

The Altered Geopolitical Situation, Changed the Geostrategic Adjustment of Germany's Cultural and Educational Foreign Policy

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The interconnectedness of the world's civilizations as a consequent of the growing digitalization and globalization since the early 21st century requires new foreign policy strategies. On the one hand, the crisis and conflicts in foreign countries and world regions increasingly affect national politics, but on the other hand, the globalization opens economic and demographic opportunities, like never before. The German foreign policy tries to take advantage of those opportunities and designed some initiatives of which I want to introduce a compelling one: "PASCH-Schools: Partners for the future".

Keywords:

Germany's educational work abroad: The battle against international terrorism

After the German reunification, German foreign policy in the 1990's remained focused on Europe. The national budget was also strained by the ensuing costs of integrating the Eastern European states into (Western-) European institutions. However, several global incidents made German foreign policy look closely to more remote world regions.

No later than after the shock caused by the 9/11 attack in New York, Germany's politicians realized: *"Suddenly it became clear to security politicians, that longstanding conflicts, anarchy and state failure, economic hopelessness and social impoverishment, as well as persistent experience of violence have consequences for the public safety in the western world, even when it happened in peripheral world regions."* (Mair/Werenfels 2009: 70).

In the battle against international terrorism and to prevent future terror attacks, the German government assigns cultural relations and educational policy an important role. The strategy consists of building not just strong economic but also cultural ties with all countries in the world. In 2011 the German secretary of state already remarked: *"One of the most effective methods in fighting international terrorism is the dialog of cultures. If we build a better understanding among societies, if foreign civilizations, foreign people, foreign regions, foreign ethnic groups have the impression that they have friends around the world [...] then they will reduce their terroristic ambitions considerably. In this context I would like to point out the importance of foreign cultural policies."* (Vollmer 2001).

Safeguarding Germany's mineral supply

Germany is integrated into the world economy and dependent on its growth to a greater extent than many other countries. The export of goods and services is one of the main drives of German economy. Germany as a mineral-poor country faces long-term dependence on a secure supply of metals, minerals and energy feedstock. The energy revolution and new technologies will also fuel demand for scarce raw materials. Germany is currently supplied by over 160 countries including many developing countries.

Nowadays, new actors such as China, India and Brazil play an increasingly important role as engines of demand for minerals and energy resources on the international stage. Especially China's growing economy is thirsty for sustainable supplies of mineral resources.

Despite being the number one mining nation in the world, China is facing a rapid depletion of its local mineral resources. In order to overcome shortages of essential mineral commodities, as well as to secure long-term sustainable supplies for its ambitious economic development strategy, a number of domestic state-owned and private companies pursue mining deals throughout the world. As the following data chart (Figure 1) illustrates: China's share in the worldwide import of raw material has risen from 10% in 2000 to more or less 50% depending on the specific good.

