

Examining A Proposed Link Between Germany's Stance On The War In Iraq And The Business Concept Of Codetermination Using Concept Mapping

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ABSTRACT

This research project examines the supposition that the German people had reasons for their rejection of war with Iraq that have not been heard by the American people. It attempts to make sense of why a people would be so uniform in their denial of the necessity of a war that has split so many other countries' opinion polls in half. There is a great need to try to understand one of the U.S.'s closest allies in times of violence and hatred, before irreversible damage is done to the German-American relationship. With the completion of this project, a clear and concise picture of German resistance to war, including German reasons for choosing diplomacy over force, the historical background behind these reasons, and their consequences will be provided.

Keywords: Germany, Codetermination, War, Iraq

INTRODUCTION

The Germans are a culturally rich and diverse people with a long and colorful history. America has enjoyed a prosperous relationship with Germany; one that withstood the effects of the second World War, and endured after the war. US- European trade remains the largest trade and investment relationship in the world, totalling roughly \$500 billion, with an estimated 6 million jobs in the U.S. and Europe depending on continued good will. (Alterman, 2003) Until the Iraq war, Germany's foreign policy usually reflected that of the United States. Why is it that the country has such a strong inclination to deny German participation in the conflict in Iraq? A strong theory is that Germany's history, especially concerning the events of WWII has made a lasting impression on the people and how they view the world around them.

For this project, German people of various backgrounds were informally interviewed in discussion groups of five to seven people. Discussions occurred in four different German cities with reference to the cultural understanding of concepts such as co-determination and decision making, as well as the ongoing conflict in Iraq. Concept mapping was used to record ideas and assist in discussion.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A **concept** is defined by Joseph Novak of Cornell University as being a perceived regularity in events or objects, or records of events or objects that are designated by a label. A person develops their awareness of the world around them by associating and putting these concepts together into their own experiences and points of view. Primary concepts are acquired in the first three years of life, and as vocabulary and understanding are built, they can be expanded upon. These new meanings and their value are realized by asking questions and receiving clarification of relationships between old and new ideas; concepts and proposals for change. This is how it is possible to grow and find new perspectives, as well as evolve ideas of right and wrong, morals, etc. (Novak, 2003)

Concept mapping is a small-group oriented discussion forum that has been found to be useful in clarifying job conflicts; practicing conflict resolutions in profit and non-profit corporations; stating, clarifying and solving problems like design of new products, marketing, and administrative problems; as well as in classroom situations. It can also be used to summarize learning. Sometimes a simple false supposition can lead to a different outcome than would normally be a result. Changing this view can change the overall way a person looks at things. The mapping process can also be useful in identifying principle key concepts that are very important to the participants. Often, receiving too much information at once can be confusing and overwhelming. Concept mapping simplifies this process and takes a step by step approach that is easy to follow.

Steps for constructing a Concept Map

- 1) Prior knowledge must be established before any discussion can begin.
- 2) Segment of the issue or problem to be discussed must be identified in order to give context for the discussion.
- 3) Key concepts should be chosen, listed and ranked in order of importance or relevance. This could be done in order of the most general to most specific terms.
- 4) Construct a preliminary concept map. Using software for high mobility of concepts is a must in the beginning.
- 5) After a preliminary map is built, participants can begin to search for cross-links that show how concepts relate to one another. Simple cross-linking words should be used to avoid long string-on sentences.
- 6) Final revision includes repositioning of concepts and their cross-links for the highest instances of clarity and insight.

The Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC) website stresses that concept mapping is never truly finished. It must be revised many times before anything resembling a finished product can appear.

Codetermination is defined as equal cooperation, especially between labor and management, in areas of policy making. The need for democratic proceedings not only in government but also in business is based on the German conviction that all aspects of society have a right to take part in decision making. It implies labor participation, especially on corporate boards, but also in every aspect of business operations- social, personnel and economic matters. This broad band of employee rights includes notification of any business decision that may directly affect their job. (i.e. the impact of proposed technology on their field and range of work) Workers elect a council from among their peers to represent them on the board. In corporations with over 300 employees, the company must release at least one worker to be a full time council member. (Gorton and Schmid, 2000) An important aspect of codetermination is that both employees and employers have an equal role in the process, thus ensuring fairness to both sides. This method of decision making has been very important in the recent German labor conflict involving the 35 hour work week, and the debate of whether it should be changed to a 40 hour work week.

Intercultural Learning: As defined by Andreas Thimmel in his steps to Intercultural Learning, at the beginning of intercultural learning, there are often feelings of non-comprehension, and as a result misunderstandings often occur. With cultural misunderstandings, it is hoped that both parties will seek further explanation for any strange behavior on the part of the other. These kinds of conflicts and 'insecure' situations can be very productive, in that they shake up a person's values and orientation morals.

When people from different cultures cross paths, they are either open to learning about the new culture, or closed and unwilling to see past their own stereotypes. Comparisons are made in the differences in style of living, family roles, professional goals, the separation of church and state, feminine/masculine relationships, politics, sexual orientation, and political, religious taboos, etc. However, not every encounter will lead to a sudden understanding of another culture. Instead, many prejudices will be made and "confirmed" from first impressions. Comparisons can lead to the exocentric belief that one's culture is better than all others. The interpretation of little or incomplete information can then lead people to think less of another culture. This so-called 'expert' will then take false information back to their own culture, where their words will be given credit and taken for the 'gospel truth'.

Alexander Thomas, a psychologist at the University of Regensburg, names culture as the most important concept used in the area of intercultural learning. Culture is seen as an orientation system. These kinds of cultural 'cues' are specific to a society, a nation, or a group. Culture influences observation, as well as how people are thought of, valued and handled inside that society. These cultural cues are passed on from one generation to the next. However, this does not mean that culture is inflexible or unchangeable. It is always changing and redefining itself. Culture binds members of a group together, giving a sense of security in that its members are all aware of the rules and structures of their society.

