Screening Germany in Australia: Analyzing the Australian Festival of German Films as Cultural Diplomacy

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Abstract

Cultural diplomacy increased in importance in German foreign policy following World War II (WWII) and reunification in 1989. The German model of cultural diplomacy emerged out of the need for a separation of powers between state and cultural politics, and resulted in a unique approach in which the Goethe-Institut (Goethe Institute – GI) became and remains the principal actor representing German culture and language abroad. The GI was re-established after WWII and now operates in 191 countries. As distinct from propaganda, contemporary German diplomacy aims to portray a realistic and multi-faceted image of Germany; it utilises public engagements, various media and – in particular – film. Other nations are adopting this strategy, as the growing number of nationality-based film festivals worldwide shows. Researchers in the emerging field of film festival studies have hitherto scrutinised the role of film festivals in the circulation of film, global cinephilia, as public spheres, as transnational spaces and time events, but not yet as part of cultural and contemporary cinematic diplomacy. My research adds to extant research on contemporary cinematic and cultural diplomacy through analysis of the Festival of German Films in Australia’s (AFGF) role in German cultural diplomacy. The AFGF was the largest festival of German films outside of Germany and was organised by the GI in collaboration with the German Films Service and Marketing GmbH. The AFGF was established in Sydney and Melbourne in 2002, and ran until 2016; it was a platform for Germany and German culture, as well as a marketplace for presenting German films to Australian audiences and distributors. I analyse developments in AFGF programming, choice of films and time-events, with particular focus on the period 2013–15. My research employs a mixed-method approach comprised of audience surveys, audience focus groups, and stakeholder interviews complemented by event
and film analysis. My analysis focuses on the three most prominent themes in films and curation of the AFGF from 2002–15: the two world wars, the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic), and multicultural Germany. In understanding film festivals as socially constructed, I analyse each category in accordance with Lefebvre’s tripartite concept of physical, curated and lived space. I emphasise an understanding of the AFGF as a time-event and of the roles of its component time-events. These time-events are curated occasions; the GI highlights particular films and themes by screening them on either opening or closing nights, or as part of special events, such as a question-and-answer session or an associated culinary or musical experience. I conclude the thesis by emphasising the potential and the challenges of cinematic diplomacy with a particular focus on contemporary German cinematic diplomacy. Further, I highlight increasingly transnational aspects of the AFGF and their relationship to the cultural diplomatic role Germany holds as an advocate for human rights as a consequence of WWII and the following processes of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (dealing with the past).
Declaration

1. The thesis comprises only original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated in the preface.

2. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

   and

3. The thesis is fewer than 100 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Irina Herrschner
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First and foremost, I’d like to thank my supervisors Prof. Alison Lewis, Dr. Heather Benbow and Dr. Katie Sutton for supervising this project. Thank you, Alison for sharing your immense knowledge and providing me with many useful ideas and sources! Thank you, Heather for always being there, for your close eye to detail, for meeting me in cafes during your sabbatical and for being there for me as a supervisor and a mentor for much more than just thesis-related issues! And thank you, Katie for helping me to get to confirmation feeling confident and excited about my project, for bouncing off ideas with me and reigning them in again and for your detailed feedback on the many drafts of my confirmation report!

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My dear friends Phoebe and Nina thank you for always being there for me and for listening to me throughout the last years! I don’t know what my life would be like without our beach breaks, walks, swims, breakfasts and dinners!
Dedication

This thesis is for my Brr-Oma and Anneliese. Two women who will always continue to inspire me.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 2
Declaration ......................................................................................................................................... 4
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................ 6
Dedication ......................................................................................................................................... 8
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................. 14
List of Tables .................................................................................................................................. 16
Abbreviations and Acronyms ........................................................................................................ 18
Glossary of German terms (used more than once) ..................................................................... 20
Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 22
Research Questions ...................................................................................................................... 30

1 Chapter 1: German Cultural and Cinematic Diplomacy .............................................................. 32
  1.1 Historical Overview: German Cultural Diplomacy ............................................................... 32
  1.1.1 The German Model of Auswärtiger Kulturpolitik ............................................................. 33
  1.1.2 Nation Branding and Brand Diplomacy ............................................................................. 38
  1.2 The Goethe-Institut ................................................................................................................ 40
  1.2.1 Cultural Nationalism and the Deutsche Akademie (1870s–1914) .................................. 41
  1.2.2 Cultural Propaganda (1914–45) ....................................................................................... 41
  1.2.3 Cultural Diplomacy (1945–89) ....................................................................................... 43
  1.2.4 Cultural Diplomacy in the GDR ..................................................................................... 44
  1.2.5 The Goethe-Institut in ‘the European Age’ ...................................................................... 48
  1.3 German Kulturdiplomatie through a Cinematic Lens ............................................................ 50
  1.3.1 Weimar Republic ............................................................................................................. 50
  1.3.2 The Third Reich ............................................................................................................... 52
  1.3.3 The Legacy of the Third Reich ....................................................................................... 53
  1.3.4 Representations of the GDR ........................................................................................... 62
  1.3.5 The Goethe-Institut and Accented Cinema ..................................................................... 67
  1.3.6 Overview of the GI’s Film Department ......................................................................... 72
  1.4 Cinematic Diplomacy and the Role of Film Festivals ............................................................ 73
  1.4.1 Cinematic Cartography – Space, Place and Spectacle .................................................... 75
  1.4.2 Cinematic Diplomacy ...................................................................................................... 86
  1.4.3 History of Film Festivals ............................................................................................... 90
  1.4.4 Film Festivals as Cultural Diplomacy ............................................................................ 92

2 Chapter 2: The AFGF as a Case Study of Kulturdiplomatie ......................................................... 104
  2.1 History of Migration ............................................................................................................. 104
  2.1.1 Early Settlements ............................................................................................................ 105
  2.1.2 The Migrants of the World Wars ................................................................................... 106
  2.1.3 Postwar Immigration ..................................................................................................... 106
  2.1.4 Contemporary Migration ............................................................................................... 107
  2.2 The German Diaspora in Melbourne and Sydney ............................................................... 109
3.1 Space 1: German Cinema in Australia ......................................................... 137
    3.1.1 The Australian Film Circuit .................................................................... 139

3.2 Space 2: Cultural Diplomatic Effort through Edutainment .......................... 141
    3.2.1 Film Festival Directors, Time Events and Opening Nights 2002–16 .......... 145

3.3 Space 3: Audience Perceptions ................................................................. 153
    3.3.1 Audience Demographics, 2014 and 2015 ............................................. 154

4 Chapter 4: The Third Reich and the AFGF .................................................... 162

4.1 Space 1: Australia and its Memories of the World Wars as the Setting of the
        AFGF ........................................................................................................ 164
    4.1.1 The Memorialisation of War in Australia .............................................. 166

4.2 Space 2: Curating the German Understanding of War for Australian Audiences
        168
    4.2.1 An Overview of War-Themed Films (2002–16) ................................. 168
    4.2.2 WWI in the AFGF ............................................................................. 170
    4.2.3 WWII in the AFGF ......................................................................... 177

4.3 Space 3: Audience Perceptions ................................................................. 192
4.4 Conclusions ............................................................................................ 195

5 Chapter 5: The GDR Represented in the AFGF .......................................... 200

5.1 GDR Foreign Policy and Diplomacy .......................................................... 201
    5.1.1 Arrangementsgedächtnis and Ostalgie – Adopting a Nostalgic View ....... 205
    5.1.2 Diktaturgedächtnis – Remembering the GDR as a Dictatorship .......... 208
    5.1.3 Fortschrittsgedächtnis – the GDR as the Better Society ....................... 211

5.2 Space 1: The GDR through the Australian Lens ....................................... 212
    5.2.1 Political Contact Zones .................................................................... 214
    5.2.2 The Communist Party of Australia .................................................... 216
    5.2.3 Academic and Literary Contact Zones .............................................. 218
    5.2.4 DDR-Filmtexte in Australia ............................................................... 222
    5.2.5 Australian Perceptions of the GDR Post-Reunification ....................... 229

5.3 Space 2: GDR-themed Films and Events Curated as part of the AFGF ....... 230
    5.3.1 Good Bye, Lenin! as the Opening Night Film AFGF 2003 .................. 232
List of Figures

Figure 1: GI’s Organisational Structure that Supported the AFGF (Source: Irina Herrschner) .......................................................... 72
Figure 2: Lefebvre’s Production of Social Space (adapted from Zieleniec) ............ 76
Figure 3: The Festival Space of the AFGF (Source: Irina Herrschner) .............. 78
Figure 4: The German Population in Australia, 2016 (ABS, n.p.) ..................... 109
Figure 5: AFGF Visitors 2007–15 (source: Goethe-Institut) .......................... 119
Figure 6: Number of Films Screened at the AFGF, 2002–16 (source: Goethe-Institut) ............................................................................ 120
Figure 7: Lefebvre’s Triad of Space adapted to the AFGF (adapted from Levebvre) .............................................................................. 136
Figure 10: Audience Demographic according to Suburb in Melbourne, AGFG 2014/15 .................................................................................. 156
Figure 11: Visitation of the AFGF and other Ethnic Film Festivals, AFGF 2014/15 .............................................................................. 158
Figure 12: Poster Exhibition and Actors in Uniforms as part of the ‘Centenary of WWI’ (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) ................................. 172
Figure 13: Ampelmännchen Shop in Berlin (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) ....... 207
Figure 14: Berlin Bar in Melbourne (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) .............. 207
Figure 15: The Protagonist of Duft des Westens wearing the symbols of the West on his jacket (image from Irina Herrschner; Aroma des Westens, 2014) .... 258
Figure 16: Cardboard Trabant and Ampelmännchen Cookies at the AFGF 2014 (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) .............................................. 261
Figure 17: Screening of Soulkitchen in a shopping centre and showbag with breze and Jägermeister (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) ............................... 306
Figure 18: Tea ceremony as part of the Oriental Night (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner) .............................................................................. 312
List of Tables

Table 1: Opening Nights and Time-events, AFGF 2002–05 ....................................... 145
Table 2: Opening Nights and Time-events, AFGF 2006–11 ....................................... 147
Table 3: Opening Nights and Time-events, AFGF 2012–15 ....................................... 149
Table 4: Opening Night and Time-events at the AFGF 2016 ....................................... 152
Table 5: War Films shown at the AFGF 2002–16 ..................................................... 169
Table 6: GDR Films screened at the AFGF 2002–16 .................................................... 231
Table 7: Multicultural Films and Time-events at the AFGF ........................................ 293
### Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACMI</td>
<td>Australian Centre for the Moving Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFGF</td>
<td>Audi Festival of German Film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHK</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BStU</td>
<td><em>Die Behörde für die Unterlagen des Staatsicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik</em> (Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>chief executive officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communist Party of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td><em>Deutsche Akademie</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFA</td>
<td>Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft – the state-owned GDR film studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUNIC</td>
<td>EU National Institute of Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAZ</td>
<td><em>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFRN</td>
<td>Film Festival Research Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIAPF</td>
<td><em>Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films</em> (International Association of Film Producers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanfilms</td>
<td>German Films Service and Marketing GmbH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>Goethe-Institut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Herder Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ+</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex and Queer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>German Ministry for Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-government organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSDAP</td>
<td>National Socialist German Workers’ Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Question and answer session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Socialist Unity Party of the GDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>VW</td>
<td>Volkswagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>World War I</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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</table>
**Glossary of German terms (used more than once)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ampelmännchen</td>
<td>traffic light man of the GDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangementgedächtnis</td>
<td>memory of accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auswärtige Kultur</td>
<td>German model of cultural diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung</td>
<td>Federal Agency for Political Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demokratieförderung</td>
<td>support for democratic values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutschlandbild</td>
<td>image of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutschlandbilder</td>
<td>images of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diktaturgedächtnis</td>
<td>remembering the GDR as a dictatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolchstosslegende</td>
<td>stab in the back myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einwanderungsland</td>
<td>country of immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erfahrungsraum</td>
<td>a space of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erinnerungsorte</td>
<td>places of memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eventkultur</td>
<td>event culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmbeirat</td>
<td>film council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmwochen</td>
<td>Film weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortschrittsgedächtnis</td>
<td>memory of progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frauenfilm</td>
<td>women’s film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastarbeiter</td>
<td>guest workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahlschlag</td>
<td>literally, the clearing of all trees in a certain area; used in the GDR to refer to a decision about increased censorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulturaustausch</td>
<td>cultural exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulturnation</td>
<td>nation of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitkultur</td>
<td>core culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauerschützenprozesse</td>
<td>trials of border guards for shooting people dead at the Berlin Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauertote</td>
<td>people shot dead at the German–German border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multikulturalismus</td>
<td>multiculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neue Sachlichkeit</td>
<td>New Objectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normalisierung</td>
<td>normalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ostalgie</strong></td>
<td>a combination of Ost (East) and <strong>nostalgie</strong> (nostalgia) – a form of nostalgia for the GDR</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rollbretter</strong></td>
<td>rollerskater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rollbrettfahren</strong></td>
<td>rollerskating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unrechtsstaat</strong></td>
<td>illegitimate state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vergangenheitsbewältigung</strong></td>
<td>dealing with the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weltanschauung</strong></td>
<td>a specific view of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Westpaket</strong></td>
<td>parcel from the West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zivilcourage</strong></td>
<td>the courage to stand up for one’s beliefs</td>
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Introduction

Film festivals have been part of a global circulation of culture since the first International Film Festival in Venice in 1932. Recent academic research has engaged with film festivals and their roles in the circulation of ideas, as showcases of art-house films, and in providing a platform for the discussion of identities and special interests such as human rights or peace (Iordanova & Torchin, Film Festival Yearbook 4). This is evident in the growing number of national, LGBTIQ+ and special interest film festivals (de Valck 166-167; de Valck, Kredall & Loist, 1-12; Wong, 159-189). National film festivals also form an increasingly important part of cultural and cinematic diplomacy for their capacity to provide deep engagement with culture, language, history and current issues, as well as providing a platform for exchange and dialogue between audiences and curators. The emergence of film festivals as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy is embedded in current discourses on the festivalisation and eventisation of culture (Bennett, Woodward & Taylor, 1-9), Eventkultur (event culture) (Opaschowski 1-12; Schulze, Kulissen des Glücks), and the concept of edutainment (Kotler & Kotler 54).

After World War II (WWII), many European countries developed concepts for international film festivals as cultural diplomacy. Germany has been particularly active in this, seeking to counter the influence of its dark history in the twentieth century in shaping contemporary imagery of the country abroad. German-language film festivals offer many ways to mould the country’s image and to make commentary. These festivals are an integral part of a specifically German model of cultural diplomacy that developed in post-unification Germany, in which cultural

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1 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex and Queer. The plus sign (+) represents inclusiveness of all minority gender identities and sexual orientations.
diplomacy was detached from other functions of foreign affairs and instead facilitated by non-government organisations (NGOs). The largest of these is the Goethe-Institut (Goethe Institute – GI); it has a principal focus on culture and language, and stages around 150 local, national and international festivals of German films globally (Goethe-Institut n.p.). When it is not the main organiser, the GI supports and advises local festival committees and contributes to the curating of film festivals with German special events and screenings\(^2\). The GI describes its role as being a ‘shop front for the German film industry’ (Goethe-Institut n.p.); as a partner for the German film industry abroad it offers German and international filmmakers a site for international collaboration. The oldest international film festivals organised by the GI are ‘Berlin and Beyond’ in San Francisco and festivals of German films in Paris, Madrid and Prague (German Films Service and Marketing GmbH 34).

This thesis focuses on the annual Audi Festival of German Films (AFGF) organised by the GI in conjunction with German Films Service and Marketing GmbH (hereafter, Germanfilms – the national information and advisory centre for the promotion of German films worldwide). The AFGF was not only the largest of its kind globally, but uniquely positioned within a multicultural society with largely European roots and a significant German diaspora. It was also important for the international circulation of German films: because it was the first festival of German film in the calendar year, its reception is often seen as indicative of market trends (Mariette Rissenbeek, Managing Director, German films & Bernhard Simek, Regional Coordinator, German Films 2014, pers. comm.). The AFGF took place from 2002 to 2016 and attracted approximately 25,000 viewers annually.

\(^2\) Festivals in which the GI acts as advisor and/or sponsor include European film festivals (e.g. in Almaty, Yangon, Saigon, Delhi), Human Rights Film Festivals (e.g. in Amman, Ouagadougou and Islamabad) and local film festivals, such as The Other Film Festival in Melbourne.
The GI’s main stated objective in staging a film festival in Australia was dissemination of knowledge about Germany and German culture and cinema. In partnership with the GI, the Austrian and Swiss embassies participated in the AFGF within a section of the program titled ‘Our neighbours’, which showcased contemporary Austrian and Swiss films recommended by their respective cultural institutions. Although minor, these collaborations shaped the AFGF as a German language festival and demonstrate what defines Germanness and Germany more broadly in the Australian perception.

Popular film is an archive informing audiences about the past and present, providing insight into current German debates and negotiations about its past. As such, it forms a vehicle for exchange that fosters intercultural understanding between nations (Deleuze 36). To achieve this, the AFGF invited a wide audience, attracted media exposure, and above all drove integration into the wider context of the GI’s cultural programing (Goethe-Institut, *Jahrbuch 2012/13* 117). In contrast, the main aim of Germanfilms, the GI’s collaborative partner, is to promote and sell German films to local distributors and to increase circulation of films, thereby enhancing the market presence of German cinema.

In its theoretical framing, my research provides a discussion of German cultural and cinematic diplomacy. I utilise concepts from memory studies, cinematic cartography, cinematic diplomacy and film festival studies to understand the processes taking place in and around the AFGF that help to position aspects of Germany and Germanness in the Australian public domain. I employ French sociologist Henry Lefebvre’s theory of ‘Production of Space’ to understand how different spaces work together to create a film festival space. These are the national and spatial locations of the film festival, the curatorship to select films and organise time-events, and audience perceptions of the
films. This tripartite approach allows for the analysis of the film festival as a means of demonstrating its role in contemporary cinematic diplomacy.

I pay particular attention to the film festival as a time-event (de Valck 130-135; Harbord, “Film Festivals – Time Event” 40-48). I extend Harbord’s concept of film festivals as time-events to analyse particular time-events curated by the GI to frame film screenings, including the opening and closing nights, expert discussions, question-and-answer sessions (Q&As), as well as culinary and musical events. I analyse these time-events in detail for their cultural diplomatic messages and for the way they shape audience perceptions.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are deployed alongside film and event analysis in a mixed-methods approach. In 2013, I completed an internship at the GI in Melbourne to gain insight into the organisational processes of the festival. In 2014 and 2015, I conducted key stakeholder interviews with the GI’s organisers of festivals in Melbourne, Sydney and Munich, as well as representatives of Germanfilms and members of the AFGF organising committee. Audience surveys provide quantitative data, and are complemented by four in-depth focus group interviews with AFGF audience members in 2014 and 2015. My findings are accompanied by thematic film analyses and in-depth evaluation of time-events.

The AFGF audience consisted of a diverse demographic of German speakers, including those who had recently migrated to Australia, Australian audience members with German, Swiss or Austrian connections (heritage, partner, language skills, touristic experience), Australian Europhiles with a connection and/or affiliation to Europe and cinephiles with a general interest in international cinema (for audience data, see chapter 3). This means that – despite the national framing of the AFGF – it
facilitated encounters between German culture, the host cultures and the diverse multicultural communities in Australia. The German curators organised events surrounding the films, partially driven by diplomatic efforts to represent Germany, and partially by demands from the German diaspora to represent and recreate aspects of Germany. In a negotiation of different homes, lands and cultures, the AFGF accompanied films with events that painted an image of Germany in Australia. The festival reflected on Germany’s past, its contemporary present and its future directions in a globalised world.

My analysis follows the three main thematic categories most prominent in AFGF film screenings and time-events over 2002–15: the two world wars, the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic – GDR) and multicultural Germany. Each theme forms a chapter in its own right and is examined in detail according to the three film festival spaces – its places, curators and audiences. More specifically, these are the setting of the AFGF in art-house cinemas in Australia (the physical and cultural space), the curatorship of the films by the GI (the curated space), and the perceptions of the audience (the audience space). This approach allows for an analysis of the AFGF as a created social space. Each key theme follows a different theoretical lens that best describes its representations and perceptions as part of the AFGF.

To situate the AFGF within its wider social and theoretical frameworks, I offer a historical and theoretical background in chapter 1 that provides an overview of postwar cultural diplomacy in Germany and the roles of the GI and film festivals. The AFGF is positioned between its national and transnational objectives and as a hub of intercultural communication, highlighting the transnational dimension of film festivals (de Valck, Kredell & Loist 1-12).
Chapter 2 positions the AFGF as a case study and as an example of cultural diplomacy by situating it within the political, social and historical relations of Germany and Australia, and by providing an historic overview of the development of the festival. This chapter also outlines my methodology and establishes its thematic categories and branches of analysis.

Chapters 3–6 contain my analyses, each focusing on one thematic category and in accordance with Henri Lefebvre’s tripartite concept of space. Each thematic category is analysed separately for its social, political and historical context within the festival’s Australian setting, its films and time-events and the audiences’ perspectives on the topic.

Chapter 3 offers an analysis of the AFGF as a part of cultural diplomacy and provides an analysis of audience demographics as well as the conceptual framework for the analysis of the three thematic categories.

Chapter 4 focuses on the representation of World War I (WWI) and WWII and the concept of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (coming to terms with the past). In this chapter, I analyse films about WWI and WWII, as well as WWII’s legacy in Germany and the resulting discourse on human rights as part of the AFGF. I adopt a memory studies approach, seeing the films and events as a part of cultural and communicative memory in Germany. This theoretical approach illustrates the importance of the different memory discourses surrounding war in Germany and Australia, and connects the AFGF with the Australian memorialisation of war in general and WWI and WWII in particular.

Chapter 5 focuses on the memorialisation of the GDR in contemporary Germany and Australia. It employs Martin Sabrow’s concept of Erinnerungsorte - places of
memory - and his three modes of memory of the GDR to understand the different memories of the GDR represented in film, curating and audience perceptions. The representations and memories of the GDR illustrate its complex memorialisation, between notions of the GDR as Germany’s second dictatorship, a nostalgic longing for a lost country – Ostalgie – and a continuing fascination with the GDR in Australia.

Chapter 6 is guided by Naficy’s (223) typology of multicultural German film: journeys of escape, journeys of quest and journeys of homecoming. These categories are evident in AFGF’s film screenings and time-events that revolve around the issues of multiculturalism, home and national identity. Theories of cinematic cartography illustrate the potential of the AFGF to represent lesser-known aspects of Germany. They also emphasise the responsibilities this entails, and I connect them with theories of cinematic diplomacy to scrutinise the cultural mapping processes of these films for Australian festival audiences. This approach is useful for two reasons. Firstly, the two theoretical frameworks have not been combined previously, and can provide a deeper understanding of the processes behind cinematic diplomacy for agents of cultural diplomacy and theorists alike. Secondly, multicultural histories and understandings vary significantly between Germany and Australia; hence the combination provides a point of comparison that facilitates cultural mapping.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a summary of the findings of the three thematic categories and a discussion of the implications of these findings for future academic enquiries into cinematic diplomacy and the practical application of cultural diplomacy as part of film festivals. The case study forms the lens for conclusions on broader political and social developments by positioning the AFGF within the framework of wider film festival research and the growing interest in the festivalisation of culture.
(Bennett, Woodward & Taylor 1-12) and Eventkultur (Opaschowski 1-12; Kulissen des Glücks 24-54) – the emergence of a themed world in which culture is increasingly packaged in consumable events.
Research Questions

The research questions that I set out to answer are:

1.) How did the AFGF act as an instrument of cinematic and cultural diplomacy?

2.) What kinds of cinematic images and interpretations did the GI choose to represent Germany during the AFGF?

3.) How does an understanding of the AFGF in terms of the scholarly concept of film festivals as ‘time-events’ add to this analysis of the AFGF as cultural diplomacy?

4.) How was Germany’s past, especially the Third Reich and the GDR, represented in the AFGF, both in the films themselves and in the GI’s curatorship?

5.) How was contemporary multicultural Germany represented in the AFGF, both in the films themselves and in the GI’s curatorship?

6.) How did Australian-based audiences interpret and understand Germany and ‘Germanness’ through the AFGF?
Chapter 1: German Cultural and Cinematic Diplomacy

1.1 Historical Overview: German Cultural Diplomacy

In the last century, few countries have had to struggle with a historical legacy as traumatic and unsettling as Germany’s, and in very few countries has the past – and the efforts to grapple with it – left so great a mark on national politics and government policies. This raises important questions concerning the interactions between history, memory, politics and foreign policy (Banchoff 1). The history and historical memory of the Third Reich and the GDR has shaped contemporary German foreign policy and contestations that it is a country ‘too weak to lead Europe, but too unwieldy to be integrated within it’ (German politician Peter Glotz, as cited in Banchoff 4).

According to Kattago, Germany’s enduring engagement with its Nazi past and questions of responsibility for that legacy have resulted in a shifting national identity from a ‘guilty pariah identity in the 1950s’ to ‘a therapeutic model in the 1960s and 1970s’ and a wish for Normalisierung (normalisation) since the 1980s (80). Adding to this complexity is the assertion that throughout 40 years of separation, the two Germanys developed different approaches to the past. The GDR constructed a relatively straightforward narrative of victory over fascism, while the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) – commonly called West Germany) had to accept its responsibility as a successor of the Third Reich, but was arguably too busy with economic and cultural restructuring to fully and truthfully confront this responsibility.

In light of this historical backdrop, this chapter provides an overview of German cultural foreign policy, and what is frequently described in terms of Kulturdiplomatie (‘cultural diplomacy’), including the GI as its most important agent, and the
implications of what has been termed the ‘new German problem’ for the representation of German culture abroad.

1.1.1 The German Model of Auswärtiger Kulturpolitik

*Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik* (the German model of cultural diplomacy) began around the 14\textsuperscript{th} century when the first German school opened in Estonia. German Protestant schools catering for German speaking minorities in Stockholm (1569), Copenhagen (1575) and Moscow (1626) followed (Abelein 107). From the early nineteenth century, increased trade led to German schools being opened worldwide, particularly in South Africa, East Asia and South America. Leading up to WWI, more than 5000 German schools with more than 360,000 students existed (Bode 91).

Germany recognised the importance of cultural diplomacy just before WWI. The term *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik* was first mentioned in 1913 in a letter from *Reichskanzler* (Chancellor) Bethmann Hollweg to Professor Lamprecht of the University Leipzig. Hollweg states that he ‘is convinced of the importance and necessity of cultural diplomacy’ (n.p.). In his letter, the Chancellor alludes to the two countries inspiring Germany’s early cultural diplomacy, stating that he ‘neither ignores the use that cultural diplomacy brings to France’s politics and economy, nor the important role that British cultural diplomacy plays in keeping the British Imperial Empire together’ (ibid).

During the short period of German imperialism, cultural diplomacy, religious missions and imperial politics were indistinguishable and led to an expansion of schools catering for the German diaspora. German missions had long-term effects on the connections between Germany and its colonies and German colonial
administration influenced local politics and power structures. The connection between imperialism and cultural diplomacy cannot be ignored when analysing contemporary cultural diplomacy; disseminating ideas of Germanness, Frenchness and Britishness (among others) mimics the process of expanding an empire. Traces of German colonialism are particularly visible today in the allocation of Germany’s foreign aid budget, which tends to favour its former colonies in Africa, the popularity of German names in Samoa, and the language Unserdeutsch (‘Our German’) in Papua New Guinea (PNG), which also links Australia to Germany because many students from PNG travel to Australia to complete high school.

Cultural historian Karl Lamprecht coined the term Auswärtige Kulturpolitik in his seminal speech on foreign cultural policy at the Congress for International Understanding in Heidelberg in 1911. His biographer, Roger Chickering, explains what Lamprecht saw as central to the term ‘cultural foreign policy’, thus formalising the new cultural diplomacy of Germany:

To coordinate the operations of German business and cultural organizations in foreign lands, to support German schools abroad, to attract foreigners to higher education institutions in Germany, to arrange exchange programs for scholars and tours for German artists abroad, to oversee the scholarly study of German communities abroad. (Chickering 419)

With the end of WWI and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Germany lost its colonies and much of its international German diaspora returned. However, in 1925 Professor Lamprecht revived the Deutsche Akademie (DA) as the first cultural diplomatic organisation in Germany and the basis for the GI. In 1932, the first GI was founded on the model of the Alliance Française, reinforcing the intense competition
between France and Germany on the world stage (Paschalidis 275). This mode of development of German cultural diplomacy in competition to the British and French systems is still visible in the German Sonderweg (special path), which has resulted in a novel model of cultural diplomacy that is, according to Maaß, the ‘approach by far most detached from the state’ (270).

With Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933, his Führerprinzip (leader principle) came to dominate all political, jurisdictional, educational and cultural facets of German life (Maaß 93). Cultural diplomacy was deliberately transformed into national propaganda and diplomatic institutions abroad became mouthpieces of the National Socialist (Nazi) party. Such authoritarian and elitist approaches had major influences on the Germans’ and the Allies’ attitudes to German culture after the war; German culture had to be separated from Nazi ideologies.

A Haltung der Zurückhaltung (attitude of restraint) was the leitmotif of foreign politics under Konrad Adenauer’s stewardship of the FRG (1949–1963) (Paulmann 168). This attitude applied particularly to military action, but also to foreign politics in general. Moreover, the approach formed part of a continuing process of German self-education and shaped cultural and national identities in the FRG. For cultural diplomacy in particular, the effect of this kind of self-conscious representation abroad manifested in an ‘interplay of self-perceptions’ in which individuals observe themselves in the mirror of their own representations abroad (ibid 169). Cultural diplomacy became not only a means of German representation abroad, but formed part of the re-forming of German identity. Acts of cultural diplomacy, such as the World Fair in Brussels in 1958, contributed to the establishment of a new image of Germany abroad and provided the opportunity for Germans and Germany to add new
and positive cultural memories to their national self-perception (Nilsen 25). Similarly, film festivals were established in many countries to portray the new Germany.

Reunification and the end of the Cold War dramatically altered the context of German foreign policy, as multilateralism and supra-nationalism were construed as departures from ‘a catastrophic pre-war past and as necessary foundations for the post-Cold War future’ (Banchoff 3). This post-reunification consensus narrative – itself contested over the postwar decades – reinforced the new Germany’s institutional constraints on foreign policy (Erb 67). On 12 September 1990, the Allies granted Germany complete sovereignty, relinquishing rights derived from occupation as a consequence of the ‘Two Plus Four’ Treaty. Germany had then, as a united country, moved beyond the period of its history directly linked to National Socialism (Nazism). Ironically, elimination of the political impact of National Socialism and its aftermath coincided with an intensification of discussion about the topic in the public realm. These discussions involved the media, intellectuals, politicians of all parties and the general public, who debated the Nazi past in unprecedented fashion (Banchoff 3).

A particular German model of cultural diplomacy emerged under five state forms (the Weimar Republic, Third Reich, GDR, FRG and the reunited Germany) over the twentieth century. Unlike other European countries, Germany uses federally funded NGOs to implement foreign cultural policies independently (Krischok 124; Michels 2). It ensures that German culture represented abroad is not driven and controlled by the government but instead employs a mixture of state and privately controlled Mittlerorganisationen, or third-party organisations (Haigh 112). The rationale behind

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3 Despite the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany was only possible after the Soviet Union, the USA, France and Britain had reached an agreement. In the Two plus Four discussions the foreign ministers of the four victorious powers and their two German colleagues negotiated on the question of how the two German states should be brought together.
this division of power is a consequence of Germany’s traumatic past and rooted in its responsibility to prevent disproportionate power from ever being concentrated in one person or party.

The German model of cultural diplomacy aligns with Germany’s federal system and inherent diversity of culture and governance. It delegates the mandate of an entire branch of foreign policy to independent NGOs – mainly the GI. As a result of this division of power, cultural foreign policy in Germany must negotiate a complex system of private, semi-private and church institutions (Schneider, “Cultural Diplomacy” 86). However, the Foreign Ministry funds most of these organisations and therefore presides over the general direction of German cultural foreign policy.