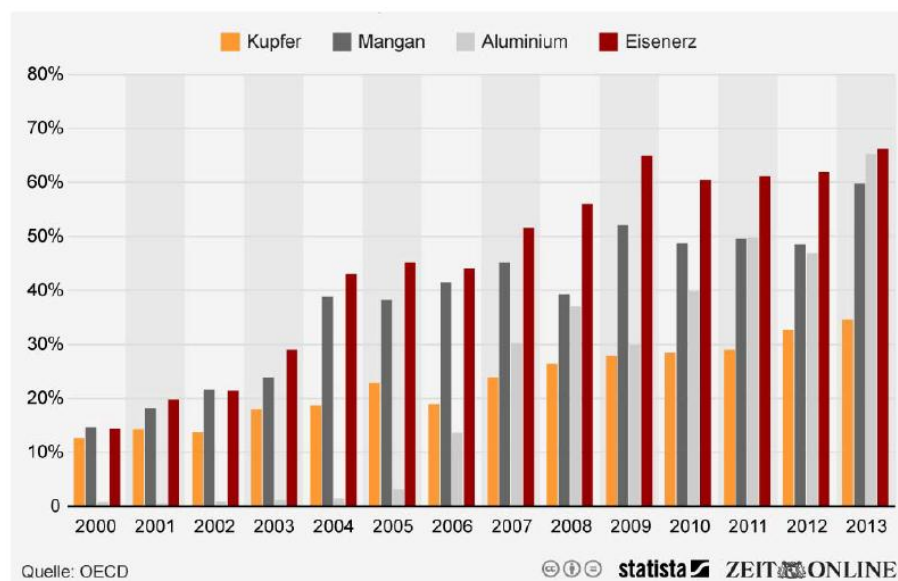


Figure 1: Chinese share in worldwide import of raw material (OECD 2015)

Keeping in mind that Chinese mineral deals are not always made public, the adjusted number of Chinese imports could be even more impressive.

Due to this worldwide competition, Germany has to make great efforts to guarantee its mineral supply. It is therefore the task of Germany's foreign policy to both promote and protect German economic interests in the world by maintaining robust diplomatic relations to as many countries as possible.

Internationalization of Germany's universities and impending lack of qualified personnel

During the last decade, Germany's politicians realized that it is in their best interest to make the university landscape internationally more attractive. An exporting economy needs well-educated people living abroad who have cultural ties with Germany. Global economic relationships can be sustained and expanded only if their partners are able to easily understand the university and scientific system and the degrees they award. Experience shows that, once they have returned home, foreigners who have studied, graduated and obtained a doctorate in Germany are the best ambassadors for the German culture and the German economy. As a top destination country for international students, Germany is currently ranking number five after the US, the UK, France and Australia (2014 UNESCO). German universities and the government have high expectations in attracting more international students to come to study in Germany in the near future.

Furthermore, the universities will expect less national students due to the demographic fact of Germany's shrinking population. If all German universities with their diversity and quantity want to survive the next decades, they will need to recruit students from overseas to fill the demographic gap.

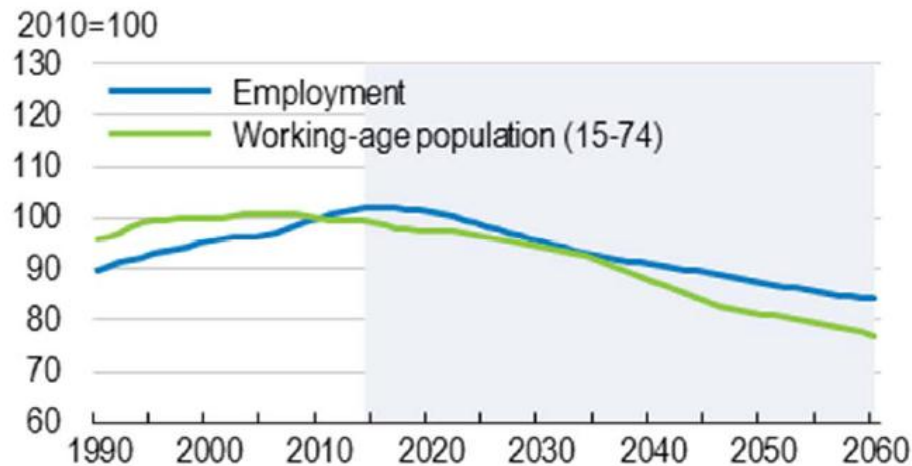


Figure 2: German working population development (OECD 2016)

In light of these demographic changes taking place, many German companies are currently facing a shortage of qualified personnel. A wide range of sectors are affected, including health care and the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics; this situation is set to worsen. Germany is increasingly feeling the need to recruit skilled professionals from abroad to ensure continued growth and prosperity in the long term.

