to start construction on the wall (The White House, 2017). Still, construction was delayed since the president struggled to secure funding for his border wall, even threatening to shut down the government should Democrats in Congress not approve a budget that included funds for the wall (Yuhas, 2017). However, looking back at the postponed construction Seth Meyers identified another reason why the wall was not being built.

> We all know the wall was the most memorable promise of Trump's campaign, and refrained at all of his rallies. And no matter how much he talked about building a physical wall, to many of his supporters, the wall remained an imaginary thing. We're at a weird point where Trump is basically the last guy who wants a wall. I mean, it's fun to chant "Build the wall", but they didn't expect it to happen any more than they expected Trump to actually lock her up. If you go to a Mets game, you chant "Let's go Mets", but you don't really expect them to go … Trump just made stuff up off the top of his head because the wall was a ridiculous thing he never thought he'd actually have to build. At any point in the last two years, Republicans – who controlled the House and the Senate – could have given Trump money for the wall, but they didn't, because it was obviously insane (Late Night with Seth Meyers, 2019, January 9 [01:37-05:00]).

By reminding the audience that the Republicans controlled both the House and the Senate, and thus had the power to pass the budget if they wanted to, Meyers refuted the president's claim that the Democrats were to blame for the delays in construction. Budget disagreements continued into 2018, with estimates ranging from US$8 to US$18 billion. Eventually, President Trump let go of the need for Mexico to pay for it, claiming that the wall would 'pay for itself' in reduced crime rates and drug offenses. By the end of March, Congress presented a spending package that would allocate a little over US$1.5 billion for border security, or, as the media put it, enough for a fence, not a wall (Jenkins, 2018).

Commenting on the delayed construction, Bill Maher offered his critique by pointing out how those who felt threatened by the migrants did not need the symbol of a wall in order to feel that way.

> Except now it's a fence. Problem is, Trump fans don't want a fence. Or a river, or a virtual barrier, they want a fucking wall because a wall represents an impregnable barrier that keeps out not just Mexicans but everything that makes them feel antsy about the old America that's slipping away […] Except it doesn't work that way. Most illegals don't even cross the border. They come here the same way you came back from Cabo: they catch a flight and then they just stay […] Even Trump admitted the wall was bogus when he was caught on tape on a call to Mexico's president saying 'the wall is the least important thing we are talking about'. It was always just an applause line that got out of hand. So there you have it. The wall will not help with employment, it's not feasible to build, and even Trump knows it's bullshit. And if all that isn't enough to deter you, let me add this Trumpsters: you don't need it because everything that wall represents – the bigotry, the racism, the ignorance, the paranoia – is already in your heart. [applause and laughter] (Real Time with Bill Maher, 2018, February 2 [01:51-04:01])

In doing so, Maher not only reiterates the fact that most migrants do not enter the country by crossing the border (and therefore a wall is a futile attempt at stopping immigration), he also addresses the ontological insecurity that Trump voters may feel as society has become more diverse. This sense of ontological insecurity was also ridiculed by Trevor Noah when he jokingly insinuated that the influx of migrants has already changed 'the old America' so much, that even the English language had made place for Spanish.

> Also, this is incredibly insulting to Canadians. Mexicans make it all the way to Canada and they still decide to keep going to the US. Canadians must be like 'hey, but we have free health care and low crime, why would you go to America?' and they're like 'yo, if I'm being honest man, I just want to be in a country where people speak my language' (Comedy Central UK, 2018, August 8, [01:55-02:15]

Weekend Update hosts Michael Che and Colin Jost also commented on the futility of the border wall.

> [Che] I'm so tired of telling Donald Trump jokes ... We've been making fun of this dude and his dumbass wall for so long, I gotta be honest, now I kinda wanna see that wall. I have never seen anybody so confident in a such a bad idea … I'm not saying we should let him build a wall, but what if we just let him do a Power Point presentation? [Or] a dramatic reenactment? I just wanna see exactly what Trump thinks is going to happen when a Mexican cartel sees a wall. What do you think they're gonna do? Shake their fists and walk home? Do you know how motivated you got to be to sell drugs? I know a guy that swallowed a bag of dope, pooped it out, washed it off, and then still sold it. You can't build a wall to stop that kind of encouragement! (Saturday Night Live, 2019, February 16 [01:51-02:41])

By joking about the alternative of a PowerPoint presentation or a dramatic reenactment, Che reinforces the belief that the wall is a symbolic performance of power that will have as much impact as the alternatives he discussed. Not only that, the segment also turned to the lack of evidence for the Trump administration's fearmongering.