Current debates on Germany’s role in the European Union (EU) have sparked old clichés about the dangerous German will to power. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann (GI’s chief executive officer (CEO) at the time of writing) highlighted these recurring stereotypes in his opening address to the GI’s 2012–13 annual report, pointing towards Germany’s historical legacy and reputation, and the increased responsibilities that these engendered for German cultural foreign policy (Goethe-Institut n.p). Lehmann highlights the political role of the GI as the geographical centre of the EU, but warns against politicising art and culture, and demanded a strengthening of civil society and increased recognition of culture, language and education as crucial drivers for peaceful collaboration (as cited in Niven 1).

The definition of culture widely ascribed to in German politics today is based on the work of two German theorists and practitioners, Hilmar Hoffmann and Herrmann
Glaser, who promoted ‘Kultur für Alle’ and ‘Bürgerrecht Kultur’ respectively (Leitformeln 63 - 97). This illustrates a move away from an elitist approach to culture (as promoted by the Frankfurt School) and a static understanding of culture (in accordance with Max Weber) (Albrecht 443). Modern Germany emphasises the notion of Kulturaustauch (cultural exchange) as its leading principle of cultural foreign politics. Holger Stunz pointed to this context and highlighted the importance of film festivals as agents for cultural diplomacy and the creation of a space for discussion and exchange for audience and artists (Goethe-Institut, Jahrbuch 2012/13 4). These notions underline the GI’s aims for the AFGF and its role in German cultural foreign politics, in which the representation of Germany to the world involved addressing ‘a complex narrative of guilt and collective shame’ (Berghahn, “Post-1990 Screen Memories" 294), an image that is publicly recognised on both the domestic and international stages (Paulmann 64). The role of the GI thus necessitates careful negotiation of these narratives in the context of a contemporary, multicultural Germany in the centre of Europe. In 2006, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Minister of Foreign Affairs until 2017) asserted that cultural diplomacy forms the basis of German foreign politics (Maaß 584).

1.1.2 Nation Branding and Brand Diplomacy

Here, it is important to distinguish between the different but connected concepts of nation branding, public relations and cultural diplomacy. Nicholas Cull sees all concepts, to varying degrees, as a combination of media, people and politics, and describes the policies, culture and values of the society conducting it as its tools (31). He refers to cultural diplomacy as a core element of public diplomacy, amongst

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4 Kultur für Alle (culture for everyone) and Bürgerrecht Kultur (culture as a citizens’ right) are two concepts of cultural politics focusing on democratic and accessible forms of culture, that exemplify a move away from an understanding of culture from the perspective of the Frankfurt School.
listening, advocating and exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting, and
defines it as the ‘facilitated export of or participation in culture’ (“Chinese Public
Diplomacy Efforts”, n.p.). As Neumann points out, ‘hybridized diplomacy’ that mixes
state and non-state practitioners is fast becoming the new norm of diplomatic process
(4). For film festivals, this includes the organisers, the cinema and sponsors. As a
public-private partnership, the AFGF was emblematic of a hybridised diplomacy,
because the GI collaborated with private companies such as Germanfilms, the cinema
and sponsors. The financing of the AFGF accentuates this partnership, in that the GI
delivered the manpower for the entire organisation and marketing of the AFGF, whilst
Germanfilms recommended films and provided screening rights and private sponsors
provided cash and/or in-kind support.

Sponsorship was an integral part of the AFGF and nation branding. This is
particularly important for Germany, because ‘Made in Germany’ has become an
integral part of the country’s international image. German brands benefit from being
recognised for their German origins, as it connotes values such as high quality,
innovation and reliability. Combining public and private branding, the German
government initiated the nation-branding campaign ‘Germany – Land of Ideas’
(Ugesh 4).
1.2 The Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut evolved from the DA and was reestablisled after WWII in 1951. Today, it receives the majority of the foreign policy funds of the Ministry of Culture, and therefore takes a hegemonic role in German cultural diplomacy. In 1969, the base contract between the GI and the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) formalised the ‘German model’ of independent cultural foreign policy (Katzenstein 159). After reunification in 1989, the former president of the GI, Hilmar Hoffmann, formulated the main task of the GI as examiner of the ‘German and European question’, meaning the image of Germany and of Germans abroad was to be negotiated anew under changed political and social conditions (David-Fox 3).

In 2016 the GI comprised 159 institutes and 12 liaison offices in 119 countries, with its main responsibility being the dissemination of German language and culture abroad (Fuchs “Neue Entwicklungen” 51). The budget the German government allocated to the GI for 2015 increased by 16.6 million euros (from 213.6 million euros in 2014), underlining the continuing importance attributed to cultural diplomacy (Goethe-Institut, Annual Report 2015/16, 6). In a recent review entitled ‘Aussenpolitik – weiterdenken’ (Bendick 2-5) the contribution of the GI was not only described as ‘an extension of diplomacy and economic politics’ (Andreas Görgen, head of the Department of Culture and Communication at the Foreign Office) but as the ‘basic condition for achieving peace’ (Michelle Müntefering, member of the Bundestag - the German Parliament). In light of the direct and numerous connections between the GI and the MFA, it is imperative to link the GI’s historical development to the situation and direction of the government of the day.
1.2.1 Cultural Nationalism and the Deutsche Akademie (1870s–1914)

As mentioned above, the idea of creating a DA was first discussed in 1913, as a response to the establishment of the Alliance Française in France as a tool for representing the Grande Terre abroad. German diplomat Ritter von Grünberg considered the establishment of a similar German institute to be a useful means of fostering cultural exchange between nations and avoiding tensions between Germany and France (Krischok 124). Nevertheless, growing nationalism and imperial tensions before WWI fuelled competition between the two nations (Michels 11-15). With the outbreak of WWI, plans for the establishment of a German cultural organisation were put on hold, but not forgotten.

1.2.2 Cultural Propaganda (1914–45)

During the interwar years, cultural diplomacy was torn between a more democratic approach, supported by the Democrats and Social Democrats, and an authoritarian line, supported by the conservative parties (Michels 20). In 1923, The Goethe-Institut was established as a university-based institute in a presentation to the dean of the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich (Michels 14). The reason behind the development of this means of strengthening the cultural representation of Germany abroad had its roots in defeat in WWI and the subsequent treaty of Versailles, which undermined German national confidence. Germany was unable to experience any real-world power, but it should at least, it was argued, be able to show its cultural assets to the world (Michels 12). The Dolchstoßlegende5 further added to the growing importance of cultural diplomacy during this time. The story, that the failure of

5 The Dolchstoßlegende (stab in the back myth) was a propaganda notion of right-wing circles in Germany after 1918, stating that Socialists and Jews betrayed the German Army and thus WWI was lost.
German troops during WWI was the outcome of a complex international conspiracy, was created and exploited by the Nazi Party. It was used as a narrative to strengthen German national cohesion and re-establish German pride (Banchoff 43).

The strength of the Alliance Française gave impetus to the establishment of the DA, as the predecessor of today’s GI, and this was accelerated by resentment of the Ruhrbesetzung (France’s military occupation of the area along the river Ruhr after the Treaty of Versailles) (Schmitz & Vollnhals 151). This competitive thought and conflict also revived the idea of a Volkstum (national character) detached from a specific place, later used in Hitler’s propaganda. The aim of the newly established DA was therefore the promotion of national unity and cultural confidence (Michels 17). In 1925 the DA officially began operating internationally, with the objective of catering for the 10–12 million German diaspora (ibid. 50). In its first year the DA struggled with finances and a tarnished reputation due to WWI, which was overcome by the employment of the journalist Franz Thierfelder in 1926. Thierfelder’s journalistic ambitions and connections helped the DA to prosper and develop four streams of work: German art and music; German language, literature, national and historical science; German history; and German political and economic science (Manjapra 17).

In 1926, the DA commenced delivering German courses for international students in Germany. The relations between the DA and the MFA started in 1929, when the DA – thanks to Thierfelder’s connections – began to receive copies of every MFA report (Michels 40-44). The precondition for close collaboration between the DA and the MFA was that it was going to be secret and tied to one person only – Thierfelder – rather than an office (ibid. 70). Following initiation of this new stream of funding, the DA shifted focus away from the cultural engagement of the German diaspora to the...
promotion of the German language abroad as the most important asset of the German *Kulturnation* (nation of culture).⁶

Between 1930 and 1939, the DA underwent a significant phase of expansion, establishing workshops for German teachers abroad and numerous *Lektorate* (language schools), especially in the Balkans (Kathe 68). With the rise of the Nazi Party, the influence of the government in cultural diplomacy intensified, reaching its peak with the establishment of the Ministry for Culture and Propaganda, headed by Joseph Göbbels, in 1933. During the Third Reich, the expansion continued under the Ministry for Cultural Enlightenment; the Allies, identifying it as a Nazi organisation, dissolved it in 1945. An acute awareness of this heritage continues to influence German cultural diplomacy and the decisions of the GI (Michels 46).

1.2.3 Cultural Diplomacy (1945–89)

In 1951, the DA was re-established as the GI in the FRG, under the leadership of Thierfelder, who had helped establish the DA in 1926 (Banchoff 3; Michels 191). Supported by Friedrich Meinecke’s notion of Germany as a *Kulturnation*, its founders envisioned the re-established GI as a ‘spiritual rebirth’ (Kathe 83). In 1953, the first GI programs were opened in small, picturesque towns in Germany, allowing foreigners to learn German and experience the best aspects of postwar Germany. In the following two years, the first language schools abroad were established (Oergel 281).

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⁶ The concept of the *Kulturnation* is a crucial element of German identity and provides a valuable basis for its analysis. Its intellectual roots originated in the movement of ‘Sturm and Stress’ in the 1760s–80s, with Goethe and Schiller as its best-known actors (Oergel 121). It emphasises Germany’s federal state and diversity (Wehler 295), and was formalised by the historian Friedrich Meinecke in 1907 (Oergel 287). For Meinecke, *Deutschum* (Germanness) was an involuntary attachment, predating and independent of the German nation state (Fulbrook & Swales 20). He defined it further by differentiating between two concepts of the establishment of nation-states: one based on a common culture, the other determined by belonging to the same state/country.
In 1959, the aforementioned ‘German model’ of foreign policy was created, with the official integration of the GI into German foreign policy (Michels 229). Since then, the GI has had the task of representing German language and culture abroad, and increased funding has allowed for the establishment of an expanded international network. In 1966, Willy Brandt described cultural diplomacy as the ‘third column of foreign policy’, thereby giving it equal importance alongside economic and political foreign politics (Drath 42; Maaß 589), and identifying it as a tool for re-establishing a positive image of Germany after the Third Reich and WWII (Schneider & Kaitinnis 165). Six years later, a contract between the GI and the Ministry of Foreign Policy established the GI as an independent cultural organisation with diplomatic tasks. In the 1980s numerous GI centres opened in large university towns, attracting international students to the ‘New Germany’.

1.2.4 Cultural Diplomacy in the GDR

Following WWII, Germany’s diplomatic services – including the DA, part of the Ministry for Cultural Enlightenment – were dissolved as part of the Allied denazification program⁷ (Michels 188). With the creation of the GDR in 1949 and the increasing tensions between Western capitalism and Eastern socialism, cultural diplomacy regained importance as a mechanism for promoting political ideology. Whilst the GDR firstly focused on the establishment of trust in the new system of socialism within its own people, the GI in West Germany reopened in 1951 with the aim of ameliorating the prevailing imaginary of Germany abroad (Schultes 351;

⁷ Entnazifizierung (denazification) was a post-war program of the Allies designed to cleanse German society and politics of any Nazi ideology. The technicalities and consequences of these policies are explained in more detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.
Michels 188). As part of the Marshall Plan, the aim was to establish and rebuild Germany as a strong economic and cultural power in the middle of Europe that would act as a barrier for socialism and as a stronghold for democratic values (Gimbel 595).

The two Germanys supported different discourses of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (dealing with the past). The GDR distanced itself from its Third Reich heritage by believing in the victory of socialism over fascism as the founding myth of the country (Fischer & Lorenz 275; Reichel 15). This myth allowed the population to consider itself the winners of WWII and to define themselves by their new state, rather than by its national heritage (Herf & Schmidt 235). Between the founding of the GDR and 1955, the focus of cultural diplomacy was clearly inward facing and focused on anti-fascism and anti-capitalism (Lindemann 62).

The cultural diplomacy of the GDR can be divided into two parts: the Auslandsinformationen (information centres abroad) and ‘international cultural relations’ as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first aligns more with propaganda, whilst the second is a form of international collaboration. In contrast to the cultural diplomacy of FRG, the diplomatic efforts of the GDR were not focused on cultural exchange, but instead on cultural self-representation (Kathe 44). With the hardening of positions engendered by the Cold War, the GDR could no longer focus on itself, and was also caught in the outward representation of the ‘other Germany’ (Berger & LaPorte 321). The GDR’s cultural diplomacy started to represent German culture internationally, with the aim of legitimising the GDR as an independent and equal German state (Golz 49; Vowinckel, Payk & Lindenberger 306). Cultural

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8 The Marshall Plan was an American post-war development plan for rebuilding the economies of West Germany and other Western European nations.
performers were sent abroad and received from other countries in order to improve mutual understanding and create emotional ties between peoples.

In 1952, the GDR founded its first organisation for cultural diplomacy – the Society for International Cultural Connections – following the example of the Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, established in 1925. Shortly afterwards, the first cultural information centres, modelled after the West German GI, opened abroad. They organised language tuition, seminars, exhibitions and film screenings. In 1961, these tasks became the responsibility of the League for Friendship between Peoples. The Herder Institute (HI), based at the University of Leipzig, was developed simultaneously with the cultural information centres, and was the GDR’s counterpart to the GI; it existed until 1993 (Praxenthaler 182). Today the HI is the core research academy for Eastern European Studies in Germany, based at the University of Marburg.

Like the West German GI, the HI focused on language tuition abroad. The aim of the HI was to prepare students for university studies in the GDR with language tuition and courses in cultural understanding (Bock, Muth & Schwiesau 59). Most of the international students who came to study in the GDR did so on a solidarity scholarship; they came mostly from Cuba, Chile, North Korea and China (Kathe 33). Although very much aimed at the promotion of the German language, cultural and political promotion also played a significant role in the work of the HI.

The GDR’s cultural centres were eventually merged with the HI, and as such recreated the pre-war DA that actively promoted a democratic Germany (Griese 47). Whilst the FRG accepted responsibility for the Third Reich and promoted active reconciliation, it also claimed all German culture created before 1933. The GDR
established a different narrative of nation building and ideas concerning elements of Germany’s classical culture, such as the work of Goethe.

The Cold War made it difficult for the GDR to represent itself anywhere but in allied countries. The main activities of the GDR’s cultural diplomacy were the export of film and children’s literature. The GDR’s children’s books were successful in many allied countries, but especially in India (Voigt 576); this goes some way to explaining the establishment and popularity of GDR film festivals in India (Weidemann & Gupta 94). Cinema and literature were key forms of authentic GDR culture and served to represent the GDR and its cultural achievements as a form of soft power (Stott 163-175). Whilst the Marshall Plan meant that the FRG was flooded with American film, literature and music, the GDR preserved its cultural industries and continued to produce German cinema. The DEFA\(^9\) film studios flourished, producing films showcasing GDR life and stories highlighting socialist values of community, farm work and a non-hierarchical society (Brockmann 213).

In 1986, almost 40 years after the founding of the GDR (and close to its end), the first official agreement on cultural exchange between the two Germanies was signed (Stephan 117). Initial discussions on a German–German cultural agreement started in 1973 but halted in 1975 due to increasing pressure from Moscow, which demanded the integration of West Berlin into the GDR (Schumacher 46). Driven by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the second attempt increased communication between the two Germanies, allowing for university exchanges, art exhibitions, concerts and school exchanges. Although this agreement had little or no impact on the cultural diplomacy

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\(^9\) Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft, better known as DEFA, was the state-owned film studio in the GDR throughout its existence.
of either country, its symbolic value was immense and arguably signalled the start of German reunification (Lindner 10).

In 1990, the new German government decided to combine the HI and the GI in order to expand its presence in Eastern Europe and to portray a reunited Germany to the world (Kenzler 258). The similarity of the HI’s and GI’s functions made a merger easy. Reunification presented a challenge to the GI with respect to redefining the future representation of Germany that has had a long-lasting effect (Kathe 33). In 2001, the GI was merged with Inter Nationes, but retained its name. France (Alliance Française), Great Britain (British Council), Italy (Società Dante Alighieri) and Germany (Goethe-Institut) are today referred to as ‘the big four’ of cultural foreign policy, comprising 75% of all cultural institutions abroad, with the Alliance Française as the largest (Berger & LaPorte 263). New and growing organisations include those of Spain (Instituto Cervantes), Portugal (Instituto Camões) and China (Confucius Institute).

1.2.5 The Goethe-Institut in ‘the European Age’

Shaped by defeat and national division in the twentieth century, the aim of contemporary German cultural foreign policy is reconciliation with its neighbours, especially France, and more importantly, the rebuilding of its international reputation (Feldmann 113). In this regard, Hanns Maull recently identified the three leitmotifs of contemporary German foreign politics: ‘the negation of all forms of traditional politics of power, the principle of multilateralism and special relations to each of the

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10 Inter Nationes (1952–2000) was a cultural institute that merged with the Goethe-Institut and became the Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes until 2003, when it was renamed the Goethe-Institut once more.
key power holders’ (my translation, for German original see footnote)\(^{11}\) (2001). Maull also pointed towards self-assurance as the key deficiency in Germany’s foreign policy, alluding to a continuation of a Politik der Zurückhaltung (policy of restraint).

In 2006 the EU National Institute of Culture (EUNIC) was founded to combine expertise and resources for designing and carrying out cultural projects representing European unity (Cross, Davis & Melissen 137). EUNIC’s formation was a groundbreaking approach towards collaboration, overcoming the historic problems of intra-European antagonism (Báatora 166). With the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the EU went beyond its original economic objective and added a completely new dimension to European politics (ibid.). The development of a community social dimension and the establishment of a common foreign policy directly impacted the national cultural institutions of Europe. The establishment of EU initiatives such as the ‘Erasmus’ and ‘Socrates’ exchange programs significantly increased intra-European mobility, bringing into question the ongoing relevance of national cultural institutions (Mol 209-222).

Europeanisation and globalisation force national cultural institutions to become more inclusive and accessible. Language courses form a major part of their work, but cultural offices also deliver significant projects for the communication of culture in diverse ways. One medium that all of the ‘big four’ institutes of cultural diplomacy regard as vital and effective for the new millennium is film. In particular, the Alliance Française and the GI invest in staff and dedicate significant funds into showcasing

\(^{11}\) ‘Drei Leitmotive bestimmen die außenpolitische Kontinuität Deutschlands: Die Absage an alle Formen traditioneller Machtpolitik, ein geradezu prinzipieller Multilateralismus, getragen von engen Sonderbeziehungen zu den Schlüsselmächten im multilateralen Design der deutschen Außenpolitik. Die deutsche Außenpolitik macht vieles richtig. Was ihr fehlt, ist die Selbstvergewisserung’ (Maull n.p.).
their national film industry abroad (Gienow-Hecht & Donfried 114). The GI has a department in Munich that coordinates film screenings and film archives in GI branches worldwide. The GI describes films as ‘the most accessible way of promoting intercultural understanding’ (Mosig 15). However, few researchers have critically analysed the perception of these efforts of contemporary cinematic diplomacy.

1.3 **German Kulturdiplomatie through a Cinematic Lens**

Another important aspect of analysing a national film festival such as the AFGF is the contextualising of the festival into its wider cinematic context and the notion of a ‘national cinema’ (Hjort & MacKenzie 7). An analysis of cinema with respect to surrounding political, economic and social developments adds valuable context to the films shown as part of the AFGF. For Germany, the history of cinematic development coincides with the country’s tumultuous twentieth-century history, including the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, 40 years of division, reunification, and development into a modern, affluent and neoliberal society.

1.3.1 **Weimar Republic**

During the Weimar Republic, films such as *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1921) and *Dr Mabuse, der Spieler/Dr Mabuse, the Gambler* (Fritz Lang, 1921) gave momentum to a rapidly growing film industry. Weimar cinema was internationally renowned for its innovative cinematography and design, and gave Hollywood some of its biggest stars, such as Fritz Lang and Marlene Dietrich (Bock 558).

Weimar cinema is particularly renowned for Expressionist and horror movies, such as Robert Wiene’s *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari/The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920). However, the aims, ideas and aesthetics of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) movement soon overpowered those of Expressionist cinema. The term *Neue
Sachlichkeit, originally the title of an art exhibition in Mannheim that involved artists working in a post-Expressionist spirit, describes an epoch that favoured a present-focused realism over Expressionist filmmaking and exotic settings. It functioned through objective detachment, sometimes veering toward cynicism as a form of cultural critique. Georg Wilhelm Pabst’s film Die Freudlose Gasse/Joyless Street (1925) and Fritz Lang’s M (1931) are considered landmarks for the new objective style (Aitken 53). Fascination with technical developments, architecture and machines added to this objectivity, and Neue Sachlichkeit has been called the aesthetic predecessor of national socialist film, especially the heroic and localised Bergfilm/Mountain film (Steiner 254).

This development from Expressionism to New Objectivity to the politicisation of cinema in the Nazi era roughly parallels political developments in Germany, from the trauma of lost WWI, the failed revolution and hyperinflation (1918–24), to the ‘Golden Twenties’ (1924–29), when greater stability allowed for more independent filmmaking. It also coincided with the increasing politicisation of the public sphere from 1929 onwards (Hake Popular Cinema 28). Siegfried Kracauer and Lotte Eisner have significantly influenced the scholarly reception of this period of politicisation of German cinema. Kracauer's study Von Caligari zu Hitler/From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of German Film examines film for prevailing psychological dispositions within the German nation and sees the ‘vacillation between anxiety, aggression, revolt and submission as typical expressions of German national character’ (Hake German Cinema 29). Kracauer sees in ‘Weimar films hidden pre-fascist tendencies that make the later rise of Hitler seem almost inevitable’ (Kracauer 12). Lotte Eisner focuses on the Expressionist movement and asserts that films are a display of national character and the German problem of identity (Eisner 17).
Brockmann (152) sees another precursor for the national catastrophe of the Holocaust exemplified in the heroes of the Bergfilm.

1.3.2 The Third Reich

Like many other cultural assets, cinema was used as propaganda during the Third Reich and has this consequently been the focus of considerable research, but is rarely considered as a form of popular culture or even art. In response to the tendency of scholars to treat the Third Reich as an abnormality of the past, Sabine Hake called for a ‘normalization’ of Third Reich cinema and thus a better understanding of it as an integral part of the aesthetic and ideological legacies of the twentieth century (Screen Nazis viii).

The Gleichschaltung (forced coordination) of culture from 1933 aligned cinema with the ideology of the Nazis, especially via anti-Semitic measures and the creation of the Staatsauftragsfilme, a highly politicised genre of films commissioned by the state (Hake Screen Nazis x). From 1933 onwards the state, through its Ministry of Enlightenment, increasingly controlled the production and screening of films in Germany. In 1936 expression of independent opinion in film reviews was banned (Bock & Bergfelder 560).

Third Reich cinema has popular connotations of mass rallies and party pageants, glorifying Hitler as the god-like Führer, such as in Leni Riefenstahl’s Triumph des Willens/Triumph of the Will (1935). However, overt propaganda represents only one part of the German film industry. Third Reich cinema was dominated by comedies, musicals, melodramas, exotic adventures, historical costume epics and biopics of ‘great Germans’ that adopted popular generic formulae and lavish production values, a much subtler form of indoctrination into fascist ideologies of anti-Semitism,
xenophobia, racism and belligerence (Bock & Bergfelder 560). According to Koepnick, Nazi feature film broke with older bonds of solidarity that originated from socially specific contexts of living and ‘fostered the illusion of a new collective of consumers, overcoming economic competition, social struggle, regional differences and gender conflict’ (24). This was further exemplified by emphasis on gender roles – a masculine ideal of labour and industry and a feminine world of emotional and sensual excess (Hake Screen Nazis 48).

With the annexation of Austria in 1938, German cinema extended beyond national borders, continuously extending in conjunction with increasing German control throughout Europe. With the onset of WWII, the film industry dwindled, as the state focused more resources on the war effort and the audiences their energies on survival rather than entertainment. Moreover, Allied bombing destroyed many cinemas and studio facilities, bringing the film industry to a halt in the latter stages of the war and slowing the postwar revival (Koepnick 560).

1.3.3 The Legacy of the Third Reich

Even though the Third Reich was officially dissolved on 8 May 1945, the legacy of Hitler’s dictatorship is arguably far from over. Vergangenheitsbewältigung describes the process of coming to terms with the past and has profound impacts on present-day Germany (A. Assmann). Against this historical backdrop the economist and patriarch of the social market economy, Wilhelm Röpke defined the ‘German Problem’ in 1945 as ‘the protection of Europe against Germany and of Germany against herself’ (21). Insofar as the official representation of Germany is concerned, the ‘German Problem’ is a source of constant anxiety (Kathe 172). A poised self-representation in media and politics has to be counterbalanced by a conscientious and careful approach to
accepting responsibility for the Holocaust. Underlined by remorse and regret, Germans generally accept responsibility for the Holocaust as the ‘original sin’ of the nation, treating it ‘as if’ they personally had committed the crimes (Olick & Levy 925) – a phenomenon that Durkheim called a ‘collective conscience’ (xxvi). Despite this collective conscience, the question of individual agency also has to be asked in order to properly undertake the work of remembrance and Vergangenheitsbewältigung, due to the differences between the private discourse on personal responsibility and the direction taken by the collective society.

The dichotomy of private and public Vergangenheitsbewältigung has its roots partly in the initial politics of postwar denazification and West German society’s subsequent processes of forgetting and rebuilding that continue to influence German foreign policy. The process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung started immediately after WWII, as the Allies embarked on the task of demilitarising and dissolving the German Nazi state, as well as ridding Germany of the ‘Prussian war spirit’ (Welzer 79). The broader process included demilitarisation, denazification, decartelisation and decentralisation, and whilst three of the so-called ‘4 Ds’ were relatively straightforward, denazification highlighted the dilemma of collective moral and individual legal guilt. Whilst the Nuremberg War Trials dealt with questions of individual legal guilt and prosecuted war criminals for their individual actions, the process of denazification elevated the collective moral guilt that involved all Germans, and attempted to clarify everyone’s personal responsibility (Jarausch After Hitler 69).

The official measures described above pertained particularly to questions of legal guilt. Other aspects of early Vergangenheitsbewältigung involved the cultural changes entailed in de-Nazifying the German nation, questioning moral responsibility, and
fostering an approach of forgetting and forging a new start (Adorno 9). These initiatives ranged from physical changes, such as the renaming of streets and the removal of the swastika from war medals, to less tangible re-education measures such as changing the portrayal of popular culture in film, music and literature (Tent 256).

By creating and screening films on the realities of the Holocaust, the Allies wanted the Germans to understand the scale of atrocities committed during the Third Reich in order to emphatically and permanently abolish any glorification of Hitler and the Third Reich. The films were intended to shock Germans out of Nazism and reintroduce them to democracy, further adding to the establishment of a collective guilt (Monod 18). *Die Todesmühlen/Death Mills* (Billy Wilder, 1945), released in the U.S. Zone in January 1946, demonstrated the harsh reality of the extermination camps and was shown together with *Welt im Film/The World in Film* – a program similar to the world news. These screenings set out to ‘[s]hake and humiliate the Germans and prove to them beyond any possible challenge that these German crimes against humanity were committed and that the German people – and not just the Nazis and SS – bore responsibility’ (Sidney Bernstein, chief of the Psychological Warfare Division, as cited in Hüser 278).

The reaction to these films has been interpreted as a refusal to accept personal involvement or guilt, and illustrate what Margarethe and Alexander (2) described as the ‘inability to mourn’ and what Ralph Giordano called the ‘second guilt’ (4). Critics saw this burial of the past under the goal of normalisation as resulting in a psychic self-denial and repression and a kind of collective somnambulism. Scholars such as Postone and Herf argued that most of the population sleepwalked its way through the

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12 After the end of WWII in 1945, the Allies (The UK, France, the US and the Soviet Union) divided Germany into four occupation zones. In May 1949 the three Western zones merged to form the FRG; the Soviets followed in October 1949 and formed the GDR.
Cold War and the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). That somnambular state was – at least momentarily – shattered by films and TV series, such as *Holocaust* (Robert Berger, 1977), and the strong reactions to Holocaust portrayal in film then and now exemplify the enduring and unprocessed trauma (Postone 97-115).

During a time when the broader populace focused on forgetting and rebuilding Germany and were therefore not fixated on revisiting the nation’s recent traumatic past, the first postwar films were made by German directors. The so-called *Trümmerfilme* (rubble movies) were concerned with WWII’s impact on Germany and, as Shandley illustrated, not only an early form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, but a conflation of the wrongs committed during the Third Reich with German postwar suffering (4). They did so in particular by conflating symbolic representations of very different social challenges, such as depicting the black market as equally distressing as the presence of war criminals, as well as assigning the same symbolic position to German soldiers returning from war and the survivors of the death camps (ibid.).

The topic of expulsion also featured in what became known as *Heimatfilme* (von Moltke 81). These genres all contributed to what Cornelia Brink called ‘das soziale Bildgedächtnis (the social visual memory)’ (135). *Heimatfilme* became popular mainly due to their representation of a peaceful, romantic country life, which appealed to the urban populations of war-torn cities (Ludewig 240). Wauchope considered the popularity of the *Heimatfilm* to be due to its Germanness, as opposed to American productions of the time, thus providing some reassuring continuity to earlier examples of the genre, such as the *Bergfilm* (215). This also explains the particular success of southern German films, set in the Alps with a stronger sense of a regional cultural identity, in stark contrast to the destroyed and politicised northern Germany, especially Berlin.
In 1959, Adorno published a paper entitled ‘Was Bedeutet die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit (What is Meant by Working Through the Past?)’, in which he critiqued contestations of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, arguing that the legitimate demand for an end to the process is impossible so long as the social structures of National Socialism remained alive in German society. He contended that although many Unverbesserliche (the incorrigible) and Ewiggestrige (die-hards) lived within the seemingly peaceful postwar society, national socialist attitudes were still very much alive.

In response to Adorno’s essay, Habermas highlighted the different approaches to the past in the GDR and the FRG and the trauma of separation as additional difficulties of a productive Vergangenheitsbewältigung in the ‘New Germany’ (i.e. post-unification Germany). He described the energy and effort invested in overcoming this second regime as an unproductive substitution of the first one (Habermas 171). Both arguments underline the ongoing influence of Vergangenheitsbewältigung with respect to the Third Reich and the extent to which the GDR frames contemporary Germany.

Gesine Schwan was among the many scholars to point towards the social and psychological consequences of the silence surrounding the Third Reich and their significance for generational communication and for creating a basic moral consensus. In the 1960s students were confronted with a wall of silence on the topic of the Third Reich, and found in the FRG the same socially conservative, bureaucratic
and authoritarian mindset as in pre-war fascism (Schwan 138). The Eichmann trial\textsuperscript{14} and the student revolt of 1968 triggered a radical reassessment of the ‘moral hygiene’ of the increasingly prosperous West German state. Subsequent major acts of terrorism by the radical left-wing Red Army Faction were arguably a consequence of the generational gap caused by deficient and dysfunctional intergenerational communication (Kundnani \textit{Utopia or Auschwitz} 4).

In an effort to counter the silence surrounding the Third Reich, German writers and filmmakers have regularly broken the cultural taboo that inhibits an open dialogue about personal and familial involvement. Particular genres of writing have emerged, such as \textit{Väterliteratur} (literature of the fathers) and later \textit{Enkelliteratur} (literature of the grandchildren) (Dembling 477). While the former typically adopts an accusatory position toward the parent generation, the latter is characterised as forging an empathetic stance toward wartime Germans (Ganeva 149). The effects of transferred silences and denials on following generations are also described as having a ‘telescoping effect that allows for certain modes of denial to be passed on’ (Pučalíková 47).