Germany's new political constellation does not pass up the geopolitical opportunities

Within the last decade German politicians started diverse initiatives and programs with the aim to attract more skilled foreign people to come to Germany:

1. Legal regulations in terms of residency rights and employment permits were eased for (potential) skilled workers from outside the EU for both academic and non-academic qualifications.
2. New regulations for the recognition of foreign qualifications were introduced, facilitating the employment of foreign labor in Germany.
3. There are various programs for foreign students which help to provide intensive support for students and young researchers from abroad and enhance the welcoming culture – „Willkommenskultur“ in German universities.
4. The initiative “PASCH-Schools: Partners for the future” (short PASCH) tried to consolidate German as a foreign language in high schools worldwide and tried to identify and encourage many young talents to come to Germany.

On the latter educational initiative I will focus my ensuing research interest.

The initiative “PASCH-Schools: Partners for the future” (PASCH)

In 2008 Germany's foreign minister Frank Walter Steinmeier introduced his ministry's latest idea to the public in Jakarta, at the German international school: the PASCH- initiative. In 2014 he returned to Jakarta and resumed:

“During my last visit, about more than six years ago, an idea evolved here in Indonesia, which has, so to speak, traveled around the globe. At the time, [...] we thought, that we needed a different model, a model that could complement the traditional German school model, and this is [...] the PASCH partner-schools.

People in Germany occasionally complain [...] that, in this world, not enough people are learning German and that not enough young people come to Germany, to study.

But we are able to observe and witness, that over the past years, this has not to be the case, this can be changed. [...] As I entered the assembly, I have heard being said by many, [...] that their greatest wish was not only to learn the language, but to use their acquired language skills to go to Germany for their studies [...].

We kindly invite you to think about, where you want to study, at which vocational school or at which university, to then consider, and think about, whether Germany might not be an interesting location [...] for you to study at.” (Goethe-Institut 2014)

But what is the initiative about, that our foreign minister and future president extols it with so much enthusiasm?

PASCH was designed by the German Federal Foreign Office as an international learning community that should not only fostering German language learning, but also try to make a lasting contribution to cultural exchange and improved mutual understanding. PASCH is coordinated by the Federal Foreign Office and implemented in cooperation with the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), the Goethe-Institut (GI), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Educational Exchange Service of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In 2017, the network of PASCH schools will reach around 1800 schools in 120 countries, worldwide. These include 140 German schools abroad, 1100 schools under the auspices of the Central Agency for Schools Abroad, as well as 590 schools overseen by the Goethe-Institut, where German lessons have been set up or expanded. Of these 590 schools there are 120 focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) subjects being taught at university and 40 vocational schools.

The network of German schools abroad and schools offering the German Language Certificate should be strengthened. Furthermore, cooperation with schools should be stepped up with a view to anchoring German as a foreign language more firmly within the national education systems. In addition, scholarships for pursuing a course of study in Germany and opportunities for school exchanges and twinning programs are made available.

During the period of eight years (2008 – 2016) the German parliament spent about 400 million euro to run the project; in 2016 alone about 46.5 million euro.

The main goals of the initiative are described as:

1. To win over partners for the German economy, politics, science, education and culture.
2. To consolidate German as a foreign language.
3. To identify young talents and encourage them to come to Germany in order to strengthen Germany as an economic and scientific place.
4. To contribute to the social and economic development of the member countries.

Role and activities of the Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut which is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, has a global reach. It promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and fosters international cultural cooperation. Aside from being the international market leader for German

courses itself, the Goethe-Institut's educational cooperation program (Bildungskooperation Deutsch) supports teachers, schools, universities and institutions holding German courses.

The Goethe-Institut supports the more than 550 PASCH schools to include or expand German teaching on their curricula. It offers teachers further training in pedagogical methods and language courses, and equips schools with modern multimedia-friendly teaching, learning and cultural studies materials. Within the framework of the initiative, the Goethe-Institut has additionally sent teaching experts out to assist the partner schools around the world. Youth programs are run in Germany for pupils from participating schools, allowing them to improve their language proficiency, develop their intercultural skills and experience Germany and its culture at first hand.

PASCH in Indonesia

In order to give a more concrete illustration of the activities organized by the PASCH initiative, I will give some examples from Indonesia, the country with the third biggest number of PASCH schools in Asia after China (128 PASCH schools) and India (55 PASCH schools).



