Reconstructing media frames in multimodal discourse: The John/Ivan Demjanjuk trial

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ABSTRACT

This article explores a way to reconstruct the verbally and visually constituted frames used in the coverage of the trial of John/Ivan Demjanjuk, a Ukraine-born U.S. citizen accused of holocaust-related war crimes. The study looks at an exemplary case of current multimodal discourse, in which written messages and images from broadcasts and press, as well as the comments and visuals that spread through social media, can be seen to relate to each other in framing public issues. To establish a viable perspective that takes into account both the communicative organisation and the semiotic constitution of such discourses, this analysis combines approaches from frame semantics and social semiotics together with recursive sampling and coding. The article then explains the analytical procedures used to reconstruct the framing of the accused as either a responsible culprit or a victim of circumstances.

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1. Introduction

In light of the current technological, organisational, semiotic and practical entanglement of digitally networked media, any analysis of discourse must take into account that the media environment is "always on" (Baron, 2008). Only looking at either verbal or visual communication, or offline rather than online interaction, would thus introduce an artificial discrimination. In particular, analyses concerning the social, political or cultural implications of public discourse cannot ignore the palette of networked services and modal repertoires that are employed by broadcasting media, public agencies and civic actors in order to gain a voice (Dahlberg, 2013; Papacharissi, 2010).

Acknowledging the normality and norm, so to say, of current transmedia and multimodal discourse prompts us to reconsider approaches for reconstructing its semantic structures. To this end, this article examines the discursive linkage across broadcast media and social media services in framing public issues (Entman, 1993; Van Gorp, 2007). In its sampling procedures, it thus traces the intradiscursive relations between different texts, outlets and actors. The analysis focuses on the interplay of verbal and visual modes in forming media frames. This sets it apart from other studies that have already examined the multimodal orchestration of genres like online newspapers (Caple and Knox, 2012), digital games (Ensslin, 2011) or user-generated videos (Adami, 2009). The study therefore advances interpretative discourse analysis through combining and adapting methodical approaches to the conditions of multimodal discourse (Pauwels, 2012; Sindoni, 2013).

In order to achieve this, the study focuses on semantic structures, namely media frames, since considerable attention has already gone to the language and pragmatics used in digitally networked communication to enact identities, communities or power relations (for overviews, see Androutsopoulos and Juffermans, 2014; Herring, Stein and Virtanen, 2013; Leppänen et al., 2015; Tannen and Trester, 2013; Thurlow and Mroczek, 2011). The article thus contributes to the understanding of the multimodal articulation of meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Martinec and Salway, 2005) by examining verbal and visual frames, while the majority of framing research neglects the arrangement of different semiotic resources (Coleman, 2010).

Although some argue that it is necessary to create a holistic perspective, which connects different versions of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2011) and is sensitive to the modalities of discourse (Fairclough, 2003; Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002), our approach side-steps this question: we neither aim for a comprehensive set of instruments accounting for all forms of digital discourse, nor do we only concentrate on the outcomes of the empirical example. Instead, the article on the one hand discusses the opportunities

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and challenges presented by current multimodal discourse for sampling material that varies in its degree of periodicity, centrality, visibility, persistence, animation and reactivity. And on the other hand, it combines methods from frame semantics, social semiotics and qualitative social enquiry in order to reconstruct the verbally and visually constituted media framing founding a discourse that varies in its communicative organisation and semiotic composition (Herring, 2010; Scollon and Scollon, 2004). Through this approach, the analysis seeks to adapt to the changes in the discursive field, rather than proceeding the other way round, where the chosen method determines what material could and should usefully be investigated.

The study explores the discourse on the third trial of the alleged Nazi collaborator, John/Ivan Demjanjuk. John "Ivan" Demjanjuk was a soldier of the Soviet Red Army, a prisoner of war during the Second World War and an auxiliary police guard, a so-called *Trawniki man*, at Nazi extermination camps. After becoming a naturalised U.S. citizen in 1958, he later stood trials for Holocaust-related war crimes, first in Israel in the 1980 s, second in the U.S. in 2001 and third in Germany between 2009 and 2011, where he was convicted as an accessory to murder, pending appeal. The multi-lingual discourse that accompanied the trail, particularly in Germany, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Russia, the U.S. and Israel, emerged from the interplay of a range of media. This included television, press and online communication, especially forums, websites and social media, which in turn mainly consisted of weblogs, the social networking site Facebook, the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia and the video platform YouTube. The discourse covered issues of war crimes, holocaust remembrance and historic guilt (for details about the case, see Douglas, 2016).

Before looking at the case, this article first discusses the analytical conditions of current multimodal discourse. Next, we combine approaches from frame semantics and social semiotics in practices of recursive sampling and coding taken from Grounded Theory. These analytical procedures are then applied to the discourse of the John/Ivan Demjanjuk trial.