The ‘Oberhausen Manifesto’ of 1962 was an optimistic declaration by 26 young German filmmakers, announcing that ‘\textit{Papas Kino ist tot}’ (Daddy’s cinema is dead) and the dawn of a new cinematic era. This anti-commercial challenge to the film industry was based partially on the generational split, characteristic of the first wave of \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}, between a younger generation demanding answers

\textsuperscript{14} In May 1960, the trial against Adolf Eichmann took place in Jerusalem after he had been seized by the Israeli Security Service. Eichmann was sentenced to death for numerous charges, including membership in a criminal organization and for the coordination of the deportations of Jews into concentration camps. His execution remains the only death penalty ever executed in Israel and brought the atrocities of the Nazis to the world news.
and an older generation longing for stability. It also grew out of the *Kulturfilm* festivals (cultural film festivals) in Mannheim and Oberhausen.

*Kulturfilm* and the term ‘New German Cinema’ are loosely applied to a selection of art-house films made in West Germany between the 1960s and 1980s. Internationally, New German Cinema was proclaimed the most encouraging cinematic development in Germany since German Expressionism. In particular, Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog and Edgar Reitz gained international renown through films that reflect this cinematic movement. The personal fame that directors gained explains the initial description of New German Cinema as a ‘cinéma des auteurs’, or *Autorenkino*, but gives only a partial understanding of the reasons and ways this movement gained fame (Knight 3). Julia Knight drew on the work of Eric Rentschler, Thomas Elsaesser, Anton Kaes and Ingeborg Maier O’Sickey to demonstrate that a ‘range of historical, cultural, social, political and economic related factors helped shape the New German Cinema. In much the same way, Hester Baer pointed out that all these factors influenced the development of postwar cinematic movements from the point of spectatorship as well as production (1-15).

Through discussions in the public, the media and academia, different interpretations of the Holocaust were negotiated, which – among other developments – led to the *Historikerstreit* (historians’ debate) of the late 1980s and 1990s, a major and widely publicised debate concerning public memory of the Holocaust. This important debate can be briefly characterised as one between German academics who saw the Holocaust as unique and those who argued for historicising it, and has had ongoing implications for the representation of the Holocaust in German culture and for the representation of Germany abroad (Dembling 477-495).
Today, considerable political and cultural activity in Germany is presented in terms of ‘learning from the past’. The main foci of present-day political concern and activity in Germany in this context are struggle against repression, infringement of civil liberties, court procedures and discrimination against foreign workers, all of which are directed against an authoritarian state. Although this arguably does not signify ‘a learning from the past’, these campaigns represent the ongoing and sometimes metaphorical nature of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (Olick, “States of Memory” 284; Olick, “The Sins of the Fathers” 400; Reichel 66).

Since the early 2000s, the Third Reich has received increased attention from filmmakers, authors and artists. The trustee of the GI and Director of the German Literature Archive, Ulrich Raulff, called 2003 ‘the year in which 1945 returned’ (Postone 50; Postone & Santner 203). The collective memory of the Holocaust and its legacy are still prominent seven decades after the war, and it seems that ‘Hitler’ is more prominent than ever with media, literature and cinema exploring variations on the same theme (Cohen-Pfister & Wienröder-Skinner 4). German film has caught a ‘mnemonic fever’ since the turn of the century, strongly focused on the Nazi past, with Vergangenheitsbewältigung and a Gedenkultur (commemoration of the suffering of Nazi victims) dominant in film since (Huyssen 7). This ‘memory boom’ coincided with the emergence of the third generation after WWII, whose recollection of the past is not direct but increasingly mediated and refracted (J. Winter 273-290).

Following the approach of Annette Kuhn (35), I critically analysed film within and against its historic, social and spatial context. Furthermore, I considered film as a repository of memory that is not always consciously selected by filmmakers but always passively influencing their creative processes. Consequently, film is more than a contemporary narrative or display of the past, but also a construct of individual and
collective memories. In an examination of German film, this is a pertinent issue as the tumultuous recent German past (1914–1989) influences society, state and culture in particularly significant ways (A. Assmann 384). By interpreting film through the lens of memory studies, I provide insights into the processes of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, normalisation and reunification that are displayed through the AFGF.

The memory studies of Jan and Aleida Assmann are especially pertinent to the debates on Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Jan Assmann distinguished four modes of memory that capture the range of memory discourses: mimetic memory – the transmission of practical knowledge; material memory – the history that is contained in objects; communicative memory – the residues of the past in language and communication; and cultural memory, which entails the transmission of meanings from the past (i.e. the historical perceptions and awareness represented in film) (J. Assmann 36). Cultural memory exists in two types: firstly, in the ‘potentiality of the archive, whose accumulated texts, images, and rules of conduct act as a total horizon’, and secondly ‘in the mode of actuality, whereby each contemporary context puts the objectivized meaning into its own perspective, giving it its own relevance’ (A. Assmann 6).

Aleida Assmann’s cultural memory does not have a temporal horizon, allowing film as cultural memory to transcend temporal boundaries by representing narratives taken from individuals’ everyday lives and forming them into an archive (101). This archive is then used to inform and interpret contemporary contexts and explain some aspects of society. This is particularly true for knowledge transfer between cultures and diasporas, in which film can act as an interpreter (Wood 83). In the context of German cultural diplomacy, the GI points towards these ongoing challenges of representing
Germany’s National Socialist past in its mission statement, highlighting the importance of democracy, freedom of speech, and its belief in ‘the power of art and its ability to ask questions and unsettle’ (Bosch & Mendolicchio 7).

In the specific context of the AFGF, Dr Arpad Sölter (CEO of the GI in Australia 2012–15) has referred to films on the Holocaust as an expression of the German Zeitgeist (in Galvin, 2012), whilst his predecessor Klaus Krischok (2006–10) refers to a global interest in the Holocaust as ‘sex and goose-stepping Nazis sell’ and the responsibility of the GI to actively frame Germany’s history, rather than letting others decide how the past is interpreted (2014, pers. comm.). The proportion of films in the AFGF directly referring to the Third Reich was high, and many audience debates and Q&As facilitated discussion and deeper engagement with these films and their subject. My analysis of these films and their integration into the AFGF as a branch of German cultural diplomacy provided insights (presented in chapter 4) into the implications of this ‘long shadow of the past’ 15.

1.3.4 Representations of the GDR

Whilst the Holocaust continues to influence Germany’s cultural landscape, the Third Reich and its Vergangenheitsbewältigung played a comparatively minor role in foreign politics of the GDR. Vergangenheitsbewältigung, understood as trying to grapple with the mechanisms of National Socialism and one’s own role within it, was thus essentially a private concern in the GDR, because officially it was unnecessary (Kocka, “Chance und Herausforderung” 108). The official narrative about the past was framed as a history in which the traumatic site of Hitler’s Germany was located

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15 Aleida Assmann, in her book Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit - Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik, described the collective construction of history. She analysed the differences between personal memories and official modes of remembrance and suggested giving ‘memory a common space for expression’.
firmly in the ‘other Germany’, thereby allowing for a reconstitution of citizens’ identities under non-traumatic conditions. In exchange for identification with the new system and a belief in its founding myth, East Germans could put aside feelings of loss and shame (Fulbrook & Swales 181).

The East German view of the Third Reich and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is reflected in the cinema of the GDR and the separate trajectories of the East and West German film industries (Brockmann 213). Despite the rapid rebuilding of West Germany during the 1950s, the country’s film industry stagnated, and with a relatively small market for domestic film and small budgets, productions were often crude (ibid. 289). The opposite happened in the same period in the GDR, where the domestic film industry flourished. As profit-making was only a secondary motive, GDR cinema has been argued to be more cerebral as a whole than its Western counterpart, where the initiative for intellectually demanding film came from the filmmakers themselves and was constituted in the aforementioned New German Cinema (ibid. 216). Filmmakers and intellectuals used GDR cinema as an ‘opportunity for entering discussions on political and social developments’, illustrating the role of film and art in a country that lacked forums for public debate (ibid.).

GDR films were made in the DEFA studios in Berlin, founded in 1946 in the buildings of the former Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA). GDR cinema became especially renowned for its children’s movies, and some films were even exported and became famous in the West, such as *Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck/The Story of the Little Muck* and *Das Sandmännchen/The Little Sandman*, the latter developing into a longstanding German television institution that continues today (Brockmann 217; Sabrow 349).
Despite the successes described above, during the four decades of separation GDR cinema remained mainly unknown to West Germany and the Western world. Only with reunification was there a dramatic increase in the popularity of GDR cinema, with historians keen on investigating the culture of a country that no longer exists (Brockmann 213). This is partly due to questions about the relationship between film and politics raised by cinema in the GDR and Third Reich (Hake German Cinema 126). GDR cinema was characterised by shifts between liberalisation and restrictiveness that reflect the political situation of the GDR at the time.

It is unsurprising that, more than 25 years after the end of the GDR, its socialist past and the question of the best modes of remembrance and commemoration have become contested topics (Gook 119). Indeed, the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung as applied to the GDR remains disputed, precisely because the term that has its roots in the legacy of the Holocaust has been applied to describe the historicising of the GDR (Wiedmer 168). The issue of a second Vergangenheitsbewältigung of the East German past is largely dominated by debates about East Germany’s Stasi heritage and comparisons of the GDR to the Third Reich. These comparisons are especially pertinent in the debates surrounding the criminal trials of former border guards and their similarities to the Nuremberg trials following WWII. The post-Wende (reunification) debate, or Literaturstreit (literature dispute), which centred on Christa Wolf’s collaboration with the Stasi, was sparked by the publication of her book Was bleibt/What Remains (1990), a novella portraying

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16 The Ministry for State Security, known as the Stasi, was the official state security service of the GDR.
17 Christa Wolf (1929 - 2011) was one of the GDR’s most celebrated writers. Her novel Der Geteilte Himmel (The Divided Heavens) won the GDR's Heinrich Mann prize in 1963, bringing international recognition. In her book Was bleibt (What remains) she provides a personal account of what it is like to be under surveillance by the Stasi.
the author as the victim of Stasi observation (Tate 194) that called into question the value of GDR culture and the apportionment of guilt (Hodgin “Screening the Stasi” 75).

The existence of two Germanys can also be seen as an additional hindrance to the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung between 1949 and 1989, as one Germany was always able to blame the other for the past. The GDR, as a communist state, identified capitalism as the source of fascism, a claim that enabled it to draw comparisons between West Germany and the Third Reich. West Germany, on the other hand, identified totalitarianism as the core of fascism and socialism, and was therefore able to denigrate the GDR as the socialist equivalent of National Socialism. The result of such recrimination was that neither state adequately came to terms with their National Socialist past, as ‘inculpation went hand in hand with self-exculpation’ (Niven 2). The GDR’s authoritarian cultural diplomacy spread its interpretation nationally and internationally, accepting no alternative. Its view of culture as the principal means of political propaganda made culture not only an instrument of politics, but created and shaped it to fit convenient political agendas (ibid.).

Competing claims of justice have aggravated the lack of moral clarity about the GDR. Its characterisation as an Unrechtsstaat (illegitimate state) ‘is thus particularly troubling to East Germans who feel that their treatment by the unified state has been anything but just’ (Baker, cited in Wohlfort 59). The portrayal of the GDR in culture is often compromised by representations of it and its citizens as fundamentally other to the democratic and capitalist FRG. Western cultural representations frequently associated the GDR with National Socialism, thereby reiterating the discourse of a second German dictatorship and underpinning a practice of negative mirror-imaging whereby the identity of the FRG relied on an image of the East as its primary Other.
Countering the discourse on the GDR as a ‘second dictatorship’, however, was the idea of *Ostalgie*, a combination of *Ost* (East) and *Nostalgie* (nostalgia), ‘broadly understood as a form of nostalgia for the GDR. The idea has often been interpreted as a romanticisation of the socialist past and an attempt to underplay the oppressive nature of the authoritarian state’ (Hyland 101). *Ostalgie* has established itself, particularly in popular culture, as a commodification of East German culture. It has been interpreted within a post-colonial theoretical framework as trivialising and fetishizing GDR culture, but also as part of a more egalitarian post-reunification approach – in particular by critics who describe *Ostalgie* as part of the nation’s quest for unity, in which West German culture is not to be prioritised over East German culture (ibid.).

As the GDR recedes further into the past, memories are increasingly in flux. This is a response to changed political, social and cultural agendas, but also to the passing of time, new generations and contemporary media (Cooke 145). Martin Sabrow, historian and director of the *Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung* (Centre for Research on Contemporary History) in Potsdam, claims that the ‘GDR has become a battleground of memories, in which knowledge of the GDR can no longer be taken for granted but has rather become a site of projection’ (20). During the past 25 years multiple forms of remembrance have developed as part of political processes and legal trials, as well as in popular media (Saunders & Pinfold 4).

Since reunification the GI has had responsibility for the representation of a unified Germany, but acknowledges that the GDR and the German separation continue to be present in unified Germany – whether as celebratory thoughts of reunification or as an
enduring ‘wall in the head’\textsuperscript{18}. The GI points towards the historicisation of the GDR by a new generation growing up in a unified Germany and a world without the Eastern Bloc. This also brought new challenges to cultural foreign policy and the AFGF, which are detailed in chapter 5 of this thesis.

1.3.5 The Goethe-Institut and Accented Cinema

Reunification of Germany in 1989, even though marking a significant turning point in German and European history, only brought on a gradual integration of East and West German cinema. David Clarke described the issue of commercialisation as a major aspect of German post-reunification film that increased pressure on German filmmakers to make internationally viable films (\textit{German Cinema} 1). Clarke pointed towards two responses to this development. The first is a mourning of the ‘commercial turn’, which is compared unfavourably with the films of the New German Cinema; this view is represented in the works of Eric Rentschler, Georg Seeßlen and Fernand Jung. The second response refers to the tradition of German filmmaking, and applauds young filmmakers for producing quality entertainment products that not only appeal to domestic audiences, but are internationally successful (Clarke, \textit{Remembering the German Democratic Republic} 4).

A ‘cinema of affluence’ privileged technical competence over critical subject matter in the 1990s, screening ‘light’ films, low in critical content, to an increasingly affluent and comfortable German public. Rentschler referred to a ‘cinema of consensus’ in which the possibility of changing the status quo is no longer entertained (16). Under Helmut Kohl’s government (1982–98), cinema was encouraged as a popular form of entertainment rather than an elitist and critical art.

\textsuperscript{18}The notion of a remaining wall in the heads of Germans alludes to the continuing influence of the division of Germany on the thinking and perceptions of East and West Germans.
Tom Tykwer’s *Lola Rennt/Run Lola Run* (1998) was the first internationally renowned German film post-reunification and is therefore a landmark in contemporary German filmmaking. The founding of the independent production body X-Filme following Tykwer’s success was an attempt to bridge the gap between commercial viability and quality filmmaking. Its productions so far include *Good Bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003), *Sommer auf dem Balkon/Summer in Berlin* (Andreas Dresen, 2006), *Das weiße Band/The White Ribbon* (Michael Haneke, 2009) and *Amour* (Michael Haneke, 2013), thus validating the X-Filme model (Clarke, "German Cinema 5; Hake "German Cinema 195").

John Davidson’s analysis of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in contemporary German film identified a set of sincere films that critique the role of ordinary people during the Holocaust (43-72). A further development is that of ‘anti-memory’ films, such as *Stalingrad* (Joseph Vilsmaier, 1993), which was criticised for twisting historical truth and ‘stealing and falsifying the possibility for real cultural memory’ (Krimmer 86). German post-unification film is thus more than a ‘cinema of consensus’; it is also a portrayal of contemporary Germany, an increasingly multicultural, neo-liberal country with a traumatic past.

In the first decade of the new millennium, Germany’s cinematic landscape shifted. However, in discussions of contemporary German film, the concept of a ‘cinema of consensus’ remained popular (Cooke & Homewood 3). German film must be seen increasingly within a transnational rather than national context, particularly in regard to film production and narratives. European cinema is no longer just ‘white’, nor can it be adequately conceived of as an amalgamation of discrete national cinemas that coexist, separated by geographical, cultural and linguistic borders (Berghahn, “Far-Flung Families in Film” 6). The ‘transnational turn’ in German filmmaking has taken
place in the context of Germany’s growing multiculturalism and internationalisation, and this has arguably provoked German filmmakers into reflecting on ‘Germany’s place in the world and on contemporary constructions of Germanness’ (Cooke & Homewood 4).

Beginning in the 1960s, German cinema portrayed the dilemma of German guest workers on screen, underlining their engagement with a range of social and political issues. During the next two decades, guest workers found their own artistic voices in literature, film and other forms of cultural representation that were independent of the German gaze. Films such as Thomas Arslan’s triology Geschwister/Brothers and Sisters (1997) displayed new and emerging hybrid identities and Germany’s status as an Einwanderungsland (country of immigration). A new generation of filmmakers embraced this cultural hybridity and added significantly to German cinema, multicultural self-understanding and the debunking of stereotypes (Langford 148-150).

Hamid Naficy’s ‘accented cinema’ is a useful concept for describing the increasing number of German films by directors with multinational heritage and cultural upbringing. Naficy’s term describes cinema made by exilic, diasporic and postcolonial ethnic and identity filmmakers who live and work in countries other than their country of origin. The filmmaker’s ‘double-consciousness’ stands at the core of these films, and the linguistic concept of an accent in the name highlights its value-free deviation from standard, dominant cinema. These cinematic developments have also driven recent academic inquiry into questioning the very possibility of a ‘national cinema’; Fatih Akin’s films are a prime example of transnational German-Turkish productions focused on post-migration experiences in Germany (Fisher & Prager 13).

In chapter 6, I analyse this aspect of German films within the framework of the AFGF.
The development of a national cinema poses further questions for the analysis of the AFGF as a portrayal of Germany and Germanness. Governed by a cultural diplomatic task through the GI, the AFGF’s goal was not only the depiction of German cinema but a cinematic portrayal of Germany. Whilst changes in German film production and narrative challenge conventional understandings of national cinema, some of Germany’s most acclaimed recent films, both at home and abroad, are still engaged with national discourses (e.g. Good Bye, Lenin! (Wolfgang Becker, 2003), Der Untergang/Downfall (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004) and Nirgendwo in Afrika/Nowhere in Africa (Caroline Link, 2001)).

According to Kapczynski, two types of film currently dominate the German cinematic landscape: ‘nostalgic works of displacement and postmodern narratives of dislocation – both expressing the increasing concern of globalization of a country that, perhaps more than any other, has had cause to rethink the category of the national’ (5). The AFGF aimed to screen all aspects of contemporary German cinema, as well as highlight films and directors from all epochs deemed most important in retrospectives, as opening or closing night films and at other special events. By analysing an international audience’s perceptions of German film, my study contributes to the understanding of the nexus of German cinema and social, political and economic understandings of Germany abroad.

The history of the GI typifies the ongoing effects of National Socialism, the subsequent separation into two Germanys, reunification 40 years later and the current position of Germany (a founding member of the EU) on German domestic and especially foreign policies. Each significant chapter of Germany’s history in the twentieth century left its mark in different sensibilities and priorities, which guide the GI in its work. In the context of the AFGF, an understanding of these wider historical
implications is crucial in order to contextualise the case study within the wider framework of German cultural diplomacy.

Film forms a major part of the cultural work of the GI, and it organises events that annually attract more than two million visitors in over 80 countries, as well as running workshops and seminars to help developing local film industries (Goethe-Institut, n.p.). Two thirds of all film events include a feature film and 60% of all screenings are of recently released feature films, forming the largest and most significant segment of the film department. The GI also supports German documentaries with global screenings, as the genre is considered particularly suitable to the conveyance of a differentiated and varied image of Germany.

The GI’s work has to be evaluated not only for the events it organises but as part of an intercultural dialogue and connecting of cultures, and therefore must be analysed through the lens of its cultural–political dimension. Reinhard Hauff called the GI the largest distributor of German film, alluding to its extensive role in the dissemination of German film abroad (as cited in Mosig 9), while Tobias Mosig described the tension between cultural and economic interests in German film, referring specifically to the collaboration of the GI and Germanfilms. Germanfilms is the national information and advisory centre for the promotion of German films worldwide, and it collaborates with the GI on multiple Festivals of German Film. This collaboration is shaped by different interests, co-dependency in terms of funds and human resources, and their reputations (Rissenbeek, Sölter, Eppener & Krischok, pers. comm.). The various objectives of film festivals become clear through critical analysis of the philosophical basis and structure of the GI’s film department. Figure 1 below outlines the organisational structure of the GI in regards to its global film department and the organisation of the AFGF by the GI in Australia.
1.3.6 Overview of the GI’s Film Department

The Filmbeirat (Film Council), located in Munich, is globally responsible for the quality control of films shown as part of GI events and acts as an advisory for new film purchases. Consisting of 12 renowned experts in film and media and representatives of the Federal Office for Culture and Media and Germanfilms, the Filmbeirat is the advisory committee to the GI’s Film Department. The Filmbeirat decides on the long-term strategies and thematic focus of the GI; the thematic foci of the GI are Vergangenheitsbewältigung of National Socialism, the DEFA history of film and contemporary migration to Germany (Goethe-Institut n.p.). These also form the basis for the thematic foci of this thesis.

Film officers are responsible for the implementation of GI strategies at a regional level. They are mostly German expatriates who specialise in audiovisual media and are advocates for German film at their sites and attend one to two German film festivals each year to keep up to date, especially the Berlinale, the Filmfest München.
the Hofer Filmtage and the Oberhausen Internationale Kurzfilmtage. They regularly attend festivals, are familiar with film production in their countries and can relate to the German film scene. At a local level, cultural managers implement cultural programs, film screenings and film festivals. These cultural departments work closely with the local film industry and other cultural and educational organisations to most effectively achieve the global strategic goals within the budget provided.

Two scholarly concepts drive the work of the GI Film Department in Munich and the global branches: cultural diplomacy (as defined earlier), and cinematic diplomacy. I explore the concept of cinematic diplomacy in the next section.

1.4 Cinematic Diplomacy and the Role of Film Festivals

As noted previously, cinema forms an important part of Germany’s cultural diplomacy, acting as a medium for cultural transfer and connecting nations through what is referred to as cinematic diplomacy. The underlying argument of contemporary cinematic diplomacy is that film not only portrays cultural differences but shared human themes, thus can connect nations as equals (Sölter 11). This aligns with the idea of Kulturaustausch (cultural exchange), promoted by the German Department of Foreign Affairs as their credo for cultural diplomacy.

Film festivals are historically closely linked to the representations of nations. The first international film festival (in Venice, in 1932) was organised like a world expo, with a quota system allowing countries to enter their films into the competition, and with a film festival price closely linked to national prestige (The Mussolini Cup) (Taillibert & Wäfler 5). The Venice Film Festival linked politics and cinema when Leni Riefenstahl’s Olympia won the Mussolini Cup in 1938, illustrating the fine line
between cinematic diplomacy and propaganda and explaining the end of the application of the concept following the Cold War (Gundle 185).

Much research on cultural diplomacy to date has focused on film festivals during the Cold War as international showcases for national cinema and artistic, commercial and political exchanges (Romijn et al. 2; Shaw & Youngblood 155 - 178). Contemporary scholarly applications of the term ‘cinematic diplomacy’ have been sparse, and acknowledgement of it has only recently emerged in the work of film scholars and policymakers. Cinema as a form of cultural exchange and a part of cultural diplomatic efforts is scrutinised by tourism scholars, nation branding experts, as well as marketers interested in brand compatibility and product placement. Film festivals are an interesting case study for cinematic diplomacy, as they connect various aspects of a national culture in a heightened state of temporality and within a relatively small timespan and geographic location. Nevertheless, the concept of a national cinema has to be questioned in light of contemporary transnational film production, when ethnic film festivals arguably heighten the national understanding of film through their framing of sponsorship, events and food.

The so-called festivalisation of cultural politics has increased scholarly interest in the topic of nation branding through film festivals. According to Fehervary and Fischer, festivals are ‘no longer merely periodic, cultural, religious or historical events within communities, but rather a popular means through which citizens consume and experience’ (65). This is true also for ethnic film festivals that combine different spheres of society, culture and politics and which feature a nation different to one’s own (de Valck 16; Harbord, Film Cultures 61). Nevertheless, the understanding of film festivals as places of intercultural communication is often inadequately linked to research on film studies and cultural diplomacy (Chalcraft et al. 110; Gamson 231).
Scrutinising film festivals for ‘imagined communities’ and their ‘cartographic agency’ provides valuable approaches for closing this gap.

### 1.4.1 Cinematic Cartography – Space, Place and Spectacle

Cinema is a peculiarly spatial form of culture, because it operates and can be understood in terms of the organisation of three interconnected spaces: the space in films themselves, the space of the narrative and its geographical setting (Fitzmaurice 2). Cinema blurs the boundaries between physical spaces, imaginary spaces, emotional spaces and social spaces, and is thus inherently linked to the physical representation of space itself. It produces and represents an abstract space, defined by images and language that are subject to individual interpretation. The increasing complication of physical and corporeal spaces makes cinema an important agent in the process of social mapping, by allowing visual and emotional access to a different culture and country. This active process of mapping can be explained in more detail using Lefebvre’s theory on the production of social space. For Lefebvre, the emphasis is indeed on the active and individual production of space – a process at the heart of film festivals.

#### 1.4.1.1 The Production of a Cinematic Space

Henri Lefebvre (1909–1991) was a neo-Marxist philosopher and sociologist of urban and rural life. He is best known as a theorist of social space and as the author of *The Production of Space*, which deals with ‘social space itself as national and cosmopolitan expression of modes of production’ (47). Lefebvre referred to three intertwined spaces: everyday practices and perceptions, representations or theories of space, and the spatial imaginary of the time. The ‘perceived space’ of everyday social life informs popular action and opinions and in addition, every individual inhabits a
‘lived space’ of the imagination, which is accessible by the arts and literature. This ‘lived space’ transcends and refigures the balance of the popular ‘perceived space’ and official ‘conceived space’ (Lefebvre 37). His theory of the production of social space identifies three moments of production: material production, the production of knowledge, and the production of meaning. Lefebvre thus argued that social space is the outcome of ‘a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object’ (73). In a metaphor, Lefebvre referred to the first, physical space as a building, to the second, conceptualised space as its architects and to the third, lived space as that of its inhabitants (ibid. 291-293). These spaces refer to the triad of ‘spatial practice’, ‘representations of space’, and ‘spaces of representation’, which conversely refers to ‘perceived’, ‘conceived’, and ‘lived’ space; this triad of space and its metaphorical illustration are also illustrated in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Lefebvre's Production of Social Space (adapted from Zieleniec)](image)

Like Zygmunt Bauman, Lefebvre regarded space as a fluid, overlapping concept produced by relationships between various social groups and the environments they occupy. In the case of a film festival, these three spaces can be adapted to the physical space of the film festival – the curated space – which produces knowledge and a third
space, consisting of the ever-changing audience. Edward Soja drew on Lefebvre’s theory of the production of social space and proposed the existence of three autonomous spaces: a physical space, a mental space and a social space. Extending on Lefebvre’s lived space, Soja called this triad thirdspace and described it as a ‘creative synthesis and extension that builds on perceptions of the ‘real’ material world as well as ‘imagined’ interpretations and representations of that reality’ (6). In doing so, he critically re-evaluated the traditional dualism of space to create an alternative approach that includes the material and mental dimensions of spatiality and also extends ‘beyond them to new and different modes of spatial thinking’ (Soja 7).

Cinema has the potential to be such a space, and the immersive capacity of cinema in general and film festivals in particular empower film festivals as cultural diplomacy (Visch et al. 1440). In line with the festivalisation of culture, diplomatic agencies have embraced the potential of events and film festivals in particular to showcase their country, culture and contemporary topics of concern. By creating chronotopes (a socio-cultural practice continuously reproduced through intersubjective interaction and cultural memory – Bakhtin as cited in Vice 200), the curators enhance this immersive experience for audiences by employing film and festival as ‘reel geopolitics’, or a ‘mimetic of the real world’ (Crampton & Power 3). In the case of the AFGF, curated events that surround screenings added to the immersive experience of Germany and Germanness and help to create a cinematic space, influenced by all three social spaces Lefebvre and Soja describe. The chronotope of a diaspora is concerned with preserving traditions (Vice 208) – a notion that Naficy explored in his study of accented cinema (10) and which I employed in a two-fold engagement of the German diaspora in Australia and the representations of different diasporas in Germany.
I applied an adapted theory of Lefebvre’s production of social spaces and Soja’s thirdspace to my analysis of the AFGF as a case study for immersion cinema in its role as cultural diplomacy. This application encompassed the physical space of the cinema itself (the spatial practice, or perceived space), the filmic space (the representation of space, or conceived space) and the audience experiences that create a joint social space (the space of representation, or lived space). As an extension of the thirdspace, a mnemonic dimension became part of the AFGF through the German diaspora, former connections to Germany, as well as the continuation of this ‘lived space’ beyond the actual time and place of the AFGF. This threefold approach to film festival analysis is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The Festival Space of the AFGF (Source: Irina Herrschner)
1.4.1.2 The Mnemonic Dimensions of the AFGF

The chronotope of the AFGF involves the past (in retrospectives and historical films), the present (in the immediate festival experience and contemporary film) and the future in the continuation of the festival in memory and conversations following the festival experience. Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory is useful in exploring the future dimension of the AFGF. The term ‘postmemory’ was first used in an article on Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* in the early 1990s; it describes the relationship that subsequent generations ascribe to the traumatic memories of their parents and grandparents. It refers to ‘memories’ that are only ‘remembered’ thorough childhood stories, images and behaviours, but are transmitted so profoundly and affectively that they now comprise memories in their own right (Hirsch 103). Hirsch’s theory calls into question the individuality of personal memory by positing a generational transfer of particularly profound and formative memories. In the context of film, ad-hoc and emotional interpretation takes place mostly in this subconscious space and thus influences the production of social space for each individual. Postmemory exemplifies the individual formation of memory based on narratives of memories experienced by others influential to this individual, whereas collective memory describes the memories shared by cohorts and nations.

In researching the formation of collective memory in a German context, Jan and Aleida Assmann posited that the Holocaust and its terrors have become part of most individuals’ personal memories (A. Assman 153; J. Assman 193). Expanding on the notion of cultural memory, Aleida Assmann makes an important contribution to the analysis of film as cultural memory by defining it as distanced from the everyday – based on fateful events in the past – as opposed to communicative memory, which takes place in everyday relations (57).
In keeping with this approach to memory, a notion of the archive is pertinent as it brings to mind the dual meaning of memory and archive as the starting point for the analysis of cinematic diplomacy. Memory as the established frame of reference for new information and images emphasises the individuality of interpretation of film and images. For an audience that is geographically distant, the ‘archive’ can be influential in the decoding and interpretation process of film. It can be argued that the analysis of films as part of a national representation alters its interpretation and has significant influence on the role of the AFGF as a branch of cinematic and cultural diplomacy by attributing the role of memory and space production to its screenings.

In an increasingly globalised and digitalised world, social space has become more prominent in the liminal space between the corporeal and the virtual world (Bhabha 213). It can be argued that online social networks are produced by social interactions and that they create social spaces that can transcend national borders and are detached from real time. Harvey speaks of time–place compression that is underlined by an alteration of time over space in which both concepts are fluid and multifaceted. Social spaces are created through everyday interactions, representations of the unknown and reflection of such representations, and therefore the production of virtual social spaces becomes a fait accompli (D. Harvey 77). The growing (to end 2016) online presence of the AFGF in social networks (Facebook, Twitter, the festival blog) exemplified the continuation of the festival space beyond its geographical and temporal boundaries.

Film combines the two spheres of corporeality – the audience sharing the space of the cinema, experiencing a film in real time, and the virtuality that the film represents as a recorded and mediated image and archive of another time and land. Following the approach of Walter Benjamin’s seminal 1936 article Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical
Reproduction’) on the reproduction of mass media, I raise the question of the authenticity of film on the one hand and the ability of the audience to differentiate this mediated imaginary from reality on the other. Whilst Benjamin would arguably conceive of repeatability of cultural events as a clear downgrading from real-time performances of culture, cinema can also act as a signifying system for the individual, society and culture and provide a vehicle for imaginaries to be created and interpreted anew (Ferris 32). In an international context, cinema can provide new imaginaries and question old perceptions within the framework of postmemory and collective memories, and create an individual nomological and systemising archive.

 Whilst globalisation and virtualisation bring into question the concept of nations as clearly demarcated social and cultural spaces, they also emphasise the need for a systematic understanding of cultural norms and customs. Meanwhile, regional, national and class differences continue to influence individual perceptions of the world. Cinema, art and cultural artifacts therefore act as interpreters and cartographers of these cultural zones, where social space is represented and created anew within the artifact firstly and then in the interpretation of it.