Intercultural learning takes place when someone from another culture attempts to understand the social structure of another. There are four levels of intercultural learning. The foreign culture is first observed and then compared to the home culture. The second step entails tolerance and acceptance of the foreign culture as a relevant alternative, but no steps are taken to integrate parts into an individual's value system. The third step involves seeing the other culture as being just as important as the home culture. It is only in the fourth step that elements from the other culture are accepted and integrated into a person's social values. (Thimmel, 1993)

Collective Memories- Memories shared by a group of people with common history, background and culture. (Brady, 1999)

METHOD

Explanation of Memory and Its Impact on a Culture

Collective memories of various cultures are important deciding factors in many events throughout history. Collective memory helps keep a culture together by giving it a shared past. When we think about the history of a nation, there are many aspects, both good and bad, that can be seen as influential on a country. In many cases, however, public memory seems to dwell on negative experiences, to be held up as a red flag of what not to repeat. (Brady, 1999) In keeping with this theory, when it comes to the holocaust and subjects of discrimination, Germany's motto seems to be "*Nie Wieder*" (Never again). Germany especially relies on its collective recollections of the past in order to make many decisions about its behavior in today's world. The events of WWII are not easy burdens to bear, and have colored Germany's view on issues ranging from foreign politics to their choice of leisure arts and literary works. Especially affected by these recollections is the working world. German employee/employer relations are based on a consensus decision making model called "codetermination." (See above definition)

According to Koshar in his book, From Monuments to Traces, memory relies on "stories that have been told and retold; adapted and shaped in response to specific moments of triumph and crisis, celebration and challenge." (Koshar, 2000) They can be very vague and not fully formed. Brady stated that memory is also very susceptible to popular opinion and what the majority thinks. Memory is not necessarily an explanation of a culture's behavior. Collective memories can sometimes come into conflict. The winner emerges as the new definition of the national history. Though this view may reflect the opinion of the majority of people, it will not always represent the view of the entire society. (Brady, 1999) Memory is considered a link between ideology and history; however, it is only a link, as there is a great difference between the two. History relies on accredited sources that are, to a certain point, free of bias. The happenings of the past are evaluated according to known rules and criteria, and this entire project is subject to review and debate. Public memory, however, is very different in the fact that there is a greater emotional attachment involved in the entire process. Memory is a highly personal subject, because for the most part it revolves around individual experience, or the experiences of others who are closely associated with that person. The German word *Zeitzeuge*, or "time witness", is a perfectly appropriate example here. A *Zeitzeuge* is someone who was actually present at the time of a crime or happening. (Brady, 1999) Seeing something in person makes such events much more meaningful and gives a longer lasting impression than just reading about it in a textbook. With the disappearance of *Zeitzeugen* over time, so too goes a major connection; it is much easier to downplay the event or forget it all together. The lines between history and memory sometimes become blurred because memory is based on fact, and can be used to fuel conflict, power struggles and difficult decisions. Germans have sought to preserve their cultural knowledge of war through memorials, *Trauertagen* (days of mourning), and the passing of knowledge from the older generation to the younger.

Koshar goes on to relay that cultural knowledge always relates what it knows to a contemporary event. What a culture knows is based on its shared history, which can bias or influence decisions based on past events. For example, WWII had a huge influence on the German people as a whole. Lives were taken, cities destroyed, and all on the German's home soil. Having experienced such disasters firsthand, Germany shows a great reluctance to engage in "any and all unnecessary violence, and practices extreme cautiousness in decision making." (Kuhn, 2003)

Collective memory has much more to do with the future and the present than the past. It can also be abused to manipulate the power of public opinion. A prime example of this was the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's vehement opposition in early 2003 to the possibility of a war with Saddam. (Komarow, 2002) Coincidentally, the stance occurred at the same time as his re-election campaign. Taking into consideration the high emotions of the German people, it seemed to some critics that he was riding the wave of public opinion towards victory by assuming an early defensive stance against the war. Was it a campaign ploy? The jury is still out on this one. But as Moran states in A Germany that can say No: "Germany is a nation redesigned, rebuilt, reunified and reprogrammed by American foreign policy. To write off the unpopularity of America's Iraq intentions in such a country as just a load of election-year politicking is extremely shallow."

The reaction of Bush to this kind of a situation was shown to be exactly the opposite. After being asked of what he thought of the size of many antiwar demonstrations in March of 2003, Bush was quoted in the Times South Pacific as having scoffed that worrying about (the demonstrations) would be like "deciding, well, I'm going to decide policy based on a focus group. The role of a leader is to decide policy based on security - - in this case, the security of the people." (Graff, 2003)

Another issue that greatly relies on public memory is the concept of Nationalism. In the United States, citizens take for granted their freedom to extol the virtues of patriotism. They sing anthems, have huge national holiday celebrations, and boast proudly that their nation is the greatest nation in the entire world. This would be unthinkable in Germany, even the Germany of today. Many Germans disapprove of a show of such nationalistic loyalty. Germans are reminded in everyday life of their shared past and atrocities committed in WWII, the so-called “just war,” in which every German citizen would take back their share of the work, riches, and power that had been unfairly taken from them. “We are the victims of a ‘just war’; so we question if that ‘just cause’ justifies the means.” (Dickey, 2003) There is a greatly reduced tolerance for patriotism and nationalism. Overly loyal citizens are seen as being easily led by the whims of the state, because of the mass followings of Hitler. Above all things, Germans do not want to be blindly pulled through such horrific happenings again. They encourage individual participation in all aspects of shared decision makings.

This is one of the first examples of contrasting values between the United States and Germany. America is a **To Do** society, where great importance is laid upon what someone does for a living, what they have, what they have accomplished and where they are going. Europe is considered a **To Be** society, where family and where one comes from is strongly emphasized. The To Do vs. To Be theory from Dr. Gary Weaver of American University includes examples such as:

<u>To Do (America)</u>	vs	<u>To Be (Europeans)</u>
Earned Status		Ascribed Status (ex. Use of titles)
Individual Achievement		Affiliation
Individual Action		Stability
Equality		Inequality
Self-reliance		Reliance on others
Independence		Dependence
Individual competition		Cooperation
Individualism		Collectivism
Guilt		Shame
Class Mobility		Caste Rigidity

Europeans and Americans differ in recollections of faith and history, of God and of war. Their views of who they are and how the world works are radically different. Europe is more inclined towards arbitration, laws, and institutions. America believes in using pressure and force in their government and businesses. (Dickey, 2003) This type of working relationship can complicate the use of consensus decision making in the U.S., as it can only truly function if both sides are free of bias and fear, and have the same degree of leverage as to the outcome.

