

From Sons of Gastarbeita to Songs of Gastarbeiter

Migrant and Post-Migrant Integration
through Music and German Musical Diplomacy
from the 1990s to the Present

Gesa zur Nieden

“Rap was communication-music as opposed to reference-music.” This is how sociologist of music, Antoine Hennion, describes early US-American and European rap in one of his articles on mediators of music. By examining especially non-human mediators such as “scores, texts, sound, instruments, repertoires, staging, concert venues, and media,” Hennion emphasizes the fact that the concern of rap “was not with music as a beautiful object or a purveyor of musical truth in a reconstituted collectivity [...]. Instead what counted was the individual performance in the present with whatever means at hand and with success measured by how that performance is judged relative to the performances of one’s rivals” (432).

According to this communication-based description, which highlights the dimension of battle and rivalry, rap music and hip-hop culture would not seem to be useful media of communication within transnational public diplomacy. Due to their centering of individuals and their competitive dimensions, rap and hip-hop seemingly oppose the diplomatic purpose of purveying a positive cultural image of a certain state based on “reference-music,” even if recent public diplomacy scholars have pointed out the importance of direct and individual exchange with

a “strong human factor” by focusing on so-called people-to-people exchange.¹ But despite the fact that rap music and lyrics might convey negative cultural images and “bad policies” that have to be avoided in public diplomacy (Scott-Smith 55), rap and hip-hop have been frequently employed in German public diplomacy of the last 20 years. This is certainly due to the current purpose of distributing the image of a culturally diverse nation in a global context: Since 1998, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its connected institutions such as the Goethe Institute have utilized rap, hip-hop, and electronic music by German musicians with a recent history of migration to promote a modern image of Germany in a global age.² This includes the organization of concerts at various branch offices of the Goethe Institute, the preparation of educational material on rap songs for German lessons in France and Belgium, as well as the release of music collections by the first, second and third immigrant generations, remixed and recorded by young DJs under the title *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland* (Songs of Home from Germany).³

With regard to aesthetics, it seems as if the employment of rap and hip-hop only partly fits the actual definition of art within an “arts diplomacy” described by US researcher John Brown. While German rap music probably responds very

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- 1 Cf. the definition of Public Diplomacy by Cross (4). See also Scott-Smith (50-6). The immediate communication between people is also stressed in Deis (192-205).
 - 2 According to the annual reports of the Goethe Institute, their first rap project was organized in Cameroun in 1996, with Yaundö and the German lyricist Marcel Beyer. The first concert of German rappers with a recent migration history took place at the Goethe Institute in Brussels in 1998 with the crew Sons of Gastarbeiters from Witten. A year later, two international joint programs included rap musicians from Germany: the workshops for German teachers “Rap in Deutschland” with rapper Spax and DJ Mirko and the exhibition “Migranten und Kulturpolitik” in Rotterdam with the participation of Selim Özdogan and Microphone Mafia from Cologne (see *Jahrbuch/Annual Report 1996/1997, 1997/1998 and 1998/1999*).
 - 3 The last years have witnessed a necessary and overdue debate over the terminology that is used in order to refer to the descendants of “guest workers” and other first-generation immigrants. While the terms “second-” and “third-generation immigrants” is still commonly used, social activists have advocated for the alternative of “new Germans,” thus seeking to counter the process of Othering that is inherent in such concepts as second- and third-generation immigrants. Since many of the artists discussed here refer directly to the generation of “guest workers,” this article uses the terms second- and third immigrant generations while being aware that these words do not question, in any way, their German citizenships and identities.

well to the purpose of personal communication and a demonstration of cultural diversity and humanity, it might not match the mental maps of global citizens regarding Germany in terms of music history as compared to the US. Indeed, following Brown, it is the romantic aesthetics of art that seems to guarantee the embeddedness of a nation in a global, humanist culture, since “arts diplomacy provides audiences with unique and memorable experiences” that are generated by “powerful impressions,” “revelation,” and “illumination.” This kind of aesthetic approach seems to fit the repertoire of classical music by German composers while contradicting the alignment of German hip-hop with the concept of cultural, ethnic, and racial otherness of the Turkish-German population (Diessel; Ickstadt). Thus, how can diplomatic and cultural institutions integrate (politically motivated) rap and hip-hop into an art diplomacy that ensures personal experiences through “the kind of unique moments that make our lives worth living” (Brown 59)?

In what follows I will analyze Hennion’s sociological statement on rap music as a medium of individual, mostly locally based communication in relation to the central concerns of (West) German public diplomacy between transnational information, dialogue, and a successful promotion of a modern image of Germany.⁴ As Hennion does in his article, I will contextualize the employment of German-language rap music in German public diplomacy with other genres of popular music by members of the first, second, and third immigrant generations. I will cover the period from the 1980s to the present, looking at perspectives of both the musicians and (West) German institutions of foreign policy in the cultural realm to detect the principal aesthetics and cultural elements of rap music used in (West) German public diplomacy.

The chosen period of investigation allows me to historically contextualize the different intentions connected with German rap and other genres of German popular music composed and performed by the second immigrant generation: the children of so-called *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), immigrants from Southern and Southeastern Europe, including Turkey, who responded to the German call for manpower between 1955 and 1973. Taking a person-oriented approach and a comparative look at the aesthetic values of rap music and its reception in comparison to other forms of popular music, I argue that German rap musicians in the 1990s with a recent migration history were called upon to underscore the democratic, young, and future-oriented image of a modern Germany as long as they set aside, or even erased, negative aspects of German history since the

4 For an overview of German public diplomacy see Zöllner (262-69). For an overview on concepts and key themes of public diplomacy see Ostrowski (19-36).

