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Memory Relations: Cross-Border Collaboration between Mnemonic Actors in Germany, Central and Eastern Europe, and the MENA Region

Sara Jones, University of Birmingham

Summary

This article explores the cross-border collaborations of two German institutions focused on memory of communist repression. It combines quantitative network analysis with qualitative narrative research. The article demonstrates how networks created by the two institutions are divided into “memory regions” and the structurally influential position of (Western) German actors. The institutions construct an apparently subaltern “Eastern” region in their engagement within Europe. In contrast, in co-operations with actors in the MENA region, they narrate themselves as the agents of a progressive “Western” mode of memory, from which the non-European partners should learn. This suggests that cross-border co-operations can be used to perpetuate unequal power structures in global memory activism.

Key Words: transnational memory; Germany; Central and Eastern Europe; MENA; network analysis

Résumé

Cet article explore les collaborations transfrontalières de deux institutions allemandes dédiées à la mémoire des répressions communistes en combinant une analyse quantitative de réseaux et une analyse de discours. Il montre comment les réseaux créés par les deux institutions sont divisés en "régions de mémoire" et illustre la position structurellement influente des acteurs (ouest-)allemands. Dans leur engagement en Europe, ces institutions construisent une région "orientale" apparemment subalterne. Mais dans la coopération avec les militants du Moyen Orient et d’Afrique du Nord, elles se présentent comme les agents d'un code mémoriel progressiste "occidental" dont les partenaires non-européens devraient s'inspirer. Cela suggère que les coopérations transfrontalières peuvent être utilisées pour perpétuer des asymétries de pouvoir au sein du militantisme mémoriel global.

Mots clés : mémoire transnationale ; Allemagne; Europe centrale et orientale; Moyen Orient et Afrique du Nord; analyse de réseau

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The central concern of this special issue is the ways in which Central and Eastern European (CEE) memory activists interact and co-operate with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Indeed, memory studies as an interdisciplinary field has seen a reemphasis in the last decade, away from a tendency to focus on the nation state as the supposed container of memory cultures and towards greater exploration of the ways in which memory and its politics crosses borders. A number of theoretical frameworks have emerged through which such movements of memory can be analysed. These models each point towards the ways in which different modes or traditions of memory are entwined: the transnational with the national (De Cesari & Rigney, 2014), beyond and between different cultures (Bond & Rapson, 2014), or through a "cosmopolitanization" in which memory is de- and reterritorialised (Levy and Sznaider, 2006, p. 27). Michael Rothberg (2009, p. 21) has explored the potential "dialogical exchange" between different memory traditions. Through "multidirectional memory" the remembrance of one past can produce "complex acts of solidarity" with remembrance of another (Rothberg, 2009, p. 11). The work presented in this article takes inspiration from these reflections. However, I shift the focus to the practice and structure of international collaboration and the agents who drive it. This focus allows me to consider questions of how global power relations manifest within those connections (e.g., relations between East and West and North and South) and the ways in which national and transnational discursive frameworks about how the past should be remembered and for what purpose manifest themselves within cross-border activities. In this way, I highlight empirically the central role played by those discursive frameworks in determining what I have described elsewhere as "collaborative memory" (Jones 2017, 2020).

Steven Vertovec (2009, p. 4) notes that central to transnationalism are "systems of relationships best described as networks". The two key terms within this observation – "relationships" and "networks" – form the focus of this article. Alongside the empirical and

theoretical contribution indicated above, I seek to advance the burgeoning field of transnational memory through the development of an innovative mixed methodology that allows us to explore: (1) the networks created by the cross-border collaboration of "mnemonic actors" (Bernhard and Kubik, 2014); (2) the structural position of different actors within those networks; and (3) the meaning ascribed to the relationships from which the networks are constituted. I draw on the insights of relational sociology to consider how cultural formations and network structure are intertwined and interdependent. As will be seen, central to this is the question of *what* is being transacted in the collaborations – memory, human rights, democracy – and the direction of the exchange. The empirical focus of my analysis are networks constructed by the cross-border activity of two state-mandated German institutions whose work centres on memory of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the period 2011-2012: the Federal Office for the Files of the State Security Service of the former GDR (*Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR,* BStU) and the Memorial Berlin-Hohenschönhausen (*Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen*, HSH).

These two organisations are embedded in German memory culture surrounding the GDR; however, they also collaborate extensively with actors elsewhere in the world in the context of established networks, joint exhibitions, seminars, conferences and official visits. In 2011-2012, many of those connections were with individuals and institutions located in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in countries undergoing transitions initiated by the anti-government protest movements that became known as the "Arab Spring". This was a moment of transnational co-operation between these German actors focused on memory of the GDR and actors from the MENA region in the context of events described as "the Arab world's 1989 revolution" (Head, 2011). It therefore provides an opportunity to explore and compare cross-border collaboration between these institutions and (Eastern) European actors on the

one hand and those operating in non-European contexts on the other. I ask which actors are connected with one another in the networks created through these co-operations? What is the structure of those networks and which actors are in a position of influence within them? What topics are discussed in and what meanings are ascribed to co-operations with actors in different parts of the world? How are structure, topic and meaning interwoven with one another?

Remembering the GDR in the United Germany: An Archive and a Memorial

The BStU was established in 1991 to manage access to the Stasi files for victims, informants, media and researchers, according to the Stasi Records Law passed in December of that year. Alongside its involvement in lustration and file access, the BStU also has in its remit political education and remembrance. This includes the running of seminars, workshops, and other events, as well as the management of regional and national exhibitions relating to the activities of the Stasi. The BStU is a member of the multinational Platform of European Memory and Conscience (PEMC), the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret Police Files (ENOA), and is a partner institution of the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS). Opened in 1995 and with permanent financial support at state and regional levels since 2000, Hohenschönhausen is a memorial situated in the former remand prison of the Stasi in Berlin. Alongside a permanent exhibition and tours of the former prison, HSH organises a range of conferences, seminars and podium discussions, educational workshops, and hosts temporary exhibitions on relevant topics. The growing prominence of HSH in German national memory politics has been accompanied by an increasing involvement in transnational collaborations (Jones, 2017) and the Memorial is a member of the PEMC.

The memory-political activity of the BStU and HSH takes place within interwoven national, regional and transnational frameworks. German national memory culture is often celebrated

as exemplary in terms of its approach to the histories of National Socialism and state socialism (e.g., Hammerstein et al., 2009; Neiman, 2019). In the context of memory of the GDR in particular, the BStU and the Stasi records law that underpins its work have been viewed as a model to follow in other post-socialist contexts (Welsh, 2015, pp. 171-174). And yet this international view on German national memory masks ongoing conflict within that same memory culture, in particular surrounding the East German past. On the one hand we see a divide between those (principally eastern) Germans[1] who reject what they view as the imposition of a western perspective on the GDR and a state-supported public memory that (despite shifts in recent years) remains focused on dictatorship, repression, the Stasi and the Berlin Wall (e.g., Cooke, 2005; Hogwood, 2013). On the other hand, we see a divide between this dominant (and state-supported) memory culture, which continues to insist on the uniqueness of the Holocaust, and groups who view National Socialism and communism as two sides of the same coin (Langenbacher, 2010). In this regard, German memory culture reflects divisions at a European level, at which there is "pressure on the eastern side to conform to a seemingly unquestionable but, in fact, contested western norm" (Beattie, 2007, p. 17). That "western norm" simultaneously emphasises the need to remember both National Socialist and communist dictatorships as "totalitarian" and the uniqueness of the crimes of National Socialism (see e.g., Littoz-Monnet, 2012, p. 1184; Neumayer, 2015). Mälksoo describes Eastern European actors as "subalterns" in this context, and as "exercising resistance to the hegemonic 'core European' narrative of what 'Europe' is all about" (2012, p. 655).