Figure 3: The 29 PASCH schools in Indonesia ©Goethe-Institut Indonesien

In Indonesia, the German language is in the comfortable position of being the first of the second foreign languages taught at senior highschools (SMA). Approximately 150.000 Indonesian pupils learn German and 10 universities in Indonesia offer courses for future teachers of the German language. This is quite impressive given the fact that Indonesia lies on the other side of the world and the historical ties between these two countries never have been extraordinarily close. Besides that the German language is not just relatively wide spread in Indonesia – German products and German policy (mostly) have a high reputation. A good starting point to launch the PASCH initiative in Indonesia.

PASCH activities in Indonesia

There are 29 PASCH-schools in Indonesia. Pupils learn German from class 10-12, around 4 hours a week. PASCH-schools are provided with modern equipment, including libraries and laboratories. PASCH activities in Indonesia are aimed at the three main target groups: pupils, teachers and principals.

In many partner schools extra German courses are provided to boost German knowledge. As a consequence, the numbers and the results of German Language Certificates conducted by the Goethe-Institut Indonesia are constantly increasing.

Table 1: Passes Exams from PASCH pupils in 2010 and 2016

	Passed A1 Exams	Passed A2 Exams	Passed B1 Exams	Passed B2 Exams
2010	509	153	-	-
2016	440	472	64	4

Language learning courses during the holidays are offered in Germany, other ASEAN countries and various Indonesian destinations. Special cultural events such as music tours, theatre workshops, exhibitions, etc. should further motivate the pupils to learn German and to encourage their enthusiasm for the German culture.



Figure 4: Youth camp in Bali 1
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Figure 5: Youth camp in Bali 2
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Furthermore, the quality of the German lessons is ensured, as the 80 German teachers employed by the partner schools are offered training events in the fields of language, methodology, pedagogy, and regional studies in Germany and locally. In 2016 teacher training reaches 139 Indonesian German teachers. (Multiple count in case of multiple participation).

In addition, the headmasters are involved in the expansion of the PASCH initiative, through their participation in an annual report meeting and regional ASEAN meetings that focus on increasing the schools' activities aimed at promoting the German language. The PASCH initiative also provides headmasters with workshops held by experts and regularly invites them to visit Germany, in order to get them updated on the possibilities for their pupils to study in Germany.



Figure 6: PASCH school directors in
Germany 1
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Figure 7: PASCH school directors in
Germany 2
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Effects of the PASCH initiative

It is for sure very challenging, if not even impossible, to describe the effects of a single educational program, but I want to show three figures:

1. In 2015 15.4 million people worldwide were counted who learn German as a foreign language. After decades of decline the number has been rising since 2010.
2. Since 2013 Germany is the second top migration destination of choice after the US.
3. With a total of 321,569 in 2015, the number of international students in Germany increased by nearly 32% over the past decade.

Of course these developments are not solely due to the PASCH initiative. The persisting positive image of Germany abroad and its stable economic situation during the last five years are as important factors for people to learn German and to come to study and live in Germany, as the general basic conditions in the partner countries, such as demographic and economic developments, educational reforms, etc. However, the survey mentioned:

“The support of German as a foreign language abroad is a key task of the foreign cultural and educational policy. It makes an essential contribution to future subjects such as the internationalization of German university and securing the supply of skilled workers. The support of German as a foreign language is crucial for the rise of the number of foreign students and foreign skilled worker in Germany.” (Auswärtiges Amt 2015, S. 5).

The demand for learning the German language is internationally growing. At the same time it can be observed, that the interest in learning German is regional on different levels. The biggest number of German learners is still in Europe, and the interest in learning German as a foreign language has been increasing lately. In some countries in which the German language is traditionally well anchored, such as the countries of the community of independent states, the interest in German has been consistent, despite a slight decrease in the number of learners of German as a foreign language. In Asia, on the other hand, the demand for the German language has risen remarkably. Especially for the education-oriented middle class in South-East Asia, in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, Germany is traditionally an important destination for higher education.

Immigration to Germany

The German language has lately experienced a comeback thanks to the impression that German-speaking countries have flourishing economies and are anchors of stability in Europe. That makes Germany more attractive to some extent, particularly in developing countries, because German language skills promise an advantage for the economy and people's careers. On the list of languages with the most native speakers, German ranks number 10. There are approximately 104 million native German speakers. However, more important for an international ranking is the gross national product (GNP) that is yielded by German speakers. And in that regard, the German language is in fourth place. English comes in first, followed by Chinese and Spanish. It can thus be argued that the economic potential associated with native German speakers holds a lot of weight.

“The world knows that the EU is economically dependent on Germany and that Austria and Switzerland, which are also German-speaking, are also flourishing economically. It's impressive for people that Germany can compete with the large countries as a world export leader. That gives the impression that learning German will give you access to countries that flourish economically and offer good opportunities for business or for a career and perhaps even to immigrate. That motivates people to learn German.” (Deutsche-Welle 2015).

Number of foreign students in Germany

The numbers of foreign students for 2015 put Germany comfortably on pace toward its longer-term goal to host 350,000 foreign students by 2020. They also secure its position among the top six study destinations worldwide, placing second only after the US, and the UK and competing with France, Australia, China, and Canada. In 2014 Germany attracted a lot of attention globally when it announced an initiative to waive off tuition fees for international students. That has made many students, especially in high-cost countries including the US, start evaluating Germany as a serious option for international education. Based on the past three years' momentum, and the smart initiatives being rolled out to attract students, it is probable that Germany will overtake the UK and become Europe's leader in higher education within the next five years.

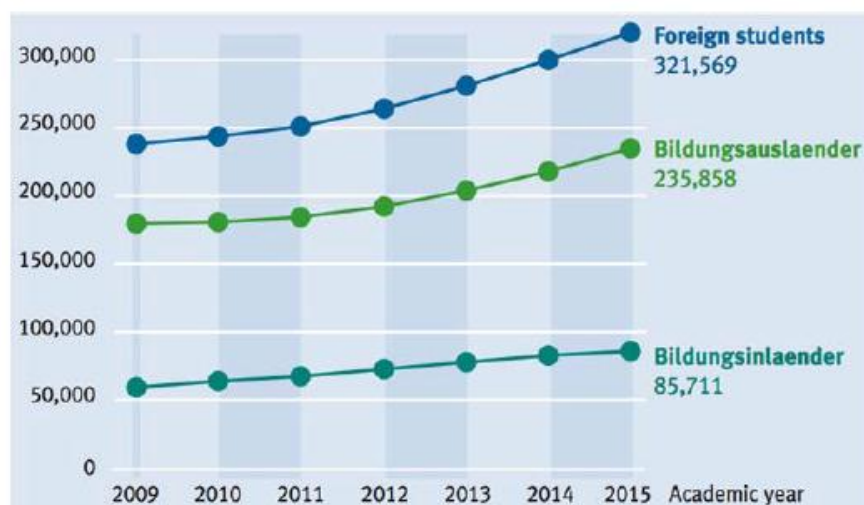


Figure 8: Foreign student enrolment in Germany, 2009-2015 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016)

Bildungsinländer: (students of other nationalities who completed secondary school in Germany).

Bildungsausländer: (those that completed their secondary studies outside Germany).

Conclusion

The German foreign ministry has high expectations for the PASCH program resolving future German demographic and economic challenges. From the perspective of the participants, including pupils, teachers, and school directors, the program will definitely provide them with many personal and professional benefits. From the German perspective, the program will surely increase Germany's popularity and reputation. The number of foreign students in Germany has been increasing significantly just like the number of people who learn the German language. The globalization moves foreign countries for young people to be more accessible. In the last years, Germany has been one of the leading countries to provide a place for higher education for international young talents, because the country has established itself as a top destination due to its well-respected stable economy, science and research. However, whether this trend will remain sustainable is questionable and depends on many other factors, including inner German affairs and worldwide developments.

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