1930s. At present, the aesthetic value of projects on music by immigrants that are relevant to public diplomacy is increasingly based on a conception of music as a medium of a common cultural memory and a shared culture of remembrance in a post-migrant society, a fact that is paralleled by the mostly German citizenship and identities of the second immigrant generation.⁵

GERMAN RAP BETWEEN IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

The history of German rap is strongly related to immigration, integration, social commitment, and cultural transfer in a culturally varied society.⁶ In the 1980s German rap was established in West Berlin, Brunswick, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Kiel, and Dortmund, mostly by musicians with a migration history (Elflein 257, 261). When Germany was shaken by the many racist arson attacks on refugee centers during the 1990s, German rap and rock emerged as central media of antiracist commitment and the affirmation of Germany's so-called "multicultural" identity (Pennay 116-17). As Pablo Dominguez Andersen pointed out, the transfer of US-American rap to Germany was a means for mostly male members of the second immigrant generation to broach the issue of a constant lack of integration. While their English band names symbolized acculturation to the Western world, masking their Turkish, Greek, or Italian names, their German texts ironically contrasted the flow of German words with the language of Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, as in the song "Ahmet Gündüz" (1992) by Fresh Familie:

At work my boss say to me: *Kanacke*⁷ how are you?
I tell him *Hastir lan*,⁸
but the asshole don't understand anything.
My son attend school, now knows how to write,
but teacher is a bastard, he gives him the lowest scores.⁹

5 For a critical view on the term "postmigrant" and on its history see Kosnick, (Introduction 7-10; "Ethnic Club Cultures" 199).

6 For the history of rap music in Germany see Pennay (111-33); Verlan and Loh; Loh and Güngör; Bennett (133-50); Androutsopoulos; Saied; Kautny (405-19).

7 Derogatory German slang term for Turkish and Southern European immigrants.

8 Fuck off in Turkish.

In this song from the album *Falsche Politik* (1993), the German boss's failure to understand the Turkish immigrant's German language outlines an overt rebellion by the Turkish-German rappers of the group against the socially, medially, and economically inaccessible structures in German everyday life.¹⁰

While this demand for respect is articulated with curse words that circumscribe the immigrant's presumed authentic experiences, three years later, the band Sons of Gastarbeita, a formation of young Lebanese-German and Philippine-German rap musicians in the Ruhr Area,¹¹ one of the biggest metropolitan regions in Germany, released a song that shows the same functional elements as "Ahmet Gündüz," including spoken German by Turkish *Gastarbeiter* and the denunciation of a collective lack of integration.

In contrast to "Ahmet Gündüz," however, the song points to the generational process of cultural rootedness rather than to actual experiences of social, political, and medial discrimination as the reason for rebellion.¹² First of all, the band name Sons of Gastarbeita mixes English and the Ruhr Area's vernacular to circumscribe the second immigrant generation in Germany (qtd. in Loh and Güngör 62). In their song "Söhne der Gastarbeita," the group's generationality is the core theme (*Du so*). Consisting of the lines "Sons of Guest Workaz / we are the sons of guest workers,"¹³ the song's hook emphasizes the rappers' German, locally-rooted but culturally open identity ("a son of this region / regardless of tradition and religion").¹⁴ The song also calls for the complete and permanent integration of the second immigrant generation into German society, a process that had been denied to their parents. The second verse, in which the rappers mimic the language of "guest workers," describes the idealized image of Germany many workers from countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy shared before their arrival in Germany, and which vanished into thin air once they had arrived. This positive but unrealistic image, emphasizing the importance of Germany for the second generation, becomes the song's central message in the second verse:

9 "In Arbeit Chef mir sagen: Kanacke hey wie geht's? / Ich sage *Hastir lan*, doch Arschloch nix verstehen. / Mein Sohn gehen Schule, kann schreiben jetzt, / doch Lehrer ist ein Schwein, er gibt ihm immer Sechs." (Kaya 79) All translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

10 For an interpretation pointing to the confrontation of different mentalities in the song see Kumpf (210-11).

11 For an overview of hip-hop culture in the Ruhr Area see Nitzsche (4-8).

12 For the mixture of German and Turkish in German rap also see Byrd (292-300).

13 "Sons of Gastarbeita/Wir sind die Söhne der Gastarbeiter."

14 "ein Sohn dieser Region/unabhängig von Tradition und Religion."

the struggle of first-generation immigrants is carried on by a progressive second generation who are rooted in Germany and who refer to this struggle as “creative resistance” (“kreativer Widerstand”) to discrimination.

The rendering of German integration history via generationality is musically contextualized by a more mainstream soul beat and background singing. The female voices of the background chorus do not contrast, but rather complement the male shouting of the band name in the chorus, an outcry that is reminiscent of a political demonstration. With this musical arrangement, the Sons of Gastarbeita helped to popularize German post-migrant rap texts and styles beyond communities with a recent migration history and their focus on oriental music styles. In the 1990s, such a musical and textual orientation was embedded into the rise of German rap and rock as media of antiracist commitment and of what was commonly referred to as Germany’s “multicultural” identity after the many racist arson attacks on refugee centers in 1991 (Hoyerswerda), 1992 (Rostock-Lichtenhagen), and 1993 (Solingen) (Sons of Gastarbeita, qtd. in Loh and Güngör 63).

