Ideology within a Pluralist State Apparatus

The Goethe-Institut Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing the German Nation-State

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1. Part One

1.1. Introduction

Social orders have a way of perpetuating themselves. Practically, social orders can be reproduced through coercive institutions such as the courts, the police, the army, the tax office and their corresponding laws. Ideologically, the same job is done by institutions of education, the media, advertising and so on. Marxist thinkers have examined how a mode of production, such as capitalism, relies for its continuation not simply on force and coercion, but on ideological dominance as well (Althusser 1491). Others have analyzed how, for example, nationalism is employed to cement the central position of the nation state (Billig).

In this paper I will neither reveal some kind of cunning ploy that capitalism secretly executes in order to sustain itself, nor the nation state’s latest stratagem for the conditions of the 21st century. This study has an entirely different point of departure. In this paper I take a close look at one particular ‘institution of perpetuation’ of one particular capitalist state and its ideological workings. My focus will be on Germany’s number one “Public Diplomacy” (Nye 95) organization abroad, the Goethe-Institut.

In examining its discursive landscape I specifically acknowledge that the Goethe-Institut as a whole does not deliberately pursue this or that secret goal. To identify the Goethe-Institut as a perpetuator of social order does not mean to say that this process is an endeavor clearly defined, carefully planned, to be then executed with precision. Rather, as I will show in Part II of this paper, we are dealing with an amalgam of several distinguished political and economic interests, which all happen to intersect in a point at the Goethe-Institute.

This plurality of interests is a result of the plurality of interest groups for which the Goethe-Institut embodies a strategically advantageous point to operate through, and thus invest in the project. In Part Two of my paper I will therefore sieve through the evidence in order to draw up personified “ideal types” (Zijderveld) of the four most prominent and
influential players characterizing the Goethe-Institut. I will outline in how far the respective stake holders are related and how they stand in relation to one another. Furthermore I will briefly discuss how and why it is that these specific groups are involved in the Goethe-Institut project while other major interest groups are excluded.

In Part Three, I will move to the question of production. I will examine the consequences of aforementioned strategic alliance of interest groups within the frame of the Goethe-Institut, showing that reproduction of the current order is the common, though not inevitable result. Analyzing the discourses on three exemplary topics (the GDR, the German language, and Europe), I will show how according to the extent of the cooperation between the interest groups, the Goethe-Institut may end up constructing, deconstructing or reconstructing the concept of the German Nation state.

1.2. The Object

The Goethe-Institut is Germany’s chief cultural institution abroad. Its predecessor, the Deutsche Akademie, had been established in 1923 with the intention of “[expanding] German influence abroad” (Michels 206) and was “[developed] in the course of the Second World War into the biggest cultural propaganda institution of the Third Reich” (207). After the war the Deutsche Akademie was “dissolved . . . as a Nazi institution” (207) and in 1951 the Goethe-Institut was founded to take its place (222). Today the Goethe-Institut presents itself as “the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany [bringing] the multifaceted image of Germany to the world [, providing] access to German language, culture and society and [promoting] international cultural cooperation” (Goethe-Institute Homepage, “Mission Statement”). At the time of research, the organization has over 140 branches in over 90 countries (GIH, “Network”).

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1 Henceforth, when quoting from the Goethe-Institut’s homepage I will abbreviate it with ‘GIH’.
The Goethe-Institut in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan, overseeing Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, was founded in 1998, and currently has a staff of about 20 people. This study is inspired by firsthand experience I gathered there during an internship in winter 2010. An anecdote of the internship application procedure illustrates what sparked my interest. In spring 2009, after first clicking my way past a lot of cosmopolitan rhetoric, I find out that to be an intern one must hold German citizenship (Goethe-Institut Taschkent Homepage, “Praktikum”). Fulfilling that requirement, I get one of the popular positions, presumably partly due to my language skills and international experience (which are also required). However, when it comes to financial support, citizenship notwithstanding, I am deemed too far removed from Germany. I am refused a travel grant on the grounds that I study in Sweden. On a later occasion, during my internship, my superior, who spends more time outside Germany than within, and is married to non-German, assigns me the task of educating locals about certain ‘German’ traditions, which I myself only know from TV, without sensing a trace of the inherent irony.

In the first case I was intrigued by the incoherence with which I was at once deemed German enough to represent Germany, but then not enough to receive financial support for it. In the second case I was amazed by how the common sense understanding of German-ness easily refuted the oddity of the situation. The fact that two such contradictory experiences could occur within the same state apparatus, inspired me two seek a deeper understanding of how such an apparatus functions. So even though I do not primarily rely on material gathered in Tashkent, it was during my time researching there that I was able to gain the understanding of the Goethe-Institut’s internal life that is the basis of this dissertation.

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2 Henceforth abbreviated as ‘GITH’.
3 The Goethe Institut does not reimburse its interns. Instead, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) pays travel grants and allowances to those doing internships there. One of their requirements is, however, to be enrolled at a German University.
4 In Sweden on the other hand I was barred from seeking financial assistance on the grounds that I am not a Swedish Citizen, or Permanent Resident.
5 I was to give a presentation of Carnival, a festivity not celebrated in the North-East of Germany, where I grew up.
2. Part Two

2.1. The Characters

“We live and work in diversity and are, together, one institute: the Goethe-Institut.”

(Goethe-Institut Homepage, “Mission Statement”)

When analyzing the sheer mass of text that can be found on the Goethe-Institut’s homepage, in its publications and exhibitions, as well as in the material that is used in the German language courses, one finds a large diversity of discourse. This can be observed on two levels.

Firstly, when the political debates of the day are presented, two or more viewpoints are generally introduced. An article on the issue of phasing out nuclear power in Germany on the Institut’s website for instance presents arguments supporting both of the two large camps of the debate (GIH, “Atomic Energy”). Similarly, representatives of all five political parties currently in the German parliament took part in a debate hosted by the Goethe-Institut in Tashkent in June 2008. (GITH, “Diskussionsabend”) Such diversity of views is a well-known characteristic of liberal democracies.

But also on a second, more fundamental level (and for my research significant level) discourse and practice of the Goethe-Institut is not always coherent. Discourses on the nature of some of the very foundational aspects of the Goethe-Institut, as well as strategies regarding them, can be diverse and are often contradictory. The understandings, for example, of what exactly the definition of the German language (or nation, or culture) is, or how one should relate to it, lie widely apart. British Marxist critic Terry Eagleton and his discussion of ideology can be a useful guide in wandering through this discursive forest, as I will explain in a moment.

The discursive diversity within the Goethe-Institut is not in itself surprising, considering the pluralistic nature of Germany, and the fact that the Goethe-Institut is largely independent of day to day politics. The organization’s claim to be “[conveying] an all-round image of Germany” (GIH, “Who We Are”) seems hence not entirely invalid. Things get
interesting, however, when one begins to filter and sort the mass of different discourse and practice according to the most commonly reoccurring patterns.

Doing that, four relatively distinct ‘currents of thinking’ emerge: a Humanist one, a Nationalist one, one of Realpolitik and a Capitalist one. In Ideology, Eagleton offers one definition of ideology that means “ideas and beliefs . . . [symbolizing] the conditions and life-experiences of a specific, socially significant group or class” (29). Since each of these four discourses can be traced back to a corresponding force of German (and more generally western liberal) sociopolitical reality, they can be considered separate ideologies.

As these ideologies can live autonomously of one another, and each has a unique logic and motivation, I will henceforth consider them autonomous entities even though they are greatly intertwined. We can give a face to the discourses by personifying each one in an ‘ideal type’ proponent of the respective ideology: the Humanist, the Nationalist, the Real-Politician, and the Capitalist. It is important to keep in mind here that, in accordance with Max Weber’s notion of his concept of ‘ideal type’, the resulting characters are an idealized abstraction, and do not actually exist in reality (Burger). It is thus possible that two or more of these characters might be found in one and the same text or project.