The position of the BStU and HSH within this discourse is ambivalent. They construct themselves as part of German "success" and yet as opposed to the "western norm", that is, as

[1] I will follow the convention seen in much Anglophone literature about the GDR of using "eastern German" when I am referring to the territory that once formed the GDR and is now part of the united Germany, and "East German" when referring to the GDR as it existed between 1949 and 1990.

representatives of eastern German memory. In the tenth BStU activity report (BStU, 2011; covering the period 2009-2010), for example, the authors reflect on the state of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in Germany and Europe and the role of the BStU within it. They describe the work of the BStU as being one of a set of measures that show Germany "to have set international standards in the approach to dictatorial pasts" and yet they lament that "just as the West is still quite some way from seeing the GDR as part of German history, it seems that the history of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe formerly under communist rule are not yet seen as part of European history in Paris, Stockholm and Rome." We see a similar narrative of German success and European failure in the work of HSH. In the sixth activity report (Stiftung Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, 2014; covering 2011-2012), the authors describe the Memorial as a sought after partner for actors in other countries who are looking for "inspiration and advice". On the other hand, in the description of the 5th Hohenschönhausen Forum in November 2012 – held under the title, "Working through the Communist Past as a European Task" – the organisers ask, "has Europe failed in working through the communist past?". Indeed, the Memorial's position towards memory of communism and National Socialism has often resulted in controversy. In 2018, the Memorial made the decision to distance itself from its own support association (*Förderverein*) following statements by its Chair, Jörg Kürschner, in support of the far right party, Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland,* AfD). This was viewed as especially problematic given the AfD's tendency to trivialise National Socialism and compare the GDR to the present-day Federal Republic (Beitzer, 2018). In the same year, HSH sacked one of its long-standing tour guides (and former political prisoner), Siegmar Faust, after statements he made in an interview with the *Berliner Zeitung* that appeared to support Holocaust-denier, Horst Mahler, and suggested a need to draw a line under memory of National Socialism (Decker, 2018).

These German actors thus occupy a unique position. As representatives of the memory of communist terror, which is – in their accounts – at odds with the dominant discourse in both Germany and the EU, they claim to speak from a position of subalternity. And yet as state-mandated institutions of a powerful Western country that is perceived as practicing model forms of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*, they are also representative of that hegemonic discourse.

Studying Actors in Relation: A Framework and a Method

Studying networks and relationships means studying agency in relation. As Sierp and Wüstenberg argue, "it is not sufficient to study actors: we need to understand how different actors […] are linked locally and across territorial, cultural, and institutional boundaries" (2015, p. 326). Emirbayer juxtaposes the relational approach with the "substantialist". Whereas the latter looks only at the units involved in the interaction – or in Emirbayer's terms "transaction" – for the relationalist, "the very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction." Thus the connection between actors becomes the "primary unit of analysis" (1997, p. 287). As Crossley describes, in the relational approach, actors have the agency to form and drive connections with others; however, through the networks created by that agency "they are entangled and precisely inter-act" (2010, p. 1).

There are multiple methods for exploring relationality; however, one of the most common, and the one that will be drawn on in this article, is Social Network Analysis (SNA). While the concept of relationality has begun to gain momentum in memory studies (Erll, 2017, 2018), the use of SNA has to date been relatively limited. One important exception is Wüstenberg's (2015) pioneering work on official networks at the European level; however, her methodology necessarily limits her to an analysis of members of the selected networks and, therefore, to European actors. Moreover, as Wüstenberg herself notes, for a fuller picture, the

quantitative data produced in her study needs to be complemented with qualitative data and interpretative methods (2015, p. 113). This article combines quantitative information about the structure of the networks created by and through the transnational co-operations of the BStU and HSH with qualitative and interpretive analysis of texts produced about those co-operations.

Exploring Network Structure

The quantitative techniques of SNA allow us to identify systematically actors who are in positions of influence in the networks created by the collaborative activity of the BStU and HSH and assess if and how actors from different parts of the world are being connected with one another. This is an essential starting point for the qualitative analysis that follows. This article considers how the selected institutions located in a single national context interact with other mnemonic actors globally. The network boundaries are therefore defined according to the activities of those institutions. I trace the connections between the BStU and HSH (which might be described as the "egos" in SNA terms) and other national and transnational actors created through cross-border co-operations (the "alters"). I also track the connections created between those alters through the same activities. This allows me to describe how different actors are positioned structurally within the network created by and through the BStU and HSH. However, it should be emphasised that the data does *not* show what transnational activities the alters engage in beyond co-operations that include the BStU and HSH. The arguments I make below thus relate only to these institutions as representatives of German state-mandated organisations focusing on memory of the GDR.

In order to map these networks, information about the transnational collaborations of the BStU and HSH was gathered from the publicity material generated by those institutions about the period under study (i.e., 2011-2012). This included press releases, yearly summaries, and

the biannual activity report for each institution.[2] The data collection is therefore limited to those activities that the BStU and HSH choose to present publicly. This means that any co-operations taking place "behind-the-scenes" would not be included. The aim of this article is to explore the meanings attributed to cross-border collaborations by the BStU and HSH and the ways in which the rhetoric of memory activism shifts in the presentation of different relationships. The focus on those activities deemed significant enough to be included in publicity material is therefore appropriate.

From this material I identified all of the actors involved in co-operations and the connections between them (i.e., the times that they were brought together by and through the collaborative activity). Where the affiliation of an individual was provided, the institution itself was recorded as the actor. Frequently, the documentation referred generally to actor groups, rather than naming individuals or institutions – e.g., "Tunisian Citizen Rights Activists." Where this was the case, I recorded the actor using those terms. German government actors were grouped under a single heading. The exception is the German Foreign Office (GFO), the data for which was recorded separately, as it was clear from the outset that this body plays a particular role in these transnational networks.

Once the actors had been identified, I coded each with a region. The regions were identified by grouping the country locations of the actors according to their geography, historical experience and memory political activity. Eleven regions were identified: Western Europe, post-Socialist/CEE (states formerly in the Soviet sphere of influence, but not in the Soviet Union), multiregional (e.g., EU institutions, Amnesty International), Scandinavia, North America, MENA, post-Soviet (states formerly part of the Soviet Union), Central and South

[2] For the BStU, the analysis was based on 14 press announcements, the yearly retrospectives for 2011 and 2012, and the activity report for 2011-2012 (BStU, 2013). All available at: www.bstu.de. The number of events coded was 87, including 91 actors with a total of 440 ties between them. For HSH, the analysis was based on 33 press announcements and the activity report for 2011-2012 (Stiftung Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, 2014). All available at: www.stiftung-hsh.de. The number of events coded was 50, including 70 actors with a total of 458 ties between them.