In 2002, the group with its narrative of a new generation was officially honored by then German President Johannes Rau in the context of an “integration competition” that was organized by the Bertelsmann foundation (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 18). A privately-owned organization closely tied to the Bertelsmann media corporation, the Bertelsmann foundation had a special interest in the second immigrant generation (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 9). In their list of criteria for the choice of the winning projects they pointed to the significance of the musicians’ own initiative and to the importance of direct exchange between local citizens from different cultural backgrounds at several times (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 17, 25). Moreover, the awarded projects embraced most of the central fields of public diplomacy, including language promotion, youth work, and cultural encounters/rapprochement (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 22). At the same time, the criteria covered typical aspects of public diplomacy evaluations such as efficient networking, sustainability, and range of influence (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 15). In the portrait of the band, music is ascribed a very wide range of influence in building communities and reaching out across various media (Bertelsmann-Stiftung 28).

Due to this overlap between the musical expression of a young generation and local or national public diplomacy, the Goethe Institute invited the Sons of Gastarbeita to perform and offer workshops to French students at the institute’s branch offices in Brussels, Paris, Nancy, Lille, and Lyon in 1998, 1999, and

2008.¹⁵ The Goethe Institute also integrated the group into their language courses by compiling an educational unit for German lessons in France on the song “Sons of Gastarbeita” (Dommel et al.). Those didactic materials not only accentuated the narrative of the young generation by providing an exercise where students had to write a story based on fragments of the lyrics; in the handout for German teachers, published online by the German language section of the Goethe Institute after 1998, the song was also directly linked to a very positive image of German *Landeskunde* (Area Studies):

In this context, the history of immigration in the German Federal Republic can be discussed (the 60s, the economic miracle, the Berlin Wall—workers from East Berlin could not come to West Berlin anymore, the lack of workforce in the highly industrialized Ruhr Area, the recruitment of Turkish workers). (Dommel et al., “6. Textarbeit 1”)¹⁶

While the Goethe Institute’s educational material narrates the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s principally on the basis of the rappers’ biographies, historical background information is limited to the 1960s economic boom, thus contradicting the original intention of the band who wanted to transfer historical knowledge on the contemporary life and structural disintegration of the first generation of *Gastarbeiter* (Sons of Gastarbeita qtd. in Loh and Güngör 63-5). In summary, the educational material used the lyrics to construct strategically suitable personalities while neglecting the performing musicians themselves who claimed to have studied the social conditions of first-generation *Gastarbeiter* in Germany and who had accumulated historical knowledge that was never taught at school (Sons of Gastarbeita qtd. in Loh and Güngör 63).

According to the teaching materials, these biographically constructed figures and their cultural mobility correspond to a global “reality” of migration (Dommel et al., “1. Mit Wortkarten Geschichten schreiben”).¹⁷ To achieve such an understanding, the students are repeatedly asked to compare the statements in the song to the situation in France. Interestingly, these comparisons are mostly evoked when negative aspects, such as a lack of integration, are concerned:

15 For a brief overview of local promotions of hip-hop in the 1990s see Mager (267).

16 “Der Anlass ist gegeben, die Geschichte der Immigration in der BRD anzureißen (Die 60er Jahre, das Wirtschaftswunder, die Berliner Mauer – es kamen keine Arbeiter mehr aus Ost- nach West-Berlin, der Mangel an Arbeitskräften im hochindustrialisierten Ruhrgebiet, Anwerbung von türkischen Arbeitern).”

17 “Ihr werdet den Song anhören. Da geht es um eine Realität, die Menschen überall in der Welt betrifft.”

[G]o deeper into the difficulties of the “guest worker”: misery in the homeland, the dream of paradise, the hostility of Germans, and isolation within the “ghetto” that prevents them from properly acquiring good German. In the classroom discussion it becomes clear that such a situation is still extremely topical—even in one’s own country. (Dommel et al., “7. Textarbeit 2”)¹⁸

Thus, the handout constructs the rappers as members of a new generation only by constantly hinting to the fact that integration is a current topic in the entire world of “our times” (Dommel et al., “9. Textarbeit 4”). The artists’ concert is mentioned only in testimonies by the participating schools that document the quantitative criteria for success. In one of those testimonies, for instance, a French teacher of German seeks to invite the rap group to her school for another concert after having attended a performance at the Goethe Institute:

Yesterday evening I attended the concert of the “Sons of Gastarbeits” with the pupils of the fifth bilingual English-German class and the presentation with the pupils’ work done in two workshops in the morning of the same day at the very beginning; my pupils were caught with enthusiasm during the evening by the energy, the warmth, and the generosity of the musicians who allowed attendees to get on stage to dance—One of my pupils did a hip-hop performance and I found him quite talented!

We bought the CD and on our way back home my pupils again sang the refrain “Ich will mehr!” (“I want more”)!!!

Thus I would like to know whether and under which conditions the Sons of G could come to our school to give comparable workshops and a concert. My colleague who gives music lessons has some musical instruments and we have various bigger rooms in the school building. How could such a thing be organized???

I would like to thank once again the Goethe Institute for this initiative and for the good gentle and intercultural spirit of this evening. (Sternberg, slide 22)¹⁹

18 “[D]ringt tiefer in die dargestellte Problematik des ‘Gastarbeiters’ ein: die Misere in der Heimat, der Traum vom Paradies, die Feindseligkeit der Deutschen, die Isolierung im ‘Ghetto,’ die einen guten Spracherwerb verhindert. Man erkennt im Klassengespräch, dass diese Situation auch heute noch—auch im eigenen Land—von höchster Aktualität ist.”