In what follows I will introduce the characters one after the other. Further I will examine in which of the Goethe-Institut’s fields of work the respective characters are most active in, what influence they have and what implications this has on the work of the organization.

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6 Michels identifies roughly the same forces in his discussion of the Deutsche Akademie. I see my Humanist in his Bildungsbürgertum (206), and in what he calls the “tradition of neohumanism” (209). His Nazi (219, 221, 227) corresponds to my Nationalist. What he calls “Wilhelmine power politics” (206), I renamed Realpolitik, and what he calls ‘industry’ (220, 223) is subsumed in my Capitalist.
2.2. The Humanist

“[The] Goethe-Institut feels obliged to the idea of cosmopolitan humanism”.

(Goethe-Institut Homepage, “FAQ: Objectives”)

What marks the Humanist as a character is dedication to cosmopolitanism, esteem for education, or Bildung, appreciation of the arts as part of that Bildung, as well as Enlightenment values such as tolerance and political liberalism. Domestically the Humanist is most commonly encountered among the bourgeois intellectual elite, within the Green Party, and with liberally oriented social democrats.

The Humanist has been with the Goethe-Institut from the start. In fact he was its obstetrician, as it was members of the early 20th century Bildungsbürgertum, which first came up with the idea of a German cultural institution on foreign soils to promote German interests, as an alternative to conventional power politics (Michels 206). Today the same thing tends to be phrased more cautiously as “[providing] access to German language, culture and society and [promoting] international cultural cooperation” (GIH, “Mission Statement”).

The Humanist is also the one who greets you and welcomes you at the doors of the Goethe-Institut. I mean that in two ways. Firstly, the staff of the many Goethe-Instituts around the world can best be described as Humanists in the way that they conceive of the role of the organization and their own role within it. This self-conception is apparent in such statements as “We, the staff around the world, represent an open Germany” (GIH, “Mission Statement”). It is not surprising that the workforce of an organization such as the Goethe-Institut would be made up of cosmopolitan Humanists. In fact, a degree of cosmopolitanism is required in order to work there. An internal questionnaire for the orientation of potential future managerial staff suggests many characteristics one should have in order to be suitable for the job. Being satisfied with living abroad for as long as 20 years, appreciating intellectual discourse in different languages, and seeing cultural difference in a team as something enriching, belong to
a long list of implied requirements ("TEST"). Accordingly, when my supervisor, (the co-director of the Tashkent institute) gave a short speech to the staff at my farewell dinner, she approvingly described me as already having a “real Goethe-life”, as a way to summarize that I speak several languages, and had spent much time in different places outside Germany.

The second way that the Humanist greets and welcomes us at the Goethe-Institut’s doors is the way that it is the friendly and colorful humanist aspect of the Goethe-Institut that is most brought to the fore in its brochures and advertisements, its online appearance and not least of all in its very name itself. The website explains: “Just like our eponym, the Goethe-Institut feels obliged to the idea of cosmopolitan humanism and promotes intercultural dialogue” (GIH, “FAQ: Objectives”). Correspondingly one of the most frequently depicted images on promotional material, is one of young people cheerfully meeting one another, enjoying ‘high culture’ and learning together (Figure 1).

Besides cosmopolitanism, another central aspect of the humanist discourse is Bildung. This concept means education, which serves “primarily the perfection of the individual” (Michels 209) and by extension creates cultured individuals. Implicated in this thinking is an understanding of culture as high culture, reflected also in the way the Goethe-Institut conceptualizes ‘culture’ into such categories as ‘Visual Arts’ ("bildende Kunst"), ‘Film’, ‘Music’, ‘Dance/Theatre’ and so forth (Goethe-Institut Taschkent, 10 Jahre).
Enlightenment values are another cornerstone of the Humanist’s worldview. These values include a tolerance of others, which feeds “the idea that all cultures and languages in the world [have] an equal right to exist, […] and that no culture [is] superior to another” (Michels 222). The inclination towards political liberalism that comes with the Humanist’s enlightenment values also prompts a certain regard for such political projects as democracy and universal human rights. Considering that democracy and human rights are to be found in Germany (surely more so than in places like Uzbekistan) the Humanist sees it not only as legitimate but as obviously mandatory that those virtues should be promoted abroad as much as Pretzels or Bauhaus. Combined with the idea of distributing culture (which in the Humanist’s logic of Bildung carries substantial value), triggers the Humanist to conceive of the Goethe-Institut as a charity in the service of the good of mankind.

2.3. The Nationalist

“[Careful] use of resources has always been . . . a German virtue along with hard work . . .

punctuality and Ordnung.”

(Goethe-Institut Homepage, “Frugality”)\(^7\)

The Nationalist can be described as the counterpart of the Humanist in the Goethe-Institut. Domestically this character appears most purely in the shape of the strictly conservative petty bourgeoisie that populates suburban garden allotments, football pubs and heritage clubs and is politically represented by the right wing of the Conservative party and the minor nationalist or xenophobic parties. The far right nationalist weekly Junge Freiheit, concerned with the loss of status of German abroad, for instance, cheers an initiative supported by the Goethe-Institut, that attempts to reverse the “dramatic” trend, and applauds the Institut’s president Klaus-

\(^7\) This broad generalization of “Germans” is made in a context of irony, and what’s more by a British national. These two facts become the legitimizing disclaimer that allows the Goethe Institut to publicize something otherwise bluntly racist on its website. It should however not be disregarded on the same grounds by the researcher, since, as Slavoj Žižek notes, “in contemporary societies, democratic or totalitarian, . . . cynical distance, laughter, irony, are, so to speak, part of the game. The ruling ideology is not meant to be taken seriously or literally” (28).
Dieter Lehmann for demanding from Germans more confidence and passion with regards to the German language (Paulwitz). But I emphasize ‘most purely’ again, for the Nationalist is not only to be found in those peripheral spheres.

In *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig rightly observes that in “a world of nation states, nationalism cannot be confined to the peripheries” (5). The Nationalist has never been the poster boy of the German Public Diplomacy project (except of course from 1933 to 1945), yet is absolutely essential to the whole endeavor. For what would be the point of a *German* cultural institute without a clear, convincing and (seemingly) timeless definition of what exactly that ‘*German-ness*’ is based on? As Billig would phrase it, “nationhood provides a continual background” for the Goethe-Institut’s discourses (8).

A key figure in this is Johann Gottfried Herder, a close friend of the Goethe-Institut’s namesake. According to the views of this 18th century philosopher “the social world [is] populated by a multitude of nations”, “each following its own *Bildung* and nature” (qtd. in Wimmer, “Ethnicity” 3) Though Herder’s work is now described with some skepticism on the Goethe-Institut’s website (Goethe-Institut Rumänien Homepage, “Herder”), he nevertheless laid the intellectual groundwork for the logic of the organization. This is evident in the way that the German nation, when talked about, is conceived in a perfectly Herderian fashion, as being “constituted by three isomorphous aspects” (Wimmer, “Ethnicity” 3).

The first of these aspects is that the nation is supposedly held together by “close ties among [it’s] members” (3). Though this premise stated all over in the world of the Goethe-Institut, it is most clearly expressed in the discussion of the cold war period. As the discourse on the Berlin Wall is wholly centered on words such as ‘divide’ and ‘separation’, it implies that there is something that ultimately and naturally belongs closely together.

Secondly a nation, according to Herder, represents an “[identity] formed around a sense of shared destiny and historical continuity” (3). All texts of the Goethe-Institut dealing with ‘German history’ follow this logic and link history to the nation becoming what it is
today. In an exercise about ‘dealing with history’ (\textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}) one can find, for example, the following sentence: “[We, the Germans,] have thought about . . . our responsibility for the horrible crimes of the National Socialist period”. (GIH, “\textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}”, my translation) This conception entails that the nation is a nation because it has its own unique biography which it can ponder and reflect upon, and which shapes its character.