America, East Asia, Central and South Africa, Southeast Asia. In most cases, the geographical location of an actor was used to determine the region to which it belonged. Notably this is more complex for German actors who were divided between Western Europe and post-Socialist/CEE to reflect the historical division of Germany and the division in German memory politics. This was done by biography for individuals (that is, with consideration to where they were socialised) and for institutions according to location (that is, in the western or eastern *Bundesländer*), or according to the focus of their activities (that is, whether or not their focus is memory of the GDR). Thus both the BStU and HSH were coded as post-Socialist/CEE. The decision was made to define actors representing Germany as a whole (notably most government institutions whose work does not focus on memory of the GDR) as Western Europe. As discussed above, the western perspective remains dominant in political discourse in the united Germany and thus actors that are pan-German in this sense are most likely to draw on western narratives about the past. I recognise that this regional grouping is likely to mask some of the nuance of different actor perspectives. It is also clear that I have differentiated within Europe more than other contexts and this is likely to mask fractures in memory narratives elsewhere. The transnational collaborations of both institutions extend beyond, but have their focus within Europe – it was therefore possible (in terms of total numbers) and necessary to differentiate more finely between the regional distributions of European partners.

I used the network analysis software, UCInet, to run a series of mathematical measures on the data relating to centrality, components, and homophily (concepts I will explain further below) and the companion software Netdraw to create visualisations of the networks.

Exploring Meaning in Relation

Qualitative text analysis was used alongside the quantitative approach to explore the meanings given to the relationships created by the cross-border collaboration of the BStU and

HSH. This can be understood as "relationship culture" in the terms outlined by Jan A. Fuhse (2009, p. 60): "a *relational definition of the situation*", which "lies at the core of the relationship" and which draws on "cultural available 'frames'" to answer the question, "what is going on here?" [italics in original]. The text corpus is the same as that used to track the networks as described above. The text for each collaborative activity was coded according to "region", "topic" and "narrative". For all three, a collaboration could be tagged with multiple different codes. "Region" used the same categories as those described above. One key difference is that I did not code "region" for the German actors involved in the co-operation. This is because I am interested principally in the nature of the collaborations as transnational, that is, in what narratives are common for co-operations with actors located in different (non-German) contexts. The codes for "topic" were developed inductively and used to identify the major theme or themes of a given collaboration. The major topics coded for the collaborations with partners in post-Socialist/CEE and MENA countries in this period were: *Aufarbeitung*, Democratic Transition, Dictatorship, European Memory, Memorialisation, Past Crimes, Political Imprisonment, Revolution, Secret Police, State Archives, and Totalitarianism.

The identification of "narratives" involved an analysis of the meaning-making interwoven with the description of what happened and what it was about. I draw my understanding of "narrative" from methods developed in narrative analysis (e.g., Czarniawska, 2004; Spector-Mersel, 2008, p. 208). This approach is located firmly within a constructivist and interpretative paradigm: I am not looking for information on the "real" motivations behind cross-border collaborations or for an authentic insight into their purpose; rather I am interested in how the narrators (here the authors of the reports and press releases or those cited in them) give meaning to these co-operative activities. These are accounts of the motivations behind these collaborations, of which approaches to the past work and which do

not and they identify who should be learning from whom. The narratives identified in the corpus were grouped into eight categories: Common Histories; Expert Exchange; Learning from CEE; Learning from Self (BStU or HSH); Learning from Others; Learning from the Germans; Other Histories; Supporting Global Human Rights.

As noted above, the use of publically available material means that the meanings traced are those produced for an external audience and for the purposes of supporting the work of the central institution. This means that they cannot reveal behind-the-scenes decisions or reflections; instead, they show how these institutions narrate cross-border collaboration in the context of dominant global, national and regional discursive frameworks. The focus on narratives produced by the BStU and HSH – and not on those produced by the partners with whom they co-operate – also means that we are missing one half of the conversation. In this regard, the approach taken here can reveal how these German actors, whose focus is memory of the GDR, narrate their cross-border collaborations with actors around the world; however, further research is needed to be certain of how those other actors perceive those same co-operations. As observed by Grosescu, Baby and Neumayer, cross-border collaborations are marked by both a "globalization of memory and justice paradigms" and a "fragmentation" of those paradigms as they are contested by regional and local practices and understandings (2019. p. 307).

Networks within Networks: The Structure of Collaboration

Turning first to the results of the quantitative analysis. In the period 2011-2012, I coded 440 ties between 91 actors for the BStU and 458 ties between 70 actors for HSH. The cross-border collaborations of both institutions included actors from eleven different regions.

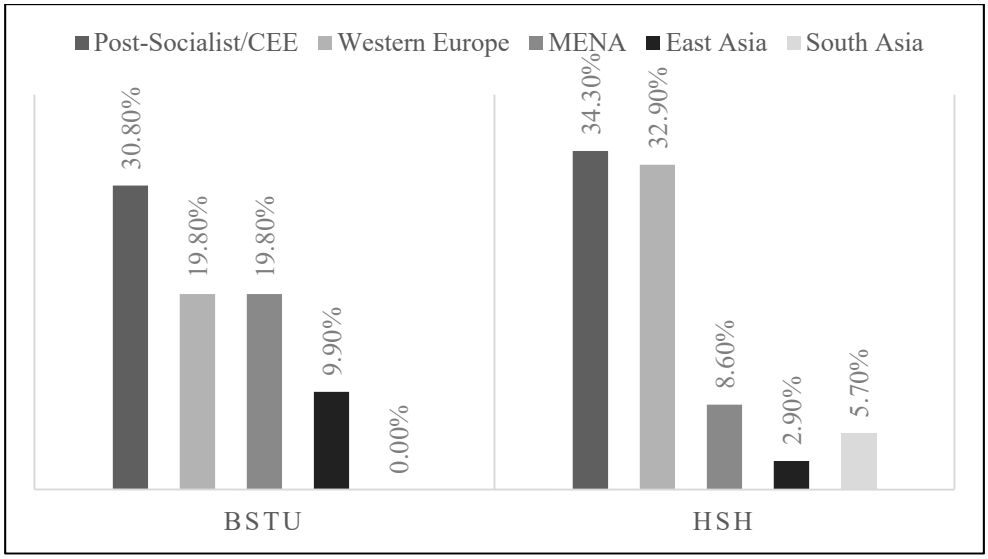

Figure 1: Regional composition of the networks created by and through the BStU and HSH, 2011-2012

Figure 1 shows the break down for those regions represented by at least 5% of the actors in either the BStU or HSH. It is clear that, in this period, the regional focus of collaborations for the two institutions was similar, with an emphasis on intra-European co-operations (post-Socialist/CEE and West) and extra-European collaborations principally with partners in the MENA region.