> [Jost] Trump described increased violence at the border but to be fair, he had airtight evidence to back it up.
> [footage of Trump on the White House lawn] I use many stats. Let me tell you, you have stats that are far worse than the ones that I use. I use many stats.
> [Jost] Many. Now does anyone get the sneaking suspicion that when he says many, he means zero? It's like turning in a paper where the bibliography section just says 'many books'
> [Che] This wall is clearly racist, it's just a way for middle America to blame brown people on their new heroin habit. Why didn't they build a wall for us in the 80s when we needed it? But the wall isn't that drugs are coming in, the problem is that people really wanna get high. Address *that* part! (Saturday Night Live, 2019, February 16 [03:19-04:03], emphasis original).

Both Maher and Che alluded to the underlying issues that the border wall cannot fix: anxiety about losing one's identity, and the perceived threat to ontological security. These lingering fears provided the grounds for the president's securitization of migration, which lead to his border wall proposal. As Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010) noted, "security practices in response to fears of the effects of migration have taken on increasingly racialized characteristics" (2010, p. 137). Comedians soon picked up on the notion that racism and xenophobia were at the core of the border wall idea, and targeted this fear by desecuritizing

migration. One of the ways in which comedians did so, was by disputing the president's argument that immigrants and crime are linked.

> [Oliver] But let's face it. For many people efficacy is beside the point, this wall is about making us *feel* safer and here is where the racism and xenophobia that we put aside at the top of this piece really needs to be brought back. Because while other politicians have supported barriers at the border, Donald Trump has been uncommonly clear about who we need to be protected from.
> [CNN footage of Donald Trump announcing his run for presidency] When Mexico sends its people they're not sending their best. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some I assume are good people
> …
> [Oliver] Yes, individual undocumented immigrants have committed horrible crimes, so, obviously, have American citizens. And in fact, researchers consistently find that immigrants are less, not more, crime prone than their native-born counterparts. The crime rates among immigrants once here are relatively tiny digits, which is something Donald Trump should frankly understand given that he has ten of them attached to his miniscule wrists (LastWeekTonight, 2016, March 20, [14:28-15:51]).

In doing so, Oliver employed what can be seen as the objectivist strategy to securitization, explaining that migrants do not form a threat to American identity or security since in comparison to the 'in-group', they are actually less crime prone. But President Trump, his administration, and right-wing media persisted with the construction of an image of migrants as threatening, especially in the months leading up to the 2018 midterm elections, when the 'migrant caravan' became a prominent news story. Where the international community and left-leaning domestic media reported on the caravan as one of refugees that needed help, right-wing media and the Trump administration incorporated the 'threatening' caravan into their securitization discourse.

> [Bee] With the midterms within screaming distance the right's typical anti-immigrant rhetoric has exploded into full-on Gerard Butler movie mode
> [Footage of Fox News commentators] These individuals are not immigrants. These are people invading our country. That's an army of people. They're going to storm our border. I think the president should send in the military. If they carry their country's flag that means they're coming to conquer us.

> [Bee] An invading army? Oh I see, this refugee's baby must be a tactical baby. Also, that's not how flags work. If it were the most terrifying event of all time would be the Olympic opening ceremonies
> …
> [Footage of a Fox News commentator] We don't know who's coming through that border. Terrorists, ISIS, Hezbollah
> [Footage of another Fox News commentator] How many may be potentially ISIS?
> [MSNBC footage of the President] You're gonna find MS-13, you're gonna find Middle Eastern
> [Fox News Commentator] They caught over a hundred ISIS fighters in Guatemala … we don't know, it hasn't been verified
> [Samantha Bee] 'We don't know, it hasn't been verified' should be Fox News' motto. That story hasn't been verified because it's not true. The Guatemalan President did mention ISIS in a speech but he didn't say they were hiding in the caravan, and we know this because he said it before the caravan existed. *What the hell kind of lazy scaremongering is it to just claim that Isis and MS-13 are hanging out …* And by the way, the reason that the terrifying caravan of Doom was formed was not to conceal ISIS members like a bunch of children sneaking into a movie theater in a large trench coat. It was to protect each other from gangs and traffickers (Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, 2018, October 24, [03:35-05:22], emphasis added)

In the above, Samantha Bee directly attacks not the president, but the media as complicit in the staging of a threat. By explicitly calling the media out on how they construct migrants as a threat, that is, by hinting at members of terrorist organizations pretending to be migrants or hiding amongst them, she applied the constructivist approach to desecuritization.