2. Analytical conditions of current multimodal discourse

Specific opportunities and challenges are met by any analysis of multimodal discourses that commonly run through online and offline spheres, and that connect different broadcasting media outlets and social media platforms. First, such analyses must be sensitive to issues of *sampling*, that is, the generation, preparation and storage of material representing a discourse completely or fragmentary. Second, they must consider *interpretation*, that is, the hermeneutical understanding of discursively constituted meanings, through an analysis of the varied semiotic, semantic or grammatical aspects constituting the elements and relations in multimodal texts.

At a fundamental level, the approach to sampling rests on a definition of what should count as a unit of sampling, and thus as an individual text or discursive fragment, in a usually hyperlinked and dynamically evolving environment (Lemke, 2002). Furthermore, the discursive material challenges the methodology of sampling across six dimensions. The first of these is *periodicity*. While news outlets are typically published on a set schedule so that their chronology can be traced, current multimodal discourse encompasses texts that range from synchronised to erratic contributions. This makes it difficult to arrange a timetable for collecting items. The second dimension is *centrality*, since the diffusion of "mass-self communication" (Castells, 2009), p. 70 results in fragmentary discourse taking place in a host of venues besides broadcast publications. This cannot comprehensively be indexed and therefore no random sampling can be done. To some extent,

however, tags, mark-up or machine-readable metadata might facilitate purposive sampling, since digital texts can often be found through search engines. These services, however, also come with their politics, while concentrating instead on major platforms restricts the sampling and means complying with their settings and requirements. For the third issue to sampling, *visibility*, we must consider that instead of having either a mass or a minute audience, multimodal discourse can technically often reach a very large potential public, and yet in many cases the number of people that empirically take notice is considerably smaller (Marwick and Boyd, 2011). Besides creating practical problems for collecting discursive occurrences, such oscillating visibility also challenges ethical decisions regarding the use of material that is assumed to be public. The fourth consideration is *persistence*. Although digital discourse is frequently treated as an enduring archive (Mayer-Schönberger, 2009), the unreliable durability and availability of ephemeral texts, due to errors, conversions or de-publication, is another prevalent problem that the sampling has to cope with. As a fifth consideration is *animation*, since the different kinds of animated content can lose their modal coherence when stored as static documents and require technological solutions to record and preserve their dynamic composition. The sixth aspect, *reactivity*, relates to the fact that the digitisation and the compilation from databases allow for the customisation of content and content display, according to individual settings and technological protocols that are difficult to account for in sampling.

In turn, prospects for interpreting semantic structures from multimodal discourse are commonly associated with the availability of large corpora in digital form, which come from a range of sources and thus potentially cover a spectrum of discursive positions (Lewis, Zamith and Hermida, 2013, p. 35). A key strategy to capitalise on these options has been the turn to corpus linguistics and data mining that provides otherwise inaccessible insights into measurable discursive features (Mautner, 2005; Manovich, 2012). Yet due to the settings and limitations of their tools, these studies often fall short in fully acknowledging the complexity of the *communicative organisation* and *semiotic constitution* of such discourses that both pose challenges for interpretation.

Discourses constituted in the interplay of broadcasting media and social media are marked by unidirectional, bidirectional and multidirectional forms of exchange, which afford different degrees of interactivity. This basic condition yields an array of *communicative organisation* along modal range, speed, timing, direction of communication, roles of discursive agents and interrelatedness of messages (Quiring and Schweiger, 2008, p. 155). The analysis must therefore be sensitive to these varied settings and allow for contextualising their units of analysis in such interactive configurations (Herring, 2010). Finally, interpretation must take into account the *semiotic constitution* of current discourses as digital media services, namely the World Wide Web, have been associated with simplifying options for multimodal remix and multiplying the possible meaningful combinations of verbal passages, sounds, images, audiovisuals, colours and layouts (Lemke, 2002). Analysing these particular semiotic orchestrations requires methods to recognise their discursive significance, both separately and in combination (Kress, 2010; Pauwels, 2012).

Beyond these various considerations, any attempt to gather and understand multimodal discourse has to be aware of its generative creativity, which continually shifts the available and appropriate genres, stylistic registers and levels of formality (Baron, 2008; Crystal, 2011). In this regard, the standards of both professional and amateur communication, as well as the very criteria of what makes up amateurism and professionalism, are evolving and ask for appropriate analytical response.
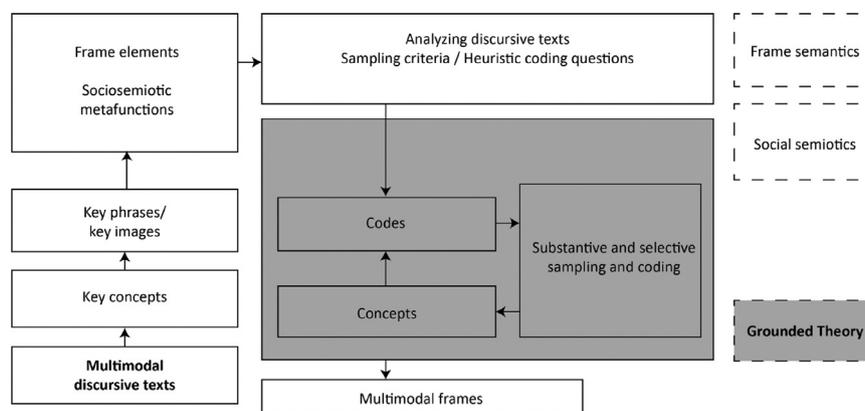
Fig. 1. The recursive analytical process.