This data can indicate *who* is in the network and the frequency with which the BStU and HSH collaborated with actors from a particular region. However, it cannot tell us which actors were most influential in the network – for this we need to measure what is known in SNA as "centrality". There are multiple measures of centrality: the one that I focus on here is "betweenness centrality" (BC). BC assesses the extent to which an actor connects two actors in the network. An actor with a high BC is one who functions as a bridge or "broker" between different actors in the network. Such actors are in a structural position of influence; they have the opportunity to draw on resources from and provide resources to multiple different groups. Such resources might be material (in the form of funding for example), but

also include symbolic and narrative resources relating to the past and the processes of remembrance.

Table 1 shows the top five most "between central" actors in the networks created by and through the activity of the BStU and HSH in 2011-2012. The data is normalised (nBC) according to the size of the networks to allow comparison.

BStU 2011-2012		**HSH 2011-2012**	
Actor	*nBC*	*Actor*	*nBC*
GFO	3.307	German Gov.	20.237
Tunisia Citizens Rights (CR) Activists	2.694	Tunisia Gov.	17.954
ISTR, Prague	1.532	Deutschlandfunk	15.935
Egyptian CR Activists	1.302	Deutsche Kinemathek	10.009
Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung	1.149	Tunisia CR Activists	6.629

Table 1: Top five most between central actors in BStU and HSH networks, 2011-2012

At the top of the lists are German government actors (principally, regional and federal ministers) and the GFO. The GFO does not officially have "memory" as part of its remit. The body's co-operation with the MENA region through the "Transformation Partnership" is instead defined as focusing on the "promotion of democracy and civil society, human rights, guidance on constitutional and judicial matters, administrative reforms, equal opportunities for women, the media, scholarships and research collaboration" (German Foreign Office, 2019).[3] Looking at the other German actors in Table 1, the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung is a political foundation associated with the centre left Social Democratic Party. Like the GFO, their work in the MENA region is subsumed under "foreign and security policy" (Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, 2019). I return to this distinction between democracy promotion, human rights and memory in the discussion below. Deutschlandfunk is a section of Deutschlandradio (German Radio) whose remit is politics and culture, and Deutsche Kinemathek is a German film museum and archive.

[3] All translations from French and German are my own.

Turning to the non-German actors, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ISTR) is a Czech state-mandated research institute and member of the PEMC. It describes its remit as generating and transmitting knowledge about "the Nazi period and the period of Communist totalitarian power" (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, 2019). The actors from the MENA region are less clearly defined in the corpus. Few individual organisations or individuals are named and instead they are described most often as, for example, Tunisian or Egyptian "citizens' rights activists." This tendency to subsume these actors into a single category in the texts means that the nodes, "Tunisian CR activists" and "Egyptian CR activists" likely include multiple actors and institutions which the data does not allow us to disaggregate. The only named actors from this region were the project "Contre l'oubli", led jointly by HSH and partners in Tunisia and the organisation Le Labo' démocratique. Le Labo' state their aim as being to "uphold the principles of the universal declaration of human rights" and to contribute "to the establishment and entrenchment of an innovative and living democracy" (Le Labo' démocratique, 2019). The Tunisian government is represented by multiple actors principally in the context of official visits to HSH by individuals and groups from different government departments and national commissions.

In both networks, the actors with the highest BC are diverse in terms of type (governments, media, state institutes, activists, political foundations). In terms of regional location, Western Europe (in fact, western German) and the MENA region would seem to be overrepresented in comparison to actors from CEE. This phenomenon can be explored further through a measure of components: a component is a segment of the network in which the alters are connected to one another through a path that does not include the BStU or HSH. The component is still part of the network created by and through the central actor and cannot tell us anything about transnational collaborations beyond that network; however, breaking the network down into

components can reveal more about the shape of that collaborative activity and the kinds of actors who are being connected to one another through it (Prell, 2012, pp. 153-155).

As shown in Figures 2-3, the network created by and through the BStU in 2011-2012 fragments into two principle components with 25 and 18 actors respectively (the next largest contained only 5 actors). Figure 4 shows that the network created by and through HSH in the same period contains one large component that, with 45 nodes, includes more than half of the total number of actors (the next largest contains only 2 actors). The shape of the node in Figures 2-4 is determined by region (see key) and the size by betweenness centrality.

Symbol	Region
	Western Europe
	Post-Socialist/CEE
	Multiregional
	MENA
	Central and South America
	East Asia
+	Post-Soviet

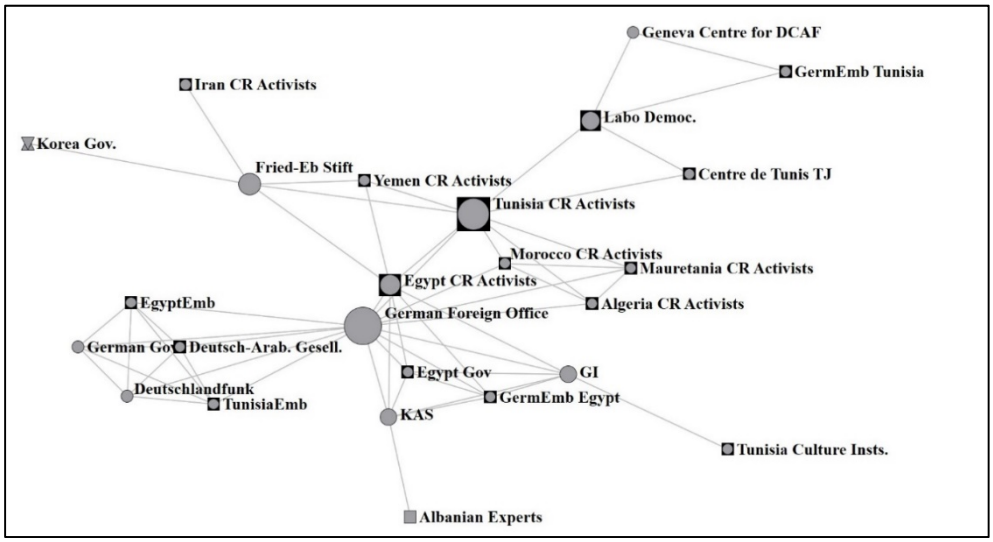

Figure 2: BStU Network 2011-2012, Component 1 (25 actors)

The two major components of the BStU network show a distinct regional focus. The first is dominated by Western German actors intermingled with and connecting actors from the MENA region. Component 2 is in contrast composed almost entirely of post-Socialist/CEE actors. Thus, the analysis of components indicates the creation of a distinctly "Eastern" network within the larger network. On the other hand, the co-operation with partners in the MENA region includes a number of German government actors, political foundations and cultural institutes, who, in several cases (notably the GFO), occupy a position of brokerage.