1.4.1.3 Processes of Cultural and Cinematic Mapping

Globalisation and increased flows of information enhance the importance of social spaces as bases of identity formation. National cinema is thus not only a representation of landscape, culture and cities of foreign lands, but acts as the common denominator between different experiences and lives. This cinematic mapping process allows individuals to define their own places against others, by providing a map for disparate social and geographic spaces that make up modern everyday life. Cinema in this sense acts as a mediator and interpreter between the individual and specific aspects of modern life. It does this by packaging in a story
what the individual cannot experience him/herself, and by so doing cinema makes these distant experiences accessible within the experiential framework of the audience.

Cinematic cartography ‘re-humanises’ the world map with its stories and engagement with local life. It transcends real time, as it is ‘as much about mapping memory as it is about envisioning the present and the future’ (Caquard 50). The creation of social spaces allows for a deep engagement and understanding of the places described and the stories lived. The ‘dreamlike’ state of the cinema audience facilitates an emotional reaction to fictional fates, stories and characters that may be closely related to the ‘real world’. While an emotional outpouring for a fictional character seems irrational to the distant observer, it illustrates the liminality and intersections of real and virtual worlds. This is in line with Heidegger’s claim that modern man understands the world as a *Weltbild* (world image), and that mapping is a fundamental human mode of thought and therefore a prerequisite for any kind of knowledge (70-88). Analysing a film festival according to its capacity for spatial mapping and the creation of a social space places the festival at the liminal boundaries of cultures and knowledge, of cohort and individual.

Postmodernism and globalisation have necessarily brought into question the concepts of nation states and the stability and homogeneity of identity. Cinema in this case acts as the precursor to and signifier for these developments through its mode of production and active production of social spaces that exemplify the blurred boundaries of identities and nation states. It is thus possible to read cinema as, on the one hand, the representation of social trends, and on the other as the creator of such developments. International film undeniably provides a space for the creation and representation of an imagined social space of another country, and in the case of the
AFGF, the production and representation of a Deutschlandbild (image of Germany) in Australia.

The AFGF actively sought to create a German space in Melbourne. The films curated were representations of German culture and life and their integration into interpretative spaces such as speeches, interviews and thematic events enhanced this creation. The audience on the other hand, out of various motivations, sought to experience and connect to another culture, time and space. Drawing from Lynch’s Image of the City (1962) and Castells’ Informational City (1992), the idea of gaining control over a disparate environment through modifying the mapping process to suit definition of this space is typified. This runs the risk of seeing and interpreting cinematic representation of a country as part of a geographic and social mapping process that may unintentionally lead to an oversimplification of image to national markers. Further, it can contribute to a reinforcing of longstanding stereotypes created by the interpretation of images through the framework of such preformed ideas.

A mapping process of experienced realities, filmic representations and an individual frame of reference resulted in the AFGF becoming a singular creation of what Germany and Germanness mean to an Australian audience. As an individual action, the outcome of this process varies greatly and is highly dependent on pre-set ideas. Deleuze noted that cinema can create ‘any space whatever’ dependent on an individual interpretation of it (125). This concept brings into questions whether a deterministic and national approach to cinema enhances its quality as a connection of nations, countries and individuals by drawing attention to shared qualities rather than highlighting differences. The discussions concerning the films shown as part of the AFGF point towards the problem of determining the interpretation of film based in
another national context, as film festivals are by nature nodal points where global cinema meets and interacts.

The notion of national cinema has to be questioned in the light of recent cinematic developments. This is because films are increasingly co-productions of multiple countries, meaning that film production has become a liminal space itself where technicalities and the story take precedence over national particularities and displays of nationality. German film production typically takes place in multiple countries and languages and is influenced by sponsors from various countries with varying motivations and expectations for the film. Very often films are co-funded by Germany and other countries, all with different national, historic or social interests. These international productions are now a space where nationality, national interests and different interpretations of history collide and have to be negotiated. As the audience is unaware of these negotiations, a film will most likely be categorised according to linguistic, geographical or contextual nationality. This means that for the AFGF, films were labelled as German based on their German language, setting and curation as part of the AFGF. This national definition influences the lens through which the audience interprets the film and understands its meanings.

In line with Bourdieu’s notion of a national habitus, it has to be acknowledged that films increasingly represent a uniquely negotiated habitus through their fusion of nationalities, experiences and geographies. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, based on the work of Marcel Mauss on bodily habits and habitus, describes the ‘individuality of the particular Englishman, Dutchman, Swede or German’ represented in a ‘common social and national habitus’, a notion that makes notions of habitus pertinent to this discussion (Reed-Danahay 104). These social intricacies and norms are defined as the ‘national habitus’ of a nation and formed and informed by its doxa – the unspoken
rules present in any society (Barlösius 28). These rules range from the everyday, such as the way a telephone call is answered, to the more ethnographically significant, such as the topics classified as taboo in certain social settings. Interpreting film as an artifact of nationality thus has to be questioned, especially when cultural diplomacy is the intended outcome of a screening.

Past experiences that each audience member has collected and interpreted prior to a screening influence their individual creation of social space between them and the film. In total, as discussed earlier, three social spaces are created throughout the screening process of a film, each with a different fusion of nationalities, ideas, motivations, experiences and expectations. Each social space is created or at least influenced by the film screening and then acts independently of the film, continuing to influence a mnemonic extension of the thirdspace in which the story of the film is shared throughout a social network, but based on the interpretations of each audience member sharing their interpretation of it. The story is adapted with every sharing, akin to ‘Chinese whispers’ or in German: Flüsterpost. For cultural diplomacy, this introduces an aspect of unpredictability and individuality in the creation of a national imaginary. In any event, cultural understanding and knowledge is gained through unique events, in which the interaction between audience and facilitator is non-hierarchical and dialogical (Bang 157-190). In line with a German understanding of cultural diplomacy as a dialogue, cinematic events are an opportunity to engage with this dialogue and foster desired imaginaries. The highly individualistic interpretation of film necessitates a careful interpretation of the filmic content, if indeed intercultural dialogue and understanding are to be at the core of the festival.
1.4.2 Cinematic Diplomacy

The concept of cinematic diplomacy was the core theoretical lens through which I analysed the AFGF. Cinematic diplomacy is used in a similar way to other branches of cultural diplomacy, such as exhibitions, concerts, art shows and lectures, but it also has significant differences. While cultural diplomacy generally assumes that differences between cultures are the core of any interaction, cinematic diplomacy focuses on the similarities and connections between nations. This can help build bridges between nations and their peoples and decrease misunderstandings, and is thus valuable in the globalisation process. It is no surprise that cinematic diplomacy is once again on the rise, being used by governments to reduce tension and conflicts between nations based on perceived points of difference (Sölter 16). However, although cinematic diplomacy is widely used as a means of cultural engagement and collaboration, it has so far attracted little academic scrutiny. This is despite developments in film production and film festivals pointing towards an increasing engagement with the concept on a practical level over the last five years, as evident in media reports and film festival reviews (Goff 431).

In his study of the social history of German cinema, Silberman described cinema as a site of collective production and reception that is traversed by many kinds of social activity, such as industrial, technological, financial, ideological, aesthetic and consumerist action (German Cinema x). He saw films as constructs and vehicles for communication within the public sphere. Every film is a construct of the present for the filmmaker and the viewer, and ‘cinema and history are discourses that bring the film spectator into an imaginary relation to the present by constructing a way of seeing’ (ibid.). Cinema has been used to showcase Germany and German culture since the 1920s. Early cinema helped to position Germany as a nation of cinematic
innovation and was rapidly established as a vital part of German art and culture. The debates on the value of cinema as a re-produced and multiplied form of cultural performance allude to its social impact (Weber 32).

Weimar cinema was a creative and progressive approach to culture and enabled a broad spectrum of society to engage with new cultural trends and developments. The Third Reich famously used cinema as a means of propaganda, shaping and influencing public opinion. Film remains an influential medium, informing opinions on foreign cultures, societies and histories. This capacity is at the core of cinematic diplomacy and central to my connection of it to German cinema.

Research on cinematic diplomacy has so far focused mainly on the Cold War era, when the claimed advantages of ideological systems were showcased (B. Harvey 487). The Soviet Union participated in film festivals in Western Europe and typically portrayed workers’ happy and fulfilled lives. The United States countered these representations with cinematic displays of freedom of speech, democracy and capitalism (Falk 47). In Germany, American film was used (as part of the Marshall Plan) to disseminate notions of freedom, democracy and enterprise (Fritsche 12). In particular, Hollywood films became the norm in cinemas; as a consequence, the German film industry lost significant market share, and funding for new film productions diminished (Fehrenbach 149). This was due to an agreement between American distributors to send their films to West Germany and repatriate any profits to the United States. During WWII, Hollywood accumulated an immense backlog of films that were already profitable due to domestic success; hence, American companies were able to undercut the prices of European films in the postwar era, and by the beginning of the 1950s held market dominance in Germany (Knight 8).
Nonetheless, these financial constraints encouraged the West German film industry to collaborate and experiment, which eventually paid off in terms of cinematic quality.

By the 1960s, cinematic diplomacy had become as complex as the political landscape it reflected. The New German Cinema during the Cold War showed German issues and people, making it a suitable vehicle for cinematic diplomacy (Shaffer 219). The GI soon noticed this trend and started promoting German films abroad. Today, Germany produces approximately 200 feature films per year, not counting the many films for television produced by the public channels ARD, ZDF, ARTE and the state-owned channels (Germanfilms n.p.). After the end of the Cold War cinematic diplomacy lost its underlying purpose, and a general Westernisation of cinema decreased the importance and size of national cinemas.

In the United States, cinematic diplomacy has received increased attention and funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which collaborates with the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts in a project that aims to engage international audiences in a cultural dialogue by utilising American film as a starting point (USC cinematic Arts n.p.). The ‘American Film Showcase’ is a good example of contemporary cinematic diplomacy. It sends American filmmakers overseas to present independent documentaries, feature films and animated shorts. Another example in line with a contemporary understanding of cinematic diplomacy is the ‘Film Forward’ initiative of the Sundance Film Festival. ‘Film Forward’ utilises ‘film’s unique ability to tell stories that explore universal themes to ignite meaningful conversations’ (Film Forward, n.p.). It thereby not only leverages the qualities of film, but provides a platform for cultural and cinematic engagement by screening films and integrating them into a wider thematic context, such as global economic and social inequalities, globalisation and development.
According to Nicholas Cull ("Cinematic Diplomacy" n.p.), cinematic diplomacy, film diplomacy, or celluloid diplomacy, can be subdivided into three categories:

- ‘film as positive’, in which film represents prestige objects on behalf of one’s society;

- ‘film as negative’, describing the fear that one’s own film industry is taken over by foreign influences and that the film industry of another country distorts perceptions of one’s self; and

- diplomatic use of cinema, also known as ‘film as chess pawn’, in which a nation withdraws from film festivals or cinema releases based on current political discourses.

For the sponsors of the AFGF, the film festival represented the positive values associated with Germany and for the GI, the festival engaged Australian audiences in a conversation about Germany. This also signifies an important shift in the use of cinematic diplomacy away from being a politically strategic ‘chess pawn’ to cultural exchange. Today, cinema forms an important part of Germany’s cultural diplomacy as a medium for cultural transfer, connecting nations through cinematic diplomacy. A connection between Germany and Australia was at the heart of the AFGF. As part of German cultural diplomacy, a realistic and positive representation is imperative, but the question as to whether the festival did indeed represent a new imaginary of Germany to Australians or if it instead emphasised common issues and trends is central to this thesis. The alignment of cinema and nation has always been part of film festivals, and the contemporary use of cinematic diplomacy although highlighting cultural commonalities still provides a platform for national representation.
1.4.3 History of Film Festivals

The history of film festivals is closely linked to European political and cultural developments. The world’s first film festival took place in Monaco in 1898, and the Lumière brothers held the first prize-winning film festival (*La Mostra*), an Italian movie contest in Venice, in 1907. *La Mostra* was the first biennial international film festival, organised as part of the Arts Biennale established in 1885 (de Valck 47). In the 1930s Mussolini began misusing *La Mostra* for political propaganda, putting an end to what was a flourishing, independent circulation of films in Italy, driven by growing nationalistic attitudes more broadly. The outbreak of WWII made international film festivals impossible, but their re-emergence immediately afterwards was closely linked to the postwar regeneration of Europe (Harbord, *Film Cultures* 61).

Major film festivals were started after WWII during a time of European urban regeneration (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 81). Cannes was established as the first postwar international film festival in 1946, followed a year later by Edinburgh and in 1951, Berlin (Harbord, *Film Cultures* 61). By the mid-1960s, Europe had a festival circuit consisting of six A-festivals and a continuously growing number of B-festivals. The goals of the new film festivals were similar to those of nineteenth-century world fairs and exhibitions seeking to evoke a community of shared experience and the promotion of specific goals and ideologies (Elsaesser *European Cinema* 89). Most film festivals in postwar Europe began as showcases for national cinema and, as such, for national achievements (de Valck 47). Festivals would either

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19 The Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF) in Paris is responsible for this regulation and accreditation of film festivals, categorising them according to the quality of films, standards of official publications and facilities (http://www.fiapf.org).
invite certain countries to participate or impose quotas on the number of films each country could screen (ibid. 53).

Sandwiched between postwar avant-garde cinema and Hollywood, the move from festivals focusing on countries and nations to the ‘age of the festival director’ began to occur in 1972, with the Cannes festival director being given sole responsibility for film selection (Elsaesser European Cinema 90). De Valck described three historical phases of film festival development: national representation in the early post-war decades, followed by the age of the festival director, to an increasing internationalisation, professionalisation and institutionalisation of film festivals since the 1990s (19). Despite the appearance and disappearance of a large number of film festivals over the years, they ‘have been an important force driving the global circulation of cinema’, and in the case of longstanding festivals, helped create an established economic and cultural circuit after WWII (Iordanova & Rhyne 1-9). Elsaesser stressed their importance for the film industry as a whole, arguing that the emergence of European ‘new wave’ cinema, including the development of cinema as an art form, largely owes its existence to film festivals (European Cinema 90).

Film festivals can be categorised differently in order to systemise events according to purpose (national, auteur or their particular objective) or according to the selection criteria (national, identity-based or genre-specific selection). With the Cannes film festival as the flagship event, much research has focused on it, creating a research template for other festivals (Wong 22). Cannes belongs to the Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films’ (International Association of Film Producers – FIAPF) most prestigious category (‘A’), defining the largest and most influential film festivals; other categories are ‘competitive feature film festivals’, ‘non-competitive feature film festivals’, ‘competitive specialized film festivals’ and
‘documentary and short-film festivals’ (Moeran & Pedersen 174). In 2018, 36 international film festivals hold FIAPF accreditation, a designation that attested to their quality standards and heightened their reputation and cultural capital (FIAPF).

1.4.4 Film Festivals as Cultural Diplomacy

Film and film festivals are a representation of values, thought processes and current and historic debates, and are arguably national accomplishments and conveyors of national identity representing a specific national Weltanschauung (a specific view of the world). The question as to whether Weltanschauung is a product of creative human action that is found in a film is contestable and complex because it does not normally take any visible shape (Hahn 230). A danger in invoking Weltanschauung for film is the suggestion that film is conditioned by a given set of circumstances and concepts (Cavell 285). In an attempt to come to some conclusions on Weltanschauung in film, Hahn suggested combining analysis of the details of the film with a synthesis of analytical results of overall film trends (Hahn 230). In analysing film as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy, I followed Hahn’s lead and undertook a thematic and content analysis of film in the context of the AFGF.

Since the 1990s, film festivals have become an important part of film distribution and thus the whole film industry (Elsaesser, European Cinema 86). Steeped in the economic post-WWII recovery in Europe, film festivals have always been shaped by national interests (Delanty, Giorgi & Sassatelli 66). Despite a recent increase in research focusing on the phenomenon of film festivals, this connection has predominantly been analysed from a functionalist and organisational or historically descriptive point of view (Iordanova 10). Recent publications, however, such as the Film Festival Yearbooks 1-5, as well as the online Film Festival Research Network
(FFRN), show increased academic scrutiny of the topic and in addition to detailed case studies, theoretical frameworks drawing on cultural studies, film studies and visual anthropology are prevalent.

*Film Festival Yearbooks* is a series edited by leading film festival scholar Dina Iordanova in collaboration with various co-editors and published through the Centre for Film Studies at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Each volume focuses on one main theme that film festivals face and thus provides an overview of current research on the topic. Volumes so far cover the film festival circuit (#1 – 2009), imagined communities (#2 – 2010), film festivals in Asia (#3 – 2011), film festivals and activism (#4 – 2012) and archival film festivals (#5 – 2013). The series is the most comprehensive collection of film festival research, and illustrates the growing academic interest in the topic. The FFRN – a network of scholars working on issues related to film festivals – is further evidence for this development. It was founded by film festival scholars Marijke de Valck (University of Amsterdam) and Skadi Loist (Filmuniverstiät Babelsberg) in 2008, and ‘aims to make film festival research more accessible, to connect its diverse aspects and to foster interdisciplinary exchange between researchers as well as festival professionals’ (FFRN n.p.).

Of particular relevance for my study is Tobias Mosig’s research on the GI as the world distributor for German film. His thorough analysis of the film department of the GI provides much organisational information, which my study complements and extends by offering an analytical focus on the selection and reception of particular *Deutschlandbilder* (images of Germany). The following sections provide an overview of film festival research and theory, before focusing on the particular issue of film festivals as part of cultural diplomacy.
1.4.4.1 Film Festivals as a Marketplace

De Valck alludes to Bourdieu’s notion of ‘cultural capital, defined as culturally valued taste and consumption patterns’ as a framework for translating a festival’s intangible features into economic viability (127). Film festivals and film festival awards often facilitate general releases due to the heightened cultural capital a film gains by having been screened or having received critical acclaim through an award. De Valck further pointed out that whilst film festivals are not trade shows, they could be described as ‘rites of passage’ for films and filmmakers, that function as gateways for ‘cultural legitimization’ (ibid. 36). As Stringer noted, festivals thus compete with each other for attention and funding and form part of a global ‘space economy’ (“Global Cities” 138) – an argument that Harbord expanded upon in her analysis of the geopolitical context of film festivals (Film Cultures, 72).

1.4.4.2 The Geopolitical Context

As noted already, film festivals began as a European phenomenon with the strong agenda of forming a counterweight to Hollywood. A festival circuit thus emerged to allow for film distribution within Europe and a reciprocal displaying of national films. The festival circuit has since dominated the discourse in regards to festival studies and festival practice (Iordanova & Rhyne 9). As part of this focus on festival studies, Harbord identified four discourses surrounding film festivals: discourses on independent filmmakers and producers, discourses on media representation, business discourses of financing and legal transactions, and discourses of tourism and service industries affected by film festivals. I build on Harbord’s four discourses by introducing a fifth: their ability to circulate national cultures.

This circulation occurs by taking cultural works out of their original national context and disseminating them through other cultural circles. The role film festivals have in
these processes is widely acknowledged (Evans 22-32; Wong 57). As well as showcasing an alternative to Hollywood productions, film festivals present a different rhetoric about national character and ideas. In the postwar context, Berlin offers a particularly pertinent example of the discourse around the social and political aspects of film festivals. The Berlinale was founded in 1951 and was situated between the revival of the German film industry and the interests of the American occupation. It always aimed at screening popular feature films and was strongly shaped ‘as a cultural accompaniment to the pro-Western and anti-communist politics of the Bonn Republic that sought to emphasis Western values’ (Fehrenbach 236). Berlin’s location as a nodal point between the two fronts of the Cold War further reinforced its geopolitical context as the ‘epicenter of Cold War topography’ (de Valck 51).

More than 15 years after the end of the Cold War, and in the context of neo-liberal cultural policies, Elsaesser gave reasons for the widespread expansion of the film festival network since the 1990s, such as the growth and competition of secondary ‘global cities’ and argued that shifts towards a commercial film industry have added to the importance of independent cinema (“European Cinema” 86). Sassen’s notion of ‘global flows’ provides an explanation for this growth by seeing metropolitan cities as nodal points of cultural and commercial circulation (127). The emergence of global cities is linked to the context of territorialisation of global processes of capital and cultural circulation. Stringer expanded on these nodes, describing the heart of film festivals as the nexus of global and local; he therefore proposed a combination of an aesthetic and political reading strategy to understand film festivals and their culture.

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20 In an increasingly globalised economy, central functions are bundled in relatively few places, a development that led to the emergence of so-called global cities as nodal points of information and sites of production. A secondary global city is a city second in size, global connections and production, such as Manchester to London, Cape Town to Johannesburg and (arguably) Melbourne to Sydney (Sassen 145).
Furthermore, film festivals are an enactment of cultural policies, directing cultural labour, governance and commerce towards a common goal through mostly public-private funding arrangements (Iordanova & Rhyne 15).

1.4.4.3 The Cultural Flow of Film Festivals

In addition to Sassen’s concept of cultural circulation, the concept of ‘five dimensions of cultural flow’ is useful for the analysis of the wider socio-political framework of film festivals (Appadurai 160). In particular, notions of mediascapes and ethnoscapes pose a useful lens for analysing film festivals within the concept of geoscalps and Sassen’s cultural flows (5). Mediascapes provide large and complex repertoires of images that constitute a landscape of a shifting, contemporary world, including tourists, migrants, guest workers and other mobile cohorts (Appadurai 33). These two scapes illustrate the two-way cultural flow surrounding film festivals: the audience that comes together from different locations and the films that transmit images from around the world. Appadurai described these scapes as ‘building blocks’ (33) for what Anderson called ‘imagined communities’, a concept frequently used to describe the communal and social experience of festivals.

1.4.4.4 Film Festivals as Time-Events for Imagined Communities

Film festivals combine many spheres of society but most particularly culture and politics (Berry & Robinson 7; Harbord, Film Cultures 61; de Valck 16). Despite the general understanding of film festivals as places of intercultural communication, film festivals are often excluded from research on film studies, cultural diplomacy and sociology (Fabiani 97; Gamson 231). Analysing film festivals as aspects of imagined communities and time-events\(^\text{21}\) provides valuable approaches for closing this gap. In

\(^{21}\text{The notion of film festivals as ‘time-events’ is explained in chapter 1. Janet Harbord coined the term (Iordanova & Rhyne 40-46) to allude to the unique character of film festivals, as opposed to a film screening as part of usual cinema programming. Film festivals enhance standard programming by}\)
seeing the AFGF as a chronotope of theatrical immersion, the whole festival experience can be analysed in its space, film, curatorship and audience interpretations.

Identity-based film festivals are considered to be for imagined communities and as Anderson noted, nations are also imagined communities based on intangible connections bonding the group (6). Even though these cohorts do not share daily lives, socio-demographic or psychological characteristics such as nationality, shared language or common interests are enough to create a sense of belonging. Film festivals fit this description of imagined communities due to their identity-shaping and identity-based criteria, such as queer, national or context-based film festivals (Wong 53). The AFGF’s imagined community was diverse, consisting of the German diaspora, Australian Germanophiles and cinephiles.

In a similar vein to Harbord’s time-events, Hurch described film festivals as *Erfahrungsräume* (a space for experience), emphasising how the experience for the audiences differs for film festivals and ‘normal cinema screenings’ (28-33). The unique experience of film festivals emphasises the role of the audience, which adds to this time-event character by creating an atmosphere of belonging (Roesch 31). Therefore, film festivals enhance standard programming by creating an interpretive framework around each film (Berry & Robinson 5). This framework consists of limited screenings, Q&A sessions, the presence of ‘stars,’ as well as the interpretation of the festival and specific films in the marketing before and accompanying the festivals.

creating an interpretative framework around each film (Iordanova & Rhyne 41). This framework consists of the limited number of screenings, Q&A sessions, the presence of ‘stars,’ as well as the interpretation of the festival and specific films in the marketing before and accompanying the festivals.
According to Nichols, film festivals provide, as interstitial events, places of social and cultural contact and ‘a window onto a different culture’ (*Blurred Boundaries* 74). Corbin described the experience of the audience as similar to that of an anthropologist or tourist who immerses themselves into a different culture – therefore alluding to the power of film in a cultural diplomacy context (314-329). Film festivals are mediations of collective identities, combining cinema and its ‘dream-like state of reception’ with a ‘politics of participation’ and ‘experience of difference’ (62). De Valck argued that film festivals ‘should commit themselves to act for the benefit of not only venerable cinemas and filmmakers’ but of national or socio-political interests (181).

According to Nichols, experiences on screen become real through the sole power of human imagination (*Blurred Boundaries* 16-33). Nichols places the film festival in a transnational space, communicating between cultures and allowing people to empathize with characters on screen (ibid.). Elsaesser adds a contemporary post-national environment that emphasises the role of national film festivals abroad as creator of transnational spaces for mutual exchange (“European Cinema” 86). However, Evans disputed the idea of a post-national environment, with examples of national specificities, such as the *Perspektive Deutsches Kino* in Berlin, a showcase of thematic and artistic trends among next-generation German filmmakers that provides a perspective on the future of German cinema. In employing postcolonial theory in his analysis of the European film festival circuit (29) Evans emphasises the specifically national qualities of cinema, and this is instructive to my analysis of the AFGF. Taking a similar stance, Elsaesser argued that the European film industry is shaped in opposition to Hollywood; European film festivals signify the struggle to free themselves from corporatisation and to create an independent identity (*European Cinema* 104).
 Adopting Marc Augé’s notion of ‘non-places’ is a suitable starting point for understanding this experience of difference that allows film festivals to be seen as hybrid or transnational artifacts (79). Non-places are homogenised places such as airports and shopping malls where ‘place’ is negligible. These anodyne and anonymous non-places make way for transitory occupants and the illusion of a utopian city world. Film festivals are non-places in a way, as they provide the impression of a journey to a specific geographic place without the physical movement. This experience is enhanced by the audience undertaking this ‘journey’ as a community and as ‘one’ (Urry 201).

1.4.4.5 Film Festivals and Identities of Place

The quality of film festivals as non-places is used to highlight the unfamiliar. The selection process for major film festivals changed increasingly to highlight non-European films in the 1970s (Beauchamp & Béhar 28). Embedded in the era of decolonisation, political changes in Europe and growing resistance to the cultural hegemony of the United States created a growing interest in local film productions from developing countries and films with specific social or political agendas (Adesokan 21). The fourth Film Festival Yearbook focuses on the issue of film festivals and activism on issues such as human rights and environmental policies (Iordanova & Torchin). These festivals are commonly organised and implemented in the former colonial countries and screen films from formerly colonised nations, such as African Film Festivals in Europe (Dovey 15).

A second branch of identity-shaping film festivals is motivated by increased global mobility and growing international diasporas. Diaspora film festivals are set at the nexus of ethnoscapes and mediascapes, presenting films from a home country to its respective diaspora. Iordanova drew on the functionalist theory of John Porter to
categorise diaspora film festivals into a ‘vertical mosaic’ (16). ‘Vertical’ illustrates the various accesses to economic and cultural power, whereas ‘mosaic’ illustrates different ethnic, linguistic and religious groupings. Unlike in the common metaphor of a melting pot, in a mosaic the different demographics are kept apart, making it a more useful metaphor for film festivals directed at specific diasporas. Within this vertical mosaic, Iordanova identified three types of diaspora festivals: festivals that are tools of cultural diplomacy, festivals that promote certain identity agendas and festivals that promote diaspora-linked businesses (Iordanova & Rhyne 38).

As noted earlier, the role of early film festivals was similar to that of world fairs: to showcase national achievements, funded by states as diplomatic affairs. Due to its public funding, this type of film festival has the highest ranking in the vertical mosaic, on account of access to the monetary, diplomatic and cultural resources of its government. Cheung’s financial analysis of different funding models of themed festivals highlights the importance of this type of funding. She differentiated between three types: ‘home country funding with commercial sponsorship; host country/city funding with commercial sponsorship; and predominately private donations’ (99-115). International German film festivals, such as the AFGF, serve as an example for the first funding model, being mainly funded by public sources with the remainder of funds solicited from commercial sponsors.

Chalcraft, Delanty and Sassatelli theorised that ‘festivalizing’ cultural diplomacy represents a shift away from the axis of elite/popular culture emphasised by the Frankfurt School towards an idealised, new democratic space (109-130). This is a pertinent point for the discussion of any themed film festival and the ‘imaginaries’ screened. Wong utilised Habermas’ conception of the public sphere to analyse film festivals as institutions of cultural communication (159). Habermas described the
public sphere as an arena for critical dispute and open debate on issues of public interest and a space in which opinions are formed. For film festivals, this approach means a focus on the two-way conversation a festival engages in and the critical productivity it possesses.

1.4.4.6 Film Festivals as Time-Events

Following Harbord’s aforementioned concept of film festivals as time-events (“Film Festivals – Time Event” 40-46), film festivals are distinct from other film screenings because of the emphasis on time as a limited resource. Limited screenings and tickets, the last-minute release of the program and the surrounding events all contribute to the creation of a different temporality. Meanwhile, cinema itself manufactures time by recording unique events and archiving them. Film festivals thus juxtapose two temporalities of the repeatable and the unique, establishing the potency of film festivals as events. The time of the film and the time of the festival are therefore inextricably linked for audience members who view the films in the context of film festivals (ibid.).

In my study, I analyse the AFGF as a time-event, but add to the concept in particular by focusing on curated events that highlight the temporal uniqueness of the film screening, as well as providing the space for the curatorship of cinematic diplomacy. These time-events include the curating of special events, opening nights and audience discussions, and the interpretations, perceptions and representations of Germany’s past and present the festival enabled. The theory of time-events focuses on the temporality of events, highlighting their unique setting in time and place. Here, time-events highlight the GI’s decisions as to how to represent Germany at the AFGF. As shown in this chapter, film festivals alter audience experience through their uniqueness and temporality. As a public sphere, the film festival experience is highly
influenced by the locality and curating as well as by the objectives and experiences of
its curators. In the following chapter, I illustrate the particular geographical and
historical location of the AFGF, its stakeholders and its curatorial and audience
developments from 2002 to 2016.
Chapter 2: The AFGF as a Case Study of Kulturdiplomatie

A large German diaspora in Australia actively connects the two countries, and various public and private organisations provide practical advice and cultural support for this diaspora. The AFGF was part of this wider network of German communication in Australia, but it was different from all other cultural connections in its diplomatic approach to engaging Australian community in a conversation with Germany and its approach to the use of film to create new and desirable images of Germany and Germanness. In this chapter, I outline the German diaspora and network in Australia as part of an analysis of the AFGF within its wider social and cultural frameworks. This allows a clearer understanding of the creation of ideas, concepts and imaginaries of Germany within the AFGF audience. Furthermore, I chart the development of the AFGF over 2002–16 and provide the background for my analysis of the AFGF 2013–15 in particular, and for the analysis of the festival as a tool for cultural and cinematic diplomacy in general.

2.1 History of Migration

German migrants have been a part of Australia’s European settlement since the early nineteenth century, arguably becoming the first prominent non-British group of settlers (Harmstoff & Cigler 5; Tampke 14). The current population of Germans in the state of Victoria constitutes 26 311 German-born people counted in the 2011 Australian census; 38% still spoke German at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), n.p.). Tracing backwards, three main waves of migration stand out: the settlers before WWI, the refugees of the Third Reich and postwar immigrants, and the continuing immigration of lifestyle migrants (Klein 93).
2.1.1 Early Settlements

Immigration regulations in the Australian colonies were removed in the early 1840s, opening the door to large-scale immigration from Germany. A prominent example is a Lutheran group, expelled from Prussia for subscribing to an impermissibly orthodox version of Lutheranism, which found a refuge in the Barossa Valley of South Australia (Harmstorf & Cigler 124). Others fled due to economic hardship. South Australia became a favoured destination for Germans that under self-government and with the most progressive constitution of the colonies, was given the nickname ‘paradise of dissent’ (Pike 5).