> [Colbert] Now, not everything Trump has said about this caravan is true. For instance, any of it. Here's what Donald Trump said during yesterday's chopper talk.
> [clip of President Trump speaking on the White House lawn] Take your camera, go into the middle, and search. You're going to find MS-13, you're gonna find Middle Eastern, you're gonna find everything.
> [Colbert imitating Donald Trump] Yes, everything. You'll find them all in there – Ali Baba and his 40 thieves, Jafar from 'Aladdin' … (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2018, October 24 [01:26-02:00]).

When the president mentioned 'Middle Eastern[ers]', the connotation was 'dangerous terrorists'. Yet, Colbert intentionally did not 'decode' the message that way; instead, he

brought up villains from cartoons. In doing so, Stephen Colbert not only hinted at the racism of the president's analogy, he also pointed out the absurdity of Trump's comparison by referencing cartoon characters.

John Oliver also took a constructivist approach to desecuritization by looking back at Trump's zero-tolerance family separation policy that was aimed at deterring illegal immigrants from entering the country (Hirschfeld Davis & Shear, 2018; Scherer & Dawsey, 2018), discussing how we had come to see migrants as threats.

> [Oliver] Why the everlasting fuck did we really do this? Well I would argue that this is the logical result of a general hard right turn toward demonizing immigrants for political advantage in a way that some might call racist, and others would be wrong about. *Now, conservative immigration arguments essentially now follow a pretty clear pattern. Crossing the border is a crime, therefore anyone crossing it is a criminal. And since all criminals are dangerous, anyone crossing the border is a dangerous criminal.* Never mind the fact that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born here. That has simply not stopped Republicans from running toxic anti-immigrant, anti-caravan political ads like these
> [Watchdog-Pac ad] A young woman, gunned down by an illegal immigrant who should have been deported
> [Corey Stewart for Senate ad] Illegal aliens invade America
> [Donald J. Trump for president ad] Democrats who stand in our way will be complicit in every murder committed by illegal immigrants
> [John Rose for Tennessee ad] Mexican druglords, MS-13 gang members, sex traffickers
> [Senate Leadership fund ad] MS-13, violent gang members
> [Marsha for Senate ad] Gang members, known criminals, people from the Middle East
> [John Oliver] Holy shit. You know that's racist because they just gave up any pretense of specific fear-mongering and simply said 'people from the Middle East'. At that point why not go all in and just start naming groups you hate … *If you watch enough of those ads you realize it's not that they don't want immigrants to come here because they're criminals, it's that they're calling them criminals because they don't want them to come here* (Last Week Tonight, 2018, November 4, [11:15-12:54], emphasis mine).

In the episode, John Oliver did not only reveal how, and why, the Republican party constructed their discourse around the concept of fear, he also explained how securitization works without explicitly mentioning the concept.

> We're now so accustomed to see immigrants as a threat that politicians routinely talk about them in the language of war. Remember, Trump referred to the caravan as an invasion, and sent troops to the border. And that kind of militaristic talk can make people think it is necessary to make the kind of impossible choices made during a war, which is how things like family separation happen (Last Week Tonight, 2018, November 4, [13:35-13:58]).

Another extreme measure that the president took as a result of his securitizing moves, was to encourage government officials working for Border Patrol to ignore the law and turn away all refugees when the toured the border area in 2019 and expressed his concerns about surging border arrests (Hesson, 2019).

> [clip of President Trump speaking at the Republican Jewish Coalition] Our country's full. We're full. Our system's full, our country's full. Can't come in. Our country is full. What can you do? We can't handle any more. Our country is full. Can't come in, I'm sorry. It's very simple [audience applauds]
> Stephen Colbert: Again, that's the republican Jewish coalition applauding turning away immigrants fleeing persecution. Hashtag always forget (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2019, April 9 [02:52-03:19]).