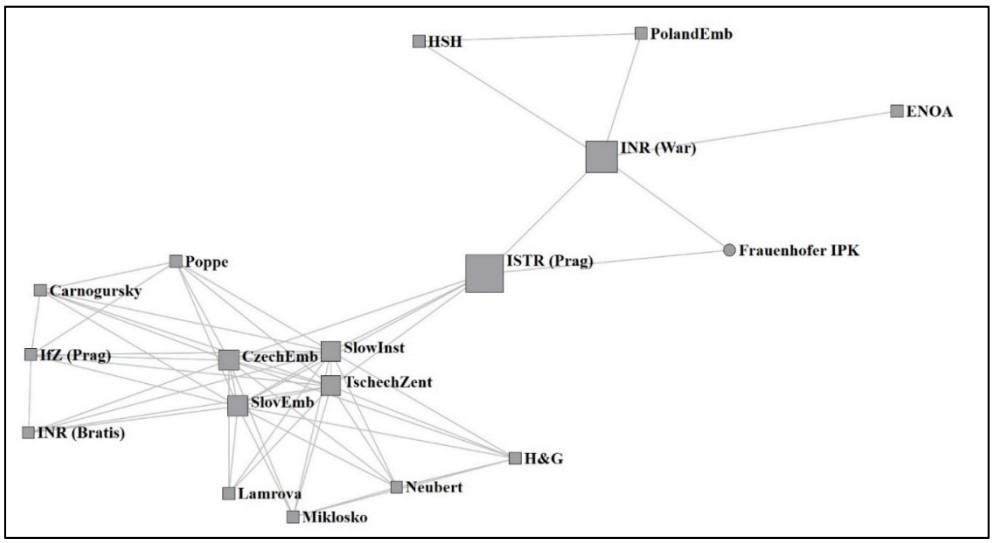

Figure 3: BStU Network 2011-2012, Component 2 (18 actors)

As Figure 4 shows, the principal component in the network created through HSH's transnational activity appears at first to be a highly connected network that is more diverse in terms of the regional location of the actors involved. Seven regions are represented: Western Europe, post-Socialist/CEE, multiregional, North Africa, post-Soviet, East Asia and Central and South America. However, a closer look at the component reveals once again that there is regional clustering and that it is a particular set of actors who are connecting the different groups: the German government, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (a political foundation aligned to the Christian Democratic Party of Germany, KAS), and the GFO.

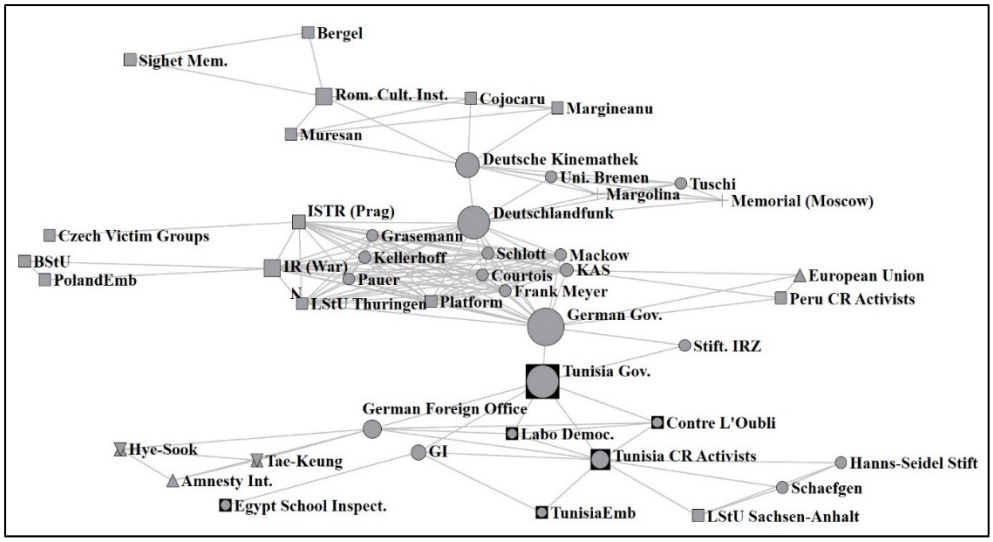

Figure 4: HSH Network 2011-2012, Component 1 (45 actors)

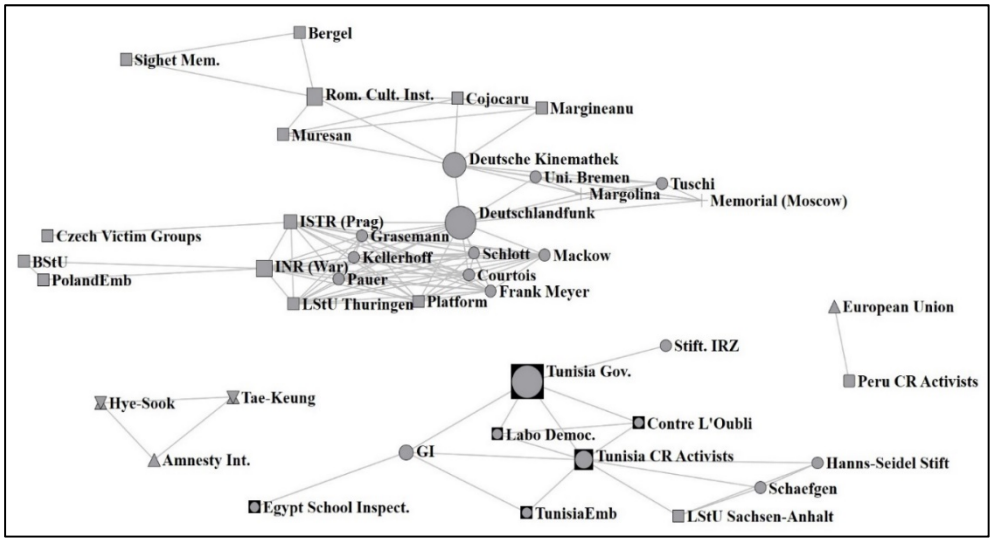

Figure 5: HSH Network 2011-2012, Component 1 without German Gov., GFO and KAS

Figure 5 shows what the component would look like with these actors removed: the division between regions is much clearer. In particular, the two larger segments fall neatly into one focused on CEE/post-Soviet and (western) German actors and the other (almost) entirely on MENA and (western) German ones.

In both institutions we see an emerging pattern. While their transnational collaboration is global in scope, it is regional in focus. In terms of network structure, both institutions tend to reinforce “zones of memory” (Wüstenberg, 2015, p. 101) in their transnational networking.

The collaborative activity of the BStU creates a discrete "Eastern" zone – connecting only post-Socialist/CEE actors with one another – and a discrete "MENA" zone in which MENA partners are connected with one another and with other (principally western) German actors. HSH brings Western European actors into collaboration with CEE/post-Soviet ones more frequently than does the BStU. Of those actors, some – notably the French historian, Stéphane Courtois (editor of the controversial *Black Book of Communism*[4]) – hold perspectives on communism and totalitarianism that are similar to those represented by the "Eastern" actors with whom they collaborate. The others are all western German. In the network created by the collaborative activity of HSH, we see one grouping that combines predominantly post-Socialist/CEE actors with western German ones, and another that brings together predominantly MENA actors with western German ones.