The third Herderian premise holds that ‘each ethnic culture and language [enshrines] a unique world view’ (Wimmer, “Ethnicity” 3). Such an assumption is frequently reflected in statements as banal as “The Germans enjoy their [garden] allotment culture” (GIH “Gardens”) or as profound as “We Germans believe . . . , that one can come to terms with the past” (GIH, “\textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}”, my translation). Furthermore, and in addition to the ‘unique worldview’ the Nationalist has a tendency to attribute the nation with a culture that is supposedly homogenous. It was with that in mind, and under the banner of ‘ethnography’ (“\textit{Landeskunde}”) that I was expected to give a presentation of German carnival traditions to a group of Uzbek teachers, even though carnival is not celebrated at all in the part of Germany where I grew up.

I have to clarify here that the three premises above do not alone make the Nationalist that I want to describe. In fact, Herderianism (especially in its linking of history and nation) is almost as close to the Humanist’s conceptions of nation as to the Nationalist’s, and it is only with the addition of one more specific ingredient that the Nationalist gets clearly demarcated. That ingredient is a few drops of blood; the nationalist discourse employs subliminal racism. Such racism can be observed whenever, for instance, ‘being German’ is equaled with ‘having German blood’ (ancestry), and ‘being foreign’ with the lack thereof. Such can be witnessed when people are considered as Georgians even though they were born and live in Germany (Goethe-Institut Georgien Homepage, “Georgier”). Similarly people whose ancestors were German are considered as Germans even though they might never have been to Germany
(GIH, “Deutsche Minderheiten”). In similar fashion, an article on the institute’s website describes Brazilian “Indians” as always having preferred “suicide over working for others”, (GIH, “Yanomami”) implying that Indian-ness is the profound and unalterable essence of the people in question. This racism should not be misunderstood as residue of bygone times that has not been properly washed away, but rather as a whitewashed, but “integral part of the institutional order of the nation state” (Wimmer, Nationalist Exclusion 217) to which the Goethe-Institut belongs.

The Goethe-Institut obviously does well not to stress the nationalist theme too vehemently, especially abroad, as it might cause irritation there. Billig’s term “Banal Nationalism” meaning “the [banally mundane] ideological habits which enable the established nations of the west to be reproduced” (6) captures the Nationalist’s role within the Goethe-Institut well. It is not the “flag which is consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (8), or in our case: the paper flag in the flower pot in the intern’s office (Figure 2).

2.4. The Real-Politician

“What do I care about my chitchat of yesterday? “ – Konrad Adenauer

The third identity of the Goethe-Institut is that of a Real-Politician, maybe not in the shape of a Henry Kissinger, but rather a Konrad Adenauer, the first West German chancellor, in whose term in office the Goethe-Institut was born. Domestically the Real-Politician is most manifested in the bureaucracy of the state, and in the two centrist, state carrying parties SPD and CDU, which both rather pragmatically administer the state, instead of to shaping it according to their alleged Socialist or Christian values, respectively. Realpolitik is the part of
the Goethe-Institut that operates “based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations” (Oxford Dictionary), and thus in accordance with Adenauer’s ‘pragmatic’ take on morality quoted above. The Realpolitik discourse emerges much less in how the Goethe-Institut talks, than in how it acts. Put differently, the Real-Politician is to be found more in the material reality of the institute, than in its promulgations.

The composition of an organization’s funding tends to be a very conclusive indicator in trying to fathom which strategic ambitions ultimately motivate its actions. This holds true in our case too. The Goethe-Institut receives most of its resources in the form of allowances from the German state. The Auswärtiges Amt’s (Federal Foreign Affairs Office) funding made up 77% of the Institut’s budget, in 2008 (“In Kürze”). It is hence accurate to conclude that it is the German Foreign Affairs Office that makes the whole operation happen. This is telling in that the Auswärtiges Amt very matter-of-factly declares that its main function is to “serve the interests of Germany and its citizens throughout the world” (Auswärtiges Amt Homepage, “Our Task”8) Further, it specifies what exactly that entails: “Seeking to influence opinion-leaders and decision-makers in government, business and society in our partner countries continues to be a key objective of our diplomacy” (AAH, “Tasks”). In this light one sensible conclusion would be that no matter how humanist the Goethe-Institut might appear and presents itself, it is ultimately nothing but a convoluted and most ornate tool in the service of advancing the geostrategic ambitions of the German state.

The historical inception of the Goethe-Institut, or specifically its predecessor, supports such a stance. Michels explains the German state’s project of Auswärtige Kulturpolitik (“cultural initiatives to achieve political aims” (206)) as an “instrument . . . used by nation states to either defend or extend their influence abroad” (206). He further shows that this instrument was first conceived in the early 20th century, and then was the initiating force that led to the establishment of the Deutsche Akademie, and later the Goethe-Institut (Michels

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8 Henceforth abbreviated as ‘AAH’.
That this technique continues to be in high esteem among advocates of Realpolitik the (western) world over becomes clear in an article written by a fervent enthusiast of it. In *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*, International Relations theorist Joseph Nye reminds us and America’s foreign policy makers of the virtues of *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*. In his article he defines “Public Diplomacy”, or “Soft Power”, as “[attracting] the publics of other countries . . . through broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth” (Nye 95) and propagates the use of them as an efficient complementation to coercion (“hard power”) in geopolitics. He summarizes the value of effective Public Diplomacy thus: “If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to force you to do what you do *not* want” (95). Especially considering the historically grounded impossibility for German Real-political geo-strategists to use force (Hard Power) on a large scale, it makes sense for them to throw in their lot with an institution of Soft Power, such as the Goethe-Institut.

Thus one can find the Real-Politician’s handwriting all over the organization. Basic decisions about the running of the Goethe-Institut, particularly in regions like Central Asia, seem to be driven more by self-interested strategic considerations, than humanist sentiment. That Goethe-Instituts have flourished in both the dictatorships of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (for 12 and 16 years, respectively), while there is no Institut in either of the neighboring republics of Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan, is an example of this. The former two countries are of economic (natural gas in Kazakhstan) and strategic (German military base in Uzbekistan) interest to Germany, while the later two are marked by instability with civil war in Tajikistan and revolutions in Kyrgyzstan. Though from a humanist viewpoint it would seem sensible to establish branches in the relatively more free and politically dynamic Republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (place 113 and 125 respectively on “World Press Freedom Index 2009”) to reach more people with its democratic messages, the Real-Politician makes the final decision and instead decides for the dictatorships of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (places 142 and 160
respectively, on the same index (Reporters Without Borders)) where the German state has a bigger stake.

Once established in these regimes, the Real-Political discourse of being pragmatic also helps the local offices in developing its relationship to the authorities. Thus politically sensitive issues, such as the Andijan massacre (that left hundreds of protestors dead (BBC News)) are pragmatically swept under the Humanist’s pretty carpet of art exhibitions and poetry readings (Figures 4 and 5). The Real-Politician also has no hesitation to be pragmatic when it comes to such local customs as bribery and nepotism. As such it is common to appease high ranking Uzbek bureaucrats by granting their children free attendance to language courses\(^9\), as it is to cooperate with the countries ‘human-rights’ representative that make a mockery of the word.\(^{10}\)

\(^9\) This, and the topic of bribery, was discussed in a language department staff meeting I took part in, in the Tashkent institute, on February 4, 2010 (Research Diary, Entry “4.02.10”).

\(^{10}\) This matter was discussed in a language department staff meeting I took part in, in the Tashkent institute, on February 17, 2010 (Research Diary, Entry “17.02.”).
2.5. The Capitalist

“Germany needs a Goethe-Institut – and the Goethe-Institut needs sponsors!”

(Goethe-Institut Homepage, “Supporters”)

The fourth and last of the major characters that invests in the Goethe-Institut is the Capitalist. On the home front the Capitalist is organized most clearly in the corporations, the large employers’ federations, and the free market party FDP. Along with the Real-Politician, the Capitalist influences the material foundation of the organization profoundly. Thus the part of the budget that does not come from the German state, or from revenue from language course fees, comes from private donors, especially from the corporate world. On top of the list of sponsors one finds corporations such as BMW and the Lufthansa (GIH, “Spender und Sponsoren”).