During the gold rush between 1851 and the late 1860s, large numbers of Germans started to arrive in Victoria and almost immediately became its largest non-British minority (10,000 strong in 1861), and by 1864 there were already 13 German associations in Victoria’s goldfield towns (G. Fischer 145). These gold rush adventurers brought along their revolutionary ideals, and many later participated in the Eureka Stockade (Harmstorf & Cigler 138). Overall, German migration to Australia during the nineteenth century was largely a story of success for migrants, who found a new home and for the burgeoning new society that benefitted from their technical, agricultural and cultural expertise (Tampke 80). The economic downturn and political unrest in Europe led to increased immigration from Germany and participation in international exhibitions in Melbourne consolidated links between the two countries. German immigration continued into the twentieth century when WWI brought an end to migration from Germany and to the countries’ friendly relations (ibid. 150).
2.1.2 The Migrants of the World Wars

In the years between WWI and WWII, anti-German sentiment led to a ban on German immigration, and to the imprisonment of some German settlers in Australia as ‘enemy aliens’ (G. Fischer 16). The arrival of German imperialism in Australia, together with efforts by the General Consulate of Imperial Germany in Sydney to spread the message of *Deutschtum* (the superiority of German culture and tradition) among the German population, soured Australian–German relations at the beginning of the twentieth century and destroyed the previously positive image of German settlement (Williams 3). However, Nazi Germany’s racial policies rekindled large-scale immigration, with many German and Austrian Jews arriving from 1937 through to the outbreak of WWII. During and after WWII, migrants left Europe to settle in Australia – and Australia hoped in return that the migrants from Germany and Eastern Europe would support its White Australia policy (Jupp, “From White Australia to Woomera” 176). Then came the German prisoners of war, many of whom stayed in Australia following their internment (Monteath, *P.O.W.* 158).

2.1.3 Postwar Immigration

From 1952, the Australian Assisted Migration Agreement provided for an annual intake of 5,000 assisted migrants from Germany as well as for 1,000 unassisted migrants (Clyne 361). Germans were encouraged and assisted to migrate to Australia, and the Australian government offered and organised two years of employment under the same conditions (wages, living standards and living conditions) as Australians in comparable jobs. After two years migrants could decide if they wanted to stay or

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22 The White Australia policy was an immigration restriction act that barred immigrants of non-European descent from settling in Australia. The policy was instituted in 1901 and was progressively dismantled between 1949 and 1973 (Jupp 176).
return to Germany, but if they decided to stay, they did not have to pay for their passage to Australia (Teicher, Shah & Griffin 209-236). From 1945 to 1982, during which these schemes (including earlier Displaced Persons Agreements and other arrangements in which Australia provided assistance in migration) were in place, 65% of German migrants to Australia arrived as assisted migrants. Between 1951 and 1962, the height of the assisted migration period, 84% of new settlers arrived as assisted migrants (Klein 98).

Many of the postwar immigrants, like the nineteenth-century German settlers, brought with them occupational and professional skills that ensured relatively quick and positive integration into Australian economic and cultural life (Seitz & Foster 414-430). Large numbers of Germans began to arrive; Victoria’s Germans population increased by 500% between the end of WWII and 1961, to 39,291 Germans out of 2,930,113 people in the state (ABS, n.p.). At the turn of the twentieth century, Germans were Australia’s largest group of non-English-speaking European migrants (Tampke 3). The second wave of German immigration occurred in the third quarter of the twentieth century, in which over 100,000 German-speaking people came to Australia, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. Like their predecessors, they integrated readily into their new society and were often described as ‘invisible migrants’ (Tampke 6).

2.1.4 Contemporary Migration

The push-and-pull factor theory explains migration from Germany to Australia during times of social and political difficulties (Datta 23). The theory describes the pull factors of a better life in a different country and the push factors of hardships faced in the current situation. This is emblematic of a logical pattern of migration from poorer
to richer countries, or at least to a country appearing to offer more chance for personal success. This theory is inapplicable to contemporary migration from Germany to Australia, so Cropley et al. devised a theory that explains these new migratory pathways (72). His theory divides the population into ‘philobates’ (people who like change and leaving their home) and ‘ocnophiles’ (people who like staying within their home environment).

In addition, Benson and O’Reilly coined the term ‘lifestyle migrants’ – relatively affluent individuals who migrate from one developed country to another for reasons of personal fulfilment and for a better lifestyle, as opposed to a better life (“Migration and the Search” 608-625). Such people are unlike previous German migrants, who were forced to leave their home country for political, social or economic reasons. The focus on an improved lifestyle emerges from distinct circumstances present in the modern world, and the movement of lifestyle migrants can consequently run contrary to those of others, often moving from the global cores out to the peripheries, even if this can involve giving up certain political freedoms and material comforts (Castles & Davidson 82).

The introduction of the work and holiday visa in 1975, allowing young Germans to spend a maximum of two years living and working in Australia, sparked temporary lifestyle migration from Germany to Australia (Robertson 1919). Providing easy access, a safe environment and the escape many Europeans seek, the visa especially attracts those looking for a break from their routine and international work experience (Benson & O’Reilly, “From Lifestyle Migration” 20); they tend to be mainly highly qualified individuals from affluent backgrounds. Many of these short-term migrants find career jobs and partners in Australia and become permanent migrants, adding to the target audience for the AFGF.
2.2 The German Diaspora in Melbourne and Sydney

In the 2016 census, the German diaspora included 102,595 people born in Germany and currently residing in Australia and 742,200 Australians (4.3%) reporting German heritage (ABS n.p.). The largest German communities reside in the states of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, in the two largest Australian cities, Sydney and Melbourne (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: The German Population in Australia, 2016 (ABS, n.p.)](image)

In Sydney, the German community is densest in the bayside suburb of Bondi and in Tempe; in Melbourne, most Germans live in the bayside areas of St Kilda, Elwood and Brighton, or the inner northern suburbs of Brunswick, Carlton and Fitzroy (Buchanan 331-348).

The AFGF catered for the German diaspora while pursuing the objective of presenting German culture and Germanness to an Australian audience. Indeed, surveys conducted in 2007 by the GI and in 2014 by me confirmed that each German
audience member brings around two non-Germans to the AFGF. Although it was the largest German cultural event in Australia, the festival only existed as such because it was embedded in a wider framework of German political, economic and cultural institutions. These institutions represent Germany and connect the German diaspora in Australia, linking audience members, sponsorship, marketing and staff to the AFGF. In order to analyse the cinematic cartography\(^ {23} \) of the AFGF, and its role in cultural and cinematic diplomacy, an understanding of the wider social, political and historic framework of the AFGF is therefore crucial.

### 2.2.1 Diplomatic Services

The German embassy in Canberra, the German Consulate in Sydney and the Honorary German Consulates in Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns and Perth represent German political, economic and defence matters, as well as consular and cultural affairs and public relations. Each of these matters is represented by a department of the embassy in Canberra, which reports to the ambassador, Dr Anna Elisabeth Prinz (since July 2016). The Consulate General in Sydney is responsible for NSW and Queensland, and in particular for consular matters affecting Germans in Australia, economic relations between the two countries and cultural and scientific exchanges and collaborations. Since the Consulate General in Melbourne closed in 2012, the Sydney office also provides consular services for residents of Victoria and Western Australia. Honorary consulates in Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns and Perth provide additional representation of Germany as well as diplomatic advice for German citizens of Australia.

\(^ {23} \) Les Roberts defined cinematic cartography as the ‘geographic and representational cartographies contained with the filmic diegesis and the affective forms of ’mapping’ that are mobilized between the film text and spectator […]’ (70).
The German Embassy was a partner of the AFGF, providing financial support as well as lending its diplomatic voice to the opening night gala. For the German Embassy, the AFGF provided an important German cultural event and the staging of the AFGF in Canberra was more a diplomatic event than an act of cultural diplomacy (Krischok, 2013, pers. comm.). The Swiss and Austrian embassies also provide financial support to the AFGF and contribute to its organisation. The ‘our neighbours’ section of the AFGF 2013 featured Austrian and Swiss productions without drawing attention to their origin, whilst in 2014 and 2016 a Swiss Soirée featured two films embedded in special events with Swiss food and music. These events were very successful in bringing together the Swiss communities of Melbourne and Sydney. In the survey for this research, audience members mentioned the importance of these events for the Swiss community, and the high number of attendees who had been invited by the Swiss embassy, illustrate the contribution of the Swiss embassy to the AFGF.

2.2.2 Trade Relations

The German Embassy works with partners at the German–Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK) and at ‘Germany Trade and Invest24’ to establish and strengthen business links between German and Australia. The AHK is a global initiative and offers experience, connections and services to German and foreign companies at 120 locations in 80 countries. The AHK office in Australia opened in 1977 and has become an important partner in fostering bilateral trade between Germany and Australia. The main objective of the AHK is to ‘advise German and Australian companies on market development and to provide support for the initiation of business relations’ (Deutsch-Australische Industrie-und Handelskammer n.p.). The

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24 German Trade and Invest (GTAI) is the economic development agency of Germany with 50 offices in Germany and abroad. GTAI supports German businesses abroad and foreign companies setting up in Germany (http://www.gtai.de)
main objective of this economic development agency is ‘to promote Germany as a hub for business and technology and to support companies based in Germany with global market information’ (German Trade and Invest n.p.).

Both organisations used the AFGF – especially its opening night gala – as a networking event, where old trade connections can be refreshed and new ones established. The AHK supported the AFGF financially and its brochures were available to the audience throughout the festival. Both companies provided a point of contact for German companies in Australia and Australian companies wishing to engage with Germany. The AFGF provided a platform for communication and marketing. More significant for this study, though, was the support of the AHK and ‘German Trade and Invest’ for local companies, which increased representation of Germanness and facilitated important exchanges. Over 350 businesses are part of the AHK, actively engaging with Germany and creating ties between Germany and Australia for their employees. These employees were an important audience group of the AFGF, often learning German, having worked and lived in Germany or planning on spending extended time in Germany.

The AHK also provides a crucial network of potential sponsors for the AFGF, which would not have been able to function on such a scale without external financial support. Sponsorship agreements were an integral part of the organising work of the GI in Australia, and it was only through the continuing commitment of Audi (since 2008) that the AFGF was able to grow steadily. The AHK provided a communication platform for these agreements and thus helped to tie German culture and trade together for the mutual benefit of marketing and special events. Sometimes these sponsorships directly influenced the culture of the festival, so a careful negotiation of the financial and cultural objectives of the AFGF was necessary.
2.2.3 Cultural Organisations

The dichotomy between German stereotypes, such as the Bavarian traditions portrayed by the Hofbräuhaus²⁵, and the objective of the GI to portray an authentic and modern image of Germany not only prevailed in the AFGF but continues throughout the German diaspora. Cultural engagement with Germany in Australia is mainly driven by Germans living in Australia and by various networks within this diaspora. Local German clubs, such as the Tivoli Club in Melbourne and the Concordia Club in Sydney, provide opportunities for Germans to celebrate their culture. Events such as the Oktoberfest, a German Christmas and German Easter provide German Gemütlichkeit (a term that conveys a feeling of warmth, snugness and homeyness) for the German community. These clubs arguably portray a static image of Germany, fixed on the perception of older settlers rather than the image of a modern and diverse Germany that the GI promotes (Tampke 149). Cultural portrayals of Germany by the German clubs and the GI clash, one reaffirming and the other counteracting German stereotypes.

German schools and churches play an important role in keeping German language and culture alive for the second and third generations of migrants. Deutsche Schule Melbourne and the German International School in Sydney offer bilingual education for German migrants and Australian children wanting to learn German as a second mother tongue. Other language schools provide an introduction to German culture through communicative language tuition for adults, and their students were well represented at the AFGF.

²⁵ The Hofbräuhaus is a traditionally Bavarian restaurant in both Melbourne and Sydney, offering Bavarian beer, food and entertainment.
The Protestant churches and the Temple Society\textsuperscript{26} in particular provide community services and welfare for the German communities in Australia. Both churches have a long history in Australia, having been founded by migrants in the 1850s (Jensz 40). These groups provide German religious education and German services, but also non-religious community events such as children’s groups, an annual lantern walk and classical concerts. The churches established a very German atmosphere for German families through German language and traditions, whilst the Temple Society provides welfare, mainly for the elderly. The German Welfare Society is another organisation (independent of any religious affiliations) that provides support for migrants or persons of German origin. The German Welfare Society was involved in the AFGF; the cultural manager of the GI in Melbourne was the administration manager of the Society from 2002 until 2015. The Society was included in the opening night gala and its members were invited to the festival.

Online communities, such as ‘Deutsche in Melbourne’, German-speaking meet-up groups and ‘Infobahn Australia’ in Sydney provide networks for anyone with a German affiliation. These groups share information on German events and acted as an important ‘word-of-mouse’\textsuperscript{27} marketing device for the AFGF. Online reports on the festival spread the word throughout the network of ‘hidden German migrants’, a term that refers to the aforementioned invisibility of German migrants in Australia, who tend not to form tight clusters in specific suburbs but instead assimilate quickly into Australian society (Jupp 65).

\textsuperscript{26} The Temple Society is a Christian community founded in 1861 in Germany. In the late 1860s, the Templers moved to Palestine and during WWI, many were deported to Australia, where they were interned for the duration of the war. After the war, Temple Societies were set up in Melbourne and Sydney (https://www.templesociety.org.au).

\textsuperscript{27} ‘Word-of-mouse’ describes the phenomenon of a particular message or recommendation being passed from an individual to his/her contacts through the Internet. It is a development of traditional word-of-mouth marketing.
2.2.4 Sponsorship

Beside diplomatic and community partners, the AFGF had a wide range of sponsors. The organisation of the film festival required large financial resources to pay for films, guests, space and marketing. As a public–private partnership, the AFGF collaborated with German multinational companies as well as local businesses with a Germany affiliation. According to Arpad Sölter, the collaboration with local business partners required adaptation to local conditions and had to fulfil the sponsorship requirements, such as media coverage and gala nights highlighting the individual marketing needs of sponsors (Sölter 18). From 2002 to 2015, the number of sponsors nearly doubled; they contributed $142,701 in cash and $171,775 in kind to the AFGF in 2015 (ibid.). Sponsors were tiered into gold, silver and bronze sponsorship packages, and one principal sponsor was awarded the naming rights.

The principal sponsor was significant not only for its financial contribution but to the branding of the festival. For the majority of festivals from 2002 to 2015, German car companies were the principal and/or naming right sponsors for the festival. From its inception in 2002–2003, BMW sponsored the BMW Festival of German Cinema. From 2004 to 2006, Volkswagen was the principal sponsor, but did not acquire the naming rights of the Festival of German Cinema. In 2007 Audi became the principal partner of the AFGF, providing continuing sponsorship until 2015 and giving the festival its name (the Audi Festival of German Films); the inclusion in the title of ‘German Films’ was an express demand of the festival’s partner organisation, Germanfilms. After losing Audi as its main sponsor as a result of the company’s fraud scandal, the 2016 AFGF was renamed the German Film Fest (Griegoschewski, 2017, pers. comm.).
Audi in particular clearly communicates that its reasons for sponsoring international cinematic events is aligned with its brand message *Vorsprung durch Technik* (advancement through technology). The company describes parallel technological developments in the innovations and sophistication of cars and cinema as its reason for sponsoring cinematic events. Audi also sponsors the Berlin International Film Festival and the St George Open Air Cinema in Sydney (Audi Magazin, n.p.). In return for its sponsorship, Audi not only had the naming rights for the AFGF, translating to media exposure, but received tickets to the opening night, product placement (the festival car) and advertising space in the pre-film ad reel and in the cinema.

The last principal sponsor of the AFGF (in 2016) was Henkell Brothers, a local property and wine company with strong philanthropic involvement in the German cultural scene in Australia. Other German companies with a presence in Australia were secondary sponsors. For these companies, the AFGF provided a media outlet, as well as brand placement at an event that aligned with their brand values and gave exposure to potential customers. For companies, the AFGF provided exposure to potential customers and strengthens German branding. In 2017 Germany topped Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index, meaning it is the country with the best industrial image and strongest national brand. The Nation Brands Index takes into account six categories (people, governance, exports, tourism, investment and immigration, and culture and heritage) to draw conclusions on the general attitudes towards a country. For Germany in particular, its ranking illustrates a move away from postwar perceptions and together with its score on the Good Country index, in which Germany was ranked 5th in 2017, illustrates its perception as a stable democracy contributing significantly to world order (Anholt, *The Good Country*). This means that being
recognised as a German brand is a positive attribute that adds to the perceived value of ‘made in Germany’ as signalling reliability and high quality (Mühlbauer 8). Sponsorship thus helps brands to strengthen their brand values while simultaneously contributing vital funds and support for the festival.

2.3 Philosophical Background for the AFGF

The AFGF, since its inception, provided a meeting place for all people in Australia with an interest in or affiliation to Germany. German migrants, students of German, the German departments of universities and German companies continue to play an integral part in the festival. The AFGF was the largest German cultural event in Australia and acted as a bridge between the two countries (Sölter, AFGF 2013 opening speech). Although not the oldest German film festival, the AFGF was the largest outside Germany and therefore a flagship for festivals of German film (ibid.). Ralf Eppeneder, the former CEO of GI Australia, inaugurated the AFGF in 2002 based on a strong belief in the power of cinema to connect people with emotional ties created through the shared experience of watching an engaging film (Eppeneder, 2014, pers. comm.).

Eppeneder’s philosophical approach was aligned with Hilmar Hoffmann’s proclamation of a Kultur für Alle that sees cinema as a tool for sharing culture (Schneider, “Cultural Diplomacy” 209). Hoffmann was the CEO of the GI in Germany from 1993 to 2002, an enthusiastic supporter of German film and the founder of the international short-film festival in Oberhausen, the birthplace of German auteur cinema. Eppeneder founded the AFGF with a similar objective to Hoffmann’s – to provide access to German film and culture to all Australians (Ralf Eppeneder, 2014, pers. comm.).
The CEO of GI Australia during 2011-15, Arpad Sölter, presided over a shift towards more mainstream films for the AFGF. This approach was an interpretation of Hoffmann’s ambition to make culture accessible as a call for less challenging culture and de-emphasising ‘cultural education’. For Hoffmann, the advantage cinema has over other forms of ‘high culture’ is its repeatability and transportability, not its greater accessibility (Hoffmann 215). In Hoffmann’s key text *Kultur für Alle: Perspektiven und Modelle*, he emphasised the importance of the ability to comprehend culture as the precondition for any successful cultural diplomacy. In the context of the AFGF, this relates to the different national context for the screening of German films and the surrounding events that provide cultural context, information and a space for discussion:

[…] Um kulturelle Teilhabe dauerhaft zu ermöglichen, muss der Zugang zu pädagogischen Hilfen für diejenigen erleichtert werden, die ohne Vermittlung so klug blieben wie zuvor; […] wer solche Vermittlungsversuche als Pädagogisierung verteuftelt, verkennt, dass die traditionellen Eliten in Schule und Familie ja auch diverse Hilfen erhielten, bevor sie zu ‘Kennern’ wurden. (Scheytt 27)

[…] In order to allow for cultural participation, the access to pedagogical help has to be facilitated for those who, without mediation, would remain as smart as before; […] those who disparage this mediation as ‘overly didactic’ misjudge that the traditional elites in schools and families also received various help before they became ‘experts’. (My translation)
2.4 Historical Overview of the AFGF

The AFGF commenced in 2002, screening 17 films in the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) in Melbourne and Sydney. The first festival selected *Das Experiment/The Experiment* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2001), starring Moritz Bleibtreu, as the opening night film, and featured an opening statement from Bleibtreu that was read out on opening night. From the outset, an emphasis was placed on screening a variety of films and to showcase Germany in line with the MFA guidelines (to present an authentic image of Germany representing its multifaceted culture and history) (Denscheilmann 86).

Since its inception the AFGF grew substantially in terms of numbers of films and screening locations and audience sizes (see Figures 5 and 6). In 2004, the GI’s Sydney Director, Roland Goll and its Melbourne Director, Renate Elsaesser, co-directed the festival and added Brisbane as a new location; Canberra was added at the request of the German Embassy the following year.

![Figure 5: AFGF Visitors 2007–15 (source: Goethe-Institut)](image-url)
In 2006, Klaus Krischok took over as the festival director and continued in this role until 2011. The new director moved the festival from ACMI to Palace Cinemas\textsuperscript{28} in 2007 and secured ongoing financial support from Audi as the new major sponsor. In 2010, Adelaide was added as the fifth AFGF location. In 2011 the AFGF celebrated a very successful first 10 years, and Klaus Krischok handed over the directorship to Arpad Sölter. With the move from the ACMI to Palace Cinemas, the AFGF became firmly situated in the ‘circuit of national film festivals touring Australia’ (Mosig 137).

Under Arpad Sölter the festival continued to grow, striving to meet its objective of reaching large numbers of Australians. In 2013, 46 films were screened over 14 days in eight Australian cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Newcastle, Byron Bay, Perth and Canberra). There were some pragmatic reasons for this expansion, such as the more effective use of travel time and finances for directors brought from Germany to Australia (Gabriele Urban, GI cultural manager, 2013, pers. comm.).

\textsuperscript{28}The Palace Cinema group is an Australian art house cinema chain and distributor. It was founded in the 1960s to provide a ‘mature and sophisticated premium cinema experience’ to Australian audiences in 20 cinemas across Australia.
Nevertheless, in 2014 the festival returned to five locations in order to minimise logistical difficulties and organisers’ workload, as well as the number of screenings per film in order to maximise the sale potential of German films to Australian distributors (Rissenbeek, 2014, pers. comm.). This development represented a compromise between the goals of the two main organisers: GI Australia wants to display German film to the widest possible audience, and Germanfilms seeks to sell new films to the Australian market. For Germanfilms, every screening after opening reduces the ability to sell the film to a local distributor. A compromise was therefore arrived at with a maximum of four screenings per film in Australia.

The festival reached a new milestone in 2015 by screening 51 films, and ran 10 special events. However, 2016 was the AFGF’s last year under Sonja Griegoschewski as the CEO of GI Australia, and faced the challenge of losing Audi as the principal sponsor. Due to financial uncertainty and restrictions, the festival moved from May to November 2016 and screened only 36 films in four cities. The GI and Germanfilms then decided to cease the AFGF and instead screen German films as part of other film festivals (Griegoschewski, 2017, pers.comm). This decision highlights a change in the direction of GI Australia’s cultural diplomacy from representation of Germany to partnerships with Australian organisations. It also illustrates the independence of each national GI’s cultural program, as the decision has not been repeated at the GI in Germany, nor in the Asia-Pacific region. Other arguments for discontinuing the festival were the large additional workload it imposed on GI staff and the large numbers of Germans visiting the festival, which limited its reach in terms of Australian audiences.
2.5 Organisation and Curatorship of the AFGF

The target demographic for the AFGF is outlined in the guidelines produced by the GI in Munich, which identify ‘Germanophile’ locals as well as individuals with a ‘multiplier effect’ as their core target group (Mosig 104). According to Arpad Sölter, the AFGF’s audience was a diverse combination of German migrants whose families had come to Australia over recent decades and Australians with an interest in German or film festivals in general (ibid. 321). The large German diaspora in Australia results from the long history of German immigration to Australia and was accounted for in the programming.

The festival director was responsible for key programming decisions, and it was therefore his or her responsibility to choose the films and marketing channels to attract a specific target audience (Tampke 4). This followed the GI’s process of decentralisation and regionalisation in 2008, making GIs responsible for their cultural policies and themes within an allocated budget (Galvin n.p.). For film festivals, this means that regional offices can productively react to local market research and trends as well as decide on their own themes and desired audience demographics. To achieve this, the GI headquarters in Munich encourages local GIs to form an independent jury of GI staff and local film experts (ibid.). For the AFGF, the films to be screened were selected by a jury, in 2014 consisting of the CEO of GI Australia, Arpad Sölter, the managing director of Germanfilms, Marietta Rissenbeek, Australian film critic Richard Kuipers and Melbourne-based film critic Peter Krausz. This might seem a small number of decision-makers for an event aimed at representing German cinema, but it was in line with the organisation of comparable festivals (ibid.).

Films selected for the festival had to fulfil the key demands of both major stakeholders: showcasing Germany and German culture to the world and presenting
the potential of the films to be successful in the Australian market in their own right. This in turn fed back into the original aim of representing Germany, with Australian viewers of German films multiplying when a general release allowed screening in cinemas around the country following the AFGF. A screening on free-to-air TV, especially via SBS\textsuperscript{29} with its expansive range of international film, has an even greater multiplier effect (Mosig 96). To aid with pre-selection, GermanFilms recommends films to the GI for review based on market potential, quality standards and their directors. In addition, production companies and directors can send their screeners directly to the GI; this is a particularly popular way for unknown directors to get exposure for their films (Urban, 2013, pers. comm.).

The GI CEO always had a defining effect on the festival, and this was particularly evident in changes that occurred when a new CEO became festival director (Urban, 2013, pers. comm.). It could be argued, for example, that whilst the former CEO, Klaus Krishok, targeted special events towards a more academic and culturally oriented audience, the following CEO (2012–15) aimed at attracting a wider demographic range by focusing instead on more accessible events. Development of curated time-events and opening night films also reflected this shift away from academia and diplomacy and towards press, sponsors and distributors (Herrschner 124-141).

Alongside the film festival director, the jury for film selection and the local GI team in Melbourne and Sydney, the AFGF relied heavily on German volunteers who came to Australia for three months on an unpaid internship. The volunteers did much of the administrative work before the festival and were present at every screening during the

\textsuperscript{29}SBS is Australia’s Special Broadcasting Service. It was founded to provide Australians of all ages, cultural backgrounds and/or language skills access to ‘high quality, independent, culturally-relevant Australian media’ (https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/our-story).
AFGF. Unfamiliar with the localities, guests, sponsors and agreements of previous years, the volunteers contributed their perspectives from Germany to the festival and much of the knowledge and networks established during previous years was lost. Volunteers often contributed significantly to the organisation of special events, but lacking local knowledge found it difficult to program events that attracted Australian audiences and communicate new information on a contemporary *Deutschlandbild*.

### 2.6 Thematic Categories

From 2002 to 2016, 387 films were screened in the AFGF. Most films (278) were dramas; the remainder were comedies (72) and documentaries (37). According to Gabi Urban, GI’s cultural manager in Melbourne, the curating of documentaries was one of the defining features of this festival and emblematic of Germany’s cultural diplomacy. Documentaries provide a ‘direct connection to Germany and allow for real insights into its culture and history’ (Urban, 2013, pers. comm.). They provide vignettes of German life, with the topics of the GDR and ‘civil responsibility’ forming a thematic focus. Documentaries were often framed by a time-event such as a post-film Q&A or panel discussion, reaffirming them as an important part of the AFGF’s cultural diplomacy.

As mentioned before, in this thesis I pay particular attention to the representation of three themes: the world wars, the GDR and multicultural Germany. This selection was based on the themes in the films and special events over the lifetime of the AFGF, as well as the MFA’s thematic guidelines. These three categories featured strongly in press reviews of the AFGF, and thus attracted increased media exposure in the wider Australian public. Their frequent embedding into time-events also makes them an interesting subject of enquiry in regards to the wider field of scholarship of
film festivals. Films with a unique contribution to the festival’s aims of cultural diplomacy were those with a special event attached to them, those programmed as opening or closing night films and those that were independently programmed by the GI for their particular message.

2.6.1 The Wars

The representation of war – in particular the two world wars – is vastly different in Germany and Australia. As opponents in both wars, the rhetoric and emotional value attributed to the wars differs vastly (Williams 8). Whilst Australia’s Anzac\textsuperscript{30} tradition forms part of the founding myth of the country and is cause for an annual celebration of nationhood, the German commemoration of war is tied to the annual \textit{Volkstraupertag} (the national day of mourning). For the GI, this task presents the challenge of representing the German account of this memory in a sensitive manner that encourages an open discussion. Unsurprisingly, the wars and their legacy featured significantly in the AFGF. Festival director Sölter stated in an interview with SBS that he chose to include films that refer directly to the German Nazi past, as he sees them as ‘representing the German Zeitgeist in a profound way’ (Galvin n.p.). The Third Reich, its legacy and \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung} form a major part of the international imaginary of Germany and its discussion is one of the GI’s objectives (\textit{Rahmenvertrag} 14). This discussion takes place not only in films directly screening the Third Reich, but in films emphasising the importance of a civil society and human rights; both AFGF organisers and my focus group participants made this connection, and I therefore explore these topics in conjunction in this thesis. The legacy of WWI

\textsuperscript{30} Anzac was the name given to to a combined force of First Australian Imperial Force and New Zealand Army during WWI. The commemoration of Anzac forms part of Australian national identity (Lake xi).
is also part of the discussion; in particular, the different opinions and memorialisation of war in Australia and Germany generated thought-provoking discussions following the centenary of WWI commemorated in the 2014 AFGF. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of films and events with a war theme, as well as an outline of the particularities of this topic in terms of cultural diplomacy.

2.6.2 The GDR

The GDR was represented in 44 films screened at the AFGF, with a special focus on DEFA films in 2009. In this retrospective, six films produced by the DEFA film studios were screened to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. (Five years later, the twenty-fifth anniversary was commemorated with a special ‘Fall of the Wall’ event – see chapter 5.) Of the 44 films, five documentaries aim to provide insight into life in the GDR, whilst four comedies are concerned with reunification. Exploring the GDR as a focus provides noteworthy insights into the construction of history through film and media. This is pertinent, as the GDR and reunification fall into the lifetime of the majority of AFGF audience members (according to my survey, most audience members are either between 24-35 or older than 55) and their recollections of the event influence their interpretation of film. The geographical distance to Germany and the firm alliance with the capitalist West during the Cold War makes Australia an interesting case in point in the discussion of representing the GDR as Ostalgie or a ‘second dictatorship’.

2.6.3 Multicultural Germany

Recent debates on multiculturalism, immigration and Leitkultur (core culture) in Germany and Australia make the topic of multicultural Germany relevant for cinematic diplomacy. With Australia and Germany both being countries of
immigration, the topic of multiculturalism makes for an interesting debate on shared and different experiences of multiculturalism and migration. For the German diaspora, accounts of migrants in Germany allow for a reflective parallel to their own migrant experiences in Australia. Multicultural themes have been central to 44 films screened as part of the AFGF (including 14 comedies – a higher proportion than for other themes). These films screen Germany in ways that do not conform to the stereotypes and expectations of many and form an integral part of contemporary German cinema (Hake & Mennel 5). Multicultural cinema provides for a discussion around cultural translation and cultural difference (Hargreaves 197). In the context of the AFGF, this translation is twofold: between the two cultural contexts represented in the film and between the German and the Australian contexts of the screening.

2.7 The AFGF as a Branch of German Cultural Diplomacy and Cinematic Diplomacy

At the heart of cultural and cinematic diplomacy is the dialogue between two countries. The AFGF provided the vehicle for such a communication through film, as well as the platform for communication between Germans and Australians before and after the screening. I analysed the AFGF as the nexus of Germany and Australia in terms of the event itself, the social spaces it created and the memories created and reignited by the festival. Programming statements, themed sections and retrospectives added cinematic value to the program whilst interviews, Q&As and panel discussions allowed for a two-way communication and a deeper engagement of the audience with the films. Film festival scholars argue that the position of film festivals as ‘out of the ordinary’ allows for unconventional and taboo-breaking topics and films (Galvin n.p.), increasing discussion and – in the AFGF – permitting the GI to show images of Germany that are unusual and thought-provoking.
Analysing film festivals as time-events reveals the different experiences of audiences seeing a film as a national release in a cinema or as part of a film festival (de Valck 43). During the latter films are not merely screened, rather the programming surrounding the festival allows the audience to experience the festival as a unique time-event (ibid. 174), thus adding to the value of the intercultural communication. At the AFGF, more weight was given to certain films by their programming as opening night films. These films were selected either for their expected commercial success or perceived cultural value; analysis of this selection was undertaken to enable insights into the themes the organisers perceived as important, contentious and popular (Urban, 2013, pers. comm.).

Whilst the curating of the AFGF added to its value as ‘authentically German’, the festival as a whole, its atmosphere, time-events and higher German audience than for average film screenings, entailed the creation of overlapping social spaces in the audience. Utilizing Henri Lefebvre’s notion of the production of space, film creates a social space in the present, about the past and for the future. Lefebvre argued that ‘social space is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object’ (73). The production of social space in the AFGF is thus threefold: the physical space of the cinema within Australia; the film and its curating creates a space curated and represented by the German organisers; and the audiences, who perceive and interpret the festival and by doing so, parts of Germany and German culture.