Each of these shows above attacked the president for comparing migrants to terrorists, and emphasized how they should be perceived as the refugees that they are. This non-threatening image of the refugee can be reinforced by employing the last strategy to desecuritization: the deconstructivist strategy, which works by letting migrants themselves share their experience in an attempt to de-escalate the threat. *Full Frontal* was one of the shows that incorporated such a clip.

> [Samantha Bee] As for MS-13 and other Central American gangs, if your president is really worried about them he's not alone. The caravan is literally running away from them
> [CNN commentator] I spoke to one woman who fled Honduras saying that the gangs threatened her ten-year-old son
> [MSNBC footage of a reporter on scene, talking to a migrant] Why do you want to get to the United States so badly? [translating the migrant's response] I have suffered gang violence in the neighborhoods where I lived and that is why I fled the country
> [Samantha Bee] Also, he really wants to try a McRib. And like the McRib, MS-13 is an American product. The gang was founded in Los Angeles among Salvadoran immigrants,

> worsened thanks to our mass incarceration and hardened when thousands of gang members were deported back to El Salvador, which had been devastated by a civil war. The civil war, incidentally, was also worsened by the U.S.' backing of the Salvadoran government during the Carter and Reagan administrations (Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, 2018, October 24, [06:59-07:46])

Not only is this a testimony to the danger that the migrants face back home, by elaborating on the origin of the gangs that the migrants are fleeing from Samantha Bee takes one step further than the other shows. Where most political satirists have focused on changing the narrative from 'United States as a victim of migrants storming the border', as the president presents it, to 'migrants are in fact refugees, fleeing from dangerous places', Bee presents a narrative that implicates previous administrations in causing the migrant flows in the first place. Therefore, the danger in this counternarrative is not embodied by the gangs themselves, but the United States themselves.

These examples show how political satire is not just about entertaining. Satirical shows often situate everyday news in a larger context by playing clips of politicians' remarks and comparing them with remarks they made in the past, demonstrating inconsistencies or contradictions (Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2018). Providing a counternarrative to hegemonic views, and ridiculing those in power is essential to satire. Since the president and his administration, as geopolitical agents, created a hegemonic narrative of an existential threat to ontological security via the geopolitical representation of Mexico and Latin America, securitizing migration and justifying the border wall in the process, political satirists deconstructed this hegemonic narrative by opposing and ridiculing it.

In doing so, they not only attacked the border wall for being a symbolic performance of power, they also desecuritized migration by illustrating how migrants do not pose a threat to the American identity, or society more broadly, showing how migrants were constructed as a threat (by presenting counterarguments), and letting refugees do the talking themselves. In doing so, satirists have held a consistent discourse over time: the wall will not cure the anxiety that justified the construction of it; the migrants crossing the border are refugees fleeing from dangerous places, not criminals bringing the danger with them; and there are underlying issues, not migration itself, that need to be addressed which will cure the anxiety.

The successful securitization of migrants, or rival identities, depends on whether the holders of the collective identity take a relatively close-minded or a relatively open-minded

view of how their identity is constituted and maintained" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998, 23). Yet, as Fukuyama (2018) pointed out, the U.S.' political spectrum has come to be split between a left and right that hold opposing views of what constitutes their identity. This may explain why the clash between the president's securitizing discourse, and the desecuritizing discourses of political satire continues to today. When Donald Trump kicked off his reelection campaign in Orlando, Florida in June 2019, commentators could not help but notice the resemblance to his 2016 campaign – in fact, *The Daily Show*'s montage of footage from both campaigns rallies side by side showed how the president presented the same talking points by echoing his 2016 campaign speech (Noah, 2019; Scott, Steakin & Siegel, 2019). As such, this case study was just a starting point for research on this genre in critical geopolitics; with the presidential elections coming up, there is bound to be plenty more material to analyze for future studies.

5. Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the ways in which late-night political satire challenges geopolitical representations of Latin America and Mexico by talking about President Trump's border wall proposal.