The components thus suggest that when it comes to regional location, actors tend to connect with actors like themselves – something known in SNA as "homophily" (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 80-82; Prell, 2012, pp. 129-131). This effect can be tested mathematically using Relational Contingency Table Analysis (RCTA). RCTA is a permutation test, which measures the observed density of ties between actors with one attribute (here region) with actors of another, against the expected density given a random distribution. A value of greater than 1 indicates that there are more ties between actors in two given regions that we would expect, and a score of less than 1 indicates there are fewer ties. In this way, we can build up a picture of the grouping of regions within the network. Tables 2 and 3 show the results of the RCTA for the two networks under discussion. I have only included data for the key regions under discussion here: Western Europe, post-Socialist/CEE and MENA.

[4] See the contribution of Behr et. al. in this special issue.

BStU			
	Western Europe	**Post-Socialist/CEE**	**MENA**
Western Europe	1.81	0.19	2.76
Post-Socialist/CEE	0.19	5.00	0.00
MENA	2.76	0.00	3.83
p-value	0.00010		

Table 2: RCTA for networks created by and through the collaborative activity of the BStU, 2011-2012

HSH			
	Western Europe	**Post-Socialist/CEE**	**MENA**
Western Europe	3.07	1.30	1.27
Post-Socialist/CEE	1.30	1.16	0.11
MENA	1.27	0.11	6.84
p-value	0.02300		

Table 3: RCTA for networks created by and through the collaborative activity of HSH, 2011-2012

The RCTA results highlight mathematically the regional divisions observed in the components. In the network created by and through the BStU there is a greater than expected level of homophily for the actors from each of the three major regions. However, this is especially the case for post-Socialist/CEE and MENA actors, suggesting that these two sets of actors in particular tend to form regional groups. The RCTA indicates moreover, that MENA actors are connected with Western European ones more often than would be expected in a random distribution (as we see in the visualisation, this means principally western German actors). This is not the case for the connections between the MENA and post-Socialist/CEE regional groupings.

In the network created by and through HSH we see a similar result for the MENA region (in fact with even greater homophily). However, in contrast to the BStU network, Western European actors show a higher level of homophily than post-Socialist/CEE ones, which might suggest that post-Socialist/CEE actors are spread more broadly across this network. Nonetheless, a look at the other regions to which Western European and post-Socialist/CEE actors are connected more frequently than would be expected paints a different picture. Despite a high level of homophily, Western European actors are also well connected in

multiple other regions: alongside post-Socialist/CEE and MENA, a RCTA value of greater than 1 is given for ties with post-Soviet (1.70) and Central and South American (1.27) actors. In contrast, post-Socialist/CEE actors only connect more often than would be expected with one another and with Western European collaborators.

What can we conclude from this quantitative analysis of the networks? The network structure indicates distinct regional clusters: European actors focused on post-socialism on one side and MENA actors on the other. Post-socialist/CEE actors – including other German actors focused on memory of the GDR – are only very rarely brought into contact with actors in the MENA cluster. On the other hand, Western European actors – especially western German – are more likely than actors from other regions to be spread across these regions and to play a connecting function within or between them. The analysis of centrality indicates that these connecting actors are principally German government actors or political foundations whose activity in the MENA region is underpinned not by a concern with historical memory per se, but with democracy and human rights (see e.g., Holthaus, 2019; Kubbara, 2019; Marzo, 2019). It is worth noting that during the transitions following the revolutions of 1989 and before EU enlargement, these actors were involved in Central and Eastern European countries with a similar remit (Dakowska, 2005; Phillips, 1999), but their activity in the region is now part of their European policy. In contrast to the post-Socialist/CEE and MENA regions, there is *no* distinct Western European cluster constructed by the collaborative activity of the BStU and HSH (e.g., with a focus on French or Belgian mnemonic actors): in this particular sense, Western Europe does not exist in the network as a regional grouping.

Making Meaning out of Relationships: Between East and West

The structure of the network tells us about the ways in which actors might be enabled or constrained by their position within the set of relationships under analysis. Post-socialist/CEE

actors are connected most frequently with one another and rarely (in the networks under analysis here) with actors outside of that region. MENA actors are reliant on powerful western German actors to connect them within the network. What does this mean for the ways in which the activity in these regions is given meaning? As Emirbayer and Goodwin argue, "culture and social relations empirically interpenetrate with and mutually condition one another so thoroughly that it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of the one without the other" (1994, p. 1438). Both network structure and the meaning given to the different relationships within that network are thus determined by "cultural frameworks" (1994, pp. 1439-1440); these cultural frameworks are both constructed through the relationships within the network and, at the same time, determine the structure of the network.

In our context, this means that the regional clustering observed through the quantitative analysis is likely to be underpinned by and reproduce particular cultural frameworks. Exploration of the meaning given to the activities and relationships within the post-Socialist/CEE cluster on the one hand and the MENA one on the other can reveal those cultural frameworks and the discursive assumptions that are at their base. My method for excavating these meanings is – as described – narrative analysis and thematic coding of the texts produced by the BStU and HSH. The approach thus reveals the frameworks as they are narrated by the German institution. To give an overview of which narratives were most prevalent in the description of activities in a given region, I ran "matrix coding" in Nvivo for the two regional clusters identified in the quantitative network analysis (MENA and post-Socialist/CEE) and all narratives for both files. This technique shows how often an activity is coded with both a given region and a given narrative. The results are given in Table 4: the numbers reported are the percentage of all narratives coded at this region (rounded to the nearest whole number). I have shaded the narrative seen most commonly in collaborations with each of the regions under consideration.

BStU	CEE	MENA	**HSH**	CEE	MENA
Common Histories	60%	6%	Common Histories	44%	10%
Expert Exchange	13%	3%	Expert Exchange	11%	5%
Learning from CEE	10%	11%	Learning from CEE	6%	0.00
Learning from the Self	10%	17%	Learning from Self	11%	24%
Learning from Others	0%	0%	Learning from Others	17%	5%
Learning from the Germans	3%	54%	Learning from the Germans	6%	38%
Other Histories	3%	9%	Other Histories	6%	10%
Supporting Global Human Rights	0%	0.00	Supporting Global Human Rights	0.00	10%

Table 4: Matrix Coding Region and Narrative, BStU and HSH 2011-2012

The results indicate that in collaborations with post-Socialist/CEE partners, for both the BStU and HSH the dominant narrative – or discursive framework– is of a common or shared history. This is supported by narratives of expert exchange, learning from the central institution and, in the case of HSH, learning from others; however, it only very rarely includes discourses of "learning from the Germans." In contrast, in collaborations with partners in the MENA region, the dominant narrative is of learning from the Germans, closely following by learning from the central institution (BStU or HSH) itself.

A similar query was run to explore the relationship between topic and region, with the results given in Table 5. The figures give the percentage of all topics coded at that region. I have only included topics represented by at least 10% for at least one of the institutions and have shaded the top three most significant for each region.