For the German diaspora, the AFGF fulfilled another role: the extension of their families’ heritage and a place for deeper understanding of their stories. Acting as an extension of their personal memory, the AFGF tapped into the postmemory of many Germans in the audience. For the German diaspora, the AFGF forms a bridge between
their past and present, as well as their two geographical ‘homes’. In particular, the GDR and the world wars are topics of familiar stories and/or taboos, and both topics are of great interest to the German diaspora. Family stories of the war and of the GDR are part of many German migrant families’ heritage, and the AFGF provided the framework to explore them and to add to them. Fictional films gave emotional understanding of the topics, whilst documentaries added factual knowledge.

The AFGF is also part of a cultural transfer between Germany and Australia. Jan and Aleida Assmann described the formation of collective memory in a German context, where the Holocaust and its terrors have become part of most individuals’ personal memories. A collective interpretation and understanding of culture and art is based on this collective memory. The transfer of art developed within this framework of collective understanding, and its transfer to another national context thus provides for interesting reinterpretations. This means that the interpretation and experience of the AFGF differed for the Australian audience and the German organisers. Social signifiers were different and often based on a shared collective memory as the key for the decoding of meanings. This disparity in understanding emphasises the role of the GI as a cultural broker and the need for interpretation through time-events.

The notions of collective memory creation and interpretation through the AFGF embedded the festival in the mapping process of German culture and history. This means that the AFGF created an image of Germany for the German diaspora, as well as for the Australian audience that honours the AFGF’s role as a ‘cinematic cartographer’. In order to analyse this role and the dialogue the AFGF created, I explored the aforementioned themes (the wars, the GDR and multicultural Germany) in detail.
2.8 Methodology

In order to analyse the AFGF as a tool of cinematic and cultural diplomacy, I first analyse the process of cultural mapping undertaken by organisers and audiences. I apply multiple methodological approaches to understand the processes of intercultural communication through the AFGF and the nexus of representation and audience perception. In general, the methodology chosen for this research follows the work of film festival researchers such as Iordanova and Rhyne, Wong, de Valck and Stringer, including the approach to film festivals taken in *Film Festival Yearbooks 1-5* (Iordanova & Cheung, “Film Festival Yearbook 2”; Iordanova & Rhyne, “Film Festival Yearbook 1”; Iordanova & Torchin, “Film Festival Yearbook 4”; Marlow-Mann, *Archival Film Festivals*) and in particular Mosig’s study of the GI as a global distributor of German film (“Goethe-Institut e.V”). In his study, Mosig employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, analysing data on visitation numbers, funding and films distributed through the GI, as well as conducting and analysing in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of the GI. His aim is consistent with mine in seeking a comprehensive understanding of the global work of the GI and its Department of Film and its role in influencing the global perception of German film. I employ a combination of surveys, interviews and focus groups and a thematic content analysis of film and events, as Cindy Wong advocates in her work on the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

2.8.1 Branches of Analysis

As Litosseliti (22) suggests, multiple complementary approaches can be employed in order to achieve more representative results. Because I study the festival between its inception in 2002 and discontinuation in late 2016, and as an in-depth case study over 2013–15, I take into account archival data such as press reviews, press releases and
the GI’s annual publicity reports about the AFGF; primary data such as key stakeholder interviews, audience questionnaires and audience focus group interviews; and a thematic as well as content analysis of the films screened. The branches of analysis focus on two parts: the GI and Germanfilms’ representation of Germany through the AFGF in film and curatorship, and the reception of the AFGF by the audience and media.

2.8.1.1 Representation

As described earlier, the GI organised the AFGF in collaboration with Germanfilms. For Germanfilms, the AFGF provided a platform for the distribution of German films in Australia and thus brought a commercial perspective to the AFGF. For the GI, representation of German culture was the AFGF’s purpose. To explore this tension and its effects, I scrutinise both organisations’ curatorship of the AFGF and representation of Germany though the AFGF by conducting a thematic film and event analysis, and semi-structured key-stakeholder interviews.

Film Analysis

This aspect of the analysis focuses primarily on themes and genres of the broad range of films shown at the AFGF, rather than an in-depth cinematic analysis of individual films, although it includes a more extensive discussion of key films such as opening night films. Films are organised into the aforementioned themes that are then analysed in accordance with specific social or historical developments. The basic principle of thematic film analysis, as described by Hockings in his book on the principles of visual anthropology, is that any film, like culture more broadly, ‘will exhibit a pattern that consists of recurrent thematic elements that stand to each other in characteristic, recurrent ways’ (55). For my study, this means an analysis of all films screened as
part of the AFGF 2002–16 according to three thematic categories (the wars, the GDR and multicultural Germany).

Semi-Structured Interviews with Key Stakeholders
In order to explore the tension between the objectives of the AFGF’s key organisers – on the one hand the commercial objectives of Germanfilms, on the other the cultural mandate of the GI – I conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from both institutions in Germany and Australia. Semi-structured interviews allow for comparable results due to a shared set of key questions posed to every interviewee, whilst at the same time allowing the conversation to flow and giving the individual respondents some latitude and freedom to talk about their areas of interest and expertise. This allows the conversation to go in unexpected directions, and thus explore additional topics (Hesse-Biber, Nagy & Leavy 102). Conducting interviews in Germany as well as in Australia was important, because it allows me to contextualise the AFGF into the global framework of the GI.

In Germany, I interviewed Klaus Krischok and Ralf Eppeneder (former CEOs of GI Australia) and Marietta Rissenbeek (managing director of Germanfilms). In Australia, I interviewed Gabi Urban (cultural officer at GI Melbourne), Arpad Sölter (former CEO of GI Australia and AFGF director 2012–15), Peter Krausz (Australian film critic and member of the AFGF film selection jury) and Sonja Griegoschewski (CEO of GI Australia since 2016).

Analysing the AFGF as a Time-Event and Erfahrungsraum
As indicated earlier, Hurch analyses film festivals as an Erfahrungsraum (a space of experience) providing the audience with an experience, rather just a film (28-30). In a similar stance, Harbord sees film festivals as time-events, emphasizing the experience of temporality specific to film festivals (“Film Festivals – Time Event”, 40-46). For
both, film festivals differentiate themselves from routine cinema sessions through their temporality as a unique event. This is accentuated by the events surrounding the film festival, creating a unique atmosphere connected to a specific place and time.

Following Stringer’s and Harbord’s research, I place analytical emphasis on the special events, Q&As, the opening and closing night films, and the retrospectives that formed part of the AFGF. I scrutinise these events according to the themes emphasised and the interpretations of Germany and Germanness offered. ‘Special events’ at the AFGF were events that highlighted certain films, before or after the screening. An analysis of the films selected for such events, and the content of these events, allows for conclusions concerning the themes the GI wished to showcase. The same applies to the opening and closing night films, as both received extended media coverage and therefore were an important platform for cultural diplomacy.

2.8.1.2 Reception

The second branch of analysis of the AFGF complements the first, and involves scrutinising the Australian audience’s reception of Germany, German culture and German film through the festival. Hannah Slavik describes cultural diplomacy as a two-way communication, implying the importance of a complementary representation and reception (17). The two-way symmetrical model of public diplomacy entails feedback on reception as crucial to the success of any initiative (Nelson & Izadi 342).

To analyse the reception of the AFGF in Australia, I use three resources: media/film reviews about the AFGF and festival films in Australia, audience questionnaires, and focus groups.

Media and Film Reviews

A close reading of media coverage provides insight into the wider reception of the AFGF and perceptions of Germany and German culture in Australia. Reviews of
historic films are useful for the analysis of the Australian audience’s perceptions of Germany’s past and its influence on the present, whilst an analysis of the GI’s publicity reports provide insights into that organisation’s desired representation of these issues.

**Audience Questionnaire**

Questionnaires enable collection of a large amount of data in a short time and in a relatively unbiased and straightforward way. I use questionnaires (see Appendix) to collect data from AFGF audiences. For this, I attended screenings in Sydney and Melbourne, introduced my study and asked audience members to fill out my questionnaire. When I was unable to attend personally, volunteers of the GI helped and handed my questionnaires to audiences when leaving the cinema. Through this personal engagement between me, or the volunteers and the audiences, the response rate to the questionnaires was good and I could also recruit participants for the focus groups during this process. During the 2013 AFGF 290 questionnaires were filled out, and during the 2014 AFGF an additional 116. The questionnaire contains 15 questions on audience demographic, motivation to visit the AFGF, connections to Germany and reflections on the film and the AFGF. After collecting the data, I conducted a descriptive analysis of the questionnaires using SPSS Statistics to generate averages, means and ranges. Through this, the questionnaires generated important demographic data, as well as ratings of the films screened.

**Focus group interviews**

Results gained from focus group interviews (see appendix for interview guide) are not generalisable, as they are not replicable and do not aim for a representative sample, but rather deeper insight into previously explored topic areas (Fern 124). The rationale for conducting focus group interviews is to identify salient responses as part
of a group discussion (and results are thus indicative rather than representative). The focus group environment allows and encourages participants to share perceptions, opinions and point of views (Krueger & Casey 14). Each conversation has a specific thematic focus and participants are specifically selected with respect to it. In this study, focus groups form an extension to the questionnaire, adding personal and in-depth data. I conducted four focus group interviews with three to five participants each during and shortly after the AFGF 2014. This group size allows for group discussion at the same time as allowing all participants to share their experiences thoroughly (ibid. 73). To analyse focus group data, I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to highlight emergent themes. For both, the audience survey and the focus groups I obtained the ethics approval of the Universities Ethics Committee (see appendix for the plain language statement and informed consent form).
3 Chapter 3: Analysing the AFGF as Cultural Diplomacy

As mentioned previously, Lefebvre’s tripartite of space provides the theoretical framework for the analysis of data gained through qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis is designed to answer the overarching research question of how the AFGF acted a tool of cultural and cinematic diplomacy and the specific questions of how the world wars, the GDR and multiculturalism in Germany were represented and perceived through the AFGF. I scrutinise each of these three thematic categories using an adaptation of Lefebvre’s tripartite of space to denote the film festival space. These three parts form the film festival space for the analysis of the AFGF, and are illustrated in Figure 7 below.

![Figure 7: Lefebvre’s Triad of Space adapted to the AFGF (adapted from Levebvre)](image)

Lefebvre’s production of social space provides a suitable basis for this analysis, insofar as it promotes the notions of bi-location, mental location and acceptance of the idea of an individually fabricated understanding of space. In the context of the AFGF, the three spaces are adapted to the physical space – the cinema and the country, the curated space – the representation of Germany and Germanness through film and
event, and the audience space – their perceptions of the films and events. In addition to Lefebvre’s adapted tripartite of space, I apply an additional theoretical framework to each of the thematic categories that emphasises its specific opportunities and challenges. These theoretical approaches are memory studies for the chapter on wars, Sabrow’s concept of Erinnerungsorte for the analysis of the GDR, and cinematic cartography for the chapter on German multiculturalism. Before presenting a discussion of the individual thematic categories, in the following section I contextualise the AFGF in its physical, social and historical space in Australia in accordance with the three festival spaces.

3.1 Space 1: German Cinema in Australia

The first space of the festival describes its physical location in a cinema in Australia. This is significant, as the national context forms the basis or sounding board for films screened during the festival and the cinema influences the audience demographic through its positioning in the wider cinema landscape in Australia. Being held at Palace Cinemas (apart from three years, when it was held at ACMI in Melbourne) positioned the AFGF within the Australian art-house cinema landscape. Palace Cinema is a family-owned cinema chain, specialising in European and art-house cinema. In its mission statement the cinema group highlights its sophistication, as well as the importance of screening foreign film by describing itself as ‘an experience of places we long to be: countries, cultures, communities and architecturally significant cinema spaces’ (Palace Cinemas n.p.).

The Palace Cinema group was founded in the early 1960s by Antonio Zeccola, an Italian migrant to Melbourne, and from its inception as a small community cinema screening in local town halls, its focus on screening European cinema in Australia has
not shifted significantly. The cinema still programs mainly European film and with its locations in affluent suburbs with a well-educated demographic, Palace Cinema provides high-quality films to a discerning audience. The success of this concept is visible in its continuing expansion and illustrates a demand for European cinema in Australia. Today Palace Cinema is the largest art-house cinema group in Australia with 134 screens across 22 cinemas in seven cities.

Palace Cinema has been instrumental in the creation of a film festival circuit, as the group provides streamlined transport of films, marketing, and encourages film festivals to expand into all the capital cities of Australia. Particular to the AFGF is its situation in the wider film festival circuit in Australia (K. Stevens 79). Over the recent years, a busy film festival calendar has emerged on this circuit including many ethnic film festivals. This continuous availability of ethnic film festivals influenced the audience demographics of the AFGF, preventing it from being a solely German community event and attracting a wider cinephile public.

Film Festival researcher Marjike de Valck describes this trend in the audience and objectives of international film festivals in her book *From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. In my survey, about 15% of visitors to the AFGF state that they visited ‘all other festivals’, and could therefore be classified as among the urban cinephilia of Melbourne and Sydney. Here, I use the term ‘cinephilia’ based on MacCabe’s notion of an ‘omniscient cinephile’ (152) that is central to the slightly elitist concept of cinephilia, as well as to the universal appreciation of the cinematic experience. In the German context of the AFGF, this alludes to the binary between the

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31 In 2017, Palace Cinema owned cinemas in Melbourne (Palace Balwyn, Palace Brighton Bay, Palace Cinema Como, Palace Dendy Brighton, Palace Westgarth, The Astor Theatre, The Kino), Sydney (Chauvel Cinema, Palace Central & Platinum Sydney, Palace Norton Street, Palace Verona), Brisbane (Palace Barracks, Palace Centro Brisbane), Adelaide (Palace Nova Prospect, Palace Nova Eastend), Canberra (Palace Electric), Perth (Luna Palace) and Byron Bay (Palace Byron Bay).
understanding of high culture according to the Frankfurt school and Rentschler’s understanding of New German Cinema as a ‘cinema of affluence’ (261). In an Australian context, German film has a higher cultural value than ‘ordinary Hollywood cinema’ (as my focus groups and audience survey showed), thus fostering an atmosphere of elitist cinephilia for the urban populations of Australia. The Australian film festival circuit is more than a distribution channel for European films, but also part of an elitist cultural scene in the more affluent suburbs of Australia’s major cities.

3.1.1 The Australian Film Circuit

The AFGF was part of the Australian film circuit. Whilst some films remain within the film festival circuit, usually starting at one of the larger A or B festivals and then circulating according to genre, topic or nationality, other films leave the circuit once they have obtained a general release. This is the case for some films that premiered in Australia as part of the AFGF and were subsequently bought by an Australian distributor. This aspect of the festival was the motivation for Germanfilms’ involvement and to hold a distributor screening separate to the public AFGF screenings.

Nevertheless, only small numbers of films were sold to distributors through the festival, indicating the limited function of the AFGF as a marketplace. Several factors hinder the AFGF’s commercial function. Firstly, its status as an ethnic or language-based film festival meant that its film selection was often limited by larger festivals, especially the Melbourne International Film Festival and the Sydney International Film Festival, premiering films that are subsequently unavailable for the AFGF. This is the case for many films with commercial potential, such as Christian Petzold’s Barbara (2012) and Australian director Cate Shortland’s Lore (2013). Competition
between other identity-based festivals, in particular the Jewish Film Festival, further limited the curatorial freedom of the AFGF.

Another factor unique to the Australian film festival circuit is that cinema companies (such as Palace Cinema) are simultaneously film festival organisers, cinema chains and national distributors. Film festivals form a major part of these cinema groups’ positioning in the market and programming, with some festivals being organised by cultural organisations, such as the GI or the Alliance Française, whilst Palace Cinema organises other ethnic film festivals without affiliations with cultural organisations. Film festivals here function in a limited form as a marketplace, but more as a testing ground for the national market. After a film festival, the cinema groups release the most successful and promising films in their general programming, or as so-called encore screenings with a small number of screenings outside the festival. The value of such an arrangement is visible in the newly established film festivals department of Palace Cinema and the growing number of film festivals organised without involvement of the cultural diaspora. The Volvo Scandinavian Film Festival is a case in point, having been inaugurated in 2015 by Palace Cinema to showcase Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic Cinema in Australia at the same time as Nordic film is experiencing increasing popularity in the country (Palace Cinemas “Scandinavian Film Festival” n.p.). Subsequent to the Scandinavian Film Festival the most popular films are released nationwide through Palace Cinemas.

For the AFGF, the collaboration with Palace was both positive and limiting. It was positive in terms of the marketing reach and positioning of the cinema in the market, as it positioned the AFGF as a film festival for a well-educated and affluent demographic and helped reach non-German audiences. However, the collaboration also meant that only 40% of profits from ticket sales went to the GI and that the
AFGF was in competition not only with other film festivals but with other art-house cinema groups (Sölter, 2015, pers. comm). Due to the relatively small market for German language films in Australia, many global distributors only allowed for a few screenings during the AFGF to avoid cannibalising future market potential (Rissenbeek, 2014, pers. comm). This limit does not apply to films screened during Palace-organised film festivals, as the festival was the first part of a potential nationwide release through Palace Cinemas.

The AFGF was thus situated in a relatively complex situation between global and local distributors, German and Australian audiences, and as part of a cinephile and europhile film festival circuit driven by Palace Cinemas. The GI had to satisfy the needs of its two major partners, Germanfilms and Palace Cinemas, as well as fulfil its cultural mandate to represent Germany and Germanness in Australia. This curatorial work forms space 2 of this analysis in chapters 3-6.

3.2 Space 2: Cultural Diplomatic Effort through Edutainment

The second representational or curated space forms the response to the first space, consisting of the curating of the AFGF by its German organisers. I conducted stakeholder interviews with staff members of the GI, Palace Cinemas and Germanfilms to understand the GI’s curatorship of the AFGF and provide insights into the motivations and perspectives of the three partner organisations. Edutainment emerged as a useful concept in this discussion, as it helps to situate the AFGF on a spectrum of its cultural diplomatic and educating objective, but also within the commercial motivations of screening popular German film in Australia. In a similar stance, Cindy Wong places film festivals between pedagogy, art and entertainment (160). She highlights the film festival atmosphere as a factor in the character a film
gains and in the case of the AFGF, the films, the curating of time-events and the audiences can significantly alter the location of a film on the spectrum between entertainment and education.

The AFGF had a clear focus on political, social and cultural articulations that promote German cinema, Germany and social issues important to Germany and the GI, thereby adding an educating dimension to the AFGF. Similarly, a debate about cinema as highbrow or lowbrow entertainment influenced the GI’s curatorial decisions, sometimes countered by the economic pressures of filling seats with light and entertaining programming. Over the years since its inception, the AFGF shifted from more cinematic and educational films toward a less didactic and more events-based focus. This is particularly visible in the time-events programmed in each year. Particularly after 2013, under the leadership of film festival director Arpad Sölter, the AFGF employed less didactic cultural diplomacy. In accordance with the aforementioned phases of film festival development\textsuperscript{32}, the AFGF moved from films and events focusing on German cinematic culture to special events contextualising and discussing German history, then to increasingly cosmopolitan festival events with a focus on national commonalities rather than differences (de Valck 19). Nikos Papastergiadis suggests the concept of aesthetic cosmopolitanisms, in which art provides the \textit{stoa} – or the public sphere – for cosmopolitan citizenship (220-232). For the AFGF, this meant that all spaces of the festival came together in a public sphere that mapped German culture for an Australian audience by creating space for participation, immersion and comparison.

\textsuperscript{32} De Valck described three historical phases of film festival development: national representation in the early postwar decades, followed by the age of the festival director, to an increasing internationalisation, professionalisation and institutionalisation since the 1990s (19).
As the GI was, in its film selection for the AFGF, limited by various external factors and partners, the curating of time-events is a useful focus when analysing its curatorial work. Examination of the special events the GI staged as part of the AFGF from 2002–16 gives insights into the thematic focus of the AFGF in general and each festival director in particular. In conjunction with an analysis of all films screened during this period, I use this list to form the three thematic categories underpinning my approach.

In reviewing the time-events staged at the AFGF from 2002 to 2016, shifts in programming and curatorial focus became clear, as well as the factors limiting the curatorial work of the GI. Major limiting factors are the availability of films and of festival guests. As a relatively small film festival, the AFGF was restricted in its programming by distributors and other, larger film festivals (as noted earlier). Due to the busy calendars of many actors and directors, and due to the geographical distance between the AFGF and Germany, it was sometimes challenging to find prominent special guests to attend the AFGF (Urban, 2016, pers. comm). Increasing competition between festivals was also apparent in the type of guests present at the AFGF. In its early years the festival was able to invite Germany’s most prominent actors and directors, such as Daniel Brühl in 2002 and Dani Levy in 2005, whilst in the later years of the festival guests were either local or lesser-known German actors and directors.

Time-events, together with guest appearances and the selection of the opening night films in each year, provide insight into the curatorial work of the GI, as well as the role of each film festival director in the programming. The director is significant because the AFGF operated independently of the GI in Munich, particularly after a restructuring in 2008 that gave complete curatorial and financial independence to each
region. This meant that GI Australia was financially accountable to the regional head office in Jakarta, but independent in its programming.

In the following section, I scrutinise the curatorial work of each festival director from 2002–16 in regard to the opening night films and time-events that they staged at the AFGF. In doing so, the aforementioned shifts in programming and curatorial work become clear, as does a typography of time-events that illustrates the positioning of the AFGF on the spectrum between entertainment and education (edutainment). The section below is broken down according to the time that each festival director was active. Table 1 includes the years 2002 - 2005, when the AFGF was led by Ralf Eppeneder; Table 2, (2006-2011) summarises films and events during Klaus Krischok’s time as festival director. Arpad Sölter headed the AFGF from 2012-2015 (table 3) and Sonja Griegoschewski was the AFGF’s director in 2016 (table 4).
3.2.1 Film Festival Directors, Time Events and Opening Nights 2002–16

Table 1: Opening Nights and Time-events, AFGF 2002–05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening Night</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2002 | *Das Experiment* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2001) | 1. Retrospective with films starring Moritz Bleibtreu  
2. Screening of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) with live music by Aljoscha Zimmermann |
|      |               | 1. Cinematic time-event  
2. Cinematic time-event |
2. Robert Wiene’s *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari/The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) with live music |
|      |               | 1. Cinematic time-event  
2. Cinematic time-event |
| 2004 | *Das Wunder von Bern/The miracle of Bern* (Sönke Wortmann, 2003) | 1. Presentation of Arthur Hofer’s short film program |
|      |               | 1. Cinematic time-event |
2. Panel discussion on ‘Remastering the Past’ after Der Untergang (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2005) |
|      |               | 1. Cinematic time-event  
2. Topic: The Wars |

As noted earlier, Ralf Eppeneder founded the AFGF in 2002, with two objectives: to add a German film festival to the festival calendars of Melbourne and Sydney, and to showcase German cinematic culture and contemporary culture (Eppeneder, 2014, pers. comm.). Time-events under his leadership included retrospectives, refurbished films from the Weimar republic and silent films accompanied by an orchestra. These ‘cinematic time-events’ elaborated and expanded on films perceived to have particularly high cultural value. Particularly classic films were represented and
accompanied by live music, highlighting the unique character of a film festival. The selection of films in the programming during this time indicates a focus on highbrow entertainment and a positioning of the AFGF as a celebration of Germany as a cinematic nation with a long cinematic history. Eppeneder subsequently founded two other film festivals, in Russia and Estonia, following a similar model of cinematic diplomacy (Eppeneder, 2014, pers. comm).

The selection of large productions as opening night films illustrates a limited competition to other film festivals in Australia during the early years of the AFGF. In particular Good Bye, Lenin! won the Blue Angel Award at the Berlinale in February 2003 before premiering in Australia and Dani Levy’s Alles auf Zucker earned the German Film Award before being screened at the AFGF opening night in 2005.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening Night</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2006 | **Opening night:** *Die Letzten Tage der Sophie Scholl/Sophie Scholl – The Final Days* (Marc Rothemund, 2005) | 1. Fred Breinersdorfer’s introduction to *Die Letzten Tage der Sophie Scholl* (Marc Rothemund, 2005) highlighting the role of women in German resistance  
2. Panel discussion of ‘the future of Arthouse’ |
| 2007 | **Opening night:** *Vier Minuten/Four minutes* (Chris Kraus, 2006) | 1. Cinematic time-event |
| 2008 | **Opening night:** *Kirschblüten Hanami/Cherry Blossom – Hanami* (Doris Dörrie, 2007) | 1. Topic: The Wars  
2. Topic: The Wars |
| 2010 | **Opening night:** *Soul Kitchen* (Fatih Akin, 2009) | 1. Cinematic time-event  
2. Topic: The Wars |
| 2011 | **Opening night:** *Goethe* (Phillip Stölzl, 2010) | 1. Cinematic time-event |

*Vincent will Meer/Vincent wants to Sea* (Ralf Hüttner, 2010)

1. Festival guest Wim Wenders and the screening of ‘radical docs’
In 2006, Klaus Krischok became festival director and changed the festival’s direction towards a more educational event featuring contemporary German film. Fulfilling the cultural mandate of the GI for him also meant, to interpret films and embed them into expert discussions (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.). The opening film in 2006 – *Die Letzten Tage der Sophie Scholl* – and its embedding into a discussion on the wider historical issues of women in German resistance, as well as the panel discussion on German art-house cinema, set the tone for academic discussions of Germany’s past.

In a similar vein, panel discussions in 2008 after the screening of *Die Welle* (Dennis Gansel, 2007) and Robert Thalheim’s *Am Ende kommen Touristen* (2007) indicate a strong educational focus in the GI’s cinematic diplomacy during this time. Discussions engaged the audiences in the question of whether another totalitarian system would be possible again in Germany, and thereby introduced Australian audiences to the German concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. These time-events strongly reflect Krischok’s understanding of the GI as a cultural diplomatic organisation and of Germany as a country with a global responsibility (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.).

The opening night films from 2006 to 2011 reflect the growth of the AFGF into a nationwide film festival with expanding numbers of films and locations. The opening night films were by more prominent German directors than those of 2002–2005 (Table 1), starring more popular actors and already successful in the German domestic market. In 2011, the AFGF for the first time had to program different opening night films for different cities, with *Goethe* (Phillip Stölzl, 2010) opening the festival in Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide and Ralf Hüttner’s *Vincent will Meer/Vincent wants to Sea* in Melbourne and Perth. The choice of two opening films was due to screening
rights, as well as the logistics and timing of the opening nights, making it impossible to open five locations with the same film.

Table 3: Opening Nights and Time-events, AFGF 2012–15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Opening night:</th>
<th>Planned: events featuring</th>
<th>Time-event around</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>Hotel Lux</em> (Leander Haußmann, 2011)</td>
<td>‘strong women in history and cinema’, but films were unavailable due to competition with other film festivals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. <em>German Sons</em> (Phillipe Mora, 2012) and Q&amp;A with the director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Eastern Promises: <em>Ausgerechnet Sibirien/Lost in Siberia</em> (Ralph Hüttnner, 2012) and <em>Russendisko/Russian Disco</em> (Oliver Ziegenbalg, 2012) with entertainment and food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. <em>More than Honey</em> (Markus Imhoof, 2012), with Q&amp;A with director and beekeepers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. <em>Deutschland Singt/Sound of Heimat</em> (Arne Birkenstock, Jan Tengeler, 2012) with director and sing-along</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. <em>This Ain’t California</em> (2012) with skate event, Q&amp;A and party with director Marten Persiel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. The Fall of the Wall: <em>Einzelmänner/I will not lose</em> (Sandra Kaudelka, 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and *Die Familie/The Family* (Stefan Weinert, 2013) with food and entertainment

2. Horror Night: *Bela Kiss* (Lucien Förster, 2013) and Q&A with actor Angus McGruther

3. WWI Centenary: Reading performance of *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit/The Last Days of Mankind* and *Die Männer der Emden/Odyssey of Heroes* (Berengar Pfahl, 2012)


5. Oriental Night: *Exit Marrakech* (Caroline Link, 2013) and *Ummah – Unter Freunden/Ummah – Among Friends* (Cüneyt Kaya, 2013) with food and entertainment


1. *Faust* (FW Murnau, 1926) with life music by Thomas Köhner

2. Soulkitchen: Screening of Akin’s *Soul Kitchen* (2009) with food and entertainment in pop-up cinema

3. I am the Future: *Alphabet* (Erwin Wagenhofer, 2013) with panel discussion

4. Berlinale and Beyond: *Von Caligari zu Hitler/From Caligari to Hitler* (Rüdiger Suchsland, 2013) with panel discussion

5. Swiss Soirée: *Der Kreis/The Circle* (Stefan Haupt, 2014) and food and music

2. Time-event around festival guest

3. Topic: The Wars

4. Time-event around festival guest

5. Topic: multicultural Germany

1. Cinematic time-event

2. Topic: multicultural Germany

3. Expert panel extending on the film

4. Cinematic time-event

5. Food and film (sponsored by Swiss embassy)
Under the curatorship of Arpad Sölter (2012–15), the AFGF changed direction towards a more ‘lighthearted and less didactic approach of cultural diplomacy’ (2015, pers. comm.). Special events, such as a horror night or a Russian disco, were less connected to German culture than to the films screened. As such, the events did not interpret the films as artifact of culture, but as entertainment. Sölter enabled individual interpretation of film and culture, rather than conforming to more hierarchical and institutionalised interpretations typified by previous festival directors.

By emphasising German/Australian co-productions, the GI engaged in a form of cosmopolitan diplomacy (Gillespie & Webb 4). This was an example of a growing focus on Kulturaustausch in German cultural diplomacy, as well as on a contemporary understanding of cinematic diplomacy, that focuses on commonalities rather than differences. The move towards a more ‘edutaining’ festival also reflected Sölter’s idea that a film festival should include ‘glitz and glamour’ (Sölter, 2014, pers. comm.).

Under Sölter’s leadership, the AFGF expanded significantly in number of screening locations and films screened. The increase in locations was mainly due to the aforementioned involvement of Palace Cinema, which encouraged the festival to screen in most of its cinemas. In the increasingly competitive landscape of ethnic film festivals in Melbourne, the AFGF competed with other large festivals, in particular the French Film Festival under the auspices of the Alliance Française. This competition for the europhile and cinephile audiences in Australia was reflected in more entertaining and experiential screenings intended to fill the cinemas. This shift was also visible in the French film festival, which motivated the AFGF to shift direction further still.
Sonja Griegoschewski, the new CEO of GI Australia, led the final year of the AFGF in 2016. As mentioned previously, the year brought a particular challenge when car manufacturer Audi discontinued its sponsorship of the festival. As the naming-rights sponsor, Audi provided a significant part of the festival’s budget; the loss of income meant significantly less budget for curatorial work. The property investment firm Henkell Brothers, a local business with German heritage and a strong philanthropic involvement in the German–Australian cultural scene stepped in and made the festival possible, but financial insecurity was reflected in the programming and was central to the festivals’ discontinuation. However, the stated reason for the GI’s decision to discontinue the festival was the amount of work that a large film festival demands, thereby weakening other cultural events. According to Sonja Griegoschewski (2017,
pers. comm.), the GI should not act as a film festival organiser when its cultural mandate involves the representation of Germany through a diverse range of cultural engagements.

The AFGF 2016 was organised and held before the festival’s discontinuation was proposed, and followed the principle of *Gesundschrumpfen* (shrinking to become healthy) – shrinking the festival to become more doable and higher in quality (Griegoschwenki, 2017, pers. comm.). This can be seen particularly in the reduced number of screening locations (Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane) and the selection of fewer films (37, versus 51 in 2015). Fewer time-events were held to reduce workload and streamline the AFGF as a German language and culture film festival, focused on representing contemporary German cinema. Double screenings were highlighted in the programming as special events, but lacked curatorial framing.