In doing so, chapter 2 introduced the field of critical geopolitics, which aims to understand how political views of international affairs are constructed. It showed how, next to intellectuals of statecraft, the media also plays an important role in shaping how individuals understand foreign places and cultures. Whilst critical geopolitical scholars have studied a variety of pop culture artifacts, political satire was not one of them. Drawing on Communication Science literature, the chapter showed that political satire is an important source of information that provides citizens with the knowledge they need to shape an understanding of the world. Critical geopolitics examines how geopolitical representations are the result of discursive constructions. Political satire exposes these discursive constructions by subverting dominant discourses by pointing out contradictions and/or inconsistencies through ridicule. Therefore, if the goal of critical geopolitics is to understand how political views of international affairs are constructed, it should aim to study all sources that citizens rely on to get their information – entailing that political satire should be included as an object of study for this field, too.

After introducing the sample of seven political satire shows and discourse analysis as a research method in chapter 3, chapter 4 was a case study on President Trump's border wall. This chapter started by identifying key issues of space, identity and security that led to the president's border wall proposal, establishing the border wall as a product of securitization practices that were fueled by a constructed geopolitical imagery of Mexico and Latin America. Because Mexican immigrants had been portrayed as 'bad *hombres* bringing drugs and crime' into the country by the president and right-wing media, public perception of Mexican culture came to be connected with criminality and danger. As such, immigration, in particular that via the southern border with Mexico, was perceived as inherently at odds and therefore threatening to the American identity. Consequently, the arrival of immigrants and refugees was construed as a critical threat to the 'American way of life', and the amalgamation of these fears and anxieties enabled the president to securitize the issue of migration, taking emergency action by proposing a border wall to exclude these threatening others and ensure the community's survival.

The chapter continued with a case study analyzing clips from political satire shows, illustrating that the jokes were not just about the futility and ridiculousness of the border wall, but were, in fact, in line with a theoretical approach to desecuritization. The segments show how political satire challenges the president's geopolitical representation of Latin America and Mexico by contesting the discourse on migrants as dangerous threats to American society, pointing out that they did not actually pose a threat to American society and identity but were only represented as such. Therefore, the president's border wall should only be interpreted as a symbolic solution to an imaginary problem.

But some still feel anxious about their identity, and the opposing views on what constitutes identity – and therefore, who or what threatens that identity – continue to divide not only the United States, but other countries, too (Fukuyama, 2018). As this thesis showed, satire has the potential to reframe discourses that invoke fear or danger, and thus may have a potential in "shaping more pacific relations within and between communities" (Dodds & Kirby, 2012, p. 56). After all, it is politics first – laughter only comes second.

References

Agnew, J. (1994). The territorial trap: The geographical assumptions of international relations theory. *Review of International Political Economy, 1*(1), 53-80.

Bailey, R. (2018). When journalism and satire merge: The implications for impartiality, engagement and 'post-truth' politics – A UK perspective on the serious side of US TV comedy. *European Journal of Communication, 33*(2), 200-213. DOI**:** 10.1177/0267323118760322

Ballhaus, R., Peterson, K., & Salama, V. (2019, January 25). Trump signs spending bill, ending longest government shutdown in U.S. history. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com.

Balmas, M. (2014). When fake news becomes real: Combined exposure to multiple news sources and political attitudes of inefficacy, alienation and cynicism. *Communication Research, 41*(3), 430-454. DOI: 10.1177/0093650212453600

Baumgartner, J. C. & Lockerbie, B. (2018). Maybe it *is* more than a joke: Satire, mobilization, and political participation. *Social Science Quarterly, 99*(3), 1060-1074. DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.12501

Baym, G. & Jones, J. P. (2012). News parody in global perspective: Politics, power, and resistance. *Popular Communication, 10*, 2-13. DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2012.638566

Boukes, M. (2018). The Causes and Consequences of Affinity for Political Humor. In J. Baumgartner & A. Becker (Eds*.), Laughing (Still) Matters: The Next Generation of Political Humor Research* (pp. 207-232). Lanham (MD): Lexington.

