Memory, Identity and Political Communities – The Discursive Construction of the Transatlantic Alliance

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ABSTRACT: The transatlantic community has, from its inception, been described as a community of like-minded nations that is held together not only by interests but also by shared values. These are based on a common identity – of what Karl W. Deutsch has called a "we-feeling" (36). Memory is a binding factor for both national and international communities because it contributes to their self-understanding in the present and is indispensable for imagining a common future. Given this assumption, this paper uses theories of memory as an analytical tool for studying the transatlantic partnership. More specifically, this paper will introduce the term and concept of a "transatlantic memory community" which is developed from Maurice Halbwachs's concept of collective memory. It is based on the idea that the members of the Atlantic Community have developed a shared understanding of the past due to their membership in this political and ideational community. The analysis of the historical framing of the Bosnian conflict in Germany, France and the United States (U.S.) will serve as an example of the development of mnemonical commonplaces in the Atlantic Alliance.

KEYWORDS: Memory; U.S.; Europe; Transatlantic Relations; Discourse; Community; Transatlantic Memory Community

Introduction

Anyone who has listened to a speech on transatlantic relations by either U.S. or European officials will have heard the mantra of "our common values", "our shared past", or "common history". Even if one argues that this is merely paying lip-service to an outdated and non-existent ideal of transatlantic allegiance and belonging, politicians on both sides of the Atlantic continue to stress a historic transatlantic bond. This is not only the case during celebratory speeches or mutual visits, but memory plays a role for the legitimation of international politics; "[B]ecause historical references frequently evoke the perceived lessons of the past experience, political actors can use historical metaphors to legitimize certain policy options and to delegitimize others" (Paris 429). Collective memory, thus, can provide legitimacy, identity, and authority for a political community. These appeals to a shared historical past support the cultivation of a collective memory of the transatlantic community. To better grasp this phenomenon, this paper introduces the concept of a "transatlantic memory community" whose basic assumption is that the members of the political and ideational transatlantic community can construct a collective memory. This means that they engage on a transnational level with their national memory or, in other words, reconstruct, adjust or maintain their memories in the transatlantic realm which serves as a framework for the (re-)

construction of a shared memory. Thus, the memory of the "transatlantic memory community" is collective and transnational.

In the following, I first want to look at the theoretical underpinnings of the term "transatlantic memory community" and then offer as an example the analysis of one narrative strand in the framing of the Bosnian crisis by Germany, France and the United States of America (U.S.). The term "transatlantic memory community" will be expounded by looking at its characteristics. The first is transatlantic[1] which geographically limits the scope of the community. Given this narrowed field of analysis, the second step is to examine the term transnational as a feature of the "transatlantic memory community." While the term 'transatlantic' in my analysis implies transnational, this term explicitly connotates that this approach looks at memories beyond national borders. Lastly, transatlantic memory is collective due to the focus on a geographically limited community. Thus, the term collective refers to the shared memory of a group. To demonstrate that transatlantic memories can develop, I will use governmental discourses in Germany, France and the U.S. during the 1990s as an example. The historical framing of the Bosnian crisis in 1994/1995 will serve as an example of how the transatlantic allies France, Germany, and the U.S. have used memory to classify the conflict and legitimize it toward both national and international audiences. Governmental discourses in France, Germany and the United States will show how a common historical framing of the conflict in terms of the opposition of the European past with the European present and future developed.

Transatlantic

The term transatlantic will be used to describe the relations between the U.S., Canada and (Western) Europe and the feeling of belonging which has developed in the last decades. While my later example of the Bosnian conflict only includes three countries, the theoretical concept is tailored on a broader approach of transatlantic relations which includes all countries that are perceived to be part of the transatlantic partnership.[2] Intensified relations between the countries of North America and (Western) Europe have resulted in feelings of belonging and a sense of a community of nations by its members. Especially during the Cold War, this community of nations portrayed itself as the "free world", "the West," and the "Atlantic allies" and in opposition to the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Moreover, it has come to represent a specific set of values such as democracy, liberty and the rule of law. These definitions are not very specific and leave

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[1] The terms 'transatlantic' and 'Atlantic' are used interchangeably in this analysis.

[2] It is interesting to note that the literature on transatlantic relations does not offer a clear definition of who belongs to this community. The 'membership' depends on how the transatlantic partnership is defined. Possible determinants are the 'membership' in NATO, the EU or the broader concept of the 'West'. Beatrice Heuser has identified the key players in transatlantic relations as Britain, France and Germany on the European side and as the U.S. and Canada on the American side (1).

room for multiple interpretations of these relations: They include institutionalized relationships and informal networks of cooperation which are based on a sense of belonging and preferential cooperation.

The self-portrayal through such terms as the "free world" and the "West" does not only show the inherent value dimension of this community but also its construction in opposition to parts of the world that are perceived as non-democratic and non-free. The transatlantic community – and this is equally true for the memory community – is an ideological construct built on certain aspects of the past. Richard Armitage in his conception of Atlantic history argues that the genealogical approach to the term 'Atlantic' exposes three different Atlantics: First, the White Atlantic with Cold War roots, second, the Black Atlantic with post-Civil War origins, and third, the Red Atlantic which reaches back to Marx's cosmopolitanism (15). The focus on the transatlantic community with Cold War roots which is built on the ideas of a Western Civilization thus only represents one transatlantic history and excludes others.

Due to multiple transatlantic connections, the relations between Europe and North America are multi-layered. Andreas Daum argues that two concepts of community are implied when referring to the Atlantic nations. First, there is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which represented a guide for its member states during the Cold War – sharing an anti-Soviet attitude and a Christian cultural heritage.[3] Second, there is what John F. Kennedy in several speeches in 1963 called "Atlantic Community" and which Daum conceptualizes with Max Weber's term of communitization; meaning that not only nation-states but also interstate relations need a level of approval. To arrive at a political community, the relationship between the members needs to be based on feelings of an emotional and transcendental community (20). The idea of a transatlantic memory as defined here is equally built on this two-part logic that the members of the Atlantic Community are a military and political community through the institutions surrounding NATO and an ideational community built around the concepts of an Atlantic Community and an Atlantic civilization. A clear separation between the two concepts is difficult to attain as both have from the beginning been interconnected, and it can be argued that the previously existing idea of an Atlantic Community has influenced its politico-military realization in NATO.

The idea of the Atlantic Community and its ideational underpinnings which Kennedy invoked was first used by Walter Lippmann during the First World War to argue for U.S. entry into the war.[4] Lippmann called on the "Atlantic powers" to fight for "the common interest of the western world" to show that a community of North Atlantic nations existed. This was meant to lay the

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[3]   Daum in his analysis does not expound the case of Turkey.

[4]   The underpinnings of Lippmann's Atlantic Community are much older and can be found in the concept of a Western Civilization.

groundwork for a federation of the western world in the theoretical future (75). Lippmann linked American security to power balance in Europe and thus "combined long-standing cultural affinities with the new concept of security" (Steel 18). This idea of an Atlantic Community was further developed by intellectuals, especially during and after World War II and served as a framework legitimizing the new world order after the war.[5]

The idea of an Atlantic Community found its realization after the Second World War in several Atlantic institutions, especially NATO. Like the European Union (EU),[6] NATO has enshrined its values and ideals in its founding treaty which emphasizes its self-understanding as more than a defense alliance. In this preamble, NATO founding members stated that they "are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area" (1949). It becomes evident from this that there is a connection between NATO as a politico-military community and the broader ideational community. This assumption is described in Kenneth Weisbrode's statement that "NATO is, and to some extent always saw itself to be, something more than a military or defense alliance. It is not the exclusive embodiment of the Atlantic Community, but it is its best-known vehicle" (57). The NATO founding members in this preamble established that the institution is built on a common history and identity because of a shared civilization and values. Further integration and intensified relations of this community influenced the perceptions of the past.

Within NATO, an Atlantic identity formed through meaningful communication as well as the perception of the West as a unit based on common values set up in opposition to the Soviet bloc (Costigliola 22-23). This identity was and continues to be supported by ceremonial and political manifestations such as NATO's fixed cycles of foreign minister and summit meetings. These NATO meetings offer fellowship and ritualize a joining of forces against perceived external threats. Moreover, member states' references to positive memories of the Second World War helped create a feeling of cohesion of the alliance as a result of political acculturation (ibid.). The NATO preamble and Frank Costigliola's analysis demonstrate that the two spheres of community – NATO and the ideational background – are closely interwoven and that shared transatlantic interpretations and memories have developed through acculturation processes within the community. These shared memories, based on the membership in both the political and ideational community, are what transatlantic memory connotates.

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[5]   For works on the idea of an Atlantic Community and Western civilization, which are closely connected to Atlanticism, see, for example, Luce; Streit; Hayes.

[6]   See, for example, Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community; Eder and Spohn.

Transnational

The "transatlantic memory community" is perceived as transnational, because it goes beyond national borders and incorporates several nations within the transatlantic realm. Development of closer knit networks of communication and ever faster means of travel as well as the engagement of local and national actors in an international sphere in recent decades have led scholars to contemplate the development of transnational memories – memories beyond local and national boundaries.[7] Aleida Assmann has identified four meanings of "transnational": The term may refer to non-state actors that operate in different countries or to geopolitical units comprising different nations, for example the European Union. It can also point to the impact of media; to networks of communication providing people all over the world with information. Lastly, "transnational" may relate to individuals or groups that move in space, be it voluntarily or under political or social pressure, thereby creating a diasporic connection to their former homelands. According to Assmann, the term "transnational" carries normative implications and an inherent value dimension as it is often underpinned by a cosmopolitan ethos and the desire to move beyond the nation toward a new political imagery ("Transnational Memory" 66). Thus, "transnational memory" can refer to different entities – ranging from political communities over communicative communities to personal and private relations as part of a diaspora.

Memory in both international relations and national politics has been conceptualized as a dividing as well as an integrative force. Memory scholars have argued that the influence of memory in international affairs necessarily leads to "memory wars" as different political actors fight for the recognition of their interpretation of the past (Sangar 68). However, this is not solely an international phenomenon, but different actors also fight for their interpretations of the past within a country. One could argue that the ramifications of these memory conflicts in international and national arenas are different and solved through different channels.[8] Simultaneously, scholars and public intellectuals are discussing the possibility of a European transnational memory within the context of European integration and a trans-European identity.[9] Jürgen Habermas, for example, argues that international communities and organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the EU give themselves constitutions or functionally equivalent treaties without gaining a state-like character. These scripted political communalizations precede the construction of supranational capacities for action. However, international organizations such as the EU and the UN have different needs for integration. Habermas states that the UN, as a world-wide organization encompassing all recognized sovereign states, needs a smaller basis of legitimation if it reduces its functions to human rights politics and peacekeeping. This conception

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[7] See, for example, Levy and Sznaider; Cesari and Rigney; Rothberg.

[8] See, for example, Linenthal and Engelhardt; Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson; Sangar.

[9] For discussion of European memory see Schönhoven; Rigney; Kühberger and Sedmak.

does not allow for social boundaries of "ins" and "outs". In comparison to the UN, the EU which perceives itself as more than a political community needs a deeper level of integration. Citizens, who identify themselves as members of a certain political community, act with the awareness that their community is defined by a way of life that is considered to be collectively and tacitly understood and accepted by all members of the community. For Habermas such a political ethos is not primordial. The question according to him is not if a European identity exists, but if Europe's national arenas can be opened for each other in such a way that momentum is gained for the development of a joint political opinion and decision-making process about European contexts and over national boundaries. Such a political European self-understanding can only develop through democratic processes. However, this process should not involve a pejorative distinction from other continents' citizens (80-81). Many of the features described by Habermas can also be found in the Atlantic Community, such as a founding treaty, the creation of socio-political boundaries of "inside" and "outside", and the Atlantic Community's way of life supposedly defined by very broad shared values such as democracy, freedom and the rule of law, which are, of course, not only found in the transatlantic area.

The Atlantic Community, I argue, forms a transnational memory community that is based on a geopolitical unit comprising different nations. It becomes evident from this definition that national memories are not obliterated in this transnational approach "but they are symbolically and politically recast; they are imagined differently as inherently and externally relational, embedded, and contextualized, always implicated in and partaking of larger processes and changes" (Assmann, *Transnational Memory* 67). As a result, the 'member states' of the transatlantic community do not lose their national perspectives when engaging in international politics, but rather shared interpretations of an Atlantic past can develop due to the membership and participation in the ideational and political Atlantic community. Thus, the analysis of transatlantic memory starts from a national level as it is based on nation-states acting as parts of the Atlantic Community.

Collective

Transatlantic memory is perceived as collective because it is shared by multiple nations partaking in a transnational geopolitical community. The basic hypothesis is that members of the transatlantic community have constructed a shared memory based on the history and experiences of this community and its member states. Collective memory, understood as the past remembered by a social group, is both multiple and ever-changing. This is the case because every individual belongs to several groups simultaneously (Halbwachs, *Das Gedächtnis* 193-94). Thus, an infinite number of collective memories co-exist, and every individual is part of several collective memory communities based on different group "memberships". In Maurice Halbwachs's analysis groups can range in size and he, for example, mentions both families and

nations. However, Halbwachs did not include transnational entities in his thinking. As Eric Sangar points out, "Halbwachs remains essentially silent on the particular question of the possibility of a trans-national collective memory" (72). Nonetheless, the possibility of a transnational collective memory was not excluded in Halbwachs's thinking. A further characteristic of collective memory is that it is never fixed but constantly in flux as new events can be added to the spatial and temporal framework or a new development changes the group's perspective. Constant adjustment work, as Halbwachs calls it, is thus necessary: coming back to previously defined terms from a new standpoint (*Das Gedächtnis* 189). Especially important for the transatlantic memory community is the focus on a social group, the procedural character of collective memory and the importance of the current social and political context.

However, several scholars disagree with the assumption that collective memory can be applied to modern times. Alison Landsberg argues that the concept of collective memory introduced by Halbwachs is no longer adequate in our modern times due to changes initiated by modern mass culture. The technologies connected to mass culture have the capacity to structure "imagined communities" that are not based on geographical units and a pre-established sympathy. Thus, they connect people from various social, religious and national backgrounds (8). Brian Etheridge equally argues against the usage of collective memory and instead favors the concept of prosthetic memory coined by Landsberg[10] to describe transnational phenomena. For Etheridge, collective memory suggests an exclusively domestic focus and gives domestic actors and narratives a measure of authenticity because it portrays collective memory as a near-exclusive "domestic" enterprise. Prosthetic memory, however, "opens the realm for narratives and actors 'organically' tied to the community" (5). Despite these criticisms of Halbwachs's term "collective memory" and its applicability in the transnational context, this analysis postulates that Halbwachs's concept can be applied to the "transatlantic memory community" due to its focus on groups and its procedural character. Transatlantic memory is in this sense a collective memory which crosses borders, but stays within a demarcated group – the Atlantic community. I argue, similar to the arguments put forward by numerous scholars with regard to the European Union, that it is not a unitary transatlantic memory that is envisioned,[11] but rather a shared under-standing of the past and a joint participation in a narrative, also for future action. Thus, it is nations

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[10] According to Landsberg, prosthetic memory is a new form of public cultural memory, emerging at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past at what she calls "experiential sites", for example, museums and cinemas. When the person gets in touch with a historical narrative at an "experiential site", it brings that person into larger history and the individual does not only learn a historical narrative but takes on a more personal memory through which the person did not live him- or herself. This interaction results in a prosthetic memory which has the power to shape that person's views (2).

[11] There seems to be a scholarly consensus on the fact that there cannot be a unitary European memory as Europe is too diverse and a monolithic memory is not considered desirable. For example: Schönhoven; Bell; Mälksoo; Rigney.

with their national memories and interests that (re-)produce a transnational memory, engaging with their national views in a transnational context.

Memory in Transatlantic Relations

The discursive construction of political memory is one example of collective memory in trans-atlantic relations. Transatlantic collective memory is not unitary, but several collective memories coexist – from social over political to cultural memories – and these find expression in different mnemonic phenomena.[12] Traditions, judicial systems, institutions, memorial activities and "the near invisible absorption of memory into the civic habits of people" are all representations of the collective memory of a community and are "the manifold forms of memory of a life-in-common" (Booth 21). Thus, collective memory finds its expression, for example, in monuments, memorials, discourses and schoolbooks.

Going back to the theoretical tradition of social constructionism, in which Halbwachs's theory of collective memory can be placed, I argue that through the uses of historical memory in speeches, statements and interviews, government officials try to construct a political transatlantic memory. Political memory is understood as one form of collective memory, as identified by Assmann, in which the reference point is a political community. In comparison to other forms of collective memory, political memory is intentionally and symbolically constructed based on selection and exclusion, by choosing relevant parts and excluding the remaining ("Re-Framing Memory" 41-44). Political memory is one representation of transatlantic memory.

Decision-makers and government officials have a privileged role in the interpretation and construction of collective memory in general and political memory specifically, since memory is inherently connected to power and legitimacy. Politicians use collective memory through analogies, historically grounded justifications and myths to create patriotic feelings, legitimacy and a moral standpoint. Memories can reconcile differences but at the same time can lead to conflict and hostility (Shain 216). Bernhard and Kubik argue that mnemonic actors such as politicians often try to use history instrumentally and construct a version of the past that they think will generate the most effective legitimation for their power. However, they are not totally

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[12] Aleida Assmann differentiated between three different types of collective memory—political, social and cultural. She defines social memory as the past perceived through experiences. Social memory is communicated or repressed in a given society. This memory is diverse and continuously changing with the death of individuals. Thus, it undergoes a perceptible shift after approximately 30 years. In comparison to social memory, both political and cultural memory are mediated and founded on symbols and material representations which are transmitted over generations. Political memory, however, is a top-down memory and tends to be more homogeneous and is used for the formation of national identities and political action. Cultural memory's symbolic signs are more complex, and, in addition, cultural memory has more individual forms of participation ("Re-Framing Memory" 41–44).

free in their construction of the past if they want to remain credible for their audiences. The distinction between credible and incredible versions of the past is not easy to make and moreover subject to change. Yet, once a mnemonic actor uses an implausible version, his or her claim to legitimacy fails or is considerably weakened. At the same time "proposing a vision of history, however instrumental such activity can be, contributes to the solidification of a body of interpretations that this vision represents" (9). Thus, the introduction of new historical references in legitimation strategies can open up new historical discourses and through repetition and acknowledgement by the audience a new historical argument may emerge.

Mnemonic actors in general, and this is not specific to policymakers, do not only use and interpret the past but are at the same time influenced by it. According to Friedman, policymakers are influenced by the past in their thinking about present challenges. They also use past narratives that they find convincing to argue for their policies and against possible opposition. Thus, they turn to these past narratives and their interpretations as a source of symbols, metaphors and lessons that are rooted in people's memories and can give decisions legitimacy (148). This already points to an important link between speakers and audiences. When decision-makers are influenced by and use memories they not only refer to their own history and pre-learned assumptions, but also refer to a past shared with the audience. Due to the intimate relationship between the producers and consumers of memory, there is a need for the consumers to understand and relate to the references of the producers. There is a relationship between the narrator and the audience, because "there cannot be too large a discrepancy between the conceptual background of one who tells the story and the one who listens to it; they must share a common background in order for the story to resonate for the listener" (Apfelbaum 86). I argue that this common background in the discursive construction of collective memory is historical memory. Halbwachs defines historical memory as "the sequence of events remembered in national history" (*Collective Memory* 77). In his understanding, historical memory covers all events within national history, whereas collective memory retains those events that are important for a certain social group. I infer from Halbwachs's observations that historical memory is not more limited than collective memory but rather has a wider conception. It is from these remembered events that a group chooses, evaluates and weighs those past events that are important for its collective memory. Historical memory is the repository from which the reconstruction of collective memory is chosen. The references from this stock of memories are chosen based on their functionality in the present (Wodak et al. 36). Government officials use historical arguments in speeches, interviews and statements to legitimize their actions vis-à-vis both a national and international audience and to frame the situation in a way that makes it more accessible to the audience. With these historical arguments, politicians are constructing a narrative of the community's past which is one expression of a shared history.

The Historical Framing of the Bosnian Conflict

To illustrate the emergence of mnemonic commonplaces in the Atlantic Community, German, French, and U.S. governmental discourses during the Bosnian conflict in the 1990s will be analyzed. One historical narrative strand that was used during the search for a settlement of the conflict in Bosnia-Hercegovina in the 1990s will serve as an example of how transatlantic collective memory was discursively constructed. The 1990s are an especially interesting time frame for the analysis of transatlantic memory as a reconfiguration of what the Atlantic Community stood for took place after the end of the Cold War. It will be shown how Germany, France and the U.S. as members of the Atlantic Community have used historical memory to frame the conflict in Bosnia as a European conflict evocative of the European past. It is important to emphasize that this mnemonical narrative strand is only one of several further memories employed by Germany, France and the U.S. during the Bosnian conflict.

The Bosnian conflict was part of the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the ethnic violence that came with it rattled the international community. The nationalism in the belligerent communities was infused by their leaders with different memories, among them memories of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and Croatian cooperation with Nazi Germany during World War II. In turn, the international community understood and framed their reactions to the Bosnian conflict through the lens of their own memories. This conjuring-up of memories, however, did not lead to swift action. Ilana Bet-El has argued that the international community "rather than learn from these images of the past, chose in Bosnia-Herzegovina first to use them as a reason to dismiss the conflict, and then, when the awful reality of 'ethnic cleansing' became evident, as a bland moral weapon that ultimately trivialised the events they recalled" (221). Thus, the handling of the Bosnian crisis by the international community can be called a failure. James Gow argued that this failure was based on four fundamental features: bad timing, inappropriate measures, incoherence, and lack of political resolve (299-300).[13] The EU, the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (CSCE – renamed to OSCE in 1994), the UN, NATO and individual states were involved in finding a solution for the situation in Bosnia. However, NATO only decided to act after the deterioration of the conflict and increasing doubts about the Western powers' and especially NATO's credibility. Moreover, both the international community's and individual states' decisions for (in-)action during the Bosnian conflict were legitimized by appeals to memory – memories of their own states' past and of Balkan history.

Even though historical memory did not figure prominently in French discourse on the conflict in Bosnia, the European past was still evoked to evaluate it. President Jacques Chirac asked in a speech in the summer of 1995 after the massacre in Srebrenica became known to the 'Western'

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[13] For a detailed history of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian conflict see among others: Kaufman; Lampe; Woodward; Schwab-Trapp; Daalder.

world: "How can we imagine this, today, in Europe, with soldiers of the UN who weren't allowed, who probably couldn't do anything to help them?" (Chirac, "Point de presse"). He then went on thinking about the future of two further enclaves in Bosnia which according to Chirac represented "about ten thousand people, victims of the barbarism of another century" (ibid.).[14] In these remarks, Chirac contrasted the Europe of the 1990s with a continent of barbarism and nationalism, a history that Europeans supposedly had overcome. The term "barbarism" can be linked to World War II and atrocities committed by the Nazi occupiers in Europe during the war. This reference to European barbarism of the past and its (in)direct reference to National Socialism and World War II can equally be found in the rhetoric of German and American government officials. In comparison, the Europe of the 1990s was imagined as a peaceful, law-abiding entity in which war had become impossible. Chirac saw the war in Bosnia as a threat to this idea of Europe because it showed that Europeans were still struggling with issues they thought to have overcome in previous decades. Even before the massacre, Chirac explained that "[o]ur military presence in Bosnia is founded on a simple and strong idea: the security of Europe today is acted out in this region. We do also not accept the return of ethnic hatred and of barbarism on our continent" (Chirac, "Discours"). Chirac connected European security to the conflict in Bosnia, thus giving Bosnia a central place in its construction. Moreover, in his non-acceptance of this return to the past, Chirac painted the future for Bosnia as that of Europe of the 1990s as a whole. In this description of the conflict as "barbaric", a threat to European security as well as the contrasting of Europe of the 1990s lie the closest similarities to the German and U.S.-American historical framing of the conflict. However, Chirac's reference to "barbarism" remained vague – especially in comparison to representatives from Germany and the U.S. who explicitly referenced World War II during the Bosnian conflict. This was due to France's complicated relationship with the memories of the Second World War. The 1990s were a time when memories of World War II in France increasingly became challenged and thus had a divisive influence on French society. Olivier Wieviorka argued that Chirac on his election in 1995 faced a complex memory culture. This was the case because "[t]he ambiguities of the Mitterand era had helped muddy the image of the Resistance because the reintegration of those who had served both Vichy and the Resistance into national history had blurred previously clear prevailing distinction between collaborators and resisters" (144). Thus, references to the Second World War did not lend themselves to the framing of the conflict in Bosnia due to the divided memories of World War II in French society. However, the post-World War II development and especially the European integration were seen as a success in which France played a crucial role.

The German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel argued during the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1994 that the UN has a vision of the world in which international law decides and not the "the right of the strongest". He continued: "We Europeans share this vision. The experiences

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[14]   All translations of speech excerpts are my own.

in the former Yugoslavia confirm our conviction to fight against the relapse into irreconcilable nationalism" ("Rede des Bundenaußenministers"). In another speech Kinkel, like Chirac, referred to renewed violence in Europe: "Literally barbarism returned to our doorstep. The tragedy of Gorazde forces the concession: none of the international institutions have passed their test" ("Zukunftssicherung"). In alluding to a relapse into nationalism and barbarism within the context of the Yugoslav conflict he integrated the current situation in Bosnia into European history and its history of nationalism and war. Moreover, he criticized the international institutions built after the Second World War as they could not prevent this emergence of violence and barbarism. Chancellor Helmut Kohl equally referenced the destitute situation of the Bosnian people and tried to make the situation more imminent for the German people by reminding them of their own experiences during World War II: "Still a peaceful solution of the war in former Yugoslavia is pending. Still sorrow and death dominate the situation in Bosnia. The images of the latest Serbian aggression against Bihac stand before our eyes. Especially those Germans who carry their own memory of war and hardship, know which sorrow is inflicted on the people there" (46). This comparison to World War II made the violence in Bosnia more palpable for the German people who have lived through the war. Kohl, however, equally hinted at the fact that there are now many Germans who have not known war. The images of war and refugees leaving their homes led Kohl to make this reference to German experiences during the Second World War. This German national memory of suffering gained importance in German memory culture in the unified Germany.[15] The reference to the World War II generation was used to evoke sympathy with Bosnian suffering and at the same time the reference to Germans who have not known war exemplifies the positive peaceful development since the end of World War II.

Warren Christopher, the American Secretary of State, related the conflict in Bosnia to the Second World War and framed the overcoming of "ancient enmities" like the one between France and Germany as a desirable future for Central Europe. In a speech on the future of transatlantic relations given in Madrid in 1995, he argued that "[t]he terrible conflict in Bosnia remains the single largest threat to our vision of an integrated Europe at peace" ("Charting"). Due to the context, it can be inferred that "our" refers to the transatlantic partners and not only the United States. In a later speech, Christopher drew parallels between the Second World War and the conflict in Bosnia by stating that the world had witnessed "horrors and cruelties" that the generation that fought in World War II had thought eliminated. Further, he emphasized the U.S.'s interest in ending those atrocities, which he described as the worst since the Second World War, and especially "pernicious because they have been directed at specific groups of people because of their faith" ("Senate Committee"). Christopher's comparison is inappropriate as the conflicts are essentially different, especially in scope. These differences, however, did not prevent him from using this analogy. Nonetheless, its features, such as ethnic violence and nationalism, are

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[15]   For a detailed analysis of memories of German suffering see Niven.

reminiscent of "older" European conflicts. This allowed Christopher to paint the conflict as a war of good and evil, removing it from the memories of the Vietnam intervention and clearly placing it within the interpretative framework of World War II – the "good war" in American memory. Christopher's reference to the World War II generation supported the framing of the Bosnian conflict with reference to the Second World War as that generation had become the symbol of the "good war" in American memory.[16] The World War II generation came to be known as "the greatest generation" (Brokaw) and has become the "quintessential expression of the American myth of World War II" (Bodnar 200). Whereas memories of Vietnam were dominated by the fear of fighting a morally ambiguous war in a faraway country and the loss of American lives, memories of the Second World War by the 1990s were associated with heroic American deeds. The World War II narrative was a moral tale of brave Americans who came to Europe to fight for democracy and freedom – possible ambiguous or even negative memories had long been repressed in this story. This interpretation of World War II was, in comparison to Vietnam, uncontested in American society and lent itself to justifying the involvement in a European conflict reminiscent of the past.

Like his French counterpart, President Bill Clinton linked the conflict in Bosnia to European security. In his "Address on Bosnia" he made this connection by placing the conflict into Euro-American history:

> Securing peace in Bosnia will also help to build a free and stable Europe. Bosnia lies at the very heart of Europe, next door to many of its fragile new democracies and some of our closest allies. Generations of Americans have understood that Europe's freedom and Europe's stability is vital to our own national security. That's why we fought two wars in Europe; that's why we launched the Marshall Plan to restore Europe; that's why we created NATO and waged the Cold War, and that's why we must help the nations of Europe to end their worst nightmare since World War II now.

By referring to post-war history and American support of European development after World War II, Clinton referenced central elements of what the Atlantic community stands for: the link of U.S. security and European security, U.S. support of European democratic and economic development and the fight against and ultimate defeat of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Clinton presented the history of post-World War II development through U.S.-American eyes which is exemplified in his use of "we" in comparison to the earlier "us" in Christopher's Madrid speech.

In all three case studies, "the horrors" and "barbarism" thought to have been overcome figure prominently. The use of these terms can be connected to German atrocities during World War II and "barbarism" was employed to describe the situation in Bosnia and to refer to the brutality of

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[16] The term 'good war' has become a commonplace to describe World War II in American society. It is taken from *The Good War*, Studs Terkel's seminal study of the oral history of World War II.

World War II. The fear of its return emphasized the 'overcoming' of the war in Western Europe and the portrayal of the war in Bosnia in opposition to the Europe of the 1990s which is characterized as peaceful, democratic, prosperous and free. This development is interpreted as a Euro-American post-war achievement. The reference to the Second World War is an imperfect fit, but as Andrew Schwartz argues regarding the representations of Abraham Lincoln in American society, the uses of the past in the present represent both an idealization and a critique of current circumstances. It is exactly this deviation from the past that better lends itself as a model and answer to current dilemmas than a realistic evaluation of the past would (253). European and American references to European nationalism and the Second World War were a means of making sense of the conflict in Bosnia in the present and explained to both national and international audiences why this conflict mattered. References to the World War II generation, in the American and German cases, emphasized the perceived positive development since the end of the war through the juxtaposition of the war experience to that of current generations who have lived in peace for decades. However, in the American case, the "greatest generation" was used to frame the war in Bosnia with the positive and morally clear attributes of World War II, while in the German case the references to the war generations were used to make Bosnian suffering seem more pressing for Germans. Nonetheless, the European post-war development was portrayed as a linear path which allowed the governments to see the humanitarian and military intervention as a necessary continuation of the development of the last fifty years and as the last step in reaching a peaceful and democratic Europe.

This analysis demonstrates that transnational memories can develop while nationally specific framings are maintained. Despite differences in detail, this analysis of the discursive framing of the conflict in Bosnia within three member-states of the Atlantic Community suggests a common basic understanding of a shared past – the evolution of Europe through the overcoming of nationalism and ethnic hatred and a mutual understanding of how the future should look like: a free and democratic Europe at peace. These two features, a shared understanding of the past even though from differing national perspectives and a shared vision for the future of the community, are vital elements in the discursive construction of a shared transatlantic memory. Still, national perspectives in these speeches are not lost, which can be seen in the French case in the vagueness of the reference to "barbarism", in Kohl's rhetoric through the reference to German "hardship" during World War II and in the U.S. in the interpretation of World War II as the 'good war'. Moreover, in the French and American cases, the link between European security and the conflict in Bosnia figured more prominently. Despite these national specifics, the mnemonical references correspond to the larger framework of the post-World War II Euro-American success story of having overcome barbarism and nationalism and having attained democracy, the rule of law and a successful economy. This is a story which the government officials of the U.S., Germany, and France see as their own success story. The mnemonic

references are based on the founding myths of both the European and Atlantic communities – the overcoming of nationalism and war through transnational economic and political co-operation. The Second World War and the developments that followed are the major historical reference points for France, Germany and the United States. However, this is not necessarily due to World War II's likeness to the Bosnian conflict. Rather those memories reflect the self-under-standing of the three countries in the 1990s and the interpretation of end of World War II as the starting point of increased European and transatlantic cooperation.

Conclusion

This paper introduced the concept of transatlantic memory based on the idea that through parti-cipation in the transnational polity of the Atlantic Community, represented through NATO and its ideational framework, shared interpretations of the past developed within the member states. The term "transatlantic memory community" was introduced by looking at its characteristics – transatlantic, transnational, and collective. The process of constructing a transatlantic memory is inherently a process of remembering and forgetting. A social group – and the transatlantic memory community is no exception – does not only decide which memories are remembered and highlighted but also which memories are suppressed or forgotten. In the example of the historical framing of the Bosnian conflict, this process can be seen in the highlighting of the positive Western European-American development since the end of World War II and the exclusion of memories of transatlantic crises that have accompanied this development, such as the Suez crisis in 1956. Equally excluded is the fact that Germany stood against the U.S. and France during World War II. This historical fact is conveniently forgotten or downplayed while the shared and retrospective interpretation of the war as starting point for European and transatlantic development is highlighted. Moreover, the exclusion of the Eastern parts of Europe behind the Iron Curtain in this narrative of European development was equally not mentioned. Rather the conflict in Bosnia was framed with reference to European nationalism and "barbarism", as well as the Second World War and by contrasting it with the success story of Western Europe. Thus, the conflict was classified in terms of a Western European-American history of the 20th century. This narrative was employed because it lent itself to the needs of Alliance building in a critical period. The framing of the Bosnian conflict through the Euro-Atlantic lens and as "the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s" (Holbrooke 40) can be seen as a legitima-tion for the further existence of NATO, which was at the time looking for a new purpose. Alan Steinweis argues with regard to the American public and the use of Holocaust analogies that even if the intervention was more about preserving the credibility of NATO than saving Bosnian lives, the domestic support was based on a moral outrage which was fueled by comparisons between the atrocities of the Serbs with those of the Nazis during the Holocaust (549). The same logic can be applied to the U.S., Germany, and France with regards to the use of the European past – it

fueled the understanding of the Bosnian conflict as an atrocious event on European soil endangering the free and democratic Europe that the Western Europeans and the United States had built after the Second World War. Moreover, the context in which these memories were employed was also the reason why the Atlantic Alliance was constructed after the Second World War in the first place – to secure peace in Europe for the benefit of both the U.S. and Western Europe. The connection between European and U.S. security remained unbroken during the Bosnian crisis and the memories employed refer to the framework of the Atlantic memory community. This transatlantic memory community will encounter new and existential challenges in the 21st century such as migrant crises in both the U.S. and Europe and the questioning not only of the role but also the mere existence of its most famous symbol – NATO.

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