3. Methodical procedures

In order to take into account the various challenges of sampling, an approach is required that can continuously reflect on the materials' varying conditions, and scrutinise the collection process accordingly. Embracing the modal arrangements when interpreting semantic structures also necessitates combining methods that are sensitive to the different ways that meanings are articulated. However, the variance of communicative constellations and the modal complexity of discursive fragments are difficult to be grasped exhaustively (Norris, 2004). Rather, they compel any empirical investigation to decide which features should be incorporated into the analysis – and which should be left out (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). In this light, the methodical procedures used in this study, for analysing the semantic structures of multimodal discourse, focus on the meaningful combination of spoken and written verbal texts, as well as images, as resources for framing public issues. Analysing their interplay, the approach adapts linguistic frame semantics and social semiotics within the practice of sampling and coding taken from Grounded Theory (Fig. 1).

Originating from symbolic interactionism, Grounded Theory offers both methodological orientation and procedural instruction, centring on recursive steps of data aggregation and conceptualisation. This is directed towards reconstructing social understandings and interactional processes in close connection to the empirical material (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Employing the constitutive elements of theoretical sampling as well as open and selective coding, the analysis advanced here started however from pre-defined sets of coding schemes, and applied them to a corpus of documents.

Methodologically speaking, on the one hand, the procedure thus capitalised on one particular tradition of Grounded Theory going back to Strauss (1987, p. 27), which exploits generic coding paradigms to enhance theoretical sensitivity and to inform the coding. On the other hand, it referred to methodical advances that seek to apply Grounded Theory's strategies particularly to the interpretative study of discourses and media frames (Clark, 2005; Keller, 2005; Van Gorp, 2010). Hence, the semantic and semiotic aspects of frames were coded according to schemes derived from frame semantics and social semiotics, which were then refined and altered over the course of the analytical progress. In other words, interpreting the discursive material and looking "closely at the particular features of the frame", as demanded by Reese (2010, p. 20), balanced inductive and deductive steps of analysis (Kelle, 2005). This implied switching between assigning discursive fragments to the palette of top-down codes, and accommodating these schemes to the bottom-up empirical variances found in the actual material.

The analysis was carried out in tandem and discussed in regular institutional workshops. This allowed for juxtaposing and modulating our interpretations of the semantic structures, thus fostering a cogent implementation of the research and the formulation of intersubjectively plausible results. In sum, the analytical groundwork established 300 codes, which were then developed into 30 categories, forming the aspects of the reconstructed frames. The coding was carried out using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti (Version 6) with regular team sessions in order to review and adjust the analytical progress. As this was essentially a hermeneutical process, no measures for intercoder reliability can be provided.

3.1. Adapting theoretical sampling to current multimodal discourse

In terms of garnering discursive texts, Grounded Theory's approach to theoretical sampling has been employed for data collection that did not follow statistical evidence or target a large-scale corpus in the hope of accumulating the discursive instances in total. Rather, the basic strategy was put into operation by using two sets of criteria in order to bring together a comprehensive corpus in terms of both *topical level* and *media level* (Clark, 2005, pp. 145–180; Hijmans and Peters, 2000). On the topical level, the sampling looked for key phrases and key images by using Internet search engines (Google, Yahoo) and professional databases (LexisNexis, HeinOnline). The aim was to capture the range of thematic facets expressed in the discursive utterances, and also the list of actors advancing their positions.[3] The sampling reached a point of saturation when no material could be found that contributed uncharted discursive topics, positions or people. It should be noted that the sampling did not classify the sources by political orientation in the first instance. Instead, during the analysis we examined how the differences in perspective (on Demjanjuk's disputed guiltiness and on the significance of the trial) were played out along ideological fault lines, and were used by individual actors and broadcast media outlets to position themselves within the political spectrum from extreme right-wing to extreme left-wing (van Dijk, 2006).

On the media level, the repertoire of possible "configurations of communication" (Morris and Ogan, 1996, p. 46) was assessed according to the degrees of reciprocity (uni-, bi- or multi-directional), how it is addressed (one-to-one, one-to-few, one-to-many) and its temporal structure (varying between synchronous and asynchronous exchange, with ephemeral to permanent records).

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[3] Apart from English and German documents, the multi-lingual Demjanjuk discourse especially involved material in Slavic languages as well as in Dutch, which is not considered here.

Given these criteria, the sampling was completed when no variant type of expression could purposefully be found.

Overall, given its step-by-step approach to analysis, the sampling was able to address the occurring analytical challenges by adjusting its proceedings accordingly. Thus, the strategy of following up on explicit interdiscursive relations, such as hyperlinks, quotations and retweets, as well as tracing implicit connections in the form of indications, allusions or references, helped to deal with the varying degrees of centrality, periodicity and visibility within the discourse. Rather than taking a complete inventory, our fine-grained engagement with the forms and contexts of the discursive fragments enabled – and necessitated – our advancement from piece to piece, and thereby opened up the discourse and accounted for its communicative, semiotic and semantic facets. Furthermore, in order to cope with issues of persistence, reactivity and animation, the sampling made use of screencapturing software (Camtasia), which allowed the recording and storing of the dynamic multimodal orchestration from graphic and audio interfaces.

In practice, sampling the Demjanjuk discourse started with an item aired on the prime German public service news broadcast, *Tagesthemen*, on 11 May 2009 (2:43 min). The audiovisual piece was selected as point of departure because it surveyed the incident and its circumstances and therefore furnished the sampling with a preliminary set of key concepts that could be related to key phrases and key images found in the discourse. Using the initial material, a key concept regarding *Demjanjuk's assumed complicity in murder* was tentatively established. It was verbally expressed as "John Demjanjuk, who is accused by the Munich prosecutor's office to have assisted in the murder of 29,000 Jews at the Nazi extermination camp, Sobibór".[4] This was illustrated with an over-the-shoulder split-screen featuring an up-to-date photograph of Demjanjuk matching a monochrome image showing, supposedly, Demjanjuk's picture on an SS ID card (Fig. 2). The other key concepts introduced at this stage were *Demjanjuk's SS ID Card, Demjanjuk's extradition*, *Demjanjuk's poor health*, *Demjanjuk's legal wrangling* and *Demjanjuk as Ivan the Terrible*.

In sum, the data collection yielded a corpus of 503 single units of analysis published between March 2009 and May 2012 encompassing: 13 press articles; 2 television broadcast reports; 2 thematic threads from online forums; 57 entries from six different blogs; 3 articles from right-wing websites; 2 articles from left-wing websites; 6 articles from political institutions; 57 postings by a Facebook group; 32 postings by a Facebook profile; 52 postings by a Facebook fanpage; 5 videos with related comments from YouTube; the German-language and English-language Wikipedia entries and their corresponding talk pages; and 268 tweets featuring the hashtag #Demjanjuk. In terms of identifiable discursive actors voicing their opinions, the sample included statements from the lawyers of the joint plaintiffs as well as from Demjanjuk's U.S.-based family, who started campaigning through broadcasting and social media.

3.2. Probing heuristics for analysing verbal and visual framing

A key approach for reconstructing meanings in discourse in communication studies, political science, sociology and linguistics has been to treat them as media frames. In their basic form, these are seen as structured representations of knowledge, which become materialised in utterances and organise patterns of discourse (Borah, 2011; Scheufele, 1999; Tannen, 1993). For multimodal analysis, Kress (2010), p. 149 holds that a "frame defines the world to be engaged with; it excludes and it includes; and in doing that it shapes, presents the world according to the interest and the principles of those who frame". Frames in discourse are therefore often viewed as evolving from framing as "meaning work – the struggle over the production of mobilising and countermobilizing ideas and meanings", as Benford and Snow (2000, p. 613) put it, by connecting materially available and semiotically conventionalised resources in an argumentative manner.

Most of the current approaches in frame analysis take media frames as being sets of semantic elements that problematise an issue in terms of its causes and consequences, make evaluations and suggest responsibilities (Entman, 1993). While this is a plausible starting point when looking for frames, it nevertheless limits the ability to develop nuanced understandings of discursive meanings (Van Gorp, 2010). Consequently, in order to study semantic structures in verbal texts, the methodical approach referred to frame semantics. Here, the tradition builds on Minsky's (1975) elementary proposal to conceive of frames as templates of slots that represent default values for situations, processes, agents, objects and other phenomena, and act as placeholders for specific fillers established in framing actions. Therefore, frames can be treated as "tools for the description and explanation of lexical and grammatical meaning", as Fillmore (1985, p. 232) argued, because understanding a signifying element evokes a conventionally associated frame as a structure of interrelated semantic aspects. In discourse, key phrases thus activate a particular frame and guide the verbal expansion of that frame in the overall text.

Putting this approach into operation involved developing a list of key concepts from the material in order to configure the adequate frame templates. From these templates, in turn, the frame elements and corresponding questions employed during the initial coding could be deduced (Fig. 1). To this end, the investigation used a convenient register of generic templates from the Berkeley FrameNet project, which administers an open repository of about 10,000 lexical units (pairings of words with semantic descriptions) in almost 800 semantic frames (Ruppenhofer et al., 2010).[5]

In the case of the Demjanjuk discourse, the key concept regarding *Demjanjuk's assumed complicity in murder* evoked the frame "misdeed", which opened up a series of heuristic coding questions that guided the first round of data analysis. *Misdeed*: what is the issue the assessment of the wrongdoer/s is based on? *Wrongdoer*: who is the person/are the persons whose misdeed is being judged? *Injured party*: who is harmed by the misdeed of the wrongdoer/s? *Judge*: whose point of view is taken in assigning the judgment? *Manner*: how is the misdeed described? *Means*: what actions are taken by the wrongdoer/s to accomplish the misdeed? *Place*: where does the misdeed occur? *Purpose*: what state-of-affairs does/do the wrongdoer/s hope to accomplish through his/her/their misdeed? *Severity*: to which degree does the misdeed offend the moral sense? *Time*: when was the misdeed performed? *Frequency*: how often did the wrongdoer/s commit the misdeed?[6]

Arguably, the selection and accentuation of visual representations, in their associative rather than argumentative manner, also convey interpretative perspectives. Visual forms interacting with verbal texts can, therefore, play a complementary part in framing strategies (Coleman, 2010; Messaris and Abraham, 2001). Unsurprisingly, a growing number of studies especially in the fields of visual communication and journalism studies employ visual frames (e.g. Borah, 2009). Nevertheless, rather than seeing framing as stemming from the discourse-specific combination of verbal and visual resources, the

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[4] German quote: "John Demjanjuk, dem die Münchner Staatsanwaltschaft vorwirft, im Nazi-Vernichtungslager Sobibór beim Mord an 29.000 Juden geholfen zu haben" (00:23–00:29). Source: http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/video/sendungsbeitrag1798.hmlt (accessed 02.09.15).

[5] The English version as the core of the project is based on the British National Corpus. See https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu (accessed 02.09.15).

[6] See https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/index.php?q=frameIndex (accessed 02.09.15).

Fig. 2. Screenshot from the initial document.

Source: http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/video/sendungsbeitrag1798.hmlt (accessed 02.09.15)

majority of such studies treat visuals as entities independent from verbal messages (Brandtner, Geise and Lobinger, 2013).

In contrast to this approach, the present study aims to acknowledge the correspondence between linguistic structures and other, in particular visual sign systems. The analytical framework used rests on Halliday's (1978) call to examine the variety of semiotic resources in terms of their meaning functions. These are culturally conventionalised modes employed in articulating content (ideational meaning), in establishing social relationships (interpersonal meaning) and in devising coherence (textual meaning). In addition, an instructive approach for interpreting multimodal discourse comes from Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 2006), who argued that these three meaning functions (the ideational function of representing entities and issues in discourse, the interpersonal function of articulating relations between people and the textual function of connecting signifying elements to meaningful compositions) are simultaneously enacted in every act of social communication.

Understanding their discursive functions and "politics of choice" (Kress, 2010, p. 172), the ideational function was used to refer to propositions represented through visual modes, and thus to the visually depicted persons, objects, events, issues and so on. The interpersonal function was taken to concern the salient stylistic display and presentation through which a discursive temper or perspective are sought to be realised. The textual function then was used to zoom in on the meaningful composition of modal aspects of the discursive fragments.

Building on these elements, the analysis of visually constituted frames relied on a scheme of heuristic codes and corresponding coding questions. The ideational function was translated into a range of questions. *Agent*: who is depicted? *Social role*: which social roles can be inferred given the agent's appearance and exposure? *Topic*: what phenomenon, event, situation or issue is presented? With regard to the interpersonal function we asked two questions. *Perspective*: what angle or view on the topic or agent is established and what relation is enacted toward the represented setting? *Detail*: what display of the represented topic or agent is opened up and what relation is thus configured? The textual function brought again its own set of questions. *Movement*: what dynamics are formed through alignments and vectors? *Relationship*: what relationship between agents or topics can be assumed given their posture, proportion and position? *Affiliation*: which conditions of closeness or distance and affiliation or demarcation, respectively, are realised? *Accent*: which dominances and centres of attention are created (through colour, scale, acuity or hue)?

4. Analytical process

Reconstructing the framing of Demjanjuk in the discourse of his third trial takes place following the elementary stages of substantive and selective coding, according to the established key concept of *Demjanjuk's assumed complicity in murder* (Strauss and Corbin, 2008, p. 195f.). In what follows, the first step is outlined along the recursive assignment of the deductive list of codes and its gradual inductive refinement in accordance with the discursive material. The second step of analytical completion then focuses on the discursive frames in their modal variance and meaningful coherence.

4.1. Opening up the discursive field – contrasting semantic and semiotic relations

Following the work that went into advancing the key phrases and images pertaining to key concepts, as developed from the initial document, the sampled material was then related to the two lists of heuristic coding questions. In terms of the Demjanjuk discourse, basing the coding on provisional, first key concepts and associated phrases and images allowed us to order the various historical incidents, people, evidence and strands of argumentation that constituted the different stages of Demjanjuk's prosecution (for amplification, see Sommer, 2012).

Looking at the codes assigned to the verbal material at this stage, passages dealing with *misdeeds* broached the issue of Demjanjuk as *wrongdoer*, who acted as an accessory to the murder of 27,900 people while being a guard at Sobibór. Yet in other sequences this fundamental relation was replaced by a perspective that portrayed Demjanjuk as not being responsible, because he was viewed to be a victim of the Nazi regime and its executors, who thus assume the role of the actual wrongdoers ultimately in charge of the misdeeds in question and, moreover, of Demjanjuk's imprisonment. Following the first line of reasoning, cognate discursive positions distinguished the groups of the surviving victims and the victims of extermination camps in general and in Sobibór specifically as *injured parties* of the murder, while the second line placed Demjanjuk in this position.

In discourse as well as in court, representatives of the surviving Sobibór victims testified against Demjanjuk and acted, along with relatives of killed victims, as joint plaintiffs in the Munich trial and its discursive reflection. Together with legal institutions, such as the Munich State Court, and a number of forensic, legal and historical experts, they were therefore appearing as *judges* producing convincing or unconvincing evidence, depending on the

conflicting views of Demjanjuk's wrongdoing. The evolving set of codes capturing *manners* was especially employed to register the perspectives on Demjanjuk's state of health, which came to matter in the motions to reopen the case and the following conviction and sentence. Hence, whereas Demjanjuk's supporters sought to prove his infirmity, thus rendering the deportation to Germany a torture, others strove to prove his fitness. The set of codes for *means* was associated with descriptions and depictions of the different kinds of possible misdeeds, whereas the codes for *place* were assigned to those passages and sections that related the misdeeds to different concentration camps and extermination camps at Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek or Flossenbürg. There, Demjanjuk might have been on duty as well as in detainment at different points of *time* between June 1942, when an SS ID card was presumably issued, and the end of war in 1945.

With respect to framing the trial in reference to war crimes, holocaust remembrance and questions of guilt, the codes covering purpose and severity became central devices. Looking for purposes helped to explain and conceptualise the problem of accounting for the crimes committed by Trawniki. Hence, codes established for *purposes* covered Demjanjuk's asserted compliance and inhumanity, while another set of codes referred to his attempt to survive and escape from his own confinement, being himself a prisoner and subordinate. The *severity* of the misdeed he was made accountable for was, in turn, set in relation to other Nazi atrocities, leading to the conclusion that it should be judged as comparably less severe. In contrast to non-Nazi acts of violence and mass murder, however, it was rendered as being more grave, and compared to more contemporary Israeli–Palestinian conflicts it was declared as being equally profound.

The application of the multimodal coding questions to visual material at this step can be illustrated by means of the probable SS ID card, which was a crucial and contested piece of evidence during the trials. Its reproductions appeared in many instances of the intertwined discourse (Fig. 2).[7] In the broadcasting report, as the initial fragment sampled, the ID card was introduced in the commentary to be "Demjanjuk's SS ID card whose authenticity was confirmed by German authorities in February this year".[8] In the same text, a sequence of images was presented showing parts of what looked like a yellowed German printed form with typed German declarations, handwritten Cyrillic notes, a black-and-white photograph of a frontal view of the face and upper torso of a young man in dark uniform and two Nazi seals. Following this appeared a typed German letter bearing a swastika seal, a handwritten Cyrillic memo and the Latin name "Demjanjuk", a close-up of the photograph on the document presented first and finally a screen where this picture transformed into a recent portrait of Demjanjuk.

In their iconic function, images of the supposed SS ID card and related visual representations were employed to identify the accused Demjanjuk as the *agent* responsible for committing the misdeed. Hence, the person in the photograph was matched to the present-day culprit in order to associate him with his alleged past *social role* as Trawniki. For this reason, the document was explained to originate from the historical situation of Demjanjuk acting as Trawniki and his service at extermination camps. Coded thus as establishing the *topic* of Trawniki membership, the piece of paper and the photo on it were not only discussed as iconic references to identify the young and old Demjanjuk, but also as indexical signs and the only remaining material evidence of his service, issued by Nazi authorities to Demjanjuk as he entered the Trawniki in

summer 1942. Pars pro toto, they thus bore witness to Demjanjuk's Trawniki deeds. Following this reading, the document taken as an unaltered witness was employed to establish a *perspective* that disclosed Demjanjuk's collaboration as a proven historic relict, featuring an authentic image of the young Demjanjuk in function. To this end, a *relationship* was established between the person as former holder of the card, the image as his effigy, the signature as his production and the information provided on the card as referring to his bodily features: for instance, a scar on his back mentioned in one of the form fields. Therefore, in terms of *affiliation*, the card in its physical state was taken to be a cohesive item with links to the accused Demjanjuk and his past misdeed. In this regard, the statements especially concentrated on the photograph as a *detail* whose significance rested with the claim that it attested to Demjanjuk's identity. Hence, the discursive demonstrations aimed at showing the visual resemblance between the two faces. They thus also mirrored a practice in court in which eyewitnesses were asked to identify his likeness on the photo, as the man they knew to have been Ivan Demjanjuk, and even Demjanjuk himself was requested to recognise his picture. In audiovisual contributions, this framing aspect worked through close-up *movements* to the parts under special scrutiny, namely, the photograph, the seals and the signature, which matched forensic investigations. Other visual fragments too created an *accent* by showing only those parts of the document with a comparably high conclusiveness.

In contrast to the set of framing aspects just described, the coding of the sampled discursive material along its ideational, interpersonal and textual functions also produced another set of framing aspects, which were mobilised both during the trial and in the accompanying discursive examinations to question the authenticity of the document. Rather than evidencing Demjanjuk's involvement, visual means of *movements* and *accents* were then employed to highlight graphic inconsistencies and thus to reveal the card as a counterfeit document and to disassociate different traceable or fictional John/Ivan Demjanjuks.

Presumably treacherous *details* were taken as evidence for a deliberate fabrication, for instance: the signature differed from other examples attributed to Demjanjuk; the photomontage of Demjanjuk's head pasted onto another uniform; the mismatch between the seal on the photograph and the paper itself; and two punctured holes piercing through the right side of the picture but not the paper that contained purple ink used by the KGB. As such, they presumably helped to construe a *relationship* between the incriminated Demjanjuk and the culpable historic figure and to fake an *affiliation* with the person acting as an accessory to the murder at Sobibór. In this *perspective*, Demjanjuk fell prey to a Soviet attempt to use disinformation in order to discredit the former Trawniki and emigrated Ukrainian and to confuse political enemies. This strategy became possible, according to this framing, because the prosecutors adopted the perspective afforded by the suspect document, by concealing exculpatory evidence and witnesses about the card being a fraud. According to this perspective, because the card's invalidity was not accepted in the first place, Demjanjuk's whereabouts during Second World War could be made a *topic* of Trawniki membership, in which he was wronged as a responsible *agent* fulfilling the *social role* of a compliant collaborator.

4.2. Capturing discursive variance and correspondence – constituting frames

In order to transpose codes to frames, the analytical process could draw on several kindred attempts. Grounded Theory offers a paradigm for displaying interactional relations in terms of their conditions, action strategies and consequences (Strauss and Corbin, 2008, p. 89). Furthermore, Entman (1993, p. 52) condenses the basic set of framing facets so as to entail the definition of an issue as

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[7] Images of the ID card appeared in almost every document of the corpus including disparate places, such as the websites National Alliance and Altermedia, the online forum Allmystery, the international news platform Radio Netherlands, Wikipedia articles and the weblog of the lawyers of the joint plaintiffs.

[8] German quote: "Demjanjuks SS Dienstausweis, dessen Echtheit im Februar diesen Jahres von deutschen Behörden bestätigt wurde" (01:45–01:58).

problematic, the identification of causes, the conveyance of moral judgments and the endorsement of remedies. Still others have studied such components as reasoning devices of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing (Benford and Snow, 2000). Drawing from these cognate traditions, the sampling and coding was oriented towards elaborating substantial frames of discursively constituted issues in their *causal conditions*, *contextual conditions*, *strategies* and *consequences* across the relevant modal relationships. Including further documents, the codes were thus amplified to represent the semantic and semiotic variances, and also aggregated to form the aspects of the frame. In case of the Demjanjuk discourse, the catalogue of coded frame elements relating to *Demjanjuk's assumed complicity in murder* brought two prominent, though opposing framings of the trail and its protagonist: as being the *responsible culprit* versus being a *victim of circumstances*.

The framing of Demjanjuk as being culpable employed a set of causal conditions that were seen to authenticate not only his Trawniki membership and Sobibór crimes, but also the volitional barbarity of his compliance despite possible alternatives. To this end, evidence from historic and legal contexts were mobilised, which represented the dimension of violence, the options for defection or sabotage and the demanded fate of comparable offenders. Demjanjuk was presented as responsible for Trawniki misdeeds through verifying his Trawniki membership by reproducing documents and linking his biography to incriminating intelligence.

In turn, the framing of Demjanjuk as a victim of circumstances also accepted the Trawniki membership, but put it in relation to his coerced complicity and his attempt to survive as exonerative causes. This strategy on the one hand, sought to victimise Demjanjuk himself, both in historic terms and with reference to his present sickness, and on the other hand, the alleged misdeeds were qualified in terms of Nazi wartime atrocities as well as probable Israeli wrongdoings. Doing so was made possible within a judicial context that lacked accounts of Demjanjuk's particular involvement and that had only scant and ambiguous evidence from archival sources and eyewitness accounts. The lack of available visual depictions of Demjanjuk as a Trawniki, except the photograph on the SS ID card, only added to the plausibility of this frame. In consequence, Demjanjuk could not, so this framing concluded, be judged as war criminal but as victim of circumstances in compulsory service.

Through the described sampling strategies we included a wide range of discursive fragments. Hence the reconstructed media frames *responsible culprit* and *victim of circumstances* evolved in broadcasting media and social media services. One interesting result of our analysis was that we could not notice differences on the semantic level of meanings between amateur text fragments and professionally produced outlets. There were, however, notable differentiations of how frames were used by discursive actors. For example, in broadcast media the frame *victim of circumstances* was verbalized in a more understated way, using suggestive questions. The headline of an article in *Deutsche Welle* thus ran "Accused Nazi Helper John Demjanjuk: Murderer or Victim?" Similarly, a headline in an article in International Business went: "John Demjanjuk. Victim or Nazi War Criminal?"[9] With these types of questions, professional journalists activated this frame without giving a concrete answer to whether or not Demjanjuk should be treated as a victim. In online texts from extreme right-wing outlets, or in short comments from individual users in online communication, this position was formulated in a more direct way. But at the same time these actors refer to mass media through linking articles and

videos in their own statements to underline their position and they copy and paste visual material found in journalistic texts thus linking their positions to broadcast media.

5. Conclusion

Responding to the form of current multimodal discourse methodically asks for an approach that factors in its varied communicative constitution and semiotic orchestration, and adjusts its procedures of collection and interpretation accordingly. Accepting such prerequisites deliberately, and turning to semantic frame structures constituted within a topical discourse, the analytical approach used in this study joins aspects of frame semantics and social semiotics with the recursive routines of sampling and coding. It thus creates an analysis organised into a stepwise and gradually enhanceable course of reasoning.

Overall, the analysis ran through six principal phases. First, the topical focus and thus the discourse in question was identified. Second, the communicative and modal parameters to sample the material were defined, and third, an initial document was designated, which furnished probable key concepts with related key phrases and key images to be used in the first round of sampling. Fourth, in accordance with the established set of potential discursive concepts, a compatible list of frame elements for verbal passages as well as a list of frame elements for visual sections was derived. To this end, the analysis resorted to consonant frame semantic schemes and catalogues of multimodal synopses. Building from this step, the fifth and sixth steps of mutually informative substantive and selective sampling and coding were finally directed at covering the discursive variations and reconstructing the semantic relations by comparing and contrasting the material. Looking at the Demjanjuk case, which was examined using this methodical approach, the two coding schemes taken from frame semantics and social semiotics were employed as fine-grained analytical instruments to disentangle the manifold semantic relations.

Going beyond the preoccupation with discursive structures, the Demjanjuk case's interweaving of social exchanges, legal proceedings and discursive conversions also displays the permeation of social fields, interactional processes and discursive orders. In methodological terms, this essential though contingent reproduction or mutual "articulation", as in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001, p. 137) post-Marxist intervention into hegemonies and Hall's (1996, p. 141) notion of cultural enactment, demands for extending the analytical assemblage. In this context, multimodal analysis accounts for the situated use of semiotic resources in their cultural, material and social potentialities and constraints (Kress, 2010; van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 285). Likewise, critical discourse analysis has developed several sorts of "interdiscourse analysis" (Fairclough, 2003), p. 3, which place a detailed analysis of discursive types in their respective institutions, situations or social structures, and link the examination of texts to the knowledge, genres and styles they draw upon (e.g. Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Wodak, 2011).

Reflecting their different routes, discourses become *real* as discursive documents and discursive episodes request an investigation that embraces the dynamic configuration of modal enablements through texts, practices and sociomaterial context. Examining such interacting aspects and their relations also offers methodological range. With its emphasis on the complexity of social life, its methodical impartiality and acceptance of different types of data, an ethnography or, as Swales called it, a "textography" (1998, p. 1) of discourse-in-practice, should thus suggest itself as an analytical amplification (e.g. Macgilchrist and Van Hout, 2011; Norris, 2011; Scollon and Scollon, 2004). Such ethnographic analysis could especially help to untangle the

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[9] Sources: http://www.dw.com/en/accused-nazi-helper-john-demjanjuk-murderer-or-victim/a-15064271 (accessed 19.02.16); http://www.ibtimes.com/john-demjanjuk-victim-or-nazi-war-criminal-283579 (accessed 19.02.16).

trajectories between interactional patterns and types of significa-
tion by looking at what Giddens has named a structurating rela-
tion between the accomplishment of discursive practices and the
coextensive enactment of discursive structures (1984, p. 25).
Attuning the methodical framework and analytical procedures to
these conditions could, in this regard, tie down an analysis of
contemporary discourse to the situated sites of its enactment.

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