Boukes, M, Boomgaarden, H. G., Moorman, M. & de Vreese, C. H. (2015). At odds: laughing and thinking? The appreciation, processing and persuasiveness of political satire. *Journal of Communication, 65*(5), 721-744. DOI: 10.1111/jcom.12173

Brewer, P. R. & Marquardt, E. (2007). Mock news and democracy: Analyzing The Daily Show. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 15*(4), 249-267. DOI: 10.1080/15456870701465315

Buzan, B. (1991). *People, states and fear: An agenda for international studies in the post-Cold War era* (2nd ed.). Boulder, CO: Lynne-Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security. A new framework for analysis*. London: Lynne-Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A. & Iyengar, S. (2016). The End of Framing as we Know it ... and the Future of Media Effects. *Mass Communication and Society, 19*(1), 7-23. DOI: 10.1080/15205436.2015.1068811

Callahan, W. A. (2018). The politics of walls: Barriers, flows, and the sublime. *Review of International Studies, 44*(3), 456-481. DOI: 10.1017/S0260210517000638

Chappell, B. (2019, March 26). Pentagon takes $1 billion from military personnel account to build border fence. *National Public Radio.* Retrieved from https://npr.org

Comedy Central UK. (2018, August 8). *Mexicans are sneaking into America through Canada | The Daily Show with Trevor Noah.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_n4hfkJiv_fo

Dagnes, A. (2010). *Politics on demand: The effects of 24-hour news on American politics*. Santa Barbara, CA: Prager.

Dalby, S. & Ó Tuathail, G. (1996). The critical geopolitics constellation: problematizing fusions of geographical knowledge and power. *Political Geography, 15(*6), 451- 456.

Day, A., & Thompson, E. (2012). Live From New York, It's the Fake News! Saturday Night Live and the (Non)Politics of Parody. *Popular Communication*, *10*(1-2), 170–182. DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2012.638582

Dodds, K. (1996). The 1982 Falklands War and a critical geopolitical eye: Steve Bell and the If… cartoons. *Political Geography, 15(*6), 571-592.

Dodds, K. (2005a). *Global Geopolitics: a critical introduction*. London: Pearson.

Dodds, K. (2005b). Screening Geopolitics: James Bond and the Early Cold War films (1962–1967). *Geopolitics, 10*(2), 266-289. DOI: 10.1080/14650040590946584

Dodds, K. (2007). *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dodds, K. (2008). Hollywood and the popular geopolitics of the War on Terror. *Third World Quarterly, 29*(8), 1621-1637. DOI: 10.1080/01436590802528762

Dodds, K. & Kirby, P. (2013). It's not a laughing matter: Critical geopolitics, humour and unlaughter. *Geopolitics,18*(1)*,* 45-59. DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2012.668723

Ejdus, F. (2018). Critical situations, fundamental questions and ontological insecurity in world politics. *Journal of International Relations and Development, 21*(4), 883-908. DOI: 10.1057/s41268-017-0083-3

Faina, J. (2012). Public journalism is a joke: The case for Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. *Journalism, 14*(4), 541-555. DOI: 10.1177/1464884912448899

Feldman, L. (2007). The news about comedy: Young audiences, The Daily Show, and evolving notions of journalism. *Journalism, 8*(4), 406-427. DOI: 10.1177/1464884907078655

Finnegan, M. (2016, June 3). 'It's going to be a big, fat, beautiful wall!': Trump's words make his California climb an even steeper trek. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/

Fukuyama, F. (2018). Why national identity matters. *Journal of Democracy, 29*(4), 5-15. DOI: 10.1353/jod.2018.0058

Full Frontal with Samantha Bee. (2018, October 24). *Asylum seekers aren't scary | October 24, 2018 act 1 | Full Frontal on TBS* [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxrDAGiDUc8

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity. Self and society in the late modern age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gottfried, J. & Barthel, M. (2015). How millennials' political news habits differ from those of gen Xers and baby boomers [Graph illustrations, June 1]. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/01/political-news-habits-by-generation/

Graves, B. (2019, March 19). Some military construction may wait for border wall. *San Diego Business Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.sdbj.com

Gray, J. (2006). *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, parody, and intertextuality*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hall, I. (2014). The satiric vision of politics: Ethics, interests and disorders. *European Journal of International Relations, 20*(1), 217-236.