The Goethe-Institut reciprocates the generosity of German big business with more than just a note of thanks on its website. One finds examples of this, to remain in the region, in the republics of Central Asia. “For German business”, the Federal Foreign Affairs Office advises, “an increased economic cooperation with Kazakhstan offers great chances” (AAH, “Kasachstan”). The year 2010 is promptly celebrated by the Goethe-Institut, in collaboration with the local German embassies, as a German-Kazakh-Friendship-Year, including events such as October 1st, the day of “German business in Kazakhstan”. The last page of the informational brochure (Figure 5) is decorated with the logos of METRO, BMW and GAZPROM GERMANIA (“Deutschland in Kasachstan 2010”).

Uzbekistan is also a market of great interest to German business, as the Foreign Office explains (AAH, “Usbekistan”). Member of the Daimler AG management board, Andreas Renschler, delightedly cheers the signing of a large scale
contract to supply the capital city of Tashkent with buses as “another important step . . .
towards opening up growth markets” (Daimler Global Media Site, “Bus-Joint Venture”).
Incidentally, the Daimler AG aspires for the image of Germany in Uzbekistan to remain a
positive one, and supports the Tashkent Goethe-Institut financially (GITH, “Förderer”). This
collaboration also perfectly coincides with Nye’s recommendations on Public Diplomacy. He
plainly discusses the same as a giant advertising campaign (Nye 97).

The Capitalist within the Goethe-Institut does however also pervade its texts discursively.
It is the idea of ‘marketing Germany’ which most reflects this. A director of the Goethe-
Institut, for instance, is supposed to provide “optimal advertising for the German language
and Germany” (“TEST”) as the above cited questionnaire puts it. One might wonder what a
language needs advertisement for. Such a statement only makes sense within the capitalist
discourse that conceives and discusses nations, such as Germany, as a “trading partner”,
“market”, or business location (GERMAN IS 4U!), and a language, such as the German one, in
terms of its exchange value (“ProDeutsch”). The Capitalist conceives of Germany, in accord
with Nye’s article, as a commodity to be sold to a foreign market.

2.6. Character Summary
After introducing every character individually, I will now examine how the characters define
and stand in relation to German culture and language, as well as the Goethe-Institut, and how
they stand in relation to one another. In that, Eagleton can help us again. Where his definition
of ideology applied above only describes “a kind of collective symbolic self-expression” (29),
we now need to conceive it “in relational [and] conflictive terms” (29). In the following I will
discuss not just what the four character’s ideologies look like, but also what motivates them.
This will involve an analysis of how much the respective discourse serves the “promotion and
legitimation of the interests” (29) of each character.
For the Humanist the point of promoting ‘German culture’ lies more in the ‘Culture’-part, than in the ‘German’-part. Raymond Williams can help to conceptualize this with his list of the three conventional understandings of the word ‘culture’ (Jordan and Weedon 6). Firstly it can be seen as the property of the cultivated individual (‘being cultured’) (6), secondly as the property of an anthropological group (‘German culture’) (7), and thirdly as the product of artistic activity (high culture) (7). As Jordan and Weedon point out, it is the first of these definitions that underlies Humanism (6). Accordingly, the Humanist sees culture as that which one gains on the path to perfection. In our case this is thought to apply both individually and for societies as a whole. In humanist discourse, the German nation thus emerges, to summarize roughly, as ‘that nation, which on a long path of hardships and learning as acquired such values as liberalism, individualism and democracy’. Thus ‘German’ is seen more as a convenient vehicle for ‘culture’, in a grand project of spreading perfection and values, with the aim that even Uzbek citizens may one day be as cultured and cosmopolitan as German Humanists.

On the part of the Nationalist, this relationship is reversed. Here ‘German’ is the value, and culture is the vehicle. In nationalist discourse Williams’ second definition of ‘culture’, which denotes “a particular way of life” (qtd. in Jordan and Weedon, 7) prevails. A statement such as ‘punctuality is part of German culture’ operates according to this logic. The noble values so important to the Humanist, are to the Nationalist just another indication of the great nature of ‘German culture’. It is of course natural for the Nationalist to see both the nation-state as a natural order, and ‘German culture’ as something ‘good’, if not superior. To the Nationalist, ‘German culture’ should thus obviously be promoted abroad, along with the idea that all societies should be organized into states, representing nations.

On a side note, I should remark that both the Humanist and Nationalist also constantly use the word culture in the sense of Williams’ third definition, which means “the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (qtd. in Jordan and Weedon 7). This is
evident in the way that ‘culture’ is organized into such traditional categories of ‘high culture’ as “Literature”, “Theatre” or “Visual Arts” (GIH, “The Arts”). Thus the Humanist spreads ‘German culture’ (third definition) for people to become ‘cultured’ (first definition), while the Nationalist spreads ‘German culture’ (third definition), to show the grandeur of the ‘culture of the Germans’ (second definition).

The Real-Politician and the Capitalist both have a less sentimental approach. For neither of them lies the benefit of promoting ‘German culture’ inherently in either ‘German’ or ‘culture’. In a bit of an intellectual stretch one could imagine that the discourses that lie at the base of the Capitalist and the Real-Politician, actually appreciate culture in the sense of Williams’ fourth, rather academic than common-sensical definition of the word. In it, culture is described as “the signifying system through which . . . a social order is communicated [and] reproduced”. (qtd. in Jordan and Weedon 8) Their motivations for ‘promoting German culture’ arise out of specifically material (for the state geostrategic, for capital economic) considerations. ‘German culture’ is understood as being able to communicate, advance and establish a specific, (material,) social order. In doing that, the Capitalist and the Real-Politician move to a different operational level and adopt a more abstract, pragmatic relation to ‘German culture’.

The Humanist and the Nationalist regard each other’s projects with skepticism. The Humanist disapproves of the Nationalist’s illiberal racist views, while the Nationalist rejects the Humanist’s universalisms. Both, however, rely on each other for providing one another with a framework of thinking. A similar relationship can be observed between the Real-Politician and the Capitalist. While the state needs capital to flourish within it, the Real-Politician seeks to keep destructive tendencies at bay. The Capitalist relies on the order that the state provides, but is wary of its strong controlling arm. Furthermore the Humanist and Nationalist will find irritating the Real-Politician’s at times somewhat too pragmatic attitude towards moral values or towards loyalty to the Nation. The Capitalist will cause similar
irritation when displaying disregard for moral values or national boundaries. In the same breath, however, the Capitalist relies on the Humanist’s discourse of individual liberty and responsibility while the Real-Politician needs the Nationalist to fill the nation-state project with nation. In summary, we can state that our four actors, for the time being, all live within a sort of uncomfortable symbiosis.

A crucial aspect of this symbiosis is the sharing of labor between the Real-Politician and the Capitalist on the one hand, and the Humanist and the Nationalist on the other. Nye finds a way of saying it in his own ‘Real-Capitalist’ jargon, describing it as either aiming for the “immediate and visible ‘bang for the buck’”, or hoping for the “slow media of cultural diplomacy [to have a] ‘trickle down effect’” (98). Oliver Zöllner (in his discussion of the Deutsche Welle11), finds another set of descriptions for the same divide. For him the former are the “tough minded school”, which thinks “tactically” and short term, while the latter belong to the “tender minded school”, preferring long term “strategic” approaches (166). I would argue that both the Real-Politician and Capitalist seek practical or material success (expansion of geopolitical influence, or greater market access for capital), while the Humanist and Nationalist live and work in a world of ideas and feelings - in an ideological world. Ironically, in daily politics, the label of ‘ideology’ is often applied opposite; it is used to castigate all too visible and insensitive ‘bang for the buck’ tactics. The slow, tender, trickling of humanist or nationalist ideology in “art, books [or] exchanges” (Nye 98) goes unnoticed as such. To credit the Capitalist and Real-Politician with only thinking short term is not entirely fair. From a Marxist perspective it could be argued that the other two characters’ job is in fact nothing else than to secure the state’s and capital’s long term interest, by providing them with a meaningful discursive framework for action.

To exemplify and analyze the complex relationships of correspondences and conflicts among the characters with examples from the Goethe-Institut shall be the next intellectual

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11 The Deutsche Welle is a partner organization of the Goethe-Institut. It broadcasts German radio and TV abroad.
step of this study and the object Part Three of this paper. Before moving on, we only have to acknowledge one more crucial fact. It is remarkable and absolutely consequential that certain heavy weight political forces of the German socio-political arena, most notably the trade unions and the Left Party\textsuperscript{12} (arguably also the churches, environmental associations, etc) do not play a role in the Goethe-Institut project. It makes no sense to fight for workers rights in Germany, with a theatre performance in Uzbekistan. ‘Promoting German Culture’ will do nothing to address the conflicts that those players are involved in; it is of no interest to them. This lack does however have significant consequences for what is produced in the Goethe-Institut, as we shall see in what follows.

\textsuperscript{12} Michels shows that the left and the unions had been excluded from the German Public Diplomacy project from the start (219).
3. Part Three

3.1. The Product

As we have seen, four distinct discourses operate within the Goethe-Institut, which correspond to four different socio-political ideal type characters. Each of those has specific motivations for investing in the Goethe-Institut, and expectations for what to hope for in return. In the context of this study, it is the discursive collaboration between the characters that is interesting for the consequences it has on the project of the German Nation State as a social order.

What we will see in the following, is that, depending on the extent that the four characters can come to a consensus on a specific aspect of the German Nation State, the Goethe-Institut will bring forth an accordingly coherent or incoherent discourse thereon. The effect of this can be likened to the physics of light. When all the characters bundle their forces, and their discourses operate in unison, the different colors are not visible and all we see is the bright, ‘neutral’ light of fact. When, however, there is something in the way that breaks the light, like a prism does, the discursive rays emerge separately and their different colors become visible. For the four characters do not come to a productive agreement on all aspects of the Goethe-Institut’s work. Especially in an age when certain aspects of nationhood are increasingly under attack, the response is less coordinated. I will discuss three of the most prominent topics that appear on the Goethe-Institut’s website and in its publications.

The first example shall be the Goethe-Institut’s handling of the GDR\textsuperscript{13} and the ‘Divided Germany’. In this case, all four characters, for their own reasons, see an advantage in engaging in the same discourse, and thus cooperate efficiently in promoting it. This coherence results in a specific construction of the past, involving a historical narrative that

\textsuperscript{13} The German Democratic Republic (GDR), or East Germany, was a German socialist state that existed from 1949 till 1990, and was a member of the Warsaw pact.
suits all the characters. The light shines bright and white, seemingly neutral; a specific construction of present day Germany as ‘natural’ is the consequence.

The second example concerns the topic of ‘the German language’, in a context of worldwide decreasing interest in German as a foreign language, and with regards to globalization and migration. In this case no coherence is to be found, and no clear picture is produced. Each character pursues a different direction of thought, and subsequent line of action. Several different discourses on the essence of the German language emerge. Just as a prism, breaking the light, can help students in physics class to understand that ‘neutral’ light actually is made up of several different colors, such discursive incoherence can help the observer understand that institutional ideology also is made up of several differently motivated strands of thinking. As this happens, the artificiality of the seemingly coherent entity of the German nation-state is revealed, and a foundational legitimizing cornerstone thereof – that of national language – is deconstructed.

In the third example we see what happens when three of four characters find consensus. Here I will be talking about the Goethe-Institut’s handling of the idea of ‘Europe’. On this matter, the Humanist, the Capitalist, and the Real-Politician find a common discourse that suits them all, while the Nationalist’s concerns are channeled into harmlessness. An individual shade of color is filtered out; the light changes its color, slightly but significantly. The German nation-state is not reproduced, but in fact reconstructed into a different shape.

3.2. Construction

“In 1949 Germany was divided into two states”. “[In 1989] East Germans . . . and West Germans . . . embraced one another und celebrated the German Reunification.”

(Goethe-Institut Homepage, “Reunification”, “Wiedervereinigung”, my translation)

Each of the four characters involved in the Goethe-Institut has, as previously described, specific interests and agendas. Certain topics are significant to only one or two of them, other
topics are of interest to them all. The now long defunct German Democratic Republic is an example of the latter. The GDR has a central function in the discourses of all four of the characters. By that I mean that all four aspire to position the GDR in a way that in turn produces contemporary Germany, distinctly as the Non-GDR. Each character has a unique motivation for contributing; the end product is a coherent discourse.

The Humanist basically sees the trouble with the GDR in that it was a state in the hands of ‘uncultured’ people. This lack of cultivation on the part of the SED Party elite translates, in humanist thinking, into a lack of reason, and hence disregard for political liberties and individuality. The Nationalist sees the main crime of the GDR in building the Berlin Wall and thus separating the German people, thereby disturbing an order perceived as biologically natural. To the Real-Politician, the GDR with its Warsaw Pact allegiance, and its claim to also being a German state, had always impeded the West German Nation to realize its full power potential. The Capitalist’s concern is most obvious. The socialist nature of the republic is that character’s main irritation.

Interesting is how, in this consensus, all characters complement each other’s argumentation perfectly. The ‘Unnaturalness’ for which the Nationalist attacks the GDR, is taken up by capitalist discourse and applied to castigate ‘unnatural’ economic policy. This shows, for instance, in a text for German language learners, using a text on the GDR as an exercise. Here economic stagnation is made out as the natural consequence of central planning; private barter trade, in contrast to the state run economy, is explained to have been lively (GIH, “Alltag”). In a similar move the Real-Politician takes up humanist rhetoric in constructing a historical narrative of the perfection of the German Nation in the second half of the 20th century. The years 49-89-09 are arranged in a way that illustrates the German Nation’s development to what it is today. According to the commentary, 1949 was the year that ‘division began’ and 1989 the year of ‘reunification’, where ‘division was overcome’. Thus in this discourse the GDR state in its entirety is deemed unnatural - biologically,
economically, intellectually. Unification is seen as a return to nature and reason, as an achievement of perfection.

Significantly, in the process of retrospectively delegitimizing the GDR, the Germany of 2009 is constructed and legitimized as the natural, reasonable and perfect order of things. This manifests itself most blatantly in the commonly applied word ‘Reunification’. This term implies that the political entity, which was created in 1990, had been there before and is thus legitimate. The same is achieved semiotically when silhouettes of the two German states are pictured beside one another with a gap in-between, like perfect jigsaw puzzle pieces (Figure 6). Both pieces also have the same black-red-yellow coloring; only the smaller piece is blemished with the socialist coat of arms (GIH, “Einheit”). The fact that Germany had never before existed in the borders of 1990 and that all three preceding ‘unified’ German states had encompassed many areas and populations which are now not included,\(^{14}\) is effaced by this representation.

But more important than the geographical legitimacy of the German State, is the cementation of its internal order. Following the thinking of Roland Barthes, the GDR comes to signify on the level of “Myth” (115), the justice, naturalness and legitimacy of today’s Germany. In an exercise for German learners the students are supposed to write down their own associations with the concept “German Unity/German Reunification”. A list of suggestions, supposed to help insecure learners, is very telling. While “Democratization”, “Reunification”, and “fall of the Iron Curtain” are suggested, counter hegemonic readings of the same events, that would be associated with such terms as “privatization”, “sell-out”, “loss

\(^{14}\) As there were: Masuria, Alsace, Lorraine, East Prussia, the City of Gdansk, and Austria, to name a few.
of jobs”, “annexation” or “loss of identity” are neglected\(^\text{15}\) (GIH, “Antworten”). The GDR thus comes to denote dictatorship, economic stagnation, and suppressed individuals. Today’s Germany is constructed as the place of liberal democracy, capitalism, and individualism. The German state’s legitimacy is boosted in that it now represents the ‘whole’ German people, while capitalism is anchored within it as the true, natural way of organizing the economy. The current political order is naturalized and alternative possibilities are denied.

The fierceness of this ideological campaign is impressive. As nostalgia about the GDR flourishes in popular German imagination\(^\text{16}\), and the successor to the GDR state party is proliferating itself as the most credible alternative force in German politics\(^\text{17}\), the demonization of the ‘other-Germany’ is stepped up. One aspect of this is the discourse of the ‘two German dictatorships’. This means that the GDR is mentioned as often as possible as the ‘second dictatorship’, whereby it is implicitly likened to Fascist Germany. Furthermore, when German high school students do not share the view that equates Stasi with Gestapo and the Berlin Wall with the Holocaust, it is declared (in an article on the website) that “young people know far too little about the second German dictatorship” (GIH, “Knowledge”). The problem is identified as failed parenting: “Many [east German] parents . . . only tell young people about the supposedly positive daily routine in the GDR, but blank out the negative side in the process.” (GIH, “Knowledge”, my italics.) To amend this condition, “schools and institutions are called upon” (GIH, “Knowledge”). People’s memories of the country they grew up in, are rendered unreliable, to be replaced with the state’s indoctrination. This shows how haunted Germany apparently still is by the specter of Communism.

In this context one can identify something Zöllner, in his analysis of German Public Diplomacy in the Middle East, discusses as “Institutional Ideology”. In his example the myth

\(^{15}\) “Wir sind ein Volk” (‘We are one people’), the slogan used at the time by pro-western nationalist forces, is included, while “Wir sind das Volk” (‘We are the people’), the slogan used by the first wave of (largely leftwing dissident) protesters is discarded.

\(^{16}\) In movies such as Good Bye Lenin it even gets successfully exported abroad.

\(^{17}\) …winning 11% of the popular vote in the federal election of 2009.
of Nazi Germany is the “background narrative that paves the way for [the Deutsche Welle] institutional ideology: with the Nazi-era past being the opposite of the contemporary image of Germany [,] the desired image […] of being an open-minded broker of intercultural understanding and democracy [is promoted]” (Zöllner 172). For the Goethe-Institut the GDR is integrated into the myth, and contemporary Germany becomes the opposite of ‘two dictatorships’.

This instrumentalization of history does not just serve domestic ideological aims. In the Uzbek context for example, there are substantial practical considerations involved. During my internship there the Goethe-Institut in Tashkent, displayed an exhibition of uncommented before/after (1990) photos from Eastern German cities, which clearly depict a dramatically improved condition of buildings and streets (Figure 7), further emphasizing the ‘GDR - bad, Germany – good’ dichotomy. One picture, showing a wasteland in the center of Berlin, (before) and a slick postmodern federal government building (now), makes the connection to the current political order especially clear (Figure 8).

Roughly at the same time, a different exhibition toured the Goethe-Instituts in the former Soviet Republics. It showed pictures of people in public places in Soviet times, parallel to pictures of the same people in the same places today (Figure 9). Interesting here is the background. That statues of national heroes (often poets) have replaced Lenin pleases the nationalist eye, and the fact that the representative buildings in the background are still as
shiny as before confirms the capitalist success story. That, in the Central Asian dictatorships today, it is only the representative buildings (and perhaps those of large corporations) that are kept in shape, while Soviet-built kindergartens and hospitals are decaying, does not figure. Consequently, nostalgia is confronted here as well as on the home front. This appears as a sincere reminder to the Uzbek public that the post-Soviet order is the preferable option (and it certainly is for the German Capitalist and Real-Politician), in Germany as much as in Central Asia.

3.3. Deconstruction

“German Language Learning is Meaningful and Useful in the World today” (Pro-Deutsch!)

We can observe the reverse process taking place when looking at the topic of language, where it appears that deconstruction would be the adequate description of what the Goethe-Institut does. Here, all characters contradict, compete with and hinder one another, in trying to impose their discourse. The background for this chaos is of course, the fact that the German language is drastically losing significance both worldwide and domestically. The awkwardly insecure assertion quoted above not only inadvertently admits the fundamental problem the four characters face, but also about sums up the extent of the consensus among them on the topic. Each of them reacts differently, in what is today the “desperate struggle to defend the status of the German language” (Michels 208). Furthermore, the arguments that a characters uses abroad often contradicts the same character’s argumentation in the domestic context. Thus total confusion and incoherence reigns.

Within humanist discourse, language is intimately connected to cultivation, Bildung and perfection. Wittgenstein’s remark “The limits of my language mean the limits of my
world”, is the guiding motto of a brochure on how to promote German language learning, and is conveniently turned into the battle cry in humanist defense of the German language (Pro-Deutsch!)\(^{18}\). The language is defined as the gateway to the works of such great thinkers as Goethe and Schiller, and thus a vehicle of enlightenment. As a website targeting potential learners in Brazil expresses, “to get to know . . . great thinkers and their works in their own language is very enriching” (Goethe-Institut Brasilien Homepage\(^{19}\), “Kulturen”, my translation).

It is further alleged that German, being “the SECOND most commonly used language for scholarly publications worldwide” (GERMAN IS 4U!, capitalization in original), opens up big academic possibilities. Thus, again the connection between the German language and Bildung is stressed. This is ironic, considering that in June 2007, in a debate on ‘language conservation’ organized by the Goethe-Institut in Munich, former Goethe-Institut President Jutta Limbach decries the fact that most German scientists today use English in order “to be cited or perceived abroad” (GIH, “Sprachenschutz”, my translation). For German scientists to converse in a global language, at the cost of German, apparently does not qualify as the ‘right’ kind of worldliness.

Cosmopolitanism, a central concept to humanist thinking, comes in again as well, when one is offered the prospect of becoming a “Global Citizen”, and meeting other “Global Citizens” through learning German (GERMAN IS 4U!). What the Humanist tries to do, in other words, is to convince foreign nationals to learn German for their own intellectual refinement. One is encouraged to learn it as one once learned Greek or Latin. The language is thus positioned outside our lived human temporality. German becomes the language of

\(^{18}\) This is of course a complete misreading of Wittgenstein. What he is arguing is almost exactly the opposite. “[Even] given a mastery of the country’s language [we] do not understand people” (190e, italics in original). He does not refer to ‘languages’, such as German, but to the way people can conceive of reality through language. “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him” (190e), even if he spoke German.

\(^{19}\) Henceforth abbreviated as ‘GIBH’.
(mostly) dead thinkers, only to be spoken perhaps with a few other enlightened humanist world citizens. Hence it is removed from physical locality as well.

For the Nationalist, on the contrary, the German language is a good in itself. Within this logic, German is presented as a great language for how many people speak it and how grand those people are. Since Germany with its population of 80 million does not figure convincing enough, the Nationalist transgresses the conventional definition of ‘German’, and draws up a greater pan-German people. Thus 100 million people get lumped together as German, in spite of their mutually incomprehensible idioms and differing citizenships (GERMAN IS 4U!).

Another trick up the Nationalist’s sleeve is to appeal to the target audience’s sense of heritage. In a brochure targeting Americans, this is done with a list of famous ‘German’ Americans, besides a picture of a blond blue eyed girl. The compilation of the list is based on a racial idea of ‘pan-German-ness’, since not only immigrants speaking German as their first language are included (Schwarzenegger, Kissinger), but also individuals born in America, with German bloodlines (DiCaprio, Babe Ruth) (GERMAN IS 4U!). In a text aiming at Brazil, it is the “5 million people of German heritage” (GIBH, “120 Millionen”) in the country, that are supposed to draw people into the German language courses. In this thinking, German is the language of the German people, or to put it more provocatively, of German blood.

The Nationalist is also very vocal in internal debates on language policy. In the debate on ‘language conservation’ mentioned above, it is the Nationalist’s ‘biological’ discourse on language that prevails (GIH, “Sprachenschutz”). The title of the debate and the idea that one
has to protect or conserve (‘schützen’) a language already indicate this. A professor of
German philology, who celebrates Herder for having “conceptualized languages as a cultural
good”, complains that “in Germany the forest is protected, not the language”. The German
language is seen as an endangered being, the “beauty” of which must be protected, like a
“treasure”, rather than “just a means of communication” (GIH, “Sprachenschutz”).

What it is that the language must be protected from also comes across. Limbach says
that unlike in other contexts, it is not the long established linguistic minorities which threaten
the purity and dominance of German in Germany.20 “Our actual problem”, she explains, “are
the immigrated minorities”21. The philologist Jürgen Trabant adds that English, the “new
Latin”, is another great threat when it comes in, and when “an ugly mixing of English and
German takes place.” Here nationalist discourse clearly confronts humanist ideas about using
language to achieve Bildung and worldliness. Kant is celebrated for philosophizing in “the
people’s language” (“Volkssprache”), and today’s thinkers are scolded for not following his
example and publishing in English rather than the language of “those who pay for everything,
the people”. When it is further claimed that “in our culture, cultivation of language and love
of language belong together”, or when it is demanded that “science inform society in the
country’s own language”, or that immigrants “should know the country’s language” (GIH,
“Sprachenschutz”) to be naturalized, the nationalist idea of how culture, language, nationhood
and the state belong together, is clearly outlined. Bilingualism or multilingualism on a societal
level are denied, as it is denied on an individual level, when people are described as having ‘a
mother tongue’. A country is supposed to be made up of a people, which speaks a language.

In other words Germany is German, because the Germans speak German.

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20 She does not mention that the clear linguistic boundaries of central Europe, and Germany, are a result of the
large scale ethnic cleansings, deportations and genocide of the first half of the 20th century. Furthermore she
forgets that there are long established minority languages in today’s Germany: Danish, Sorbian and Frisian. The
latter two of which, as well as a myriad of local German dialects, are being pushed to the margins or to
extinction because of the dominance of standard High German.
21 When advertising German abroad, the same foreigners are utilized to increase the appeal of the language. A
brochure advertizes that “Thousands of Africans study and train in German-speaking countries every year” and
that “[several] millions of workers with other native languages have made German their second language”
(“GERMAN IS 4U!”).
The *Real*-Politician, as usual, sees the matter more pragmatically. For the *Real*-Politician, who has long understood that the German state’s power potential is best realized within an EU context, the German language is a notable, but not determining component, and is discussed and utilized as such. One can see the *Real*-Politician’s handwriting when German is trumpeted as a “MAJOR FORCE behind the European Union.” (*GERMAN IS 4U!*, capitalization in original) Europe, in general, is an important keyword in the *Real*-Politician’s campaign. A brochure, that says that German is spoken by “a quarter of all Europeans” and therefore to learn it “is excellent preparation for traveling to Europe” (*GERMAN IS 4U!*), in fact completely obliterates ‘Germany’ in the process. German becomes a language of Europe; Europe is what makes it worth learning. I will come back to this in more detail in the next section of the paper, where the question of Europe will be the focus.

The capitalist has no sentimental attachments to the language, whatsoever, but rather tries to employ it as much as possible for the advancement of business relations. In that, the German language becomes “a strong partner in global business”, which one should learn in order to “be a winner” (*GERMAN IS 4U!*). The German language, in this discourse, gets its market value from the size and strength of the German economy. One should learn German because “Germans have one of the HIGHEST PER CAPITA INCOMES of the world”, because Germany is “largest MARKET in Europe . . . for telecommunication products” (*GERMAN IS 4U!*, capitalization in original) and because German is the “Second Most Spoken Language in the Export Industry” (*Pro-Deutsch!*). To Brazilians, the German language is promoted as the language of those German companies operating there, “Volkswagen, Henkel and Thyssen-Krupp” (GIBH, “Berufschancen”). This idea radically opposes that of the Nationalist, who elsewhere complains that business is one of the villains, by whom German is permeated with anglicisms [of] business English (meeting, e-government)” (GIH, “Language Policy”). Obviously, in times of neoliberal globalization, ‘German companies’ are about as German, as Chinese-made IKEA furniture is Swedish. The
Capitalist disconnects the German language territorially, culturally, and racially, and by extension visualizes “Germany as a Worldwide Marketplace” (*Pro-Deutsch!*).

This example shows, how at times of crisis, the coherence of the Goethe-Institut’s discourse is not secured. Each character defines and defends ‘German’ differently, showing that there are many dimensions in which language can be defined. Language, as the thing that is firmly tied to a people, a culture, a place, and a state, is thus unintentionally deconstructed; and a foundational building block of the German nation state edifice is removed. This in turn is extremely interesting, considering that it puts in question not only something as mundane as using a National flag to denote a language\(^\text{22}\), but such measures as the Language Test that the German Government forces migrants to pass, in order to live in the country (GIH, “Deutsch-Test”).

3.4. Reconstruction

> “Why do Australians learn German?

> [*- There] is the ‘Berlin-Factor’: In Australia, Berlin represents . . . the new Europe.”\(^\text{23}\)

The third and last example I find significant in this discussion of the Goethe-Institut’s meaning production, is the discourse surrounding Europe. Here a fundamental break takes place. We can observe a complete rethinking of the conventional meaning of ‘German’ or ‘Germany’, as it gets firmly situated within ‘Europe’. In other words this process is different from both the Construction-process which takes place in the discussion of the GDR, as well as the Deconstruction-process which is the product of the confusion over language. What happens rather is a complete Re-Construction of the meanings of ‘German’ and ‘Germany’. In that, certain conceptions of what ‘German’ means, which have become untenable, are degraded and subsequently integrated into a new discursive framework.

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\(^{22}\) The Goethe Institut does this in the top right corner and elsewhere on its websites.

\(^{23}\) In an interview with Klaus Krischok, director of the Goethe-Institut Australien, that appeared in the organization’s own quarterly *Goethe-Institut. Reportagen Bilder Gespräche* (47, my translation).
I attribute the *Real-Politician*, who sees the German state’s interests best secured in an integrated Europe, with having initiated this paradigm shift. The reason why I see the *Real-Politician* behind this, is that ‘Europe’ as a central concept, seems to pop up within the discourse of the Goethe-Institut, as if specifically planted there. I do not mean to sound too mysterious; one just feels reminded of the way in which the EU acquired a constitution, seemingly overnight, without much public debate before hand. In a similar move, the Goethe-Institut, a moment ago still busy trying to determine how to conserve ‘German’, suddenly takes up ‘Europe’ as if it were the most natural thing in the nation-state’s world. This intellectual gap seems to have been bridged by a swift move of the *Real-Politician*’s efficient, powerful arm.

In this move, Germany is actually more than just situated within Europe, it becomes part of Europe, and Europe becomes part of it. This logic comes up most piercingly in a specific key word from the ‘language-conservation’-discussion which I have not mentioned yet. That term is ‘Multilingualism’ (*Mehrsprachigkeit*), meaning “Languages without Borders” (GIH, “Mehrsprachigkeit”). It is to be kept in mind here that the term is exclusively applied in a European framework. The concept is not only considered “essential for intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and therefore the successful convergence of Europe” (GIH, “Mehrsprachigkeit”) but is in fact seen as the very key to defend German (GIH, “Sprachenschutz”). At first this might seem contradictory. However, when philologist Trabant (quoted earlier as part of debate on language conservation) in an interview with the Goethe-Institut stresses “the fact that Europe is a culture that is based on different languages – a culture in different languages” (GIH, “Friendship”), he means to give legitimacy to the claim for continued teaching of German, as one of many European languages. The English

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24 Therefore the slogan ‘Languages without European Borders’ might be more appropriate.
25 In the interview Trabant refers to the Humanist and the *Real-Politician*; calling them ‘Cosmopolitan’ and ‘Technocrat’.
language’s status as a lingua franca is conceded, but ‘multilingualism’ is pitted against its impending domination, thus saving a meaningful space for the German language.

The thought of ‘Europe’, however, is by no means confined to language diversity. It is also increasingly the ‘cultural’ framework within which Germany exists. In a project intended to “connect Turkey and Europe” organized by the Goethe-Institut Istanbul in 2009, European authors were brought to towns in Turkey to give talks. The project is declared a success in that the interest in German literature was raised. A local university official thanks the Goethe-Institut saying that without such initiatives, one “feels so left behind of Europe” (Goethe-Institut. Reportagen Bilder Gespräche 39, my translation) Such an example shows in how far ‘German’ and ‘Europe’ have become intimately intertwined, to an extent even interchangeable.26

Politically, ‘Europe’ is perfectly compatible with the GDR-myth that the Goethe-Institut commonly applies to construct ‘Germany’. The EU, founded “to safeguard peace and prosperity in Europe” (Goethe-Institut USA Homepage27, “European Union”) is equated with openness, abolition of borders, innovation and sustainability. If this image does not find enough acceptance among the population, it is (just like in the GDR example) alleged that people ‘lack knowledge’ of the EU. (GIH, “Image Problems”) In this discourse, in which the GDR denotes separation, dictatorship and control, while Europe denotes freedom thereof, Germany reaches yet a higher level of perfection, as it achieves actualization within Europe. If ‘Germany’ was the ‘not-GDR’, then ‘Europe’, is the ‘Super-not-GDR’.

That such a far reaching reshaping of the idea of Germany, can be realized through the Goethe-Institut is again grounded in the cooperation between the four characters of the institution. Or rather, between three of them: The Humanist sees in the EU the ideals of enlightened cosmopolitanism in the Kantian sense, securing peace evermore. The Real-

26 This happens of course at the expense of Turkey’s ‘European-ness’. When Europe and Turkey are ‘connected’ this obviously presupposes them to be two different, separate entities.

27 Henceforth abbreviated as ‘GIUH’.
Politician achieves the desired role for Germany as “the heart of Europe” (*GERMAN IS 4U!*), within the EU. The Capitalist rejoices over “the world's largest internal market” (GIUH, “European Union”). The Nationalist gets bypassed as these three characters unanimously make their move so fast that before one can properly formulate a defensive discourse, wary of the loss of national identity and sovereignty, ‘the national’ is assigned a new role. This in fact gets us back so close to Herder (or at least a boiled down version of him) that the Nationalist agrees to it before knowing what struck.

The place that this new discourse holds for the nation is within what Herder would call “a garden, where this human nation-plant flourished here and another one there” (qtd. in Wimmer, “Ethnicity” 3). As Wimmer explains, the folkloristic aspects of ‘a nation’s culture’ are central to Herderian type nationalism. Thus it makes sense that, what flourishes, in this European garden are exactly those aspects: “dances, lore and idiom” (Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion* 53), as well as cuisine. No wonder the ‘diversity of Europe’ is most often talked about in metaphors of food. In explaining the meaning multilingualism has for Europe, philologist Trabant says: “I may be able to order a pizza in English in Sicily, but that does not make me friends with the pizza baker. If I speak to him in Italian, on the other hand, I will find myself much closer to his heart” (GIH, “Friendship”). An above cited article summarizes the difficulties between the EU states as “The Rumanians” being concerned about “their tomatoes”, “The French” about “their 320 types of cheese” and “The Germans . . . about . . . their beer [being] watered down when the Belgians start selling their beers on the German market28” (GIUH, “Image Problems”).

What this fascinatingly illustrates is how long of a way the Goethe-Institut has travelled. We can also see that this is the way that lies ahead of the Goethe-Institut. In 2007 the Goethe-Institut, together with the British Council and the Alliance Française (its forerunner’s arch rivals in defending German interests in the Balkans (Michels)), and other

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28 Portraying EU-skepticism as either that banal or plainly national-chauvinist, of course denies any serious criticism of the EU’s effects on the welfare systems or environmental regulations of individual states.
EU-nations’ cultural institutes founded EUNIC – the ‘European Union National Institutes for Culture’. The mission of EUNIC is to “promote cultural diversity and understanding between European societies and to strengthen international dialogue and cultural cooperation with countries outside Europe” (Eunic Homepage, “About Us”). As in the quote in the beginning of this chapter, where ‘Berlin’ stands in for the ‘New Europe’ and therefore Australians learn German, the idea of ‘Germany’ has been turned from an essential, exclusive, determining, territorially and demographically fixed constant, into a flower in the European garden. Nationalist notions of belonging are kept intact but reformulated and utilized to beautify, rather than impede Real-political projects of the 21st century.
4. Part Four

4.1. Conclusion

In conclusion I want to return to Nye. He defines power as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want. One can affect others’ behavior in three main ways: threats of coercion (“sticks”), inducements and payments (“carrots”), and attraction that makes others want what you want” (Nye 94). This definition only withholds the name of the last of those three main ways – “Ideology”. In this study I focused on how an institution such as the Goethe-Institut is inhabited and driven by several discursive currents. These are born out of specific material or ideological interests of the groups producing them. The success or failure of cooperation between the interest groups, determines whether the Goethe-Institut is able to produce a coherent, convincing rhetoric on a matter.

With this analysis, especially with its emphasis on the fact that this process is by no means always successful, I mean to illuminate the gap between interpretations of institutions of this type as either an imperialist instrument of the West or as a charity operation of benevolent, cultured Europeans. I do not, however, want to relativize the detrimental effects that radical free-market- or Herderian-ideologies, successfully protected under the umbrella of Realpolitik, could have in a political context such as the Uzbek one.29

It remains to be seen in how far the target populations of institutions as the Goethe-Institut will follow along in the ideological escapades that reconstruct ‘Germany’ into ‘Europe’, while leaving intact those notions of essential belonging that have brought misery to so many, both in Europe, and as a European export classic also in other places.

In the conclusion to his Ideology, Eagleton writes: “When men and women engaged in quite modest, local forms of political resistance find themselves brought by the inner momentum of such conflicts into direct confrontation with the power of the state, it is possible

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29 In the multi-ethnic, former territories of the Soviet Union, the idea of trying to organize populations into homogenous Herderian nations, poses one of the most explosive threats to stability and peace, as the civil wars in the Caucasus and parts of central Asia in the 1990’s have shown.
that their political consciousness may be definitely, irreversibly altered” (Eagleton 224). Whether that was what happened in Lome, Togo, in 2005, when the local Goethe-Institut was set on fire in what seemed as an act of retaliation against the former colonizer state is one question (BBC News, “Togo”). Whether the citizens of Uzbekistan and those of Europe disenfranchised in the current order will one day act with similar determination, disposing of their tyrant, and confronting the ideologies that deny socially just and sustainable alternatives, respectively, is another question.
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4.3. Illustrations

Figure 1. Goethe-Institut Poster. Personal photograph, Tashkent, 2010. 7.

Figure 2. Flag in Flower Pot. Personal photograph, Tashkent, 2010. 11.

Figure 3. ‘Andijan’ Search General Server. Screenshot, taken at


Figure 4. ‘Andijan’ Search Tashkent Server. Screenshot, taken at


Figure 6. FRG-BRD. Graphic. Accessed via <goethe.de/lhr/prj/kal/wvg/a05/deindex.htm> on June 2, 2010. 24.

Figure 7. Street, Before/After. Personal photograph, Tashkent, 2010. 26.

Figure 8. Berlin, Before/After. Personal photograph, Tashkent, 2010. 26.

Figure 9. Central Asia, Before/After. Photograph. Accessed via

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