3.3 **Space 3: Audience Perceptions**

The third space of the AFGF was the audience space and was defined in accordance to Lefebvre’s lived space. To generate data for the analysis of this space, I employed audience surveys and focus group interviews to understand how the audiences perceived films, the festival, Germany and Germanness. This third space is, according to Lefebvre (34), a social space and a byproduct of society. It sets up new values and perspectives and is therefore ‘the space of *connaissance* [knowledge], of less formal or more local forms of knowledge’ (Elden 190). For the analysis of a film festival as cultural diplomacy, these local forms of knowledge are important, as the curators and audiences often have different cultural backgrounds and therefore perceive films through different cultural lenses.
The third space was enabled by the AFGF as a ‘public sphere, in the sense of a public arena of citizen discourse and association’ (Wong 160). Wong stated that them-specific festivals can shape alternative public spheres; by doing so, the AFGF enabled grassroots discourse on Germany, inspired and guided by the GI, but increasingly free in its shape. Michael Warner’s (49-90) and Nancy Fraser’s (56) visions of counter-publics are particularly useful here, as the AFGF engaged audiences in a different dialogue than the larger and more business-focused festivals. Audience participation is crucial for the establishment of this dialogue and for the AFGF as a part of a *Kulturaustausch*. To enhance interactive participation, the AFGF was open to all, the ticket prices were not prohibitive and there was a ‘festival pass’ for specifically interested visitors. An audience award (the Golden Gnome) also provided an avenue for public participation, as did the festival’s Twitter and Facebook accounts.

To contextualise comments and perceptions of films and the festival by AFGF audiences, the following section provides information about audiences collected by the GI and through audience surveys. I was unable to attend all the film festival locations; therefore, most of the audience demographics presented here are for the festival’s main locations in Sydney and Melbourne.

### 3.3.1 Audience Demographics, 2014 and 2015

In Sydney and Melbourne in 2014 and 2015, young professionals aged 25–34 years and people aged over 55 years dominated the audience of the AFGF (Figure 8). More women than men visited the AFGF (see Figure 9: 62.2% of the audience in Sydney in

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33 In her essay “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” Nancy Fraser draws on Habermass public sphere and argues that the voices excluded or not part of the dominant discourse can form counterpublics. This means that is not one single, unitary public, but the public sphere consists of multiples, sometimes conflictual publics. For this research, the AFGF can be seen as part of such a counterpublic (Fraser 56).

34 Tickets to the AFGF are sold at the same price as standard cinema tickets at Palace Cinema (AUD 18). Exceptions are special event tickets, where prices range from AUD30-AUD70.
2014, and 63% and 69% in Melbourne in 2013 and 2014 respectively). Many attendees brought a non-German friend (25%) or their non-German partner (29%). Most of the audience was Australian-born (68%), which included Australians with German heritage and learners of German, followed by German citizens (20%). Germans and learners of German visiting the AFGF with their non-German friends and partners acted as a multiplier for the AFGF and expanded the audience demographic beyond people with an affiliation to Germany. This also highlights the importance of the German community, as well as the student community in each city, for the marketing of the AFGF.

Figure 8: Age Distribution, AFGF Melbourne and Sydney, 2014/15

Figure 9: Gender Split, AFGF Melbourne and Sydney, 2014/15
As mentioned earlier, the AFGF was held at Palace Cinemas around the country and the locations of the cinemas significantly influenced the audience demographic. Most audience members lived in affluent suburbs in close proximity to the cinemas or the CBD (figure 10) and were tertiary educated (87% of audiences in Sydney and 85% of audiences in Melbourne held a University degree). This finding is in line with other research that shows a mainly young, female, affluent and tertiary-educated film festival audience (Quinn 71; Park, Lee & Park 50). Most audience members reported hearing about the festival through word of mouth, often also described in the comment section of the survey as ‘I just know about it’ or ‘I go every year’,signifying a high percentage of repeat visitation and thus a loyal audience base.

Figure 10: Audience Demographic according to Suburb in Melbourne, AFGF 2014/15
Similar percentages of surveyed festivalgoers stated that direct contact with the GI (16%) or Palace cinema (20%) was their source of information on the AFGF. This illustrates the large number of German students and teachers of the GI, but also the importance of Palace Cinemas as a partner organisation. This finding also establishes the two broad audience cohorts as German aficionados and local cinephiles. The differences between these two audience cohorts show in Australian audience members’ desire for more documentaries, whilst the German diaspora, especially those having been in Australia for less than five years, demanded more comedies.

The Germanophiles and local cinephiles are also visible in the responses to the question about visits to other film festivals. A large minority (42%) reported only visiting the AFGF, and that the AFGF had become an important fixture on their calendars. Members of the German community particularly highlighted the role of the AFGF in keeping them informed about Germany and maintaining national ties:

I am born in Germany and the AFGF serves the purpose of keeping me in touch with cultural changes in Germany. (Focus group 2, German/Australian, female, 35-44 years)

The second largest group (29%) reported visiting the French and the German film festivals – the two largest and longest-established festivals in Sydney and Melbourne. Another 15% stated that they visited as many film festivals as possible, so could be described as not only ‘cinephile’ but ‘festivalphile’. It is, however, important to note the Europhilic inclination of these festivalphile audiences (French, Italian, Spanish, British, Scandinavian); only 6% stated that they had visited an Asian film festival, such as the Japanese, Malaysian, Indonesian and Chinese film festivals (see figure 11). The reasons for this are most likely in the higher cultural status accorded to
European film, the cultural similarities between Europe and Australia, as well as the location at Palace Cinemas for most European Film Festivals but not for Asian Film Festivals.

When it comes to film preferences, the value of time-events becomes clear: the films rated highest by audiences were exclusively opening night films or screened as part of a time-event. This was also evident in the Golden Gnome (the AFGF’s audience award) consistently being awarded to opening night films or films highlighted as time-events. I asked audiences to rate the films they saw on a Likert scale (1 = disappointing to 5 = excellent). The audience in Sydney rated most films as ‘good’ (41%) and smaller proportions as excellent (30%) and indifferent (21%), whilst the audience in Melbourne was more enthusiastic, with 46% rating the films as excellent, 30% good and 16% indifferent.

Films screened as part of a special event were perceived as more entertaining and as significantly more representative of Germany. A focus group participant pointed to the importance of the festival atmosphere:

Figure 11: Visitation of the AFGF and other Ethnic Film Festivals, AFGF 2014/15
I think the AFGF is more than just the films – it’s the whole show… (Focus group participant 3, Australian, female, 35–44)

This finding aligns with the theory on time-events, as essential parts of film festivals, and highlights the impact of the festival experience on the film. Time-events were also one of the most mentioned features of the festival and provide a clear distinction between the AFGF and other festivals. The audiences experienced the AFGF as an authentic German event and viewed films as directly representing German culture, as the following quotes from the audience survey illustrate:

I get a view of multicultural real life in Germany. (Audience survey 2015)

Very authentic; tried to give comprehensive picture about sport systems with different opinions. (Audience survey 2014)

The motivation to visit the AFGF was either the desire to reconnect to Germany (for the German part of the audience) or to learn more about the country’s history and culture. The involvement of the GI and the embassy lent more credibility to the film festival, underlining the curatorial responsibility of the GI. The AFGF also provided a contact zone between Germany and Australia, and most audience members reported visiting Germany before attending the festival. In Melbourne in particular, audience members highlighted the similarities of Berlin and Melbourne, an indicator of reflective viewing and cinematic diplomacy.

Naturally, the curatorial work of the GI differed according to the topic of the film and audience perceptions were significantly impacted by pre-existing ideas and knowledge of each film and event. The following three chapters each focus on one of the most highly curated and represented thematic categories of the AFGF (the world
wars in chapter 4, the GDR in chapter 5, and multicultural Germany in chapter 6). In each chapter I scrutinise the geographical, historical and ideological space in which the particular films and events were screened, the specific curatorial decisions of the GI in its representations of the topic as part of the AFGF, and the audience perceptions of the topic via the AFGF.
Chapter 4: The Third Reich and the AFGF

As major national events of the twentieth century, the world wars generated (and continue to generate) many stories to be told in film, literature and art (J. Winter 183). The ways war is remembered and veterans are honoured is debated in the political and academic realm and influence contemporary national identities (Winter & Sivan 6). Two very different modes of war remembrance are exemplified in the ‘lest we forget’ of Australia and the ‘nie wieder’ (never again) of Germany. Enemies in both world wars, the two countries have developed fundamentally different cultures of national commemoration.

The most obvious difference is in the emphasis on WWI. Whilst in Australian war memory, WWI – or the ‘Great War’ – forms a large part of the nation’s founding myth and is publicly memorialised, guilt over WWII overshadows WWI in Germany almost completely (Hirschfeld 29-41). Whilst the Australian victorious perspective on WWI differs significantly to the German’s memory of defeat, memory of WWII differs even more – between that of the Australians as victors/liberators and the German’s guilty conscience (Stibbe 205-222).

The different understandings of the two world wars in Australia and Germany are illustrated in the countries’ media landscapes: WWII is represented in far more German films than is WWI, whilst WWI features in many more Australian productions than WWII. Interesting examples are two high-rating TV series in the 1970s and 1980s, the Holocaust series (Green, 1978) in Germany and Anzacs (Nine Network, 1985) in Australia. This discrepancy also influenced the screenings and perceptions of war films in the AFGF. The festival had to bridge the gap between
these opposing collective memories of war, in particular as both memory discourses form an important part of the respective countries’ national identity.

The Third Reich undoubtedly features prominently in popular media and the international discourse on Germany and, especially post-reunification, a ‘memory boom’ resulted in an increase in cultural works dealing with the Third Reich and its legacy (Langenbacher & Eigler 1-15). Films such as Der Untergang (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004), Sophie Scholl – Die Letzen Tage (Marc Rothemund, 2005) and Napola (Dennis Gansel, 2004) count among the most expensive German productions and ran successfully in Germany and around the globe. Foreign productions on the topic, such as Schindler’s List (Steven Spielberg, 1993) or Inglorious Basterds (Quentin Tarantino, 2009) are examples of successful international productions. However, these films also attracted major criticism from German newspapers and scholars for representing a ‘Hollywood version’ of the Third Reich (Loshitzky 3; Magilow 2; von Dassanowsky vii).

The Third Reich featured prominently in the AFGF and forms the largest and most highly curated thematic group. It featured in 24 films over the festival’s history and was curated into special event nights eight times. Klaus Krischok (GI Australia CEO 2006–11) described one of the dilemmas the festival faces as perceived audience expectation of films concerning the Third Reich, noting that ‘sex and goose-stepping Nazis sell’ (2014, pers. comm.) and, by contrast, the GI’s objective to present Germany in a different light, outside the shadow of the Holocaust. This tension shaped the way films with a Third Reich thematic were screened and which films were chosen to represent Germany’s approach to Vergangenheitsbewältigung as a productive and earnest one. In order to understand these different themes and opinions, I follow a memory studies approach. This includes the personal as well as
the collective memories of the German curators and the audiences in Australia and as such, I seek to understand the role these films played in the formation of a Deutschlandbild.

For this analysis, I adapt Lefebvre’s triad of space for the film festival space. Thus, the first part of this chapter (space 1) focuses on the physical space that is the setting of the AFGF in Australia and within the Australian understanding of war. In the second part (space 2) I analyse the representation of war by the German curators of the AFGF, forming the counterpart to space 1. In the third part (space 3), I consider audience perceptions of war-themed films and events, drawing on focus groups, the audience survey and observational research.

4.1 Space 1: Australia and its Memories of the World Wars as the Setting of the AFGF

In this space, I scrutinise the physical environment of film screenings and events and provide the lens through which the curators (space 2) and the audiences (space 3) perceived war-related films as part of the AFGF. Understanding this ‘physical’ setting of the festival is therefore crucial to understanding the other two spaces and ultimately drawing conclusions on the cultural diplomatic role of representations of WWI and WWII as part of the AFGF.

The way the two world wars are understood is closely tied to the national rhetoric surrounding them. Although, WWI technically started in Melbourne, where the Australian Navy fired the first shot of the war at a German cargo ship (SS Pfalz), the common rhetoric of the Great War is in no way influenced by this event (Farnsworth n.p.; MacKernan 16). It has been argued that the Great War and in particular the ANZAC myth provides a founding national myth of contemporary Australia, as European settlement in itself cannot provide a feeling of cohesion and national pride
(Damousi 84; Seal 112). WWI’s position within the national founding myth further elevates its status in the Australian collective memory above WWII. It contrasts with the continuing influence of WWII on German national identity as the ‘long shadow of the past’ (A. Assmann 47). A critical reflection on the overlap of these two ideas of war can be found in the debates surrounding German Anzacs fighting for Australia in the war but with their nationality tied to the enemy (Williams xiii).

War memory is clearly driven by the emotional associations with events forming part of familial stories. Marianne Hirsch’s concept of a postmemory is useful in providing an explanation for these continuing emotional attachments over subsequent generations. She argues that particularly traumatic events can be transmitted to future generations through the emotions conveyed through story or image, becoming part of living memory once again (Hirsch 31). Analysing writing and visual culture after the Holocaust, Hirsch argued for the immense power of mediated representations of the Holocaust and for its continuing emotional weight in history.

In Australia, the closest issue loaded with similar emotions of collective shame is the genocide of Aborigines by the colonisers (Barta 155). The topic, however, does not consume Australian society to the same degree as does the Holocaust in Germany. For the AFGF, this parallel history but different public memorialisation and discourse provides an interesting basis for discussions, in that war films can provide a reflective space to discuss wider and global aspects of reconciliation, guilt and Vergangenheitsbewältigung.
4.1.1 The Memorialisation of War in Australia

As outlined earlier, the Great War has become central to the Australian psyche and is symbolised in the Australian commemoration of war and in particular the unsuccessful landing at Gallipoli in 1915 (Brown 10; Holbrook 2; Seal viii). Anzac and its essential hero, the digger, are at the heart of Australian national identity and are the result of societal, historical and cultural processes (Inglis & Brazier 16). A complex entanglement of public and private memory created by veterans, politicians and popular media validates the construction of Australian national identity and forms the lens through which the Australian audience sees filmic representations of war as part of the AFGF (Seal 11-15).

The centrality of the Anzac legend to Australian national consciousness makes it no surprise that war films form an important part of Australian cinema. About 40 filmic representations of WWI portray the development of the Anzac legend over the years (Bennett & Beirne 130). Reynaud divided the development of ‘celluloid Anzacs’ into four phases: the first contemporaneous with WWI and the Gallipoli campaign (1915–18), the second from post-WWI until the 1950s, the third the Australian bi-centenary in 1988, and the fourth in the present day (98). The Hero of the Dardanelles (Rolfe, 1915) was Australian cinema’s first Gallipoli film and it cemented the image of the Anzac soldier as distinctive and heroic. The film also presented the Anzac soldier and military tradition effectively as a founding myth for the new nation. The Anzac Book (1916), authored by WWI war correspondent and historian C.E.W. Bean, defined what came to be called the Anzac legend: it encompassed bravery, ingenuity, endurance and the comradeship that Australians call mateship. Whilst WWII boosted the Anzac legend, during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s many
Australians became uncomfortable with the nation’s military tradition, as well as its relevance in a changing world (Holbrook 4).

In the 1980s and 90s Australia resurrected the Gallipoli story and its message, and Peter Weir’s film *Gallipoli* (1981) contributed to its resurgence powerfully. The film portrays several rural Western Australian young men who enlist in the Australian Army during WWI and are sent to the Gallipoli peninsula. During the course of the film, the young men slowly lose their innocence about the purpose of war; the climax of the movie occurs on the Anzac battlefield at Gallipoli and depicts the futile attack at the Battle of the Nek on 7 August 1915. Weir’s film reintroduced a whole generation of Australians to the Anzac legend on screen and became the benchmark for all cinematic representations of the Great War to follow (Reynaud 188). Highlighting the importance of this particular film, as well as emphasising the potential of film to influence public opinion, Ken Inglis and Jan Brazier state that Weir’s film ‘probably reached more people than any other evocation of Anzac’ (144).

Australian WWI films are often celebratory and tend to posit war as playing a constructive role in the making of the nation. In contrast, German WWII films, the dominant war film category at the AFGF, are by necessity overtly critical of the nation’s role in war. The AFGF brought together these modes of war remembrance and thus established a space for engagement with this topic for people of different nationalities, ages and personal histories. German films such as *Der Untergang* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004), *Sophie Scholl – Die Letzen Tage* (Rothemund, 2005) or *Die Welle* (Dennis Gansel, 2008) not only portray the German side of WWII to Australian audiences but also encourage a more critical engagement with Australian history and war memory. Gienow-Hecht and Donfried pointed towards the necessity of dialogue to encourage critical engagement and successful cultural diplomacy (23).
In the case of representations of war as part of the AFGF, differences between Australian and German memorialisation prompted the GI to embed many war films into time-events that encouraged dialogue between the German curators and the audiences on the topic of the films. These time-events form part of space 2 of this chapter, where the curatorial work of the GI is scrutinised.

4.2 Space 2: Curating the German Understanding of War for Australian Audiences

The curatorship of the GI forms the focus of this space. I analyse the representational side of cinematic diplomacy through the AFGF via stakeholder interviews and critical analysis of war-related films and events surrounding them. The GI had the clear task of contributing to the representation of the Third Reich and showing an active process of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Denscheilmann 20; A. Schwan 122). This included films on the Third Reich, those portraying its legacy, and those raising awareness of global genocides or human rights abuses.

4.2.1 An Overview of War-Themed Films (2002–16)

The first step in analysing the curatorship of war as part of the AFGF is to gain an overview of all war-related films screened at the AFGF over 2002–16 (Table 5).
Table 5: War Films shown at the AFGF 2002–16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film title</th>
<th>AFGF</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Stauffenberg/Operation Valkyrie</em> (Jo Baier, 2004)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Napola</em> (Dennis Gansel, 2004)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Der Untergang</em> (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2005)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sophie Scholl – die Letzen Tage</em> (Mark Rothemund, 2005)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die Welle Wave</em> (Dennis Gansel, 2008)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Am Ende Kommen Touristen</em> (Robert Thalheim, 2007)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>John Rabe</em> (Florian Gallenberger, 2009)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die Wölfe/The Wolves of Berlin</em> (Andreas Kleinert, 2009)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aimée and Jaguar</em> (Max Fäberbock, 1999)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Berlin ’36</em> (Kaspar Heidelbach, 2009)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Das weiße Band/The White Ribbon</em> (Michael Haneke, 2009)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>WWI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die Kriegerin/Combat Girls</em> (David Wnendt, 2012)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hotel Lux</em> (Leander Haußmann, 2011)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wer, wenn nicht wir?/If Not Us, Who?</em> (Andreas Veiel, 2011)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wunderkinder</em> (Markus Rosenmüller, 2011)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wintertochter/Winter Daughter</em> (Johannes Schmid, 2011)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film/Title</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vier Tage im Mai/4 Days in May</em> (Achim von Borris, 2011)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die Manner der Emden/Odyssey of Heroes</em> (Berengar Pfahl, 2012)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>WWI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Centenary of WWI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>German Sons</em> (Phillipe Mora, 2011)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Legacy of WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Cut</em> (Fatih Akin, 2014)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Von Caligari zu Hitler</em> (Rudiger Suchsland, 2014)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank</em> (Hans Steinbichler, 2016)</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die Morder sind Unter Uns/The Murderers are Among Us</em> (Wolfgang Staudte, 1946)</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 WWII in the AFGF

The significant discrepancy in the representation of WWI and WWII in the films screened in the AFGF is clearly correlated to the prominence of WWII in Germany. Whilst only a few WWI films were screened, almost all of them were curated into a time-event that pays tribute to a particular aspect of that war.

The only film screened without a time-event was Haneke’s *Das Weiße Band/White Ribbon* (2009) at the AFGF 2010. The film depicts society and family in a village in northern Germany in the years leading up to WWI and, according to Haneke, the film ‘is about the roots of evil. Whether it is religious or political terrorism, it’s the same thing’ (n.p.). The film attracted much media attention in Australia; Australian film critic Peter Bradshaw (n.p.) described the film as a ‘ghost story without a ghost’ and linked the childhood experiences of the children in *Das Weiße Band* to their adulthood as the Nazi generation. Australian journalist Julie Rigg (n.p.) established a
similar link between the pre-WWI experiences represented in the film and the
following Third Reich by comparing the film to Wilhelm Reich’s book *The Mass
Psychology of Fascism* (1930). The other two WWI films, *Männer der Emden*
(Berengar Pfahl, 2012) and *The Cut* (Fatih Akin, 2014) were curated into time-events,
the first around the centenary of WWI in 2014 and the second on the centenary of the
Armenian genocide in 2015.

### 4.2.2.1 The Centenary of WWI in the AFGF 2014

In 2014, a special event paid tribute to the centenary of the beginning of WWI. ‘The
Centenary of the War’ consisted of three parts: a reading performance of *Die Letzten
Tage der Menschheit* (Karl Krauß, 1915–22) by Justus Neumann, a war poster

*Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit* is a dramatic satire written between 1915 and 1922
that enacts the tragic trajectory of WWI. The piece retells street conversations, recites
newspaper headlines and refers to speeches and military reports. The author’s aim
was to expose what he identified as the real aggressors of war: the press. The play is a
socio-critical warning about war and the demagogical power of the media, and was
called ‘one of the great works of anti-war literature […]’ (Ferguson 322).

At the AFGF 2014, Justus Neumann performed *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit* in
Melbourne, where it had also been performed 10 years prior at La Mama (an
independent theatre) and as part of the Fringe Festival in 2004. The combination of
the 100-year-old piece of Austrian literature with a highly engaging reading made for
a challenging and confronting experience for the audience. Unfortunately, the event
was sparsely attended (ca. 10 attendees), which begs the question of whether reading

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35 The Melbourne Fringe Festival is an independent art festival that describes itself as ‘the most adventurous, inclusive, all-encompassing multi-art form festival in Australia’ (www.melbournefringe.com.au)
performances in general and on challenging war-related topics specifically were suitable for the AFGF. Following Neumann’s performance, audience members were encouraged to inspect his private collection of war posters alongside actors in Australian WWI uniforms representing the Australian presence in the war (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Poster Exhibition and Actors in Uniforms as part of the 'Centenary of WWI' (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)

After the reading performance, the war drama Die Männer der Emden (Berengar Pfahl, 2012) was screened as part of the special event on the centenary of WWI. The film had previously featured at the AFGF 2013 and was again sold out in 2014. This disparity in audience numbers between the reading performance and the following film screening highlights the fact that audiences of the AFGF predominantly attended the festival for its films, rather than the specific historic topic. Pfahl’s film is arguably particularly successful in Australia, as the story of the German vessel the Emden,
destroyed by the Australian Navy off the coast of the Cocos Keeling Islands\textsuperscript{36}, provides a topical and narrative connection between the two countries. For an audience demographic consisting mostly of Australians with a familial connection to Germany, the film tells a rare story of historic connections between the countries and thus highlights what lies at the heart of \textit{Kulturaustausch}.

Film reviews in the respective national media further emphasise the differences in war rhetoric in Germany and Australia. Whilst the \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung} (FAZ) heavily criticized \textit{Die Männer der Emden} for its romanticised account of history (Jungen n.p.), \textit{The Canberra Times} lauded the film for its focus on an historical aspect of WWI that ‘is not at all well known in this country’ (Ellery n.p.), despite the fact that the \textit{Emden} herself has become an Australian icon (ibid.). In Australia, the \textit{Emden} is only known for being destroyed by the \textit{HMAS Sydney}; the film however, elaborates the story of the \textit{Emden} before its destruction and the crew members’ journey to Germany.

In reviews of the film, the Australian media focused on the rhetoric around the crew of the \textit{Emden} as ‘gentlemen of war’. In contrast, the German media emphasised the time before and after the famous \textit{Emden} trip. A writer in the magazine \textit{der Spiegel} pointed out that the \textit{Emden} crew had been involved in an aggressive attack of the German colonial administration against the indigenous population of Ponape (Gunkel n.p.). Pfahl’s film illustrates how the men of the \textit{Emden} became pacifists and active opponents of WWII upon their return home. However, Gunkel explained how before the men became opponents of war they joined the \textit{Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei} (NSDAP, commonly referred to as the Nazi Party) and some, including

\textsuperscript{36} The Cocos Keeling Islands are a territory of Australia in the Indian Ocean. The islands are located halfway between Australia and Sri Lanka.
captain von Müller, became active NSDAP politicians (n.p.). The film review in the FAZ also added to this discourse, with an opening statement that drew a connection between the *Emden* crew and Hitler, emphasising the irony of being a ‘gentleman in war’ (Jungen n.p.).

An aversion to war heroism is clear on the website of the contemporary ‘Emden family’, constructed by the descendants of the *Emden* crew who, after return, added the hereditary name ‘-Emden’ to their family names. They specifically state that they are against any form of war heroism, and highlight the fairness of captain von Müller during the *Emden* journey. The German and English titles of Pfahl’s film further point towards this difference in war memory: the German title *Männer der Emden* (men of the *Emden*) was changed to *Odyssey of Heroes* for the English version of the film (Midford n.p.).

In the curating of the ‘Centenary of the War’, the German style of memorialisation of war – avoiding any form of heroism – became visible; the GI offset any romanticised or heroic readings of *Männer der Emden* with Krauß’ anti-war epos. The posters from Neumann’s collection allowed the audience to reflect further on the impact of war and (following the reading of Krauß’ epos) on soldier recruitment practices. In 2015, the GI took this understanding of war further by curating an event that actively took a position against war and for human rights.

4.2.2.2 *The Cut: Genocide Debates led by Germany in 2015*

Besides being a film with a strong anti-war message, Fatih Akin’s *The Cut* (2014) is a transnational film production; its Turkish-German director set the film in Armenia, Jordan, Cuba, Germany and Canada, in various languages, and starring a French-Algerian actor. According to the director, the aim of the film was to ignite a global
debate on the Armenian genocide, but it is also about forced migration and transnational diaspora (Akin, as cited in Heyman n.p.) Akin’s film follows Nazareth, who has survived the Armenian genocide but lost his family, speech and faith. After the end of the genocide, Nazareth travels the world to find his twin daughters. The film highlights the widespread suffering of diasporas using the example of a father’s global search for his missing daughters. *The Cut* forms the final part of Akin’s ‘Love, Death and the Devil’ trilogy, which includes *Gegen die Wand/Head-On* (2004) and *Auf der Anderen Seite/The Edge of Heaven* (2007).

The screening of *The Cut* at the 2015 AFGF drew attention to the vastly under-acknowledged Armenian genocide a century earlier, during which up to 1.5 million people died. By selecting and highlighting Akin’s film in its curatorship, the GI stressed an aspect of contemporary German cultural diplomacy – encouragement of a clear position on democracy, human rights, peace and an active form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (“Auswärtige Kulturpolitik” 6-11). The *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of the Armenian genocide is particularly significant for Germany, as Hitler referred to it in predicting the legacy of the German Holocaust. In his Obersalzberg speech on 22"August 1939, he asked ‘Wer redet heute noch von der Vernichtung der Armenier?’ (‘Who still talks about the extermination of Armenians?’) (Naimark 77).

In line with this contemporary form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, in 2015 German President Joachim Gauck and Chancellor Angela Merkel ignited a global outcry by referring to the events of 100 years ago as genocide, calling on Turkey to acknowledge its responsibility (Gauck 1). In choosing to screen the film and embedding it into a wider framework of discussion, the GI was unequivocal in its support of reconciliation, clearly acting on its cultural mandate from the MFA in
taking leadership in the debate and advocating for a re-examination of history. This discussion was meant to bring together Armenian and Turkish representatives in Australia. AFGF Director Sölter described ‘bringing together the two sides of the conflict in the safe space of an Australian cinema’ (as cited Caldwell n.p.) as an important task for the AFGF and German cultural diplomacy. In referring to the AFGF as a public sphere, as Wong (159) suggested in her analysis of the Hong Kong International Film Festival, Sölter further highlighted the opportunities of ethnic film festivals as cultural diplomacy.

The GI had planned a panel discussion to take place after the film screening, made up of diplomatic staff from the Turkish and Armenian embassies in Sydney. Unfortunately, the panel discussion was cancelled after a member of the panel, NSW Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian (a member of the Armenian-Australian community) withdrew, as she was ‘concerned about appearing on a platform with genocide deniers’ (Sölter, cited in Hawker, “Armenian Genocide Panel cancelled” n.p.). A Turkish panel member, Ertunc Ozen, expressed his disappointment in the cancellation of the event, but also categorically rejected the term ‘genocide’, thereby highlighting the importance of a single word and the emotional value still attributed to the event from both sides. Clearly, establishing a dialogue for Vergangenheitsbewältigung that addresses historic moments of national conflict and shame is a difficult but important task.

Instead of the panel discussion, film critic Peter Krausz gave a longer introduction to the topic after the screening. Although, the event did not have the same reconciliatory character as director Sölter had imagined, the cinema still functioned as a public sphere in Habermas’ sense – a place that allows for open and democratic discussion. This was particularly true after the official event had ended; the foyer of the cinema
provided space for dialogue and discussion for the audience, and thereby continued
the unique character of film festival screenings, referred to by Harbord as the time-
event (“Film Festivals - time event” 40-47). This space is essential for cinematic
diplomacy, allowing a Kulturaustausch between audiences and curators to take place.

4.2.3 WWII in the AFGF

Films related to WWII and the Holocaust is arguably the filmic category AFGF
audiences associate most strongly with the festival, and at the same time it is the most
problematic for the GI’s objective; that is, to screen a multifaceted image of Germany
that counterbalances stereotypes (Denscheilmann 73). Much of the global
Deutschlandbild is influenced by the Third Reich, with the term ‘Hitler’ ranking
second in associations with Germany in 2005 (‘beer’ was first, followed by ‘car’,
‘soccer’, ‘Berlin’ and ‘WWII’) (Bolten 5). This Deutschlandbild arguably changed
over the following decade: in 2015/16, Germany’s huge refugee intake and the
associated Willkommenskultur established it at fifth on the Good Country Index
(Glass n.p.). (Anholt’s Good Country Index measures the positive contribution of
each country to global humanity relative to its GDP; By doing so, the index takes a
humanitarian perspective and demands responsibility to move away from nationalism
to globalism.) On the dimension measuring the country’s contribution to ‘world
order’, including the hosting and generating of refugees, percentage of the population
giving to charity, average birthrate and number of UN treaties signed, Germany ranks
second after Austria. Thus, the planned panel discussion around the Armenian
Genocide can be seen to have drawn from increasing German self-confidence in its
cultural diplomacy and the country’s strong stance on global human rights issues.
This stance can be seen as a lesson learnt from the Holocaust, and in terms of
*Vergangenheitsbewältigung* illustrates a shift from an attitude of guilt to one of global responsibility.

From 2002 to 2016, the AFGF showed 26 films with a direct WWII theme (see Table 5), of which five were curated into time-events. In analysing the time-events throughout the festival and under the leadership of its various festival directors, different curatorial styles in regards to the representation of WWII become clear. On the one hand, this illustrates wider developments in approaches to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, on the other hand, it highlights de Valck’s classification of the AFGF as part of the ‘age of the festival director’, where the festival director establishes the identity of the film festival (192).

In the early years of the AFGF, hardly any war films were shown. This changed in 2005 with a transition from Ralf Eppeneder to a new festival director, Klaus Krischok. The new director paid much attention to the curating of films concerning WWII, describing them as an ‘integral part of Germany’s culture’ (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.). This approach changed again under the leadership of Arpad Sölter (2012–15), who took a less didactic approach to curatorship, preferring to represent ‘many different *Deutschlandbilder* that allow the audience to make up their own mind’ (Sölter, 2015, pers. comm.).

As mentioned previously, I place particular emphasis on the curated time-events that embedded a film in a wider thematic framework. This allows for conclusions on the curatorial and diplomatic agency of the AFGF to be drawn. Film selection alone does not allow for such conclusions, as films were selected in collaboration with Germanfilms, and other festivals and general releases in Australia further limited the final collection. In the following text I analyse films highlighted in their framing as
time-events, thereby illustrating this shift in curatorship of the AFGF, as well as the approach to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and war memory taken by the GI in Australia.

The text below is structured thematically according to three curatorial topics that highlight the films in the programming of the AFGF: *Sophie Scholl - Die Letzten Tage* (Marc Rothemund, 2005) as the opening night film, four films that in their curatorship emphasised the GI’s approach to cinematic diplomacy as a platform for a global human rights discourse, and a further four films that are significant because their selection for the AFGF was particularly disputed within the curatorial team.