19 “Je suis venue hier après-midi assister avec des élèves de cinquième ‘bilingues anglais-allemand’ au concert donné par les ‘Sons of Gastarbeits’ et à la présentation, au tout début des productions d’élèves ayant participé le matin-même à 2 ateliers; mes élèves ont été enthousiasmés par cet après-midi, par l’énergie, la chaleur et la généro-

In the didactic material the music of the song is only picked up in a little annotation that emphasizes the particular significance of the musical interpretation. The funky soul accompaniment is the reason why the chorus is—wrongly—interpreted as a complaint and not as a protest:

While working on a song the text should never be analyzed on its own. The interpretation confers a special meaning to it. Here we have a hip-hop rhythm that is continuously accompanied by instrumental funk and soul, not only in the instrumental passage but also in the sung stanzas. Funk and soul are melodious and sentimental. The refrain becomes a lament, at the end it is almost cried. . . . The instruments (especially keyboards and guitar) underline the lamenting character. Attention should be paid to the guitar solo in the interlude. How can the dying drum roll at its end be understood? (Dommel et al., “11. Das Lied hören”)²⁰

Characterizing the musicians as “faces of the future [who] refuse to be put down as exotic or ‘mixed’ people with personality and psychosomatic disorders” (Dommel et al., “5A. Wer sind die Sons of Gastarbeita”).²¹ Dommel et al. project

sité qui se dégageaient des musiciens- qui acceptaient que les jeunes montent sur la scène et y dansent- Un de mes élèves a fait une démonstration de hip-hop et je l’ai trouvé plutôt doué!”

Nous avons acheté le cd et pendant le trajet du retour mes élèves reprenaient le refrain ‘ich will mehr!’!!! Jetzt wuerde ich gerne wissen, ob und unter welchen Bedingungen die Sons of G in meine Schule kommen koennten, um gleiche Workshops und ein Konzert zu planen; meine Musikkollegin verfuegt über ein Paar Instrument, wir haben mehrere grosse Räume in der Schule. Wie koennte sich das organisieren lassen??? (sic)

Ich bedanke mich nochmals für diese Initiative am Goethe-Institut und für den freundlich-interkulturellen guten Geist an diesem Nachmittag.”

20 “Bei der Arbeit an einem Lied/Song sollte nie der Text allein behandelt werden. Die Interpretation gibt ihm besondere Bedeutung. Hier haben wir HipHop-Rhythmus, der ständig von instrumentalem Funk und Soul begleitet wird, nicht nur in den instrumentalen Passagen, sondern auch in den gesungenen Strophen. Funk und Soul sind melodios und gefühlvoll. Der Refrain wird zur Klage, am Schluss fast geheult. . . . Die Instrumente (besonders Keyboards und Gitarre) unterstreichen den klagenden Aspekt. Zu beachten das Gitarrensolo im Zwischenspiel. Wie ist der absterbende Trommelwirbel am Schluss zu verstehen?”

21 “Gesichter der Zukunft . . . [die] sich nicht mehr als Exoten oder ‘Mischlinge’ mit Persönlichkeitskonflikten und psychosomatischen Störungen abstempeln.”

what they deemed to be the sorrowful cultural identity of the rappers onto the music. In doing so, they tend to reduce the musicians to their ethnic identity rather than recognizing their artistic achievements.

Paralleling such an interpretation, a review on the Goethe Institute's intercultural activities published on the institute's website problematizes the fact that "the bands have not been invited because of their good music or excellent performances but because of the fact that they had non-German roots" (Verlan, "Breakdance").²² The review then goes on to list Microphone Mafia, Sons of Gastarbeita, Islamic Force, and Asiatic Warriors as examples of such groups (Verlan, "Breakdance"). Sons of Gastarbeita confirmed this view themselves, criticizing the general lack of interest not only in their historical knowledge, but also in the aesthetic dimensions of their music (Loh and Güngür 63-75).

That the Goethe Institute's interpretation did not correspond to the rap group's self-determined understanding of their music is obvious if one regards the song against the backdrop of the band's oeuvre. The band's overall work can be characterized as a compromise between post-migratory engaged texts and the German middle-class rap music by such crews as Die Fantastischen Vier. For this compromise, they were repeatedly criticized by Turkish-German rappers who engaged with political themes in their music (Özdoğan 2).

Nevertheless, one might assume that the political commitment of Sons of Gastarbeita did not fit the needs of a German public diplomacy. In their song "März-Rap 1920" ("March Rap 1920") released in 2006, the group recalls the bloody workers' revolt of 1920 in the Ruhr Area to raise historical and political awareness. Based on the soul beat sample of "Söhne der Gastarbeiter," "März-Rap 1920" poetically retells the workers' rebellion with the help of historical recordings and calls for a collective awareness in order to warn against the one-sided orientation of political authorities. Awarding the band with the German records critics' prize, commentators praised "März-Rap 1920" as a successful analysis of a historical event and a reinvention of the political song genre ("Grenzgänger"). By seeking to build historical awareness of the social and class inequalities in the Weimar Republic, the Sons of Gastarbeita may have lost some of their appeal in the eyes of decision makers in the field of German public diplomacy. Instead, the two main band members, Ghandi Chaline and Germain Bleich, continued with rap projects in youth work in Germany that discussed genuine social issues like mobbing at school, the result of which practically contributed to further integration of German youths on various social levels.