Haltiwanger, J. (2019, June 7). Fox News host Brian Kilmeade says migrants are 'mocking' Trump's border wall by walking around it. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com

Hesson, T. (2019, April 5). Trump's right. Border arrests are surging. Here's why. *Politico*. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com

Hill, M. R. (2013). Developing a normative approach to political satire: a critical perspective. *International Journal of Communication, 7*, 324-337. Retrieved from https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc

Hirschfeld Davis, J. & Shear, M. D. (2018, June 16). How Trump came to enforce a practice of separating migrant families. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com

Hmielowski, J. D., Holbert, R. L. & Lee, J. (2011). Predicting the consumption of political TV satire: Affinity for political humor*, The Daily Show*, and *The Colbert Report*. *Communication Monographs, 78*(1), 96-114. DOI: 10.1080/03637751.2010.542579

Holbert, R. L. (2013). Developing a normative approach to political satire: an empirical perspective. *International Journal of Communication, 7*, 305-323. Retrieved from https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc

Holland, E. C. & Levy, A. (2018). *The Onion* and the geopolitics of satire. *Popular Communication*, *16(*3), 182-195. DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2017.1397674

Huysmans, J. (1998). The Question of the Limit: Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies, 27*(3), 569-589. DOI: 10.1177/03058298980270031301

Huysmans, J. (2000). The European Union and the securitization of migration. *Journal of Common Market Studies, 38(*5), 751-777. DOI: 10.1111/1468-5965.00263

Jenkins, N. (2018, March 22). President Trump wanted $25 billion for a border wall. Congress gave him a fence instead. *Time*. Retrieved from https://time.com

Jones, J. P. (2010). *Entertaining politics: Satiric television and political engagement* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Jones, J. P. & Baym, G. (2010) A dialogue on satire news and the crisis of truth in postmodern political television. *Journal of Communication, 34*(3), 278-294. DOI: 10.1177/0196859910373654

Kaid, L. L. & Holtz-Bacha, C. (2007). *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Kuus, M. (2017, November 30). Critical Geopolitics. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies. Retrieved from https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-137

LaMarre, H. L., Landreville, K. D., Young, D. & Gilkerson, N. (2014). Humor works in funny ways: Examining satirical tone as a key determinant in political humor message processing. *Mass Communication and Society, 17*(3), 400-423. DOI: 10.1080/15205436.2014.891137

LastWeekTonight. (2016, March 20). *Border wall: Last week tonight with John Oliver (HBO)* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU8dCYocuyI

Late Night with Seth Meyers. (2019, January 9). *Trump's wall has changed a lot: A closer look* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuzQnzVt_DM

Late Night with Seth Meyers. (2019, April 10). *Trump listens to Stephen Miller and Lou Dobbs on immigration: A closer look* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GItXY__ITsw

Lee, M. Y. H. (2015, July 8). Donald Trump's false comments connecting Mexican immigrants and crime. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/

Löfflman, G. (2013). Hollywood, the Pentagon, and the cinematic production of national security. *Critical Studies on Security, 1*(3), 280-294. DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2013.820015

Lopez, G. (2015, July 10). Can't believe Donald Trump is rising in the polls? Let Jon Stewart calm you down. *Vox.* Retrieved from https://www.vox.com

Mawdsley, E. (2008). Fu Manchu versus Dr Livingstone in the dark continent? Representing China, Africa and the West in British broadsheet newspapers. *Political Geography, 27*(5), 509-529. DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2008.03.006

Menga, F. (2017). Hydropolis: Reinterpreting the polis in water politics. *Political Geography*, *60*, 100–109. DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.05.002

Milliken, J. (1999). The study of discourse in international relations: A critique of research and methods. *European Journal of International Relations, 5*(2), 225-254. DOI: 10.1177/1354066199005002003

Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and opposition, 39*(4), 541-563. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

Niven, D., Lichter, S., & Amundson, D. (2003). The Political Content of Late Night Comedy. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *8*(3), 118–133. DOI: 10.1177/1081180X03008003007

Noah, T. (2019, June 19). Episode 3-275 [Television series episode]. In *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*. New York, NY: Comedy Central.

Noble, G. (2005). The discomfort of strangers: Racism, incivility and ontological security in a relaxed and comfortable nation. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 26(*1), 107-120. DOI: 10.1080/07256860500074128

Ó Tuathail, G. (2002). Theorizing practical geopolitical reasoning: the case of the United States' response to the war in Bosnia. *Political Geography*, 21, 601-628.

Ó Tuathail, G. & Agnew, J. (1992). Geopolitics and discourse: Practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy. *Political Geography, 11*(2), 190-204.