BStU	Post-Socialist/CEE	MENA	**HSH**	Post-Socialist/CEE	MENA
Aufarbeitung	18%	29%	*Aufarbeitung*	19%	33%
Democratic Transition	2%	13%	Democratic Transition	2%	14%
Dictatorship	10%	9%	Dictatorship	0%	14%
European Memory	0%	0%	European Memory	14%	0%
Memorialisation	2%	0%	Memorialisation	9%	11%
Past Crimes	0%	5%	Past Crimes	14%	3%
Political Imprisonment	0%	0%	Political Imprisonment	9%	11%

Revolution	10%	11%	Revolution	5%	3%
Secret Police	22%	11%	Secret Police	2%	6%
State Archives	18%	20%	State Archives	5%	0.00
Totalitarianism	6%	0%	Totalitarianism	14%	0.00

Table 5: Matrix Coding Region and Topic, BStU and HSH 2011-2012

Here we see that while the narratives told about collaborations in different regions vary significantly, the topics around which those narratives are framed on the whole do not. Unsurprisingly, *Aufarbeitung,* working through the past, is a significant issue across the institutions and regions, albeit with slightly more emphasis on this in co-operations with MENA partners. For the BStU, as might be expected given its remit, this is complemented by a focus on state archives for both regions and the secret police in particular for the post-Socialist/CEE region. Significantly, in the MENA region, we see an additional interest in democratic transition. For HSH, there is an emphasis on memorialisation and political imprisonment (particularly in collaborations with MENA partners) –a result that reflects the remit of the Berlin Memorial. In co-operations with post-Socialist/CEE partners this is accompanied by a focus on European memory, totalitarianism and past crimes; in contrast, in co-operations within the MENA region, the secondary narratives are again of democratic transition and dictatorship.

I will give a selection of representative examples from each institution to indicate how these dominant narratives and topics are typically interwoven in the texts. In order to make clear the connection between the quantitative and qualitative analysis, my focus will be on activities within the two regional clusters identified in the analysis of network structure.

Common Histories and Working Together in CEE

A major project that ran throughout 2011, "Focus DDR-CSSR: Everyday Life and the Secret Police in two Communist Dictatorships" formed the core of the post-Socialist/CEE cluster in

the network created by and through the BStU. The project was run with the Slovak Institute and Czech Centre (both national cultural institutes) and under the aegis of the embassies of the Czech and Slovak Republics in Germany. In the eleventh activity report, it is narrated as follows:

> In 2011 the international working through of the Stasi past represents a thematic focus [of the work of the BStU]. Ten events between March and November 2011 were dedicated to the GDR state security service and its 'brother institutions,' the Czechoslovakian state security service. We explored the collaboration between the two secret police services, commonalities and differences, but also the different approaches to dealing with the legacy of the secret police in Germany, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. (BStU, 2013, p. 91)

We see a focus on repression at the hands of the communist secret police underpinned by a representation of that communist past as shared between the partners involved in the co-operation. The assertion of a shared history, of secret services that considered one another "brothers," is nuanced by a recognition of differences between the pasts of the three countries and in the processes of working through those pasts. The present-day co-operation is underpinned by the goal of sharing those common (but different) experiences. Importantly, in that process of sharing, no one actor is presented as superior or more knowledgeable: this is an exchange between equals. While German actors in general (and the BStU in particular) may have served as models for other post-socialist contexts in the past (see e.g., Welsh, 2015; Hammerstein et al., 2009, p. 11), in the narratives produced by the BStU in 2011, these collaborations are presented as partnerships of mutual exchange and learning.

We see a similar narrative in the collaborations between HSH and other actors in the CEE region; however, here the anticommunist rhetoric is often set much more explicitly in opposition to the memory culture perceived as dominant at a national and European level.

This is seen especially starkly in the narration of the Fifth Hohenschönhausen Forum in November 2012, which was combined with the annual general meeting of the PECM. The author of the sixth activity report notes:

> The participants demanded more support from the European Union in the process of working through the communist past. Above all, they argued that the public must be educated better on the nature of totalitarian regimes. At the end of the conference, the representatives introduced themselves to the German public and reported on their work. In the process, it was apparent that in many countries National Socialism and communism are thought of together, whereas in Germany they are often examined separately and differently. The rare opportunity to learn first-hand about activities relating to working through the past in so many different countries was taken up by more than 50 guests. (Stiftung Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, 2014, p. 44)

In this example, remembrance of communist "totalitarianism" is presented as lacking in support at both a European and German level based on a lack of knowledge among the (Western) public. The Eastern actors within the PECM (and the interests of this network are overwhelmingly focused on left-wing authoritarianism in CEE) are positioned as the experts from whom German and European audiences can learn. The common histories of the countries in which these actors are located drives the co-operation between them and, at the same time, constructs these actors as struggling to make their voices heard in a dominant discourse that seems to occlude these pasts. The place of Germany is ambivalent. The German public are presented as eager to learn more and yet it is implied that the "German" way of remembering (in which National Socialism and communism are supposedly considered separately) might not be the best way of remembering. In this sense, the German actors are positioned as learning from others.

Doing it Right and Learning from the Germans in MENA region

The narration of the collaborations with partners in the MENA region looks rather different and – as indicated by the matrix coding – focuses on what the non-German partner gains from the co-operation in terms of knowledge and expertise, rather than on the transformation of both actors. Alongside an interest in working through the past and the potential role of state archives and memorialisation in that process, there is an emphasis on support for democratic transition. The 2011-2012 activity report describes the beginnings of the BStU's work in the region as follows:

> Shortly after the unrest in the Middle East, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) got in touch with the authority [i.e., the BStU]. Requests came in particular from Egypt. In the first instance, Egyptian civil rights initiatives were provided with English-language informational materials via non-governmental organisations. The Foreign Office also got in touch with the BStU in the context of the task force "Transformation Partnerships". The experiences that Germany and this authority had gathered since 1989 were to be passed onto the Egyptian public and to state institutions. Eventually it emerged that an experienced member of the BStU would meet multipliers and activists on the ground in order to report on ways of making archives accessible and on experiences from the time of the Peaceful Revolution and the upheavals in Germany. (BStU, 2013, p. 102)

This framing is dominant throughout the texts relating to the BStU's collaborations with MENA partners. The collaboration is seen to be initiated by a desire on the part of the non-German actor to learn from the experience of the BStU. Moreover, this presumed expertise is expanded into a national expertise. This is not presented as an exchange; knowledge, in this narrative, only travels in one direction. The "upheavals" (*Umbruch*) of 1989 are now presented as a pan-German history that can be passed onto the non-German actor with the

support of the German state, represented by the GFO – here we see in action the connecting role played by this actor.

Interestingly, in some texts, this narrative of learning from the Germans merges into a narrative of learning from CEE more broadly. For example, the Director of the BStU received a group of activists from Egypt, Tunisa and Yemen on the 10 May 2011. The visit was organised by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation – another actor seen as an important broker in the above analysis of network structure. The activity report narrates:

> The focus was questions of power struggles after the removal of dictatorships and how to deal with the old elites; in view of the extensive security apparatus, this was an issue of central concern. Additionally, participants discussed the costs of working through the past. Using the example of Central and South-Eastern Europe, we were able to show that working through the past is possible also with smaller institutions, as long as the independence of the files [*Aktenhoheit*] is secured. (BStU, 2013, p. 102)

Here, Central and Eastern Europe is positioned as having collective knowledge that can be transferred to the non-European partners. Germany is both included in and separated from that region. It has a shared approach, but – the implication is – larger and better-funded institutions.

We see a very similar narrative in the texts produced by HSH about their collaborations with actors in the MENA region. A particular focus for the institution was an ongoing collaboration with multiple partners located in Tunisia. The beginning of this co-operation is narrated as follows:

> Due to the collapse of the dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt the interest in this region in working through the past increased rapidly. Germany was a sought-after example in the search for experiences and role models. With the Federal Foreign Minister Dr

> Guido Westerwelle as intermediary, the Director of the Memorial Dr Hubertus Knabe was invited to Tunisia as early as three months after the fall of the Ben-Ali dictatorship. (Stiftung Gedenkstätte Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, 2014, p. 81)

In a press release relating to a conference in Tunisia on 6-8 December 2012, the work with Tunisia is described as being "developed in close coordination with the Foreign Office" and as "of significance also for other states who have been able to cast off their dictatorships." Once again we see the position of a powerful (Western) German actor – the GFO – as a broker in this collaboration, including an indication that this actor has a role in shaping the form that the co-operation takes. There is some sense of an exchange of ideas in this text; the conference is described as having the aim of "introducing the discourse around dealing with the SED dictatorship and discussing the Tunisian ideas, concepts and perspectives around dealing with the Ben-Ali dictatorship." Nonetheless, the dominant narrative is of the Tunisians learning from the German approach in general, and HSH and its then director in particular. We might also note that even here, the discourse around memory of the GDR is "introduced" (*vorgestellt*), suggesting something fixed. In contrast, the approach to the Tunisian past is to be "discussed" (*diskutiert*), implying that these perspectives and ideas can still be shaped.

Memory, Democracy and Decoloniality

What we see here are two quite distinct frameworks within which the central actor – the BStU and HSH – give meaning to the relationships they form with mnemonic actors in post-Socialist/CEE countries on the one hand and MENA countries on the other. These are in turn interwoven with the network structure. Both the BStU and HSH assert a desire to see an overcoming of the presumed division in European memory. In this debate, they position memory of communism as peripheral and themselves as advocates for bringing it to the core, not only of European memory, but also of German memory. And yet, in the networks

constructed by and through cross-border co-operation, the BStU in fact appears to reinforce divisions in European memory by creating a discrete post-Socialist/post-Soviet zone that does not incorporate Western alters. The structure of the network created by and through the transnational co-operation of HSH in the period under consideration is more diverse, as it brings together Eastern and Western European alters to discuss the place of communism in European memory. Nonetheless, an analysis of who is actually speaking at the events and activities being organised by HSH suggests that here too it may be relatively homogenous in terms of perspective. These "Eastern" zones of memory are juxtaposed in the networks created by and through the activities of both institutions with a "MENA" zone that also includes powerful (western) German actors, such as the German government, GFO and German political foundations. Again, these clusters are by and large discrete – transnational collaboration does not mean for these institutions connecting directly partners located in different regions and thereby creating opportunities for the exchange of symbolic and narrative resources across those regions. Instead it is these powerful Western actors who are in such structural positions of influence. Western Europe as itself a region of memory does not exist within these networks.

The impact of this structure is highlighted by the exploration of the narratives produced about partnerships with countries located in the different regions and the topics that form the focus of those narratives. Büttner and Delius describe how CEE actors adopt norms and standards considered "world cultural" (but which I would argue are, in fact, Eurocentric) and use these to influence debate according to a particular agenda (2015, pp. 400-401). For these German actors, that agenda shifts in the context of different regional relationships. Co-operations with post-Socialist/CEE partners are described as partnerships between equals, between actors located in countries with a shared past who face similar difficulties in coming to terms with that past and in gaining recognition for it at a national and/or European level. The discursive

framework for the collaborations within this cluster is the shared history of that region – seen through the lens of totalitarianism – and ways in which that history should be remembered. In short, the framework is one of historical memory.

And yet, if in intra-European co-operations, the BStU and HSH position themselves as part of a group seeking to move memory of communism from the periphery to the centre, in the narration of co-operations outside of Europe these institutions shift their presentation of self from Eastern European "subalterns" to become representatives of a German memory culture from which they presume others wish to learn. Those (non-European) others are constructed in turn as deficient and seeking the support of the more knowledgeable European partner. The different network structure in this regional cluster – the involvement as brokers of German institutions whose focus in the MENA region has tended to be not on memory, but on democracy promotion and human rights – goes hand in hand with a shift in topic and narrative. We see an interweaving of issues of memorialisation and archives with issues of democratic transition and a shift in narrative perspective towards a model of transfer from the Global North to the Global South. In essence, the BStU and HSH modify their self-representation from that of agents of memory to agents of transitional justice. Indeed, memorialisation and archive access are well-recognised tools of transitional justice, which is in turn frequently seen as an essential part of democratisation (e.g., Barahona de Brito, González-Enríquez & Paloma Aguilar, 2001; Buckley-Zistel & Schäfer, 2014).

If these institutions are seen as part of German democracy assistance and the promotion of human rights in the region, we might subject their action to the same critique that has been applied to other transnational agents in that field. Sheila Carapico (2014, p. 12) notes that efforts towards democracy assistance, including in the form of "human rights regimes" and "NGO networks", have been criticised for their ability to "perpetuate Euro-American supremacy" and function as a means to "export" Western legal and electoral models. External

support for transitional justice, as it is interwoven with issues of human rights and practices of memorialisation, has also been subject to critiques that point towards the Eurocentrism of models that are assumed to be universal (e.g., Barreto, 2012; David, 2017; see also Huyssen, 2015). These critiques draw explicitly or implicitly on decolonial theory, in which "Eurocentrism is not a geographical issue, but an epistemic and aesthetic one" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 125; see also Quijano, 2007), in which "the origin of legitimate thinking is confined to a certain geopolitical location, Europe" (Barreto, 2012, p. 2).

The rhetorical logic of transnational democracy promotion is, Carapico (2014, pp. 200-201) argues, "that Western or American assistance is necessary but not sufficient for democratic transitions abroad – where, it is assumed, good people look to great powers for expertise, support, and inspiration." She notes that this "narrative does not travel well, or translate well". This rhetoric is similar to that produced by the BStU and Hohenschönhausen about their co-operations with the MENA region. In this way, the meanings given to these collaborations by the BStU and HSH point towards an epistemic coloniality within these relationships that risks silencing perspectives on human rights, memory and justice from without Europe and – at the same time – serves to conceal the entanglement of European and non-European histories through trade, cultural exchange, war, and colonialism: here too, there are common histories which might be explored. This indicates a need to introduce decolonial perspectives to our study of transnational memory, not only in terms of the content of memory, but also in terms of our assumptions about what goals memory should serve and how it should best serve them. With reference to human rights, Barreto (2012, p. 26) argues that this process requires not an abandonment of the European legacy; rather a provincialisation of that legacy so that it might enter into dialogue with conceptions emerging from places previously at the margins. In terms of transnational remembering, this would mean a move away from a view of Holocaust memory as having provided a "universal code"

(Levy & Sznaider, 2010, p. 4) for addressing past crimes – a code exemplified by the "German" approach – and towards a praxis that places that model in dialogue with other concepts and through relationships based on collaboration and equal exchange.

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