22 "Die Bands wurden nicht eingeladen, weil sie gute Musik machten oder tolle Liveauftritte, sondern weil sie offensichtlich nicht-deutsche Wurzeln hatten."

HEIMATLIEDER: FROM ANTIRACIST COMMITMENT TO CULTURAL MEMORY

Compared to the Sons' rap concerts at Western European Goethe Institutes, the current official musical projects in the framework of German public diplomacy show a very different mixture of music, cultural identity, and political history. This is obvious in two contrasting examples: (1) the independent ethnographic initiative by the artists and authors Imran Ayata and Bülent Kullukcu, who both were born around 1970 in Germany and recently started an independent initiative in which they compiled a collection of German migratory music under the title *Songs of Gastarbeiter* (they released a compilation of migratory and post-migratory music that was distributed in Germany among first-generation immigrants) and (2) the project *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland*, a project piloted by the German Foreign Office presenting ensembles of traditional music and musicians with a migration background who are now active in Berlin and Augsburg. Collaborating with the labels Galileo Music and Karaoke Kalk, three albums entitled *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland* (Songs of Home from Germany, 2013), *New German Ethnic Music* (2013), and *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland Berlin/Augsburg* (Songs of Home from Germany Berlin/Augsburg, 2015) were released within the project ("CD und Vinyl").

Ayata and Kullukcu are popular mostly in academic circles and are currently touring to present their collection of songs recorded by first-generation immigrants in production studios in Germany and Turkey. On social media platforms, the authors post pictures of their hotel rooms, ironically relating them to their own artistic mobility, but also to the uncomfortable accommodation of their ancestors when they arrived in Germany as "guests." The photos of Gelsenkirchen, one of the poorest post-industrial towns in the Ruhr Area, for instance, ironically show off luxury items.²³ In this way, the artists comment ironically on dominant biographical narratives of and about first- and second-generation immigrants.

Based on political and historical research and on their own socialization, Ayata and Kullukcu's ethnographic project seeks to integrate an important part of German popular music history into the official historiography of German (popular) music. At the same time, the project might also constitute a material basis for an active generational memory of the 1950s and 1960s. The artists'

23 See Songs of Gastarbeiter, "Weil wir hin und wieder"; "Songs of Gastarbeiter, das ist keine Sosyete-Komfor-Zone" (sic); "Geht doch: Luxus in Gelsenkirchen"; "In Wiesbaden wieder zurück auf dem Gastarbeiterniveau"; "Hotel Fortuna, Essen."

ethnographic work is based on a politico-historical reflection of their own socialization and on archival research. Outside academic circles, Ayata and Kullukcu address both the social experience of the second generation of *Gastarbeiter* as well as the dominant German historicization of that experience. While they define the collected songs as “our songs,” i.e. the songs of guest workers’ children, in the booklet, the album cover of *Songs of Gastarbeiter* shows a beautiful view of a mountain landscape evoking the German concept of *Heimat* (homeland) (booklet). Interestingly, the various German-language “Anadolu rock” (Anatolian rock) songs contain a large amount of cultural allusions and ironies that result not only from the texts but from the music itself (Yener Ağabeyoğlu 62-3). The album, for instance, includes the song “Es kamen Menschen an” (People Arrived) by the Turkish rock musician and composer Cem Karaca. This choice is particularly interesting as Karaca was not a guest worker, but rather lived in Germany as a political exile in the 1980s.

Karaca’s work, however, deals with the living conditions of first-generation immigrants. “Es kamen Menschen an” comments on Max Frisch’s famous statement, “they called for workers, and human beings arrive” (“man hat Arbeitskräfte gerufen, und es kommen Menschen”):²⁴

They [guest workers] have been quickly acknowledged in their home country
as foreign exchange earners,
but during this export of money and workers
they became strangers in their new world as in their old. (*Songs of Gastarbeiter*, booklet)²⁵

Not only does Karaca recast Frisch’s statement from his own perspective, he also underlines his musical authority by harking back to the Brechtian genre of the *Moritat* (street or murder ballad). This is most apparent in the deep brass sounds that enrich the generic rock music accompaniment with guitar, bass guitar, and

24 As Max Frisch states: “They say that [the guest workers] save one billion each year and send it to their homelands. That was not the idea. They save their money. In fact, you cannot really resent them that. But they are just there, a foreign infiltration by humans, although, as I said, one had merely asked for workers.”

“[Die Gastarbeiter] sparen, heißt es, jährlich eine Milliarde und schicken sie heim. Das war nicht der Sinn. Sie sparen. Eigentlich kann man ihnen auch das nicht übelnehmen. Aber sie sind einfach da, eine Überfremdung durch Menschen, wo man doch, wie gesagt, nur Arbeitskräfte wollte.” (Frisch 374).