### 4.2.3.1 Opening Night Film 2006: Sophie Scholl – Die Letzten Tage

The first special event on the topic of WWII was the screening of Marc Rothemund’s *Sophie Scholl - Die Letzten Tage* from 2005. The film is part of what Moeller called the Third Wave of post-WWII films that re-examine Germany’s fascist past (19-35). It is also the third film made about the White Rose group, which today is the best-known example of the German resistance. According to Cooke and Homewood, the film is part of a trend in German films concerned with the Third Reich that ‘humanize its agents and bear an unflinching willingness to confront its past’ (58). *Sophie Scholl – die Letzten Tage* received the Bavarian Film Prize and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Since 2006, the film has been endorsed by the *Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung* (Federal Agency for Political Education), which recommends it as a pedagogically valuable film for teachers.

In German schools, Sophie Scholl’s martyrdom for freedom, democracy and her Christian values are utilised to teach schoolchildren the value of *Zivilcourage* – the courage to stand up for one’s beliefs. In line with this, a Q&A exploring the role of
German cinema in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and the role of women in the German resistance accompanied the screening at the AFGF in 2006. The Q&A highlighted the value the GI placed on Rothemund’s film as a medium to engage in a discussion of the Holocaust, but also contemporary *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Australian and German media reviews of the film however, highlighted different readings of *Sophie Scholl*. A reviewer in the German newspaper *Die Zeit* referred to Sophie Scholl’s status in Germany as an example for the courage to think and act (Topcu n.p.). However, a comment about the status of Sophie Scholl in German society in the Australian newspaper *The Age*, that Sophie Scholl is ‘if not quite a Christ figure […] is accorded something like the status of Germany’s Joan of Arc’ (Wilson, n.p.), shows a discrepancy in understanding Rothemund’s film and Sophie Scholl as a member of the German resistance. Sophie Scholl is understood as a lesson in civil courage in Germany, whilst in Australia the film and her story is read as a historical document. This difference becomes clear in interpretations of the opening scene of the film. In a review in *The Age*, the reviewer criticised this scene for showing Sophie dancing and singing to music, locating her in the happy, normal life of a young woman, just before heading to university to hand out flyers, an action that will cost her life. The Australian reviewer describes this scene as establishing ‘an incongruous mood of light, wry nostalgia’ (Wilson n.p.); the actress Julia Jentsch, who portrayed Sophie Scholl, described it as an important scene that shows that Sophie wasn’t born as a heroine, but a young woman, full of life. According to Jentsch, this portrayal of Sophie Scholl is intended to show that one can overcome fear and weakness and demolishes the excuse ‘I’m just not as strong as Sophie Scholl’ for a lack of *Zivilcourage* (Jentsch n.p.). This also refers to the defining characteristic of contemporary *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that calls on everyone to prevent another Holocaust.
A similar difference is visible in the reviews by two of Australia’s most popular film critics, one with a strong affiliation to Germany: Margaret Pomeranz, former advisor to the AFGF in 2016 and a film critic with a keen interest and affiliation to Germany (she studied German, lived in Vienna and is married to German Hans Pomeranz), and her partner on the show, David Stratton, who migrated from the UK to Australia in 1963 (Lake n.p.; Hawker, n.p.). Whilst Pomeranz read the film as a reminder to ‘stand up for one’s principles’ and ‘a reminder to all of us of a good message that we need to carry with us’, Stratton pointed out the price Sophie Scholl and her brother had to pay for standing up for their principles (Pomeranz & Stratton n.p.). The Q&A displayed a parallel discrepancy, in that the film was discussed in its historical context rather than for its lessons for contemporary life (Krausz, 2015, pers. comm.). This interest in historic accuracy illustrates the AFGF audience’s engagement with the film as mainly a historic document, a sentiment that stands in contrast to the more universal interpretation of the film’s writer, who wanted audiences to understand ‘not only historical dates, but how the terrorist Nazi state system worked’ (Breinersdorfer n.p.).

In terms of the cultural diplomatic objective of the AFGF, this discrepancy illustrates the challenge in establishing a Kulturaustausch when the perspectives of curator and audiences differ. The value attributed to Sophie Scholl in Germany is based on the wider discourse on contemporary Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the idea of a collective guilt and/or responsibility. Without a clear introduction of this understanding and framing of the film, the Q&A did not communicate this dimension of the film and of contemporary Germany. A clear indicator that this dimension is important to the curators of the GI is the number of films that are highlighted in the programming and not directly linked to WWII or the Holocaust but to human rights, war and authoritarianism in general.
4.2.3.2 Global Responsibilities and Vergangenheitsbewältigung at the AFGF

Three films in particular utilised the AFGF to voice warnings about the contemporary potential for totalitarian regimes to emerge and to explore related questions of individual and collective culpabilities. Two films (Das Experiment and Die Welle) emphasise in particular the individual responsibility for preventing a totalitarian regime, whilst Sturm/Storm and Camp 14 – Total Control Zone highlight contemporary issues of totalitarian regimes and human rights. All four films were highlighted in the programming, illustrating the value the GI attributed to the films and their themes. Hirschbiegel’s Das Experiment and Gansel’s Die Welle are both based on experiments in the US aimed at understanding human nature and the power of totalitarianism. Das Experiment was selected for the opening night of the first AFGF in 2002, and Die Welle was followed by an audience discussion with the lead actor. Hans-Christian Schmid’s Sturm is a legal thriller, telling the story of the war tribunal in The Hague against Goran Đurić, the Serbian Commander in the former Yugoslavia, and in the AFGF 2010 was followed by a panel discussion.

Das Experiment was inspired by the Stanford prison experiment in 1971, which questioned whether human nature is inherently good or bad (Stolley 93). Using students to play the roles of guards and prisoners, the experiment investigated the psychological effects of perceived power. The film explains the role of civil rights in protecting society and what can happen when these rights become undermined. It draws attention to the importance of laws that protect society against harmful and discriminatory ideologies. According to Hirschbiegel, the film and the process of making it also highlight our ‘universal desire to be told what to do’ (as cited in Rehfeld n.p.). Philippa Hawker saw another, more contemporary connection between the film and reality: [It is] ‘hard to avoid the connection with reality TV and its aims
and modes of representation. These days, we don’t need science to justify experimentation with human subjects – the cause of entertainment is enough’ (n.p.) In this critique, Hawker articulated a contemporary understanding of the film that illustrates Australian viewers as detached from a reading of the film based on the German past.

In selecting Das Experiment as the opening night film of the first AFGF, the GI demonstrated its agency in a global discussion on authoritarianism and the abuse of power. Unlike the reading of Sophie Scholl as a historical document, Das Experiment facilitated discussions on contemporary societal challenges and thus engaged Australian and German audiences in a cultural dialogue. A similar dialogue was achieved a decade later in 2013, when the AFGF screened Gansel’s Die Welle and framed it with an audience discussion on the question of whether a totalitarian regime could emerge today.

Die Welle illustrates the seductive powers of authoritarian systems and the ease with which a charismatic leader can establish new norms. The film is set in a German high school and based on the infamous experiment conducted by U.S. history teacher Ron Jones in 1967. In this experiment, Jones created a week-long project for his history class, which was studying Nazi Germany. In order to illustrate the possibility of establishing a dictatorial system in a free society, Jones established The Wave, an organisation based on inequalities amongst students, an elitist understanding of the group itself and strict rules for conformity. For his film, Gansel adapted the experiment from the 1960s to take place in contemporary Germany, where boredom about the Third Reich had emerged amongst students (Probst n.p.). Apart from the message of the film that nobody is immune to the effects of demagogy and
totalitarianism, the film is therefore also a milieu study of Germany’s upper middle-class.

At the AFGF, the film was followed by an audience discussion facilitated by the lead actor, Jürgen Vogel. He also posed the main question of the film to the audience: could a totalitarian regime emerge today? The audience generally answered in the negative, reasoning that societal developments and better education were the key differences between the context of the German Holocaust and the present, and that ‘Australian culture […] is far less likely to follow totalitarian systems’. This stands in contrast to the German interpretation of the film as a ‘convincing transfer of the seductive powers of fascism into present days’ (Probst “Macht durch Handeln” n.p.) and indicates a different sense of relevance of this issue is present in Australian and in Germany. For cultural diplomacy, this is significant, as it affects reception and function of films and events curated as part of the AFGF.

The sense that questions of contemporary totalitarianism did not resonate with audiences at the time-event indicates a different reading of the film. For the GI, this meant that the event did not completely fulfil its potential as a warning against contemporary totalitarianism and an encouragement of democratic values. For the curatorship of cinematic diplomacy, it also emphasised the benefits of a curatorial team that is familiar with both national contexts in order to establish a common denominator for discussions. The idea of Kulturaustausch is useful here, suggesting a two-way conversation based on mutual understanding and with the aim of learning on both sides.

Two AFGF films in particular encapsulate the German approach to human rights and justice as a form of Vergangenheitsbewältigung based on global responsibilities.
*Sturm* (Hans-Christian Schmid, 2009) and *Camp 14 – Total Control Zone* (Mark Wiese, 2012) are both English-language films set outside of Germany. Despite this seeming lack of Germanness in the films, the GI emphasised both films in its programming and framed them as time-events with expert discussions following the screenings. By doing so, the GI aligned the AFGF with the wider discourse on German cultural diplomacy as ‘ambassador for democracy and human rights’ and utilised the AFGF as a public sphere to discuss issues of global importance (Schneider & Kaitinnis 30). The framing of both films with expert discussions as a form of didactic curatorship of the time-event further illustrates this dimension of the AFGF.

Schmid’s *Sturm* was screened at the 2010 AFGF, and (as noted earlier) focuses on the prosecution of Goran Đurić, the Serbian commander in the former Yugoslavia, at the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. The film is set entirely in English and focuses on the prosecutor and her attempts to convict Đurić for his crimes against Bosnian civilians during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Screened as part of the AFGF, *Sturm* conjures images of the Nuremberg trials and stresses the continuing importance of bringing the perpetrators of war crimes to justice. The audience discussion, led by an Australian human rights lawyer, further underlined the importance the GI gave to this subject. The discussion explored the process of trying war criminals in an international court and the public and private responsibility for crimes against humanity. Both issues are important parts of German foreign politics and postwar national identity, and the GI here illustrated this importance to Australian audiences, as well as engaging in a form of transnational diplomacy based on human rights.

For former festival director Klaus Krischok, the screening and event were a particularly interesting and successful example for contemporary cinematic diplomacy and also for Germany’s unique position as an advocate for human rights.
and global justice on an international level (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.). Krischok clearly connected German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and the consequential responsibility of Germany to actively contribute to a human rights discourse and to raise awareness for international injustices. This role of the AFGF is a point of difference to other ethnic film festivals in Australia, and was stressed by both festival directors in the programming of *Sturm* in 2010 as well as *The Cut* in 2015 and *Camp 14 – Total Control Zone* at the AFGF 2013.

*Camp 14 – Total Control Zone* is another transnational production by German director Mark Wiese, set in South Korea with North and South Korean actors speaking in English and Korean. The film chronicles the story of Shin Dong-Huyk, who was born in a North Korean prison camp but escaped at age 23 in 2005, and raises awareness of human rights in contemporary times. For Wiese, the film shows ‘how a system is able to condition the people’ (as cited in Applebaum n.p.), whilst festival director Sölter also described a particular national perspective of the film and stated that for him it stresses a key difference between the AFGF and other ethnic film festivals in Australia: ‘We don’t only show German cinema, but we also have the chance and task to screen films on global issues, such as human rights abuse’ (Sölter, 2014, pers. comm.). Here, the role of Germany as an advocate for human rights is again linked to the nation’s guilt for the Holocaust reinterpreted as global responsibility.

At the 2013 AFGF, *Camp 14 – Total Control Zone* was framed as a human rights document in an introduction by John Keane, the Director of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights at the University of Sydney. This not only illustrates the importance the GI attributed to Wiese’s film, but added a German notion to the transnational production, as Keane linked human rights abuse in North Korea with
Hannah Arendt’s notion of total domination (Aharony 2), by doing so, clearly connecting the Third Reich with *Camp 14* and accepting the distinctive role and responsibility of Germany in this topic. According to Sölter, the audience discussion took the topic back to Australia in a debate comparing the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo and Australia’s offshore detention centres (Sölter, 2015, pers. comm.). The connection between Australia and Germany established through film and event can be seen as a successful example of contemporary cinematic diplomacy, in which commonalities are highlighted and where the cinema forms a space for critical discussion and reflection.

The selection of *Sturm* and *Camp 14 – Total Control Zone* emphasised the GI’s awareness of the opportunity that the AFGF represented in terms of screening confronting and critical films that highlight contemporary issues of injustice and human rights abuse. Particularly, the curating of both films with expert-led discussions on the wider issues raised in the film illustrates this human-rights emphasis of both film festival directors. The screening and highlighting of the films was part of the cultural mandate of the GI that includes *Demokratieförderung*, support for democratic values, as one of the core values of German cultural diplomacy. The MFA also highlights the value of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* for its international engagement, an aspect that both discussions framing the films included. The embedding of the screenings into expert discussions thus further emphasised the importance the GI attributed to its role as an agent for *Demokratieförderung* and to the importance of an ongoing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

### 4.2.3.3 Contentious representations of Germany

As agreed in its *Rahmenvertrag* (basic agreement) with the German MFA, one task of the GI is the representation of a contemporary and diverse *Deutschlandbild*, or image
of Germany, that counterbalances popular stereotypes. The screening of some films that either reinforce stereotypical understandings of Germany, or show contentious and/or negative sides of contemporary Germany, was therefore controversial. Four films have caused discussions among the curators as to whether the films were appropriate to be screened at the AFGF. Haußmann’s *Hotel Lux* and Levy’s *Mein Führer/My Führer* (2007) are comedies about the Holocaust, Wnendt’s *Kriegerin* is a portrayal of neo-Nazism in contemporary Germany, and Mora and Grosskopf’s *German Sons* is an Australian perspective on Germany’s *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and lingering Nazism.

Levy’s *Mein Führer* (2007) and *Hotel Lux* (Haußmann, 2011) are the only two comedies in the war films category in the history of AFGF. Both films caused discussion among the curators, who debated whether a comedic take on the Holocaust would be damaging to the German image abroad (Krausz, 2016, pers. comm.). *My Führer* was the first feature comedy made in Germany to make fun of Hitler and initiated a discussion about whether holocaust comedy is possible in Germany (Gölz 174). The film was conceptualised as a counter-film to Hirschbiegel’s *Untergang* (2004); it positions Hitler as a rather useless person, and much of its humour derives from the antics of his followers (Twark 345). It had an uneasy reception at the AFGF, as its release did in Germany (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.).

Nevertheless, the success of *Hotel Lux* only five years later vindicated the GI’s decision to screen comedies, and also supports Liat Steir-Livny’s thesis that from the 1990s, a new unofficial path of commemoration has been taking shape that allows for humour, satire and parody about the Holocaust. The screening of the film was also timely, with a discussion on humour and the Holocaust having been sparked by an Australian radio commentator’s joke about the Holocaust (Slucki n.p.). This
contemporaneous discussion may have added to the success of the film, as well as the careful introduction to the topic by film critics in each city.

Another film that caused debates within the jury over whether its message was at all compatible with the AFGF’s objectives was Wnendt’s Kriegerin (2012). The film portrays the current neo-Nazi milieu in Germany, in particular in the former GDR. Festival director Sölter programmed the film because, as he argued, ‘sunlight is the best disinfectant’ and stressed that the role of contemporary German cultural diplomacy was to portray positive as well as challenging aspects of Germany and German culture (as cited in Molitorisz “See the Best of the Wurst” n.p.).

Kriegerin is set in the former GDR, in a cityscape with fading Communist-era propaganda and dreary public housing estates where asylum seekers and immigrants live and fight with neo-Nazis. Encapsulated in the figure of teenager Marisa is the struggle to find one’s identity, the dangers of a life without prospects and the draw of extremism in this context. By focusing on a young woman, Wnendt explored another paradoxical tension, in that the Nazi ideal of women and the role women hope to have in neo-Nazi organisations are polar opposites. These absurd combinations of anti-capitalism and Nazism, and feminism and Nazism, portray the identity struggle of young people, especially women, in the new federal states of Germany after reunification in 1989. Inspired by the National Socialist Underground - a far-right German terror group that was uncovered in November 2011 - Wnendt added another dimension to the male-dominated image of neo-Nazism. A reviewer for Australian multicultural TV channel SBS saw a clear link between Marisa and the German nation, writing that she was ‘as much at war with herself as the rest of Germany and its history’ (Mathieson, “Combat Girls review” n.p.), alluding to the lasting impact of the Third Reich on Germany’s self-perception and identity. The AFGF’s decision to
screen *Kriegerin* firmly situated the film festival within Germany’s contemporary approach of confronting its past and affirming the differences between propaganda and cultural diplomacy.

A different approach to cultural diplomacy was visible in the decision to screen the Australian-made film *German Sons*. Focusing more on the aspect of a *Kulturaustausch*, *German Sons* (Philippe Mora and Harald Grosskopf, 2011) was one of few films programmed by the GI independently of Germanfilms (which usually recommended films to the GI and organised the screening rights). In *German Sons*, the two directors – one Australian, one German – discuss their very different family stories and memories of Nazi Germany, Mora from his perspective as the son of a German-Jewish man who joined the French Resistance and Harald Grosskopf as the son of a Nazi Party member who joined the *Wehrmacht*. Numerous online conversations between Mora and Grosskopf led to a joint trip through Germany during which they attempted to work through their respective pasts and reconcile their opposing family histories. This journey is depicted in the documentary film.

A Q&A session with Mora and film critic Peter Krausz followed the screening of the film in Melbourne at the 2013 AFGF. The session explored the technicalities of co-production with directors on different sides of the globe. It also discussed the directors’ educational aims of explaining their views of the Holocaust and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. During the event, Mora stated that one of the key aims of the film was to show that reconciliation through friendship is possible, and that another was to educate the German and Australian public about what happened during the Third Reich. The comment of a young Australian audience member after the Q&A that she ‘now finally understands what the Holocaust is’ (Australian, female, 37)

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37 The *Wehrmacht* were the unified armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935-46
affirmed Mora’s contention that there was a lack of knowledge of the Third Reich in Australia. However, other audience members (in particular from the German diaspora) mentioned that the film was too generalising, and criticised one scene in the film in particular where a taxi driver was secretly filmed saying: ‘Just give them [the Germans] a few beers and they’re all Nazis again!’ (Philippe Mora, *German Sons*, 2012). Other responses from audience members included the following:

- Germany isn’t full of Nazis anymore – even after a few beers! (Audience questionnaire, 2014)
- The film was rubbish! Just because they found one racist taxi driver doesn’t mean that everyone is a Nazi! (Audience questionnaire, 2014)

The strong reactions of some audience members to this one scene in the film and to what they saw as unfair representations of contemporary Germany illustrate an awareness of the representational power of film as cultural diplomacy. They also point towards the power of cinematic diplomacy, in that ideas and images represented in film are perceived as more authentic representations of the country than film screened outside of the context of a national film festival.

This understanding is supported by the particularly strong reaction of the German audience to *German Sons*. The audience at this event was more than half Germans (audience questionnaire, 2014), and some stated that when the director claimed that *German Sons* was the first film to ‘openly talk about the terrible things that went on during the Third Reich and how that impacted all families and their children’ (Philippe Mora during the Q&A at the AFGF) it ignored the long-standing process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany.
There are so many films on this topic – this really isn’t the first time we hear of Nazism! (Audience comment, 2014)

This reaction highlights the curatorial responsibility to not only choose apt films, but also to embed films into expert discussions that allow for a critical engagement with the films and their content. A more knowledgeable host would not have permitted the director’s inaccurate claim about his film being the first to tell the truth about the Holocaust to stand without challenge.

4.3 Space 3: Audience Perceptions

The aim of cultural and cinematic diplomacy is to influence the perception of one’s country and culture abroad. The impact of particular initiatives on this broader understanding of nation and culture is difficult to quantify, as it depends on many individual factors, such as the recipients’ knowledge, experience and age, but also on societal factors, as in the case of war films in the AFGF and the different memorialisation of war in Australia and Germany. As mentioned earlier, focus group interviews, audience surveys and observational research were employed to understand the audience perceptions of films and events.

In regard to the war films screened at the AFGF, and the audience response to these films and events, my analysis of the audience surveys found a split between those enjoying the ‘authentic representation’ of Germany’s past and open dialogue about the legacy of war, and those who would rather engage with other aspects of Germany. Responses in the audience questionnaires in 2014 and 2015 to the questions: What did you like about the film? How could the film festival be improved upon? and additional comments reveal the importance of history as part of the AFGF, but also a split. Thirty-seven per cent of the audience stated that they had learned about German
history during the AFGF, whilst 23% wanted more comedies programmed as part of the AFGF, and 18% wanted more historical films. The GI thus faced the challenge of satisfying both needs, and representing contemporary Germany without neglecting the important lessons from its history and the challenge of coming to terms with this past.

In 2015, I held a focus group (group 1) with a particular emphasis on war films before the reading performance by Justus Neumann; it included three members of the audience who discussed the issue of war films. The group consisted of an older (age 65+ years) Australian couple – a man who spoke German because his mother lived in Berlin from 1930 to 1933, and his wife, who has ‘no European links at all, and ha[s] been Australian for a very long time’ – and a young man (aged 25 years) with Ukrainian-German Jewish heritage. All participants were interested in German film, especially for its history, but whilst the young man saw the Third Reich as distant past that did not define Germany, the female participant described the time since as ‘only 60 years – that’s not very long at all and what happened was very bad!’ While the young man was clearly interested in historic filmic accounts such as *Heimat 3* (Reitz, 2013), the older couple was more drawn to representations of cosmopolitan Germany and humorous fictional films. These interests were reflected in the results of the audience survey, in that some respondents wished for ‘more comedies’ and reflected to having ‘[…] realised that even fictional movies have become quite critical of the widely accepted establishment again and a lot stronger compared to Australian productions!’ (audience questionnaire, 2014). Other audience members, in particular students, demanded ‘I particularly like history films – more of them!’ (audience questionnaire, 2014).

A second focus group (group 2) focused mainly on the AFGF as a representation of Germany and consisted of four participants. One man was German (65+) and three
participants were Australian with an interest in Germany and German cinema (34-45 years old). Focus group participants agreed that German cinema tells a story of the country and recent German history gives ‘the films a different flavour’, describing German film as ‘special in the extent to which they acknowledge what happened under the Third Reich’ (focus group 2, male, Australian, 55-64) and Germany overall as ‘having found a comfortable level of reminiscence; not a ‘block in your mouth’!’ (focus group 2, male, 35-44). The Australian understanding of the Third Reich was reflected upon in another focus group, with a participant commenting that ‘the era of the GDR is as a dot in our understanding of history, where[as] the time of National Socialism always seemed much longer’ (focus group 2, female, Australian, 45-54).

The ‘different cinematic style’ of German film was a theme in the audience questionnaires (audience questionnaire, 2014). The Third Reich was often seen as a defining factor, in that ‘Germany is prepared to make films presenting challenges, which do not involve a happy ending and leave the viewer with much to think about’ (focus group 1, male, Australian 65+). This sentiment was reflected in many focus groups, in which German films were described as ‘just so honest and real’ (focus group 2, male, Australian 45+), as opposed to French films, which were considered romanticised and American films as just ‘too much’ (ibid.); ‘German films seem like they just got people off the street, it seems to me like – authenticity’ (focus group 4, male, Australian, 25-34).

The dark humour of German comedy, particularly in the context of the wars, was appreciated:

Germans are renowned for having no humour at all ‘Alles muss richtig sein!’
[everything has to be correct], but that is not true! A lot of German films use a
very subtle and quite dark humour, such as in *Sources of Life!* (focus group 3, male, Australian, 45-54)

A participant referred to his German book club within the University of the Third Age, saying everyone had a ‘real sense of humour to laugh and joke about the Third Reich, about their grim stories of Nazis and communists!’ (focus group 4, male, Australian, 65+). He found this willingness to joke about the Third Reich very surprising but refreshing, and saw it as ‘the only way to survive those terrible things’ (ibid.). There was no conflict between humour and a serious take on Germany’s past for any of the focus group participants; instead, humour was seen as a productive way to approach taboo topics. This indicates an openness to challenging and controversial films within the AFGF, where historic and contemporary German issues could be discussed, and validates the decision to screen films like *Hotel Lux* (Haußmann, 2011) and *Kriegerin* (Wnendt, 2012).

### 4.4 Conclusions

The space of the AFGF, which the GI created through film and discussion, together with the physical space of the festival within Australia, created a unique opportunity for reflection and debate. Through time-events and film introductions, the GI aimed to add value to and enhance the film screenings and to provide a suitable framing for each film. The many time-events following films with a focus on war created a public sphere where topics otherwise deemed difficult or even taboo, such as the Holocaust, were discussed in an open way. Whilst it is clear that the GI programmed German films portraying the Holocaust in order to create open discussion and to illustrate a productive approach to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the curating of these films also demonstrates the difficulties curators faced.
These curatorial difficulties become clear in the approach to introducing and marketing these films. Whilst not shying away from screening parts of Germany’s problematic past, from 2002 to 2011 the AFGF embedded these films in ‘expert discussions’ with academics, journalists and historians. Since 2011, such films were presented in a less didactic but more humorous way, largely due to the personal preference of the GI director for emphasising entertainment over education. Both curatorial styles bear opportunities and risks: whilst the first limits audience participation in discussion, the second risks diminishing the seriousness of the topics. The self-mocking attempt to program films that would be ‘Krautpleasers’ can further be understood as a self-conscious and deliberate attempt to debunk popular German stereotypes, especially in a postwar context. The GI used the term in 2013 and 2014 to describe a section in the programming made up by light-hearted films (Minimag, 2013). The derogatory term ‘Kraut’ (cabbage), coined to refer to German WWI soldiers, stands in contrast to an open dialogue on Vergangenheitsbewältigung based on mutual respect.

The programming of the AFGF by an Australian-German jury in collaboration with Germanfilms ensured quality control. The GI’s programming of a few films without the recommendations of Germanfilms gave opportunities for local filmmakers, but bore risks regarding their framing. German Sons (Mora, 2012) is an example of this, and emphasises the importance of careful curatorship of screenings and audience discussions. The fact that one of the filmmakers came from Melbourne qualified the film for the AFGF. However, the ensuing Q&A discussion would have benefited from an expert panel that was more knowledgeable about the legacy of WWII and could have displayed a greater awareness of the different aspects of Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Germany. The Q&A following German Sons did not
provide the space for a critical and informed discussion between the audience and the panel, which displayed a non-didactic and non-expert approach to cinematic diplomacy.

The comments of two young Australian audience members that they finally understood the Third Reich and that they first heard about Hitler through film further point towards the potential impact of the AFGF on Australian audiences’ knowledge of German history. The general interest in historic films and openness to challenging and unusual German war films makes this thematic category a fruitful one for discussion, despite the inherent knowledge gaps of Australian audiences. These issues became more apparent in audience questionnaires, focus group discussions and Q&A discussions.

The AFGF aimed to enhance intercultural competencies by screening films that challenged long-held stereotypes. At the same time, it was constrained by the different expertise and knowledge levels of the audience. German cultural diplomacy was described as a ‘Frühwarnsystem für die Friedenspolitik’ (‘early warning system for politics of peace’) by the Bundestag (German parliament). The GI contributed by curating films and discussions on the wars, the Holocaust, Vergangenheitsbewältigung and human rights issues. Audiences stated – in questionnaires, focus groups and informal discussions – that they trusted the curating of the AFGF in this regard and that German films are understood as honest and authentic. This perception heightens the curatorial responsibility of the AFGF in relation to war films, as well as films on the legacy of the Third Reich or totalitarianism, such as Gansel’s Die Welle. Audience responses to the questionnaires reflect great interest in German perspectives on war and human rights, an angle that a
revived AFGF could leverage to establish its point of difference in a crowded film
festival space and attract a wider audience demographic.

As part of Germany’s cinematic diplomacy, this angle on human rights allows a
reinterpretation of a national film festival that is removed from any forms of the
concept’s propagandistic connotations and focuses instead on global issues. The film
festival can act as the public sphere, or Erfahrungsraum, where ideas can be debated
and critically reflected. For the GI, this means that the topic of war and
Vergangenheitsbewältigung does not have to be seen as a dilemma of programming –
caught between an avoidable stereotype and expected part of German culture – but as
the starting point for discussions on wider global topics, in which it can leverage its
authority based on Germany’s past.
Chapter 5: The GDR Represented in the AFGF

The GDR was a theme of the AFGF second in popularity only behind representations of the Third Reich. It featured in 21 films, of which seven were curated as special events. In Australia, less is known about the GDR than the Nazi period and so the AFGF had an important educational mandate to represent and interpret this aspect of recent German history for an Australian audience. The topic of the GDR held a prominent place in the festival, not only because the GI saw it as an important part of Germany’s recent history, but because it appeared to have wide appeal with Australian audiences. The reasons for this interest, the nature of the film festival’s engagement with the GDR and its role in the AFGF are analysed in this chapter. I argue that selections of GDR films, decisions about where they should be placed in the program, and what events should be organised around them, were made primarily on the basis of memory politics and the different memory discourses of the GDR. These curatorial decisions in turn influenced how the films were received by Australian audiences, thereby highlighting the importance of a careful curating of the topic to maximise its potential for the festival and for German cultural diplomacy.

In order to understand curatorship and receptions of the GDR through the AFGF, I examine the spaces of memory and discourses surrounding the GDR in Germany and Australia. Then I employ Martin Sabrow’s analysis of the memory of the GDR and his identification of Erinnerungsorte (places of memory) in order to adapt his theories in relation to GDR films at the AFGF. I explain the aforementioned fascination with the GDR in Australia by analysing the Australian engagement with the GDR over its 40 years of existence. Using Lefebvre’s space theory, this chapter is structured according to the same three social spaces as the previous chapter, and employs the theoretical framework of Erinnerungsorte. In doing so, this chapter elaborates on the
external context of the film festival in space one, the representation of the GDR through the GI as the curatorial space two and film festival audiences’ interpretations of the GDR in space three.

5.1 GDR Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

As Lewis points out, memory work today is an affair that includes many, including historians, but also parliaments, public foundations, political parties, the print media, museums, television and film (“En-gendering Remembrance” 103). This is particularly true for the GDR, where memory discourses are divided. Existing for 40 years, much longer than the 12 years of the Third Reich, the GDR is an important part of German contemporary history that continues to affect German public and private life. During the postwar division of Germany, the GDR struggled to be internationally recognised and as a part of the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War, was firmly integrated into the Eastern Bloc (Wentker 1). In 1955, the same year as the Warsaw Pact came into force, the Hallstein Doktrin was signed in West Germany, meaning that any international recognition of the GDR was at the same time the end of any diplomatic relations with West Germany (Jaenicke 40).

As a consequence of the Hallstein Doktrin, only other socialist countries recognised the GDR until the 1970s, when it was successively loosened in a general move towards acceptance and stability of the two German states. Significant in this was the signing of the so-called Ostverträge (contracts about the East) in 1970 under Chancellor Willy Brandt that allowed relations between East and West Germany to stabilise and relax. The Ostverträge also laid the foundations for the Grundlagenvertrag (basic treaty) between the two countries in 1972. This meant the end of the Hallstein Doktrin, as the Ostverträge allowed the German states to co-exist
and for both to become members of the United Nations (Bock & Dietze 8; Wentker 344). Until reunification, the two German states acted independently and developed their own foreign policy and diplomatic networks (Olsen 71).

The Wende (reunification) ushered in a period often referred to as ‘normalisation’, involving the ‘gradual attenuation of the particular restrictions that have influenced and constrained Germany’s international actions since the end of WWII’ (Gordon 225). Examples of this are the deployment of German military personnel during the war in Kosovo in 1999 without a NATO mandate, which went against the fundamental notions of demilitarisation, and Germany’s official solidarity with the US after the terror attacks in September 2011 (Maull 645). In adopting a ‘policy of responsibility’, unified German foreign policy redefined its role in a global political and economic context by placing particular emphasis on the role of justice, responsibility and morality – an attitude that still stands as a marker of contemporary German diplomacy (Webber 5).

The period of normalisation continues to resonate in discussions of Germany’s post-Cold War development (Harnisch & Longhurst 49). In contemporary times this has concerned the position of Germany in Europe, with Germany’s identity becoming increasingly couched in European terms, particularly with the expansion of the European Economic Community into the EU, and its extension eastwards (Beck & Livingstone 1; Kundnani The Paradox of German Power 2). Cooke and Taberner observed that Germany discovered a less burdened approach towards ‘being German’