Pamment, J. (2014). Strategic narratives in US public diplomacy: A critical geopolitics. *Popular Communication, 12(*1), 48-64. DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2013.868899

Peoples, C. & Vaughan-Williams, N. (2010). *Critical security studies: An introduction*. London: Routledge.

Pew Research Center. (2007). *Today's journalists less prominent* [PDF]. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2007/03/08/todays-journalists-less-prominent/

Pew Research Center. (2012). *In changing news landscape, even television is vulnerable* [PDF]. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/27/in-changing-news-landscape-even-television-is-vulnerable/

Power, M. & Crampton, A. (2005). Reel geopolitics: Cinematographing political space. *Geopolitics, 10*(2), 193-203. DOI: 10.1080/14650040590946494

Purcell, D., Scott Brown, M. & Gokmen, M. (2009). Achmed the dead terrorist and humor in popular geopolitics. *GeoJournal*, 75, 373-385. DOI 10.1007/s10708-009-9258-9

Real Time with Bill Maher. (2018, February 2). *New Rule: Trump's Wall of lies | Real time with Bill Maher (HBO*) [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAJUZRZBdlM

Rich, F. (2015, September 20). Donald Trump is saving our democracy. *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.nymag.com

Rill, L. A. & Cardiel, C. L. B. (2013). Funny, ha-ha: the impact of user-generated political satire on political attitudes. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *57*(12), 1738-1756. DOI: 10.1177/0002764213489016

Romano, A. (2017, September 17). #DCPublicSchools: John Oliver starts a viral Emmys hashtag, because he can. Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/2017/9/17/16324326/john-oliver-emmy-win-dcpublicschools

Saturday Night Live. (2019, February 16). *Weekend Update: President Trump declares a national emergency – SNL* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNqJkeWBqJw

Scherer, M. & Dawsey, J. (2018, June 15). Trump cites as a negotiating tool his policy of separating immigrant children from their parents. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com

Scott, R., Steakin, W. & Siegel, B. (2019, June 19). President Trump breaks out 2016 playbook in 2020 campaign kickoff. *ABC News*. Retrieved from https://abcnews.go.com

Sharp, J. P. (1996). Hegemony, popular culture and geopolitics: the *Reader's Digest* and the construction of danger. *Political Geography, 15(*6), 557-570.

Steele, Brent J. (2008). *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*. London: Routledge.

Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining "fake news". *Digital Journalism, 6*(2), 127-152. DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143

The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. (2018, October 24). *Trump paints a false portrait of the migrant caravan* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQHHfdRwja8

The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. (2019, January 9). *Trump: It's my right 'to do national emergency'* [Video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxGcZarAl1A

The White House. (2017, January 25). Executive order: Border security and immigration enforcement improvements. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-border-security-immigration-enforcement-improvements/

Thorogood, J. (2016). Satire and geopolitics: Vulgarity, ambiguity and the body grotesque in *South Park*. *Geopolitics, 21*(1), 215-235. DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2015.1089433

Thorogood, J. (2018). Cartoon controversies and geopolitics: *Archer*, animators and audiences. *Social & Cultural Geography,* 1-23. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2018.1497190

Tsakona, V. & Popa, D. E. (Eds.). (2011). *Studies in Political Humour: In between political critique and public entertainment*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Van Houtum, H. (2005). The geopolitics of borders and boundaries. *Geopolitics, 10(*4), 672-679. DOI: 10.1080/14650040500318522

Weprin, A. (2015, January 12). Stephen Colbert's 'Late Show' will debut Sept. 8. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com/media/story/2015/01/stephen-colberts-late-show-will-debut-sept-8-003307

Whittaker, N. (2018). The Island Race: Ontological Security and Critical Geopolitics in British Parliamentary Discourse. *Geopolitics, 23*(4), 954-985. DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2017.1390743

Young, D. G., Holbert, R. L. & Hall Jamieson, K. (2014). Successful practices for the strategic use of political parody and satire: Lessons from the P6 symposium and the 2012 election campaign. *American Behavioral Scientist, 58*(9), 1111-1130. DOI: 10.1177/0002764213506213

Yuhas, A. (2017, April 23). Trump push for border wall threatens to cause government shutdown. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com