25 “[Die Gastarbeiter] wurden in ihrem Heimatland / schnell als Devisenbringer anerkannt / doch bei diesem Arbeiter-Geld-Export / wurden sie Fremde hier wie dort.”

drums in the intro. This style is combined with Karaca's voice that seems to imitate and ironically comment on the typical sound of German schlager, for example by the Austrian singer Udo Jürgens, simultaneously reminding the listener of songs like "Griechischer Wein" (Greek Wine) that transport a typical image of foreign Greek workers from a German perspective (see Huber 81-101). The ironic agglomeration of the German majority culture's conceptualizations of immigration is then contrasted by a second section with a saz-solo. In the solo, the saz, which is played double time over the unchanging rock beat, contrasts the rock rhythm with its rhythmically free playing; however, the solo also demonstrates the virtuosity of the musician playing the Turkish instrument, since the regular (half time) rock beat retakes its flow within the song only thanks to the double time of the saz. In summary, the song reflects not only great knowledge and critical awareness of German perspectives on immigration, but a competition between the two cultures that ironically emphasizes the simple regularity of the rock beat in contrast to the free rhythmic interpretation of the saz. With this irony, the musicians not only comment on contemporary German schlager, but also create an equitable involvement of two musical cultures.

Long before compiling songs by first-generation immigrants, Imran Ayata had emphasized his critique of a multicultural society. In his view, such a society's focus on ethnicity impedes serious exchange between people with different cultural backgrounds by neglecting many social, economic, and gender aspects (Ayata 275, 285). The same critique is inherent in the musical-theatrical piece *Ab in den Orientexpress* (Go, Take the Orient Express, 1984) in which Karaca participated as a musician and actor (Burkert and Böseke 1-2). This theatrical piece illuminates different social aspects and individual voices of Turkish and German characters in their social and cultural complexity. This complexity is reflected in a linguistic differentiation that also demonstrates the mental concepts related to the different characters: Turkish characters who speak Turkish, Germans who try to imitate the Turkish language, Turks speaking broken German, and Germans speaking a broken German because they think that Turks would understand them better. In this example, music is used as a placeholder for standardized spaces and mentalities that are constantly transcended by individual characters:

During the whole day Şahin Kadioğlu pushes his garbage can through the commercial center and tries to keep the ground clean of paper, cigarette butts, and chewing gum. The day before yesterday his boss gave him a new task. He has to clean the humidified fountain with swinging artificial palms and flowers two times a day. The constant background music by James Last has a particularly unpleasant effect in this place. At the café

in the center of the mall, the loudspeakers seem to be turned up more loudly than in other places. The words “Mokka-Mekka” are placed in a brown-yellow writing above the bar, where Bernd’s sister Claudia serves her clients.²⁶

The irony of the piece is based on prejudices concerning the implied mental associations of immigrants and “natives.” Thus, the musical irony in “Es kamen Menschen an” does not refer to a competition of virtuosity, but underlines the culturally experienced play with presumed cultural images. In this way, the authors and musicians of *Ab in den Orientexpress* emphasize the everyday life of immigrants and locals who belong to the same social reality. Like the historical compilation *Songs of Gastarbeiter*, *Ab in den Orientexpress* does not seem to have been used directly within German public diplomacy programs.

The current project *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland* presents a middle ground between the historiographically-oriented *Sons of Gastarbeiters* and the musico-historiographically-oriented *Songs of Gastarbeiter*. As such, *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland* explicitly works to enlarge the term “home” in cultural and musical terms. In doing so, it contrasts the reduction to ethnicity that dominates the Goethe Institute’s teaching materials analyzed above.

The output of the project is twofold: The first CD includes current so-called folk music ranging from Fado and Italian choirs to Turkish songs and Dalmatian klapa singing by different groups of German immigrants living in Berlin and Augsburg, while the second CD presents German DJs’ remixes of those pieces under the label “New German ethnic music.” Since the lyrics of the collected songs remain in their original languages, German is limited to the project’s title. Instead, the DJs remix non-German spoken word samples into their songs and create their own beats, rhymes, and melodies from morphemes, syllabi, and word fragments. Very often, these fragments are used to accompany the steady beat of the remixes that contrasts the varied and complex rhythms of the original songs. Moreover, text fragments are used to expand the sound spectrum of musical

26 “Şahin Kadioğlu schiebt seine Müllkarre den ganzen Tag durch das Einkaufszentrum und bemüht sich, den Boden der Ladenstadt von Papier, Zigarettenskippen und Kaugummi sauber zu halten. Sein Vorgesetzter hat ihm vorgestern eine zusätzliche Aufgabe gegeben. Er muß den luftbefeuchtenden Springbrunnen mit den schwingenden Plastikpalmen und den künstlichen Blumen zweimal pro Tag reinigen. Die Musikberieselung durch James Last wirkt an dieser Stelle besonders unangenehm. Hier am Steh-Café, im Zentrum der Ladenstadt, scheinen die Lautsprecher weiter aufgedreht zu sein als anderswo. Mokka-Mekka steht in braun-gelber Schrift über der Theke, an der Bernds Schwester Claudia die Kundschaft bedient.”

instruments to create smooth transitions from the original versions to the remixes.²⁷ With this kind of “musicalization” of language (or hybridization of language and music), the remixes are supposed to create a new genre of “New German ethnic music,” thus symbolizing the “actual Germany,” as former Secretary of State Frank Walter Steinmeier pointed out in a 2014 speech.