But the fact of the matter is that Germans are determined to “settle” into history, trying to resolve a “duty to remember, and a longing to forget.” (Kramer, 1996) Even Germany’s beloved Goethe felt the pressures of history and memory. As shown in his poem *Amerika*, he envied the United States its naivety and youthful lack of heavy oppressive memories.

*Amerika, du hast es besser
Als unser kontinent, der alte,
Hast keine Verfallenen Schlösser
Und keine Besalte
Dich stört nicht im Innern,
Zu lebendiger Zeit
Unnützes Erinnern
Und vergeblicher Streit*

*America, you have it better
Than our old continent
You have no ruined castles
And no basalt from ancient times
Nothing disturbs your tranquility,
In our times,
Useless Memory
And pointless argument.*

(Herzog, 2001)

A NATION’S GUILT

The concept of guilt was later revised, as more and more of Germany’s intellectuals called for “self-enlightenment,” and recognition of what had really occurred during the Nazi period. This was referred to as the “unmasking of man,” and recognition of what kind of inherent evil that man was capable of. A sort of double life ensued; public guilt was encouraged and sanctioned by the allied forces. But at the same time, there were still

feelings of denial mixed with shame that something of this magnitude could have happened. Many lapsed into private silence, preserving honor by the continued pretense that nothing had ever happened. (Müller, 2000)

In 1947, Karl Jaspers published a book entitled "The Question of German Guilt," which dealt with the subject of guilt and responsibility of the German people in regards to the Second World War. Jaspers defined clearly how guilt was incurred, and made strong suggestions on the responsibilities of the German people to the murdered Jews, to the survivors, and to the rest of the world.

Jaspers separated guilt into four categories. *Criminal guilt*, which was obviously the most active of the four, was defined as actively breaking the laws of the land and of mankind. This applied mostly to war criminals, who were aware of all aspects of what was being perpetrated. *Political guilt* encompassed most of the German citizens who lived in the Nazi regime and were aware to an extent of the crimes being committed. A sense of *moral guilt* was also extended over the nation, as citizens failed to live up to their duties as a citizen to do what was right and just. Although the first two types of guilt could be assessed and punished through the justice system of Germany, moral guilt must be worked through by the individual. The last type of guilt is that of *metaphysical guilt*, or a break in the fabric that connects all human kind. Although there is no moral obligation to sacrifice one's life for a cause, the greater good of all must always be considered. A failure to consider this responsibility is considered a failure to do one's duty by all of man kind. Jaspers stated that this could not be forgiven or forgotten by man; it must be judged by God.

The guilt of the German people, as explained in Jasper's book, was incurred by many different circumstances of neglect or ignorance. Many in wartime lived in disguise, pledging allegiance to a party whose values they did not truly believe in. This was necessary for survival in a world where the wrong beliefs could mean being shipped off to a concentration camp. While certainly a forgivable excuse, this reason does not ease the conscience of the typical German citizen from this time. Jasper stated that many Germans feel more guilt for simply *passively allowing* these events to occur than the high ranking Nazis who carried them out could ever have mustered.

Others lived with a false conscience or idealism for a falsely noble goal. When Hitler first came into power, he overwhelmed the citizens of Germany with his grandiose plans and wish for Germany to once again become a superpower in the international community. Many who followed him for these reasons glossed over the building of racial tensions as a necessary part of Hitler's plans, or worse, ignored them all together. (Brady, 1999) They pushed their feelings of doubt away, and allowed themselves to be led without question. They perpetuated a cycle of self-deception, another of Jasper's instances of guilt incurrence. Their feelings of betrayal upon learning the truth left them with a sense of not knowing what can still be relied upon. The echoes of doubt resound even now, over a half a century later. These feelings ran even deeper once those who had convinced themselves that they were doing the right thing saw the truth of the matter; if one's own conscience cannot be depended on, what can? Similar feelings of being led by Bush's head-long plunge into Iraq have been stated again and again by the German people. They are very skeptical of a world leader who suddenly feels he has the power to sway nations and lead so-called 'cavalry charges.' "Should it really surprise us that the Germans, indoctrinated and shamed by their own past, should be alarmed when a single dominant power thinks its own interests suddenly outweigh those of all other nations combined?" (Moran, 2002)

There is an obvious difference between active and passive guilt. There can be no question that those who participated in the atrocities of the war bear the largest share of blame for what occurred. But Jaspers emphasizes that a failure to act, by remaining passive, also constitutes acceptance. Those who sat back and let the mistreatment of other human beings occur without objection are also required to take blame. He speaks of a moral responsibility to "shield the imperiled, to relieve wrong, and to countervail. Blindness for the misfortune of others, lack of imagination of the heart, inner indifference toward the witnessed evil- that is moral guilt." (Jaspers, 1947)

This point could of course be argued from an American view. What was Saddam Hussein if not a dictator? Was it right to allow him to remain in power for so long? Wasn't his reign of terror just as horrible as that of Hitler himself? America would rather get into a few fights that she cannot possibly win, than stand aside and see injustice done. Professor Robert Jewett of Heidelberg University terms this the "Superhero complex." America is prepared to rescue the innocent at the very last moment. This black and white view of good versus evil is supported by the flexible idea that, "We may be wrong, and might figure out a better way to go about it later, but for the time being, this is how we're going to go about it." (Welke, 2004) But Europeans do not like our kind of 'intervention', as will be discussed in the results section of this paper.

But all excuses aside, there are many consequences of guilt. (Jaspers, 1947) These consequences are not ones that can be accepted or cast aside as a person sees fit. All Germans share in the political liability. They must all share in making amends, and suffer the consequences given to them by the victors (the Allied Forces). Jaspers stated that not every German would (or could) be punished for the war crimes that were committed, but all will have some opportunity to judge themselves.

“Probably every German capable of understanding will transform his approach to the world and himself in the metaphysical experiences of such a disaster. How that happens none can prescribe, and none anticipate. It is a matter of individual solitude. What comes out of it has to create the essential basis of what will, in the future, be the German soul.”

(Jaspers, 1947) It will be in this way that memory will effectively change the behavior and conditions of the German people in order to help them strive to overcome past wrongdoings.

MAKING AMENDS AND/OR SEEKING FORGIVENESS

Regarding the issue of purification and the assuaging of the German conscience, there is not a straightforward answer to this question. Jaspers calls for a transformation of the soul. Many Germans seem to have taken this purging of demons to heart by calling for abstention from war. Purification itself is an act of making amends. These amends are not only for the victims of Nazi Germany, but also to help wherever there is distress. Many feel that the new Germany has a responsibility to lend assistance simply because there is a need. It is also felt that Germany no longer has the right to simply sit back and enjoy life. They have been granted a reprieve, but must earn it by living for a purpose, of not allowing the issue of Nazi Germany to die. This could also be said for the German approach to other world atrocities. A common misconception is that Germany has been totally uninvolved in the war on terror. As early as November 2001, Germany pledged 3,900 troops for the anti-terror campaign, which was the country's largest military involvement since World War II, although this resulted even then in major public outcry. (Associated Press, 2001) Schröder stressed the importance of political and diplomatic efforts as well as the fact that it was a humanitarian mission, and implemented economic sanctions aimed to target terrorist networks. Schröder was quoted as saying, “We mustn't forget that the military measures are only a part of the measures against international terrorism.” (Associated Press, 2001) Some 10,000 German troops are currently serving abroad in peacekeeping missions, largely after goading from the US that they should ‘do their share.’ It is important to be made aware of the mind block that the country has when it comes to organized military. The post war taboo of German military strength, as well as this mind set kept the militia small for many years. It is only now that Germany is beginning to take up its role as a world military power once again. Donna Leinwand attempted to define the true meaning of war and terrorism in a USA Today article.

“War is the same as terrorism. Politicians who make war, like Bush and the Europeans don't seem to realize the danger of this: that the violence spirals. It is clear that terrorism must be undermined. But this can only be done by understanding the underlying reasons for terrorism. It is the great inequity, socially and economically, between the poor and the rich.” (Leinwand, 2001)

Germany's foreign policy measures alone were drastically changed after WWII. Markovits and Reich in The Contemporary Power of Memory: The Dilemmas for Foreign Policy argue that a “predominant collective memory does exist in Germany that influences the framework of policy formulation. This is explained in the manner that the people have power over their politicians, in that they can coax them to do things that they normally wouldn't do.” (Brady, 1999) Perhaps Chancellor Schröder was only listening to the overwhelming voice of the people; something that President Bush has yet to learn.

Germany is the ultimate example of how “history, identity and foreign policy are intertwined.” (Brady, 1999) The importance of foreign policy becomes clear when one considers that Germany is in a defenseless central geographical location, which tends to expose it more than other countries to outside threats. Europeans have experienced war in their own land. They would rather negotiate for peace than start a war that they have no control over. Europe is very aware of its proximity to the Middle East, as well as the feelings of their own significant Muslim populations. Most fear that the attack and war on Iraq will not bring an end to the terror, but instead become a ‘recruiting tool’ for Al Quaida. (Tolson, 2003) A centralized location also places great emphasis on the idea that Germany's leadership position in the international community will evolve in a growing world culture; taking advantage of the many positive sides of being at the heart of a new Europe. In a sense, Hitler may get his wish of a Germany dominated world after all. Just not quite in the manner that he was expecting. The prevailing view of most other European states was that Germany should not seek to become a superpower, capable of influencing the future and fortunes of others. It is easy to see that the memory of Nazi Germany “crowds out other views of how Germans are viewed by the world and by themselves; how they construct their public choices both at home and abroad; and the manner in which they implement their choices once they have been made.” (Brady, 1999) The decision not to support America in the initial attack on Baghdad shocked and dismayed the American people. Many Americans found it a bit disconcerting that France and Germany; two nations that benefited greatly from U.S. military and financial aid during and after WWII and defense of their homelands during the cold war, now appear so ungrateful. (Benedetto, 2003)

But this really should not have come as such a surprise. “Having successfully taught the Germans not to follow their *führer* blindly, we now bristle when they question the orders to follow the *über-führer*, the United States.” (Moran, 2002) This opinion was particularly obvious before the war as the U.S. administration attempted to align Europe to the U.S. strategy. Defence Secretary Ronald Rumsfeld was quoted in January of 2003 as saying, “I’ve found that Europe, on any major issue, if there’s leadership and if you’re right, and if your facts are persuasive, Europe responds. And they always have.” (Associated Press, 2003) Confident of his ability to convince and coerce Europe into line, Rumsfeld and the Bush Administration was in for a shock.

DISCUSSION LAYOUT

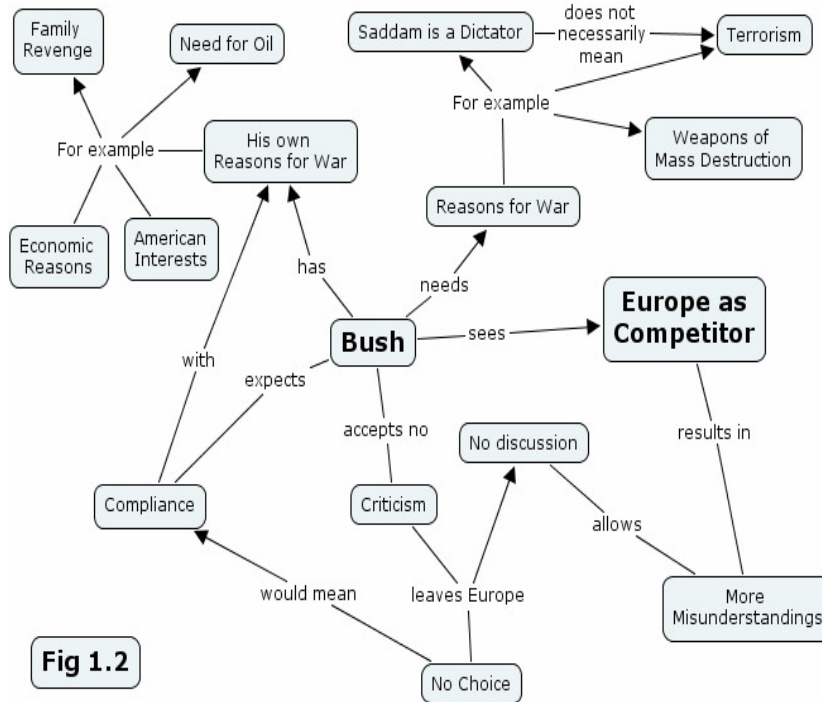
As discussed in the Introduction section, there are certain steps to be followed when attempting to construct a successful concept map. In all discussion groups, a short introduction of the topic to be discussed opened the forum. The participants’ knowledge of basic current events (focusing on the situation in Iraq), as well as the topics to be researched: “*Wirtschaftliche Mitbestimmung*” or codetermination as a consensus decision making tool, and WWII was covered. The underlying assumptions of concept mapping were explained including how it is useful in pinpointing false assumptions and conclusions made by builders. (See above definition of Concept Mapping) The groups began by listing key concepts that were determined to be important to the discussion. These concepts were then broken down into even smaller ideas and listed. Once this step was completed, the group proceeded to rank and order these smaller concepts. The unwritten laws of brainstorming were strictly followed: 1) all ideas are valid. 2) Negativity should be avoided at all costs. 3) Discussion is important. The resulting impressions were then built into a Macro-map, which contains general knowledge and perceptions. (Novak, 2003) Once all aspects of a subject had been mentioned and defined, the group progressed to a smaller, more detailed section of the map. The Micro-map contains much more specific subjects to expand upon. (Novak, 2003) For example, a discussion group might begin with an overall concept of War. Subsequent conversations could lead to other concepts such as Violence, Death, Justice, Iraq, Germany, Life, WWII, Freedom, and Oppression. A very general map about war can be made using these ideas. Then, the group can focus on Iraq, perhaps by using words like Conflict, Germany, Oil, Bush, Saddam, Just Cause and Terrorist Attacks.

The overall concepts resulted in a sense of context, helping to decide exactly what the participants want to articulate. A Micro-map then helps define a smaller topic of discussion, so that it can truly be covered in depth. Actively sought were any type of frequently repeated phrases, words, and ideas by German participants on codetermination and the war in Iraq that seem to be related to one another. It is my hope that by explaining the process by which the German viewpoint was reached, and the history behind it, that U.S. citizens can begin to comprehend these choices; as well as understand why Europe has chosen such a stance on the war, and perhaps begin to re-examine their views and decisions as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

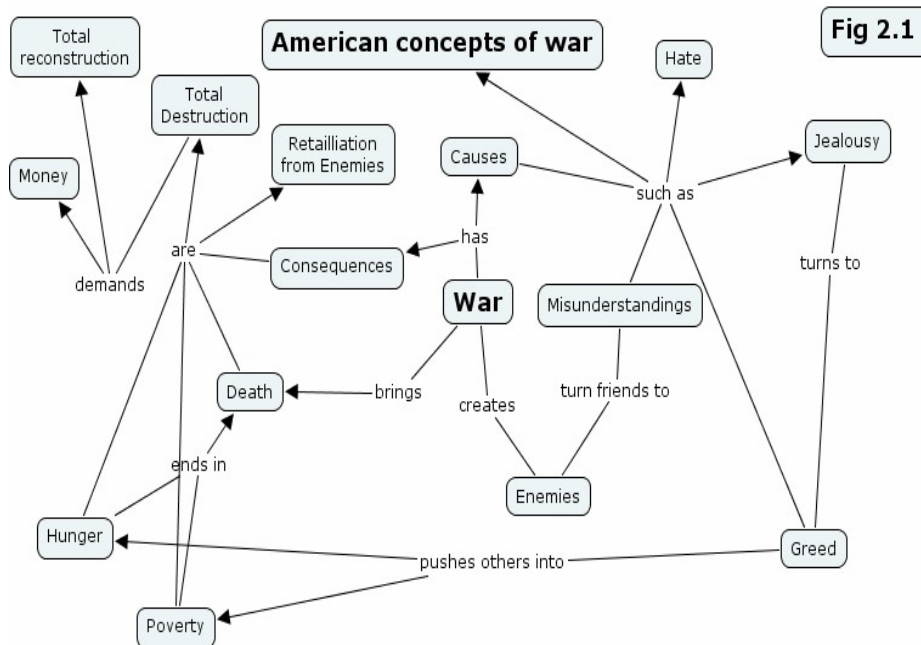
America’s Leader

One of the first questions in every session that most German citizens felt compelled to ask was that of America’s opinion of George Bush. While this is not really a relevant question to this report, it was fascinating that the theme came to the forefront over and over again, independent of circumstances, age groups, and political backgrounds surrounding the inquirers. In order to integrate this interest, the topic of Germany’s fascination with the American leader was addressed. Bush’s brand of ‘praise the Lord and pass the ammunition’ is a well worn discussion here in Old Europe. One Cologne university student even called Bush ‘Der echte Teufel’, or the *real* devil, referring to his now famous State of the Union speech in which he used Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden as examples in his ‘Axis of Evil’ campaign. “It was just so stupid, they are always talking about good and evil, in quasi-religious terms, and it gives us a strange sense of relief. Bush is always showing himself to be utterly stupid... And we just sit back and wait for him to do it. It’s unhealthy.” (Jörg Lau, *Die Zeit* correspondent as quoted in *The Nation*, 2003) Alain Frachon, Foreign Affairs Editor for *Le Monde*, went a step further by saying, “it’s not that Europe is appalled by a conservative Republican president. When Reagan was president, we never had the impression that he was motivated by fundamentalism. He was divorced. He had worked in Hollywood. But this George Bush is totally foreign to us. He quotes the Bible every two or three sentences. He is surrounded by Christian fundamentalists. He says he has no problem sleeping after sending someone to death. There was a dose of charm, humor, of Hollywood to Reagan. But not to Bush. It’s another world and one we find extraordinarily hypocritical. No one told us the Republicans had moved this far to the right.” (Alterman, 2003) A German



Visions of War

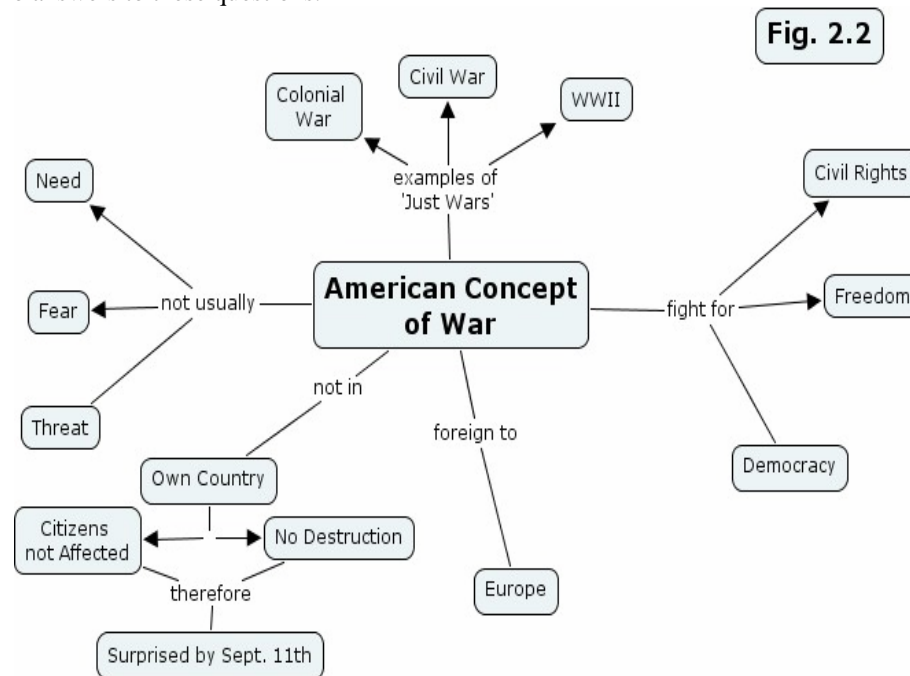
The next topic discussed was that of German understanding of war (Fig 2.1). The German view is a very negative one; they associate war with the consequences of poverty, violence, death, and hunger. Many spoke of their difficult experiences in the years of *Wiederaufbau*, or the time of reconstruction in Germany. Years of hunger and “getting by”, difficult by any standards. Especially hard to hear were the stories of those who grew up without fathers and grandfathers. Many stated only, “*Sie sind gefallen*”; they had fallen in the war. Having experienced such a trauma, it is not a surprise that the Germans, especially the older generation, would not want to inflict this experience on another country.



The article "Nein to War" by Muller-Fahrenholz addresses the issue of the remembrance of one's own suffering. The author writes of how those who have experienced war and death are much more likely to translate that experience into a commitment to develop political options from the perspective of those who suffer. Germans are very interested in the fate of the people of Iraq, having focused much of their attention on the medical relief efforts after the start of the conflict. "We know what it is like to bring war to other people. And we know how it feels when war takes hold of one's own country. We know that it is relatively easy to start a war but exceedingly hard to end it." (Muller Fahrenholz, 2003)

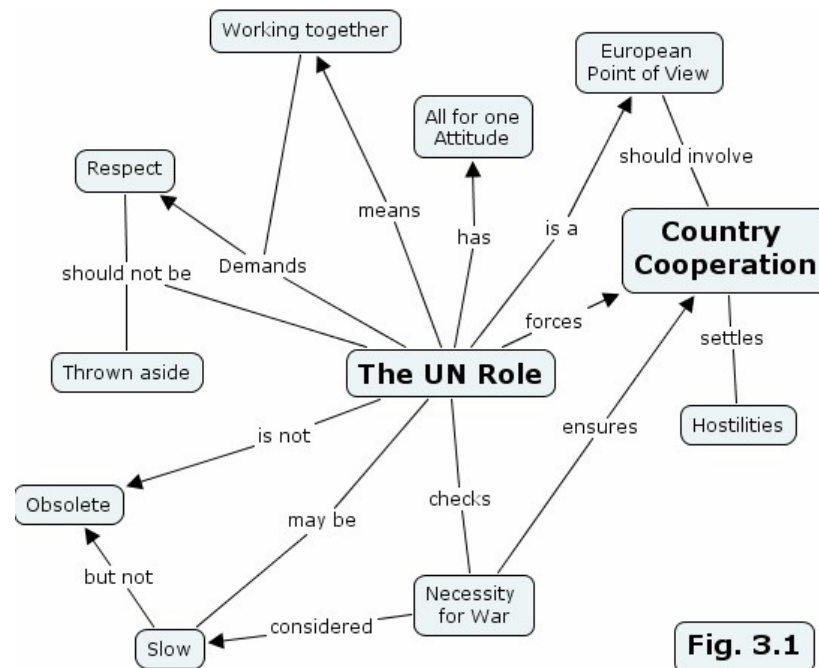
The real issue here is that of the possible consequences of war. Europe has a significant Muslim population, one that cannot be ignored. Their opinions and feelings have been voiced just as loudly as that of the German people. An important point that was raised was that of the already fragile relations between the Western world and that of the East. Many vocalized concern about the outcomes of the war- would we suddenly be facing a new wave of terrorist attacks?

But why then is America so ready to take the risk? Fig 2.2 discusses the American concepts of war. As the topic was broadened, the participants began to see the trend in American war history. The Germans attempted to understand that war has been the U.S.'s "method of self-definition" (Klingenmaier, 2003) WWII, the civil war, and even the colonial war with England; America was usually fighting to protect their own freedom, basic civil rights, and democracy. America has not experienced a war on its own soil since the civil war. In all following wars, there has been no major destruction, and the people of America were not hit by the terror and devastation of a war in their own country. Europe has been the target of terrorist acts for years. While September 11th was seen as a horrible event in Europe, the "exaggerated" American reaction of shock and widespread anger was not totally understood. Participant comments included, "America was so surprised." "It's no secret that the U.S. government built up the Taliban, provided weapons, etc., to fight the Soviet Union." "What exactly did they expect?" "Didn't they see it coming?" I had no answers to these questions.



The Role of the United Nations

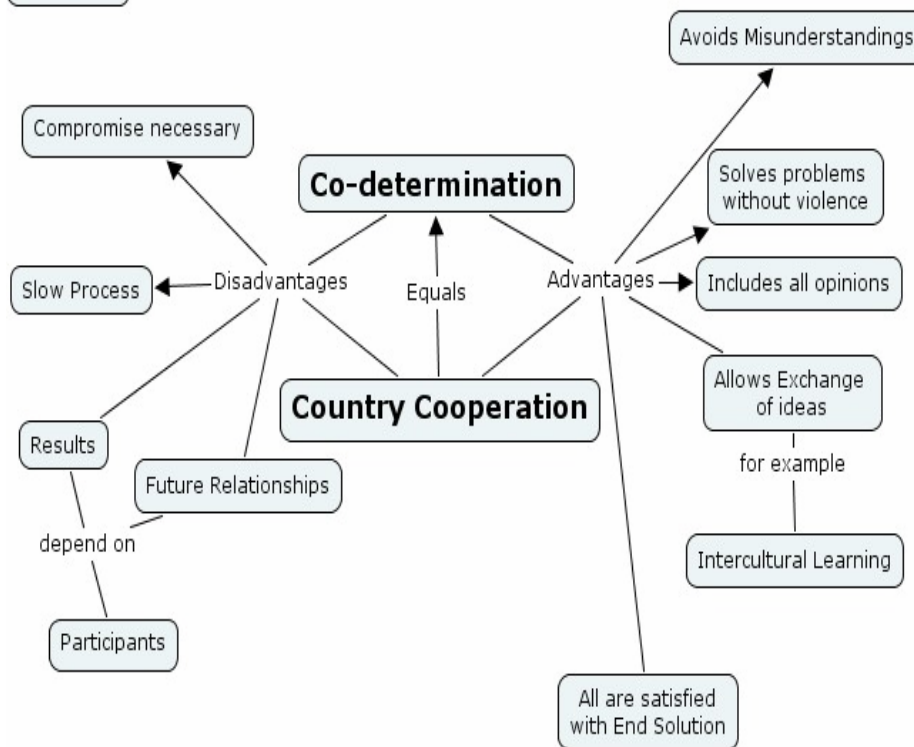
One of the arguments in the time leading up to the Iraq war that was near and dear to the hearts of the German people was that of the non-existent role of the United Nations in the conflict (Fig 3.1). Germans still maintain that there should have been a larger role played by the U.N. As an institution that represents the interests of the whole of Europe, as well as many countries from around the world, the symbolic meaning of U.S. maneuvering around the U.N. was seen as a major insult to the countries involved. Most Germans defended the U.N. They realize that the institution is not perfect, and that the processes involved can be slow and frustrating. But they insist that the U.S. did not follow the correct path by 'going it alone.'



“The UN delegates are still not elected, and the public is still not invited to sit at their councils, but now they have the wind of public opinion at their backs. They are ‘representatives’ in a way that they have never been before. The ‘we’ (referring to the many European and world wide protests before the war) has spoken—not through its government, but directly to its representatives in the international body. Moreover, it has done so in the name of a goal that is the UN’s prime reason for existing: Peace. The United States and Great Britain have sought to use the UN as an instrument of war. The world has said No.” (Schell, 2003)

The emphasized concept of Country Cooperation was enhanced and detailed in the Micro-map (fig 3.2). The group discussed the relationship between country cooperation and that of the German decision making concept of co-determination. It was determined important to receive input from all who could possibly be affected by this decision. This takes time and thorough investigation, but helps avoid possible misunderstandings created by a lack of communication. Conflicts are also usually solved “without violence”, and in the end, a solution that is satisfactory to all can be found. Germans tend to demand more information and justification before committing to such a binding and irreversible decision. It was stressed in conversations that without communication, such a process cannot be successful. The results and future relationships are dependant on the participants and their serious commitment to finding a peaceful solution. Any solution found is a compromise. Therefore *no one person or country receives exactly what they were demanding in the first place*. This view fits with the German idea of fairness and justice.

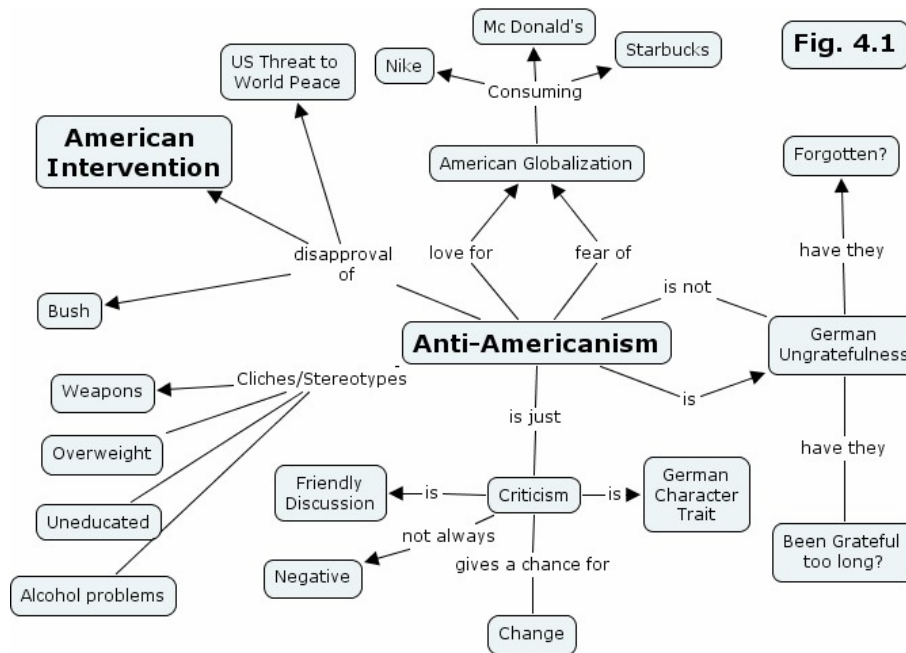
Fig 3.2



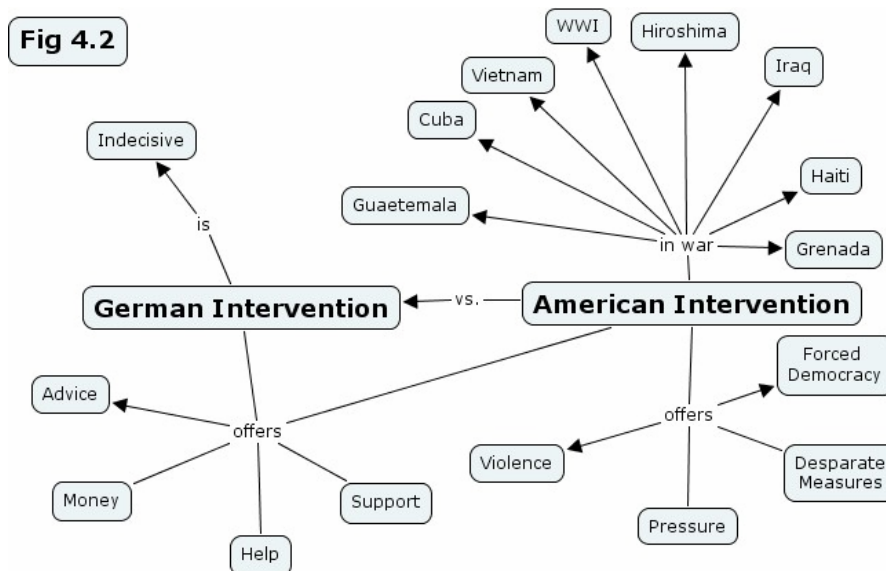
Anti-Americanism; or the Culture of the Cultureless

The negative European reaction to the American attack on Iraq caused a media sensation around the world. Journalists and analysts alike dubbed the war “the beginning of a new era of anti-Americanism.” (Alterman, 2003) But in reality, in order to be all out anti-American, one has to disapprove of the U.S “for what it is, rather than what it does.” The Bush government officials and members of the American press have attempted to portray Europe as a ‘smoldering caldron of anti.-Americanism, in which even our best qualities are held against us by a jealous, frustrated and xenophobic population lead by cowardly, pacifistic politicians.” (Alterman, 2003) This point has been used to confuse and dismiss the world concern and anger about U.S. foreign policy. The real truth of the matter is that by all accounts, even Europe is not really sure what it feels for America. A discussion of German stereotypes about America resulted in the typical listing of how guns are a normal accessory that can be purchased in the neighborhood drugstore, how Americans are overweight, undereducated and flaky, and worst of all, can’t handle their alcohol. But somehow, the ‘culture of the cultureless’ (von Buttlar, 2004) has become the American Globalization. Fig 4.1 explores the mixed feelings in a normally affectionate relationship between the U.S. and Germans. The Germans freely admit to having embraced the American shopping culture, with countless Mc Donald’s fast food restaurants, Nike stores and Starbucks at locations all over Germany. There is also a certain sense of awe surrounding some of the U.S.’s most treasured values. Returning to the To Be vs. To Do theory mentioned in the Method section, Germans find it hard to understand the nuances of American equality. In America, all are considered to be equal. But through this equality, it is expected that a person make his own way up the ladder of success. Rags to Riches stories are myths in Germany; a person is who they were born to be.

Sections of what seems to be Anti-Americanism can be explained as the cultural trait of Germans to question and argue their point of view. (Meister, 2003) While Americans tend to view direct criticism as having a negative impact, Germans see it as an important part of a relationship. Friends are expected to discuss problems and help each other find better solutions to the problem. “Honest Allies are not blind followers, but those who offer sincere criticism and workable alternatives.” (Muller-Fahrenheit, 2003) Many Germans are not aware that Americans do not like to be directly criticized.



It must be said that some symptoms of Anti-Americanism have indeed permeated modern German culture. Germans see the concept of American intervention in the different parts of the world as unnecessary and badly conceptualized. Fig. 4.2 discusses the instances of ‘American Intervention’ in countries like Haiti, Cuba, Vietnam, Hiroshima, Guatemala, and Grenada. These intervention missions ended for the most part in disaster. Germans prefer to offer help, money and advice to countries that are ready to change and grow. They do not see the necessity of force and violence to attempt to reform a country that in their opinion neither “wants nor is ready for democracy”. In addition, Germans asked the question that if “American Intervention” topples a dictator, who’s to say democracy will not be next? Who makes the decision of who stays and who goes? One student asked, “Is Schröder next?” A businessman, reflecting on Chancellor Schröder’s unpopular stand on social reform and the economy quipped, “Would that be such a bad thing?” The tension and serious tone of the discussion was broken with the most international of all concepts: Laughter.



CONCLUSIONS

To bring together all the issues that have already been touched upon, I would like to review some of the main points. First of all, memory is a powerful force in the shaping of a nation. It influences a nation's foreign politics, daily lives, view of themselves and how they act at home and abroad. A selective memory allows nations to pick and choose what it considers important and how to incorporate it into the national identity.

Overall conclusions include that the German people believe it is important to involve all parties that have an interest in the outcome of the decision making process. This is valid for their business dealings as well as world conflicts. They also feel that the war in Iraq was too hasty, and not well planned and thought out. The United Nations should have been more involved in the decision on whether or not to go to war.

The frightening term of Anti-Americanism is not nearly as large of an issue as many Americans seem to believe. "There is a pro-American world out there... It's just waiting for an America it can respect as well as admire." (Alterman, 2003)

The German-American relationship is an important facet of America's foreign policy. Their opinions should not be taken as lightly as in the past, and their reasons should be heard. History has left its mark on the country; the weight of the passage of time reminds the Germans of their duty to themselves as a people and to the rest of the world.

Germans' views of themselves and their pasts are evolving, and as the last of the German *Zeitzeugen* fade into oblivion, there may be an even larger movement towards unburdening themselves of the guilt of their parents. The guilt that crippled the previous generation will lose its meaning and fade over the next few generations. This does not mean that the Germans will forget their past and who they are because of it. They have fought against European and world censure, their own guilt, and a divided nation to become the people that they are today. Forged in the fire of its own making, Germany has emerged stronger than ever.

LIMITATIONS

As with all research, there are limitations to every project. This project was conducted on an informal basis, and did not use a large enough sample size to be considered a representative population sample. This was considered an informal discussion, and as such did not always depend on hard facts, but instead on the feeling and emotions of the subjects involved. Opinions were considered important and included, but do not necessarily represent the feelings of the author or of all German people.

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