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Remembering John/Ivan Demjanjuk: Inclusive and exclusive frames in cosmopolitan holocaust discourse

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Abstract

This article analyzes the media representations circulating around the trials of the accused Nazi collaborator John/Ivan Demjanjuk. It examines the American, Dutch, German, Russian, Jewish-Dutch, and Jewish-American discourses that framed the consecutive legal proceedings in Israel, the U.S., and Germany. Our study interrogates the convergences and divergences in the transcultural translations as well as the local appropriations of the events that formed part of the cosmopolitan remembrance of the Holocaust. We reconstructed inclusive media frames which were able to traverse different languages and cultures. We also found exclusive frames in our study that did not travel across these boundaries. The palette of views on Demjanjuk's personal guilt and on the capacity of the trials were informed by culturally restricted or culturally resonative mnemonic tropes and were sponsored by different groups of memory agents.

Keywords

Cosmopolitan memory, Demjanjuk, Holocaust, media frames, media memory, qualitative frame analysis

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The tribunals of war criminals are eminent social, legal, and communicative instances, prompting processes of memory making that go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Rather than being confined to one territory or moment in time, Holocaust trials in particular, like the Nuremberg trials (1945–1946), the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), and the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt (1963–1965), triggered a far-reaching media echo. This response, which occurred simultaneously in a variety of national media outlets, is thought to foster moral obligations and shared concerns among people from diverse localities and cultural backgrounds (Levy and Sznajder, 2005). The series of trials may thus be considered formative events for the emergence of a cosmopolitan memory in which the Holocaust serves as the epitome of suffering, as a symbol of solidarity that is not nation-centric, and as a moral blueprint for conceiving of other political killings, atrocities, and genocides (Misztal, 2010).

This article looks at the media representations of the trials of the accused Nazi collaborator and extermination camp guard John/Ivan Demjanjuk. It examines the American, Dutch, German, Russian, Jewish-Dutch, and Jewish-American discourses on the issue. The three court proceedings in Israel, the U.S., and Germany, along with the reports and debates accompanying them, are suitable analytic sites for tracing the constitution of Holocaust remembrance in a context of both global translation and local appropriation. Since the trials took place in different jurisdictions, they enable us to see whether or not there are common representations that facilitate the formation of shared retrospective attachments at a distance. Interrogating, therefore, the congruencies and incongruencies in the media frames that circulate within and across linguistic and cultural boundaries helps us to assess the kind of cosmopolitan memory that has formed around the Demjanjuk trials. In the study, we reconstructed inclusive media frames which were able to traverse different languages and cultures. We also found exclusive frames that did not travel across these boundaries. Arguably, the different views on Demjanjuk's personal guilt and on the capacity of the trials were informed by culturally restrictive or culturally resonative mnemonic tropes and were sponsored by different groups of memory agents.

The article extends previous studies into the construction of a cosmopolitan commemoration of major historical events (Sommerstein, 2017). It addresses the unresolved problem of how to reconstruct the formation of a cosmopolitan memory empirically. By studying media representations, we are able to operationalize the tension between global transformation and local adoption in order to assess a precondition for the emergence of a cosmopolitan Holocaust memory. More generally, our analysis resonates with examinations that point to the place of journalism in public commemoration (Kitch, 2008; Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014). In this regard, there are a number of studies on the role that media framing plays in memorializing the past (Golčevski et al., 2013; Hasian, 2014; Philipps, 2004). Here, media frames serve as shared representations of

collective knowledge that privilege some aspects of an issue in order to meaningfully structure our conceptions of bygone events, people, ideas, or periods.

The Demjanjuk trials in a cosmopolitan perspective

The Demjanjuk trials compel us to study how ‘the present past’, as Terdiman (1993: 8) called it, actually takes shape from several intertwined globalized and localized dynamics. The twisted and controversial biography of Ivan/John Demjanjuk, (1920–2012) which in part inspired Philip Roth’s 1993 novel *Operation Shylock*, began in the 1920s in Ukraine and continued through the turmoil of the Second World War, to the postwar era in the U.S., and to Israel at the end of the Cold War. There, he was sentenced to death in 1988 but the verdict was overturned by the Israeli Supreme Court five years later. After a second trial in the U.S., which started in 2001 and ended when his U.S. citizenship was finally revoked in 2004, Germany brought charges against him for his involvement as an accessory to the murder of more than 28,000 Jews. The third trial took place in Munich between 2009 and 2011, where he was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison. Demjanjuk was released from custody pending appeal but died a year later in a German nursing home (Douglas, 2016).

Media have played a crucial role in establishing and popularizing the Demjanjuk trials as formidable points of mnemonic reference that have enabled the widespread circulation and invigoration of these moments (Shandler, 1999). In general, Huyssen (2003) maintains that, media are ‘the *sine qua non* of local memory discourses crossing borders, entering into a network of transnational comparisons, and creating what one might call a global culture of memory’ (95). As Kitch (2008: 313) has shown, journalism is full of such ‘overt and acknowledged memory content’ that prompts public recollections and informs our relationship to the past (Lohmeier and Pentzold, 2014; Meyers et al., 2014). In their capacity to capture and frame events, journalists are consequently key memory agents in modern societies. Their reports constitute an archive for future commemorations because they reflect the predominant issues and contestations characterizing a certain point in time and its retrospective orientations (Zelizer and Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014).

Based on these observations we ask: How are the three Demjanjuk trials featured in media discourse? (RQ1) Given that the consecutive lawsuits focused on an individual but also addressed wider considerations, our first assumption is to find two general lines of reasoning: One that accentuates the judicial, historical, and social implications of the incidents for remembering the holocaust, and another that foregrounds the protagonist whose guilt and responsibility as a Nazi perpetrator were scrutinized.

The notion of a cosmopolitan memory that spans territorial, cultural, and linguistic borders has proven enormously productive for understanding commemoration on a global scale (Assmann and Conrad, 2010). Cosmopolitan memories do not override particularistic memories with universalist constructions

of the past. Instead, they comprise both local and global conceptions. They thus implicate, as Levy and Sznajder (2002) explain, a process of “‘internal globalization” through which global concerns become part of local experiences of an increasing number of people’ (87). However, up to now there is little evidence for a cosmopolitan memory at all, despite the notion’s popularity. Based on study of how disasters like the Asian Tsunami of 2004 were remembered by audiences in Greece, Kyriakidou (2018) pointed out that while there was certainly a shared attention to these events on a global scale, people did hardly feel compelled to consciously recognize the sufferings of distant others. With international news networks and agencies, people are constantly connected to a stream of 24/7 reports that enable globally shared experiences. However, connectivity and immediacy must not translate into an ethical commitment to distant others (Appiah, 2007; Chouliaraki, 2008, 2013). In Beck’s (2006) terms, what Kyriakidou found was a latent cosmopolitanism brought forward by live reporting but few signs of cosmopolitanism’s moral dimension based on ‘its self-conscious political affirmation, its reflection and recognition’ (21). Consequently, cosmopolitanism has been challenged for being the expression of a normative stance rather than the description of an empirical process (Calhoun, 2007; Mouffe, 2005). This is because a cosmopolitan outlook would, according to Beck’s (2006) as well as Levy and Sznajder’s (2005) conception, require more than global audiences sharing the same mediated experience. On top of this, it would necessitate a ‘dialogical imagination in everyday practice,’ that is, ‘situating and relativizing one’s own form of life within other horizons of possibility’ and seeing ‘oneself from the perspective of cultural others’ (Beck, 2006: 89).

Therefore, our second assumption is that we will not be able to find a cosmopolitan memory as such, that is, in a de-historicized and de-contextualized manner. To us, it seems more plausible to investigate the preconditions for the formation of a cosmopolitan Holocaust memory by capturing inclusive frames for understanding Holocaust-related events. We argue that the reconstruction of such common semantic patterning as a sort of analytical proxy will produce a better idea of the conditions for cosmopolitan memories. As Levy and Sznajder (2010: 104) suggest, cosmopolitan memories should involve a ‘conscious and intended inclusion’ of the history and suffering of locally and culturally distant others. Exclusive frames, in turn, would then work in an antagonistic mode that stresses the suffering of a particular collective, emphasizes a specific cultural belonging, and demonizes others (Cento-Bull and Hansen, 2016).

In its cosmopolitan dimension, the Holocaust serves as a parameter for situating, comparing, and evaluating other memories, mostly of genocides and violent conflicts. In these dynamics, the Holocaust has arguably not pushed aside other memories. Refusing the idea that memories compete against each other and vie for public attention, Rothberg (2009) introduces the concept of a multidirectional cosmopolitan memory that is subject to ‘ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing’ (15). Stressing, therefore, the productivity of remembrance allows us to inquire which discourses are enabled rather than superseded by recollections

of the Holocaust (Eder et al., 2017). The notion of a multidirectional cosmopolitan memory is accompanied by an ambition to enhance ethical thinking in a global dimension. That should help people to ‘understand past injustices, to generate social solidarity, and to produce alliances between various marginalized groups,’ Craps and Rothberg (2013: 518) claim. In effect, cosmopolitan mnemonic initiatives strive to promote cultural diversity, go beyond national borders, and are characterized by a vision of solidarity. ‘The creation of cosmopolitan memory,’ as Misztal (2010: 4) summarizes this normative impetus, ‘is an important step leading to post-nationalist solidaristic political communities.’

Besides the memory of the Holocaust, research has also looked at the cosmopolitan dimension of the Vietnam War and 9/11, as well as of large-scale transformations like Europeanization or globalization (Bond and Rapson, 2014; Crownshaw, 2011). The problem is that while these studies seek to move away from the territorialized state and to sever the connection between memory and the nation, some have trouble explaining how nation-transcending conceptions are constructed and adapted at the local level (Radstone, 2011). Moreover, by emphasizing the integrative potential of memories, these examinations often fail to see the inequitable struggles for recognition that undergird their formation (Bisht, 2013).

Against this horizon of mnemonic particularization and universalization, it seems possible that the production of cosmopolitan memory instigates empathy across difference, but it is problematic to presume that the past will be taken up equitably in all settings, especially in a post-conflict era (Conway, 2008; Edy, 2006). Criticizing this one-sided association, Erll (2011) highlights that ‘not each “memory around the globe” will automatically become a veritable “global memory”; not every worldwide available object of remembrance will be turned into a cosmopolitan, an ethical, or an empathetic memory’ (15). For instance, Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs remember the Holocaust very differently (Zerubavel, 1995).

Consequently, despite the moral assumption of shared understanding and solidarity baked into the notion of cosmopolitanism, moving toward more inclusive forms of commemoration is a contentious process in which connections are made ‘not through identity but despite difference,’ as Appiah (2007: 134) put it. The discourses around the Demjanjuk trials can therefore have contrasting implications: While they might accentuate the commonalities and bonds between mnemonic communities, they can also demarcate and stabilize the boundaries between them (Beck, 2002). Hence, our third assumption is that there are not only reconciliatory forms of mnemonic borrowing and adaptation, but instances in which memories are used by participating actors and translocal communities along their peculiar and at times conflicting agendas.

In this regard, Sharfman (2000) explores how the Demjanjuk trials led to tensions between national and religious identities in the Jewish-American and Ukrainian-American communities. The Holocaust events discussed in the trials resonated with longstanding conflicts over the adequate acknowledgment of the atrocities committed against these groups. In a comparative study, Cohen et al. (2002) looked at forms of commemoration in Israel and Germany in the context of

the Jerusalem trial against Demjanjuk. They showed that Israeli newspapers highlighted the atrocities more than the German press. Further, the causes of the Holocaust, as well as issues around guilt and responsibility, received stronger attention in the Israeli press in comparison to German news stories.

Against this background, we ask: What are the congruencies and incongruencies in the media frames around the three Demjanjuk trials that circulate within and across cultural and linguistic boundaries? (RQ2)

Data and method: Reconstructing media frames around the Demjanjuk trials

In order to study cosmopolitan memories, it is necessary to evade what Beck (2007: 286) has called ‘methodological nationalism’. This means that we cannot treat the nation-state and national media as fundamental units of comparison because the very allegiances or demarcations we want to examine might cut across these entities. At the same time, many journalistic outlets, especially in their print version, still primarily refer to separate national media systems. By contrast, especially online English-language media are less bound by territory.

To address this predicament, the sampling complemented national sources with publications that cater to a culturally defined audience. Whereas the German and Israeli discourses, especially around the first trial in Jerusalem, have already been examined (Cohen et al., 2002), we sought to go beyond bilateral comparison. Besides publications from the U.S. and Germany (where the second and the third trials took place), we included Russian reports. We decided to sample these sources because Demjanjuk was born in Ukraine and was drafted into the U.S.S.R. Red Army. We added Dutch reports and comments because many Jewish people from the Netherlands were murdered at the Sobibor extermination camp when Demjanjuk allegedly served there as an auxiliary guard. Further, we considered Jewish-Dutch and Jewish-American outlets targeted at the English- or Dutch-speaking Jewish diaspora in the U.S. or the Netherlands and Flanders, respectively.

For establishing basic comparability across the material, we concentrated on journalistic reports from mainstream press and broadcast news outlets as well as from Jewish media. Where possible, we sought to include sources across the political spectrum from liberal, left-wing to conservative, right-wing broadsheets, tabloids, and news websites (see Table 1). We could neither aim for a complete nor a statistically representative sample because the sources varied considerably in terms of accessibility and searchability. In some cases, like the Russian and Dutch discourse, full repositories were available for the period of 1983–2012, while in others, some texts or periods were not accessible. To account for this situation, we referred to a theoretical sampling strategy that allowed for the purposive collection of meaningful material (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Pentzold et al., 2016). We included texts from the online archives of major broadsheets, tabloids, and news websites,

Table 1. Sources.

Source	Number of articles
Dutch media	
<i>De Telegraaf</i>	50
<i>De Volkskrant</i>	172
<i>Het Parool</i>	82
<i>Trouw</i>	500
	Sum: 804
German media	
<i>Bild</i>	3
<i>Der Spiegel</i>	31
<i>Die Zeit</i>	20
<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	20
Tagesschau.de	1
Deutsche Welle	3
Jüdische Allgemeine	1
Bayerischer Rundfunk	1
Deutschland Radio Kultur	1
<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	20
<i>taz</i>	21
	Sum: 122
Jewish-American media	
<i>Cleveland Jewish Press</i>	3
<i>Jewish Journal</i>	30
<i>Jewish Press</i>	22
<i>Jewish Week</i>	7
<i>Tablet Magazine</i>	2
The Forward	62
	Sum: 126
Jewish-Dutch media	
<i>Joods Actueel</i>	10
<i>Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad</i>	88
	Sum: 98
Russian media	
Echo Moskwy	1
<i>Izvestia</i>	39
gaseta.ru (Газета.ру)	65
<i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i>	27
<i>lenta.ru (Лента.ру)</i>	20
<i>Moskovskij Komsomolets</i>	29
<i>Nezavisimaya Gazeta</i>	11
<i>Novaya Gazeta</i>	33
rbc.ru (РБК.ру)	2
<i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i>	48
	Sum: 275

(continued)

Table 1. Continued.

Source	Number of articles
U.S.-American media	
abcnews.com	10
cnn.com	26
foxnews.com	67
<i>New York Times</i>	186
<i>New York Post</i>	21
pbs.org	4
	Sum: 314
	Sum total: 1,739

including the spectrum of political orientations from liberal to conservative views. We searched for documents on the respective sites with the term ‘Demjanjuk’ (‘Демьянюк’ in Cyrillic) and additional phrases like ‘death camp guard,’ ‘Nazi war criminal,’ and ‘Ohio autoworker.’ We entered these search terms using an incognito browsing tab.

In sum, we collected 1,739 documents: 804 from Dutch, 122 from German, 126 from Jewish-American, 98 from Jewish-Dutch, 275 from Russian, and 314 from U. S.-American sources (see Table 1). Unsurprisingly, given the increase in piecemeal news stories and the cumulative archiving of digital-born reports in comparison to the often more fragmentary *ex-post* digitization of print material, most of the texts revolved around the Munich trial.

In order to unpack the material and to explore cultural, historical, and legal references, we opted for an inductive frame analysis. Adapting Van Gorp’s (2010) research design, our analysis encompassed three overlapping phases: We started with open coding in order to identify and mark relevant words or shorter passages, in particular keywords and recurrent metaphors or arguments like ‘nameless cogs’ (*New York Post*, 20 March 2012) and ‘machinery of destruction’ (*Fox News*, 17 March 2012). We considered these elements to represent potential framing devices. We also considered reasoning devices, i.e., argumentation strategies that either work by delineating causes which have led to a situation or event, by envisioning consequences, or by appealing to some principle, general rule, and moral claim (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). As such, reasoning devices resonate with the framing functions set out by Entman (1993) as definition of a problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and recommendation of remedies (see Table 2). We listed the codings and reduced them to a smaller set of significant categories with comparably strong grounding in the material, usually with more than 10 associated quotations. The final phase consisted of the creation of frame packages that linked connate framing devices and reasoning devices in a semantically coherent pattern. A frame package represents ‘a cluster of logical organized devices that function as an identity kit for a frame,’ Van Gorp (2010: 64) notes. It connects

Table 2. Frame matrix.

Frame	Cultural theme	Definition of the problem	Cause	Consequences	Moral values involved	Possible solutions/actions
Person-related frames (Demjanjuk)						
1A Incredible cheater	Shameful existence: Demjanjuk's life is built on betrayal and fraud. Although guilty and in good health, he cannot face his crimes	Demjanjuk tries to avoid punishment and negates his own biography; his testimony and statements cannot be trusted	Strategic self-conception as victim and not perpetrator after the war and later in court	Underservingly, Demjanjuk could live a quiet and unimpaird life as a free man	It is disreputable to lie, especially in the face of incriminating evidence and the outrageous dimension of his wrongdoing	Deprivation of citizenship, prosecution, and conviction
1B Victim of circumstances	Pawn of history: Demjanjuk is a victim, not an offender; a survivor, not a murderer	Double victimization: First a prisoner of war, then used in a plot of forgery and confused identity	Captive without autonomy and unintended victim of fake evidence	Demjanjuk is innocent and, wrongfully prosecuted, suffered enough from war and intrigue	It is wrong to punish the innocent again, as Demjanjuk has suffered more than enough already	Should not be held responsible; acquittal
2A Willing executor	Failed resistance: Voluntary submission to authoritarian instruction; denial of free will	Demjanjuk voluntarily participated in the Holocaust; he chose to be a diligent helper	In contrast to the victims, Demjanjuk had a choice and he chose to murder	Demjanjuk is accountable for his deeds, and these deeds cannot be justified by compulsion	Demjanjuk made opportunistic decisions against the lives of others for which he is accountable	Demjanjuk must be convicted, take responsibility for his wrongful actions
2B Cog in the wheel	Small fry: Demjanjuk was an insignificant part in the machinery of war	Demjanjuk followed orders; he was at the bottom of the chain of command	Being a prisoner of war; Demjanjuk was given a subordinate position in which he did not actively take part in murder	The culpable perpetrators are still on the run while mere ancillaries are persecuted	During a trial it is important to take the historical context into account and differentiate between the dimensions of agency and involvement	Concentrate on the prosecution of the 'real' perpetrators
3 Ivan the Terrible	Epitome of evil: Demjanjuk tortured out of sheer spite	Torturing and killing innocent and defenseless people in a bestial way	Innate and incompressible viciousness and barbarity	Demjanjuk has to atone for his crimes and the suffering of thousands of victims	Crimes against humanity are not time barred	No pity, no mitigating circumstances

(continued)

Table 2. Continued.

Frame	Cultural theme	Definition of the problem	Cause	Consequences	Moral values involved	Possible solutions/actions
Event-related frames (Trial)						
4A Last chance	Closing Window of Opportunity: Both the victims and the perpetrators of the Holocaust will leave us soon	Last chance to put war crimes and those responsible on trial and to deliver some semblance of justice	Public prosecution has started late and chances of convicting aging culprits are waning	Trials must proceed promptly and all possibilities for further proceedings must be exploited	Genocide does not fall under the statute of limitations and must be prosecuted with all available means	Put Demjanjuk on trial, continue to prosecute other perpetrators
4B Show trial	Symbolic sacrifice: Trial is held for propagandistic reasons and does not deliver justice	The trial is pointless and a waste of resources because of implausible evidence, uncertainty about Demjanjuk's identity, and his advanced age	Misuse of the trial by sensationalist media and overzealous prosecutors seeking recognition	Trials are futile and unwarranted; self-important behavior of prosecutors	Legal actions should be backed by cogent evidence, independence of political and media interests	Trial must be halted
5 Memorable act of justice	Site of memory: Trials as material, symbolic, and functional instances for public commemoration	People need concrete sites in order to remember and come to terms with historic traumas	Trials are public and mediated events	Trials make historic cruelties visible, give victims a voice, and foster a shared learning experience	Humankind must not forget the Holocaust and instead draw lessons from it	Publicness of the trails and witness accounts
General frames (Victims)						
6 Hearing the victims	Giving voice: The victims must not be forgotten	The focus on Demjanjuk and his trials has marginalized the actual victims	The public debate is giving undue attention to the perpetrator, media only focus on brief temporality of trials	The misery of the victims was neglected in public discourse in favor of the perpetrator	Aid and recognition for the victims, not the offender	Bring to the fore victim's perspectives that are usually overheard
7 True heroes	Resistance: Heroic opposition was possible	Demjanjuk failed to resist, but insurgents revolted in extermination camp	Personal prowess and willingness to suffer, cultural disposition (Ukraine versus Russia)	Their opposition was fated to fail, but their memory will last	Unconditional bravery trumps cowardice	Official recognition of their heroism

manifest framing devices and manifest or latent reasoning devices with the cultural trope, archetype, value, or narrative that is characteristic of a particular frame.

For example, the frame *The incredible cheater* was indicated by recurrent framing devices which referred to him as ‘liar,’ ‘crook,’ or ‘phony.’ In the line of reasoning associated with such keywords, Demjanjuk’s life was depicted as being based on lies and deceit (definition of the problem) because he wanted to avoid punishment (causal interpretation). Therefore, his statements in the trials are non-credible (consequence). This becomes evident in Demjanjuk’s self-portrayal as a victim after the war and later in the trials. The deliberate deception is particularly condemnable in view of the cruelty committed by Demjanjuk (moral evaluation). In effect, Demjanjuk’s citizenship should be revoked and he must be convicted (recommendation of remedies). Such reasoning was, for instance, mobilized in the following passage from the Dutch *Volkskrant* (16 March 2009) that quotes Efraim Zuroff from the Jerusalem-based Simon Wiesenthal Center with ‘Nazi war criminals are always trying to avoid persecution as much as possible, both mentally and physically, so claims like these need to be checked extremely carefully’ (all our translations).

We considered the analytical procedures complete when no additional frames could be formulated and all new material fitted into a frame package. On average, a point of saturation was reached when approximately half of the empirical sample was coded. Six coders analyzed each of the specific discourses simultaneously. They presented preliminary findings and discussed similar or variant codings at regular meetings.

Due to its qualitative approach, our study cannot calculate the frequency of the frames but is instead able to assess the cultural resonance of the particular perspectives. Thus, we cannot identify clear numerical proportions or track the development of the discourse over time, but we are able to discuss the uneven prevalence of a frame across sources. So it becomes evident that some frames, most notably *Victim of circumstances*, *Willing executor*, and *Last chance*, thread through the entire corpus while others had less currency. The *True heroes* frame was, for instance, only found in statements from Russian newspapers.

Results: Person-focused and event-focused frames

Overall, the analysis yielded 10 media frames, some of which acted as counter-frames. In line with our first assumption, the majority of frames revolved around either the defendant, that we call person-related frames, or the judicial proceedings, which we call event-related frames (RQ1).

The five person-related frames we found can be placed on different ends of a scale ranging from ‘full guilt’ to ‘innocence’ (1A–3). Some stressed Demjanjuk’s crimes and argued for his liability and worthiness of blame, while others were mobilized to controvert or mitigate his guilt. These frames were undergirded by opposing assumptions and rumors about Demjanjuk’s health and his fitness to eventually undergo detention. The three event-related frames can be situated on a

scale ranging from ‘authority’ to ‘futility’ (4A–5). Two of these were employed to assert the historical significance and legitimacy of the trials, whereas a counter-frame questioned their value and imperative.

Table 2 shows the frame packages for each frame, consisting of the cultural theme, the definition of the problem, its causes and consequences, as well as moral values and possible actions taken. An extended frame matrix and the complete data sheet can be requested from the corresponding author.

1A. *The incredible cheater*

This frame exploited the idea that Demjanjuk’s shameful existence was built on a grand delusion. By negating his biography and betraying institutions, the perpetrator was able to live a normal life, albeit unjustifiably and undeservedly. This view was, for instance, expressed in the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*: ‘He [Demjanjuk] has had a lazy life in Cleveland in the United States. He lived with his children and grandchildren. But his victims were murdered with their children and grandchildren, and those who survived are often alone’ (4 August 1987).

1B. *Victim of circumstances*

was a counter-frame and contrasted with Demjanjuk, *The incredible cheater*. It presented him as a pawn of history who had been a victim twice, first of the Nazi regime and then during the trials, where he was used in a plot of forgery and confused identity. As the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* summed up: ‘They seem to be convinced that Ivan Demjanjuk, born in the Ukraine, was a victim, a victim of miscarriages of justice, first the Israeli, then the Americans, and now the Germans’ (17 March 2010). Despite his innocence, he had to suffer from war and intrigue. Hence, this frame inverted the accusation’s logic: Demjanjuk was a victim, not an offender; a survivor, not a murderer. The only adequate consequence would have therefore been to clear him of all allegations and allow him to live the final years of his life in peace.

2A. *Willing executor*

According to this third dominant frame, Demjanjuk’s guilt was clearly affirmed by the voluntary nature of his service. Hence, the Russian newspaper *Nowaja Gazeta* described him and other Trawniki as follows: ‘These Nazi helpers were in no way inferior to their masters in inhumanity: they chased the lost souls into the gas chambers, beat them and killed them’ (10 November 2009). This view was especially prevalent in the debates around Demjanjuk’s deportation from the United States and the trial in Germany. It stressed his failure to resist and his voluntary submission to authoritarian instruction in the extermination camp. Because he had chosen to be a diligent helper, he had to be convicted for his wrongful actions.

2B. Cog in the wheel

For example, Demjanjuk was called ‘nameless cogs’ (*New York Post*, 20 March 2012), ‘piece of the Nazis’ machinery of destruction’ (*New York Post*, 20 March 2011), or a ‘living cog in a killing factory’ (*New York Times*, 12 May 2009). In contrast to seeing Demjanjuk as a protagonist like in the *Willing executor*, this counter-frame stressed the insignificance of his involvement in the Nazi machinery.

The prisoner of war (POW) was portrayed as an ancillary at the bottom of the chain of command and as someone who did not actively take part in murder. It employed historical context of Trawniki life to mitigate his guilt and to differentiate between his own actions and the agency of the perpetrators. As such, this frame suggested that Demjanjuk had wrongly been made the focus of legal and media attention while the true wrongdoers were still on the run.

3. Ivan the Terrible

This frame first appeared during the Israeli trial in the Jewish community press. Here, Demjanjuk was identified by some survivors of the Treblinka camp as ‘Ivan the Terrible,’ a notorious Trawniki feared for his barbarity. In the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* a witness was thus quoted with: ‘In Treblinka they were all bad, but he was the worst, a brutal wild animal. His hobby was murder and torture’ (3 July 1986). This nickname persisted after Demjanjuk’s further acquittal in the U.S. and deportation to Germany where it was employed to signify abhorrence of the particular gravity of his innate and ultimately incomprehensible viciousness and crimes. It was also used to signal that Demjanjuk’s crimes must not become time-barred but that he should be made to pay for them, instead.

4A. Last chance

This frame centered on the idea that a window of opportunity was closing as the legal proceedings progressed. According to this view, the judicial actions were the final opportunity to penalize Demjanjuk and other Nazi war criminals and thus to deliver some semblance of justice. For example, the German weekly *Die Zeit* underlined the importance of the Munich trial: ‘At some point, very soon probably, there will be no one left who has ever seen Auschwitz with his own eyes . . . By then, at the latest, the legal debate about the Holocaust will be over’ (4 February 2010). The frame involved a critique of delayed public prosecution and a lamenting of the waning chances to convict the aging culprits. Because genocide does not fall under the statute of limitations, Demjanjuk and his kind should not be allowed to live out their lives in peace.

4B. Show trial

The assumption that the trials were occasions that would lead to justice was challenged by this counter-frame. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* cited Demjanjuk's lawyer in the Jerusalem trial complaining about a 'show trial like in Stalin's time' (2 August 1993). It was used to delegitimize the trials and portrayed them as a form of symbolic sacrifice only held for propagandistic reasons. The account characterized the proceedings as pointless, a waste of resources, as using implausible evidence, and as led by a sensationalistic press and overzealous persecutors. Depicted as ill-conceived and an expression of mere self-importance, the trials were futile and unwarranted and had therefore to be halted until the production of more cogent evidence.

5. Memorable acts of justice

This line of reasoning underscored the commemorative significance of the public trials. They thus served as immaterial sites of memory, which Nora (1997) has described in more general terms as 'natural and artificial, simple and ambiguous, concrete and abstract, they are *lieux*—places, sites, causes—in three senses—material, symbolic and functional' (14; original italics). In that regard, the legal actions rested not only on recollections of distant events but they also provided instances that inspired boundary-transcending reconciliation. In their mediated publicness, they stimulated collective memory making and served as memorials in their own right by unearthing historic cruelties, giving victims a voice, and fostering a shared experience of learning (Douglas, 2005). For example, *The New York Times* stated: 'While no trial can bring back those that were murdered, holding those responsible to justice has an important moral and educational role in society' (30 November 2009). This could help to prevent future atrocities. In that respect, the trials epitomized the quest to defend human rights.

In addition to these person-related and event-related frames, we found two more general frames. These evolved as counter-frames that challenged the overarching orientation toward Demjanjuk or the trials.

6. Hearing the victims

This frame stressed the obligation to make Holocaust survivors heard and thus to counterbalance the overemphasis on the culprit and his trials. As an example, an editor of the German tabloid *Bild* wrote:

Instead, I turn my gaze to those who really matter. The victims. The gassed, dead victims, as well as the survivors and their families. They too are old people. They too are sick and frail. But they sit for in this courtroom, with dignity. (6 December 2012)

It called attention to the existence of the victims who would otherwise curiously run the risk of being marginalized in the discourse, even though the trials and the

public debate strongly relied on their eyewitness accounts. This frame hence criticized the undue focus on the perpetrators and the neglect of the victims' perspective.

7. True heroes

This frame was employed to recognize the role of Holocaust victims, yet with a chauvinist bend. For instance, the Russian newspaper *Moskovskij Komsomolets* urged its readers

to immortalize the heroes of the uprising in the fascist camp Sobibor [...]. 70 years ago, on October 14 in 1943, Sobibor extermination camp was the scene of an uprising by prisoners of war in which SS men were killed and the prisoners escaped. (10 October 2013)

It functioned as an alternative to *Hearing the victims*.

Discussion: Inclusive and exclusive frames in holocaust discourse

In accord with our second assumption, the discursive representation and memorialization of the protagonist, the legal procedures, and the general historic circumstances exhibited elements of congruity as well as disparity. In that fractured commemoration, the significance of particular frames was not only determined by the frequency of their appearance. This is the case because they did not constitute a set of uniform understandings that ordered the interpretation across different cultures and their respective discourses. Instead, the two heuristic dimensions of inclusive and exclusive frames signify how a type of cosmopolitan memory around the Demjanjuk trials has taken shape through coherent semantic patterns that were entangled with dissonant perspectives (RQ2). Interestingly, when looking at the semantic structure of the Demjanjuk discourse on a national level, the frames found in flagship media outlets across the political spectrum did not show any significant differences and there was no frame that was communicated by one medium alone or that was restricted to a certain period in time.

The two frames of Demjanjuk as a *Victim of circumstances* and *Willing executor*, as well as of the trial as a *Last chance*, were current in the entire corpus. Yet even these comparatively inclusive semantic patterns enfolded distinct elements and did not consistently spread across the discourse:

Whereas the frame *Victim of circumstances* was found throughout the material, depending on the cultural context, different parties were to blame for Demjanjuk's postwar misery. This blame was apportioned according to residual bipolar Cold War allegiances. Specifically, American media as well as Jewish, German, and Dutch reports accused the then-U.S.S.R. secret service, while Russian media accused Israel, Germany, or the U.S. of meddling in legal affairs. For instance,

the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* writes: '[. . .] Germans simply do not have the moral right to judge foreigners who executed their orders and should not try to cover up their own crimes with them' (21 December 2009). As regards the *Willing executor* frame, Russian reports carried patriotic undertones. So remarks about Demjanjuk's origins insinuated Nazi sympathies among Ukrainians, which were taken to explain his opportunism through a pejorative cultural image.

Then again, the reading of the legal proceedings as *Last chance* gained traction during the Munich trial in American news reports and the German press. In the Dutch newspapers, the idea that both the culprits and the victims of the Holocaust will leave us soon had already come up during the first trial and was again invoked with reference to the Munich trial: 'The reason why the trial against John Demjanjuk attracts so much attention is probably that it could be the last major Nazi trial. Only a few Nazi criminals on the run are still alive,' the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, for instance, explains (18 November 2009).

Next to these three widespread patterns, we discovered a more fragmentary adoption of the person-related frames *The incredible cheater*, *Willing executor*, and *Cog in the wheel* as well as of the event-related frames *Show trial* and *Memorable acts of justice*. Also the frames *Hearing the victims* and *True heroes* were only partially taken up.

The incredible cheater frame discussed different varieties of Demjanjuk's deceit. While American outlets were concerned with the identity fraud during his immigration and naturalization, the Dutch, Russian, Jewish-American, and Jewish-Dutch news stories distinguished between two kinds of deception. In a historical dimension, they criticized Demjanjuk's attempts to obliterate his Trawniki identity, while in the context of the trials they scrutinized his conduct in court and his illness: 'On Tuesday, even his lawyer's plea had to be temporarily suspended because the defendant snored loudly,' the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*, for example, reported (5 May 2011). Contrary to Demjanjuk's assertions, the reports and comments concluded that he was in good health and should be found guilty. The frame had, however, not been employed much in German discourse, perhaps because it played on a familiar strategy of denial, albeit one worthy of condemnation, used by other Nazi persecutors that had become the focus of postwar politics of amnesty and integration (Frei, 2002).

We found the same kind of partial dispersion and conspicuous absence in the *Show trial* frame, which, again, did not circulate in the German press but especially appeared in various contexts in Dutch and Russian media reports as well as in the Jewish-Dutch public. This might be because the Munich trial took place in Germany and was justified through the country's historic obligation to come to terms with its kind of 'unmasterable past' (Maier, 1988: 8).

Within the Russian discourse in particular, the Holocaust has long been subsumed under an official account that first and foremost commemorated the loss of Soviet lives and the final triumph over Nazi Germany (Gitelman, 1997; Rohdewald, 2008). Thus, the frame *Willing executor* was aligned with cultural stereotypes about the improper compliance and furtiveness of Ukrainians in

general. Likewise, whereas the frame *Hearing the victims* had some currency across European and American discourses, the frame *True heroes* was only found in Russian statements. In turn, the *Memorable acts of justice* frame was not present in Russian media coverage but surfaced in all other discourses.

Arguably, these divergent views on Demjanjuk's personal guilt and the capacity of the trials were informed by culturally restricted mnemonic tropes that separated Russian commemoration from European and American views. This hiatus reflects the particularity of Soviet Holocaust remembrance, which has been colored by historical narratives emphasizing the suffering and the ultimate victory of the Soviet people. Judging from the material we sampled, the Jerusalem trials were not covered in the Soviet news pieces probably because the genocide of European Jews was, at this time, rarely discussed in the public at all. In turn, the framing of the subsequent legal proceedings had nationalistic connotations that attested to Russian singularity in overcoming the fascist regime and its present-day supremacy, especially vis-à-vis Ukraine.

On these terms, especially the *True heroes* frame functioned by juxtaposing the unconditional resistance and bravery of Russian captives in the extermination camps, particularly of a Red Army soldier called Alexander Pechersky, with Demjanjuk's 'Ukrainian' cowardice. The Russian newspaper *Rossiyskaja Gazeta*, for example, declared that Demjanjuk 'did not escape from the camp, despite the fact that he had the chance to escape while he was off duty' (22 March 2011).

In contrast, the European and American discourses, together with the discourses in Jewish communities, featured more resonative ideas. According to Levy and Sznajder (2005), they can be seen to rest on normative humanitarian aspirations of recognition, respect, and regret, as well as reconciliation and redistribution that have been established and legitimized in the evolving Western cosmopolitan recollection around the Holocaust. Again, this does not mean that the kindred Western views congealed into a homogeneous account that contrasted with a particular Russian version. As a case in point, the frame *Cog in the wheel* seemed only to have had any currency in Dutch as well as Jewish-Dutch news stories. Interestingly, this separate view resonated with a more general trope that attenuated Demjanjuk's personal responsibility through reference to coercive structures and command hierarchies within the Nazi regime (Goldhagen, 1996). As the Dutch-Jewish newspaper *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*, for instance, argued:

They [Ukrainians] were added to the Wehrmacht. It is likely that these prisoners of war, mostly farmers, did not have a single political connection to Germany. But after a winter spent in inhumane conditions in POW camps, they enlisted *en masse* as volunteers for the Germans in order to escape death. (20 February 1987)

This strategy of defense had already been established in the Eichmann trial (Arendt, 1963). Another example is the *Ivan the Terrible* frame. It was initially limited to the Dutch and Jewish-Dutch discourses. Only in the coverage and

debates around the trial in Germany was this view adopted by Russian reports, where it was used as a synonym for Demjanjuk's sadistic cruelty: 'This man got his nickname for his cruel treatment of the prisoners of war, which he mutilated and killed for sheer pleasure,' *Rossiyskaja Gazeta*, for example, speculated (4 September 2009).

In sum, these fractional adaptations and interstices show that 'distinctive national and ethnic memories are not erased but transformed. They continue to exist,' as Levy and Sznajder (2005) explain, 'but globalization processes also imply that different national memories are subjected to a common pattering' (160). In effect, inclusivity and exclusivity are not abstract qualities but directions on a continuum of cosmopolitan outlook. In part, homogenization and congruency might be due to the global news stream channeled through news networks and agencies (Rantanen, 2007). Yet despite the swift sharing and transmission of news, information and views are locally adopted and contextualized both in terms of cultural and political factors on the macro level of different media systems as well as with regard to journalistic routines and values on the meso level of news corporations and outlets (Archetti, 2008; Flew and Waisbord, 2015). In Beck's (2006) discussion, a cosmopolitan outlook comes with a reflexive recognition of other perspectives, which entails a relativization of one's own position. So frames that allow for the joining of commemorative communities on a larger scale have a greater inclusive potential than those that only appear sporadically and do not traverse languages and communities. They instead undergird cultural particularities in Holocaust memory. The reflexive cosmopolitanism of memories is, in consequence, not a linear process that starts at the local level, is propelled by increasingly transcultural retrospective references, and finally reaches a global scale. On the contrary, 'though it might seem paradoxical, it is from the perspective of the "transnational" and the "transcultural," that we are reminded of the significance of memory's locatedness,' as Radstone (2011: 117) posits.

Corroborating our third assumption, in the Demjanjuk discourses the frames around the culprit and the proceedings were deployed through different strands of argument and with changing historical references or cultural references. While they had the capacity to constitute overarching understandings and generate a cosmopolitan outlook through the transmission of conjunctive ideas, they were also used to advance more antagonistic stances. Indeed, because even single news items or comments often embraced a combination of inclusive and exclusive frames, it is difficult to clearly separate cosmopolitan from more hermetic or self-referential positions. Rather, these persuasions and ambitions were mobilized as resources in multidirectional commemorative meaning work.

In the reports and comments, different groups engaged as memory agents. So besides journalists as well as victims and their legal advisers, there were civil society institutions and Jewish human rights organizations that all participated in the discourses. In particular, the *Last chance* frame resonated with the Operation Last Chance, an initiative championed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Targum Shlishi Foundation, which aimed to bring war criminals to justice. By

contrast, victims and victims' representatives who formed part of the legal proceedings—the Munich trial admitted more than 30 joint plaintiffs—especially sponsored the *Hearing the victims* frame. It was used among the Jewish communities in the Netherlands and the U.S. and was also taken up in American, Dutch, and German reports, but did not circulate in Russian discourse.

Overall, we found an interplay between journalistic positions and the accounts given by victims, often acting as eyewitnesses, or their advocates and by Jewish human rights organizations. These three groups of memory agents gathered and popularized arguments voiced during and around the proceedings, promoted their particular positions, or repudiated contrary views. With this, they acted as representatives of wider mentalities: Through reports and comments, an array of people beyond those who had personally been involved in the historic Holocaust events were able to relate to the court proceedings, to the temporally and territorially distant places and events under scrutiny, and to the overarching quest of coming to terms with the past.

In these discursive dynamics, the media coverage was not a linear progression of references, but evolved along more inconsistent paths as the series of Demjanjuk trials facilitated several threads of remediating references. Thereby, the accompanying media coverage linked the events to a series of other postwar tribunals, starting with the Nuremberg trials. Especially the Eichmann trial provided a setting and themes that were reused in the reports covering the Demjanjuk proceedings. Therefore, the media employed the legal events as opportunities, Cohen (2012) argues, 'to retell the story of the Holocaust, time and again, but each time from a more distant time frame' (535). Though not identical, the Eichmann trial offered a template of how to depict different moments in the overall proceedings, like the deportation to Israel and the situation in court, as well as a means to assess Demjanjuk's involvement in the Holocaust and his conduct during the trial (Douglas, 2005; Yablonka and Tlamim, 2003).

Conclusion

Our investigation into a potentially cosmopolitan memory of the Demjanjuk trials was based on the idea that cultural memories are not static but exist in the ongoing interplay between people evoking the past and the practices and social institutions geared toward reminiscent enterprises. Introducing the notion of 'travelling memory,' Erll (2011) claims that 'all cultural memory must "travel", be kept in motion, in order to stay alive' (12). In this respect, the study resonates with a growing body of work that deals with multiple scales of remembering that are simultaneously individual and domestic, urban, national, and global (De Cesari and Rigney, 2014). They require us to not only consider virtuous consequences of cosmopolitan memory but to also trace opposing positions and the struggles to enforce or disqualify mnemonic accounts.

In the media discourse we found, on the one hand, overarching mnemonic perspectives that connected the different discussions and formed a sort of

common patterning. On the other, we encountered cleavages that marked both the discursive memorialization contained inside national public spheres and the debates emerging at the intersection of different communicative arenas. In accord with Levy and Sznajder's (2005) analysis, U.S.-American, European, and Jewish publics seemed to form part of a cosmopolitan Holocaust memory in which a catalogue of congruent themes were remediated. This is not to say that local forms of recollection were completely overridden by a universal reminiscence of the trials and the Holocaust-related issues they channeled (Eder et al., 2017). We have evidence of more pronounced differences between the discourse in Western countries and the reports and comments prevalent in the Russian media. In the former U.S.S.R., memories of the Holocaust were dwarfed by the celebratory commemoration of the victory over Nazi Germany and Soviet suffering. As of now, the Holocaust is commonly appropriated into nationalistic and patriotic ventures to underwrite Russia's moral rectitude (Gitelman, 1997; Rohdewald, 2008).

The judicial motions we studied extended across three countries, namely Israel, the U.S., and Germany, and involved other jurisdictions and state agencies, most notably the Netherlands and the former U.S.S.R., today's Russia. As such, the events featured prominently in the respective national broadcast media, which have undergone profound changes brought on by digitalized and networked media technologies. Thus, in future research we have to consider the digital exchanges taking place on social media platforms. Arguably, this self-communication on a massive scale might give rise to more radical or esoteric views that surface in digital enclaves but are missing from mainstream outlets (Shandler, 2017).

The kind of fractured commemoration we found underscores that the sequence of trials not only inspired ethical thinking or encouraged audiences to express some sort of connection to the memories of others. This is the case despite the fact that 'prosthetic memories' found in mass culture, Landsberg (2004) assumes, might have the ability to 'produce empathy and social responsibility as well as political alliances that transcend race, class, and gender' (21). Based on the inclusive and exclusive frames circulated in the Demjanjuk discourse, we propose to extend this focus on integration and shared values in order to also capture the frictions between antagonistic mnemonic stances and the discursive strategies to enforce and legitimize a particular version of the past against other accounts. This ties in with Bisht's (2013: 14) call to interrogate 'the limits, contestations and inequalities' that also characterize cosmopolitan memory. Indeed, it seems impossible to remove the tension between the local and the global in cosmopolitan memory, Ashuri (2007) notes. In consequence, when we set aside the implicit normativity of cosmopolitan memory, the future task is to further inquire into the dual processes of translocal translation and local appropriation. There, shared memories are not an abstract universal scheme but are voiced or silenced in a discourse which simultaneously crosses boundaries and remains local.

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