For the organizers of the Heimatlieder project, the remixes constitute a “thick description” of musical, linguistic, and cultural traditions that have been neglected by many Germans until today, simply because they did not understand them (Terkessidis and Kühling). According to the project organizers, the key group for understanding this kind of music are once again second-generation Germans who supposedly grew up with this music and have an emotional relationship to it. While the project defines music as a carrier of emotions and memories, it relies on elements central to nineteenth-century European musical aesthetics. According to the organizers of the project, those musical memories originate in the “guest workers” practice of singing “songs of home” after their immigration to Germany. Such practice is said to “heal the fracture within the continuity of culture and memory that has been experienced by migrants and to re-contextualize themselves in the foreign country” (Terkessidis and Kühling).²⁸ At the same time, the project seeks to “erase the cultural articulations of the so-called first generation from the actually pejoratively understood context of folklore and puts it into a universal musical environment” (Terkessidis and Kühling).²⁹ The ethnomusicological annotations in the booklet accentuate this focus on a purely musical rather than a politically motivated cultural identity by pointing to the historical hybridization of Andalusian and Moroccan music, among other musical cultures.³⁰

Such a historically wide-ranging agenda of transcultural history, cultural transfer, and exchanges is fundamental to the construction of a modern image of German culture: according to the organizers, the long-lasting intercultural

27 See “Milho Verde” (Trio Fado) and its remix by Guido Möbius, as well as the piece “Adalardan Bir Yar Gelir Bizlere” and its remix by Murat Tepeli (*Heimatlieder aus Deutschland; New German Ethnic Music*).

28 “[D]en durch die Migration erfahrenen Bruch in der Kontinuität von Kultur und Erinnerung zu kitten und sich im fremden Land sozusagen zu rekontextualisieren.”

29 “entfernt die kulturellen Artikulationen der sogenannten Ersten Generation aus dem in Bezug auf Migration derzeit häufig pejorativ verstandenen Kontext von Folklore und stellt sie in ein universelles musikalisches Umfeld.”

30 See the liner notes of “Saadi Bellouali Jani” and “Dini Din Allah” (*Heimatlieder aus Deutschland*).

exchange between different musical traditions and genres has the power to transform longstanding misunderstandings and stereotypes. In that sense, the description of a trip to Italy in the booklet can be read as an attempt to challenge existing gender roles:

Let's go to Italy! In 2005 the choir director Annunziata Matteucci travelled to Sardinia with thirty women to attend the famous Easter processions. In the small village Orosèi at the beautiful East coast (district Nuoro) she was amazed by a very special song of the local community: "Divina Consoladora" (Celestial Comforter). The song is traditionally performed at the feast of Saint Mary in September by four singers, the Tenores: "Celestial comforter of painful pains, give us a remedy for our sufferings." The Tenores taught the rare polyphonic singing technique to the women. Right after the journey the choir Donni Sò (They Are Women) was founded. Today 23 women between the ages of 30 and 60 sing in that choir. The music teacher Annunziata Matteucci wants to share the songs of the choir with the world and to preserve the particular treasure for future generations. (*Heimatlieder aus Deutschland*, booklet)³¹

By including this anecdote, the booklet to *Heimatlieder* emphasizes the fact that previously non-German traditions have been included as integral parts of German culture by transgressing gender categories and different generations. The fact that they are now used to represent Germany abroad not only exemplifies the success of a German "welcoming culture," but also takes on a new function as an instrument of German soft power. As Frank Walter Steinmeier has described Germany's new role in the twenty-first century:

31 "Auf nach Italien! 2005 reiste Chorleiterin Annunziata Matteucci mit dreißig Frauen nach Sardinien, um an den berühmten Osterprozessionen teilzunehmen. Im kleinen Ort Orosèi an der wunderschönen Ostküste (Provinz Nuoro) überraschte sie ein ganz besonderes Lied aus der dortigen Gemeinde: Divina Consoladora (Himmlische Trösterin). Es wird traditionell beim Marienfest im September von vier Sängern, den 'Tenores,' gesungen: 'Himmlische Trösterin des schmerzlichen Schmerzes, gib uns eine Medizin gegen unser Leiden.' Die Tenores brachten den Frauen die außergewöhnliche, mehrstimmige Gesangstechnik bei. Gleich im Anschluss an die Reise wurde der Chor Donni Sò gegründet, 'Frauen sind's': Heute singen hier 23 Frauen im Alter von 30 bis 60. Mit dem Chor möchte die studierte Musikpädagogin Annunziata Matteucci Lieder mit der Welt teilen und diesen ganz besonderen Schatz für künftige Generationen bewahren."

In the perspective of foreign affairs, we need open doors—and that is an argument that is often not considered: Imagine the world being a balance. In the coming decades the weight of Germany, Europe and the Western part of the world will be reduced and that of new players will increase—in Asia, South America, and also in Africa, and this will be true for all categories concerning “Hard Power”: an increase of population, economic power, military power, political power. “Soft power” will be all the more important! It will be important that the things that we stand for will be attractive for the world: our concept of a free and open society, our idea of a social market economy.³²

For the former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, the power of art, literature, and music lies in their capacity to generate “understanding,” characterized by diplomatic collaboration, which he deems to be a basis also for everyday life:

Outside in the world there are indeed many crises. If we Germans want to participate, if we want to make a small contribution to peace—and we should follow this aspiration!—then first of all we have to be able to do the following: to understand the world! Understanding and comprehension are the basics for a true diplomatic solution.

But what is the premise for understanding?

Recently I visited India, together with a German author with Indian roots, Rajivinder Singh. And he told me: “To understand you need a view with six eyes. We should look at the world with our own eyes, with the eyes of the other and with a common view.

Such a view with six eyes starts with ourselves. Here, at home, we have to learn it.”³³

32 “Wir brauchen offene Türen aber auch aus außenpolitischer Sicht – und das ist ein Argument, das weniger oft beleuchtet wird: Stellen Sie sich die Welt als Waage vor. In den nächsten Jahrzehnten wird das Gewicht von Deutschland, Europa, dem Westen insgesamt abnehmen, und das von neuen Playern zunehmen – in Asien, Lateinamerika, auch in Afrika –, und zwar in allen Kategorien, die man ‘Hard Power’ nennt: Bevölkerungswachstum, Wirtschaftskraft, militärische Stärke, politisches Gewicht. Umso mehr kommt es auf ‘Soft Power’ an! Darauf, dass das, wofür wir stehen, attraktiv ist für die Welt: unser Modell einer freien und offenen Gesellschaft, unsere Idee einer sozialen Marktwirtschaft.”

33 “Es gibt da draußen in der Welt wahrlich viele Krisen. Wenn wir Deutsche uns einbringen wollen, wenn wir ein kleines Stück beitragen wollen zum Frieden – und diesen Anspruch sollten wir haben! –, dann müssen wir zuallererst eines können: die Welt verstehen! Verstehen und Verständigung sind die Voraussetzung für jede echte diplomatische Lösung.

Aber was ist eigentlich die Voraussetzung für Verstehen?

The success of the project was documented in press reviews on the project's website, which accentuate the modernization of the terms "folklore" and *Heimat* as well as the power of music to transform laments into dance music ("Presse").

POPULAR MUSIC DIPLOMACY IN GERMANY BETWEEN REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

My analysis of popular music by musicians and groups with a recent migration history has illuminated three aspects which have shaped German public diplomacy from the late 1990s to today. First, the governmental bodies and private institutes responsible for cultural diplomacy, such as the Foreign Office and the Goethe Institute, tried to include current trends in popular music. All of the projects discussed in this chapter emerged out of a local political and social commitment or belonged to a specific current of cultural interest and/or expression. This is true for both the inclusion of the award-winning rap group Sons of Gstarbeita and the *Heimatlieder* project that contrasts the independent compilation *Songs of Gstarbeiter*.³⁴

Second, contemporary German public diplomacy seems to prefer linear historical conceptions without interruption, and even music history to a social history of (failed) inclusion. In fact, German public diplomacy's emphasis on a historical intercultural hybridity diminishes the recognition and comprehension of irony as a means of participation and involvement within complex constellations of different mentalities. As a central element in the music of second generation immigrants, and as an important element of modern ethnography in a global, mediated age (Lethen 205-31), irony has been mostly erased by the political authorities in their public diplomacy strategies. Rather than trying to acknowledge irony, the projects that are funded by the Foreign Office have sought to integrate the first generation's nostalgia for their home-countries into the German music market via global music categories such as the newly invented genre of "new German ethnic music." As the new image of Germany is

Kürzlich war ich in Indien. Mit mir war ein deutscher Schriftsteller mit indischen Wurzeln, Rajivinder Singh. Und er sagte: 'Zum Verstehen braucht man einen Blick der sechs Augen. Wir sollten die Welt mit unseren Augen sehen, mit denen des anderen – und mit einem gemeinsamen Blick.'

Dieser Blick der sechs Augen beginnt bei uns selbst. Hier, zu Hause, müssen wir ihn lernen."

34 In 2013, Imran Ayata was invited by Mark Terkessidis ("Imran Ayata zu Gast").

global, multi-ethnic, and intercultural, German international public diplomacy seems to have acquired similar social and cultural policies that already exist in Germany.

Third, the definition of music used in the projects discussed above, differentiating between different genres such as rap, rock, electronic, and folk, generally fits the conventional aesthetic definition of “arts diplomacy” given by John Brown. Even in recent projects, popular music is supposed to take on the role of a language that is understandable for everybody and a carrier of emotions and memories. At the same time, its political and social dimensions—traceable in German migratory and post-migratory music from the 1980s to 2013—are promoted by the accompanying liner notes in booklets and by the musical performances themselves that accentuate an overall cultural hybridization. Here, processes of cultural transfer are used by agents of German public diplomacy to construct a linear and uninterrupted music history in order to balance participation and representation. Rather than integrating the social reality of immigration into the larger narratives of German music history, however, the contextualization of the music by first and second immigrant generation highlights the culturally diverse biographies of individuals for people-to-people exchanges. Thus, instead of the above named individual projects centered on ethnographic inquiries and private collections of records that create a distant view of cultural stereotypes in order to enhance discussion and self-reflection, the projects undertaken by German public diplomacy efforts paradoxically accentuate a holistic ethnic dimension over an accurate historical reality. This is the main difference between the grassroots compilation *Songs of Gastarbeiter* and its use within the larger, publicly funded *Heimatlieder aus Deutschland*.

Finally, in this context, rap music is a prosperous medium for public diplomacy, but only as long as it neglects its traditions and conventions as an Afro-diasporic cultural practice. German public diplomacy is less interested in the actual histories of popular music cultures than in their potential to show future-oriented, generationally-constructed cultural identities. At the same time, the academic interests of crews and bands such as Sons of Gastarbeita has prepared the groundwork for official, as well as independent, participatory projects of second immigrant generation within the framework of historical anthropology and ethnography. With regard to the background of the rich variety of existing projects on German migratory and post-migratory popular music, German public diplomacy will have to cope with the tension between “understanding” or “involvement” as well as between “history” and “memory” when creating

representations of German culture through individual exchanges with a “strong human factor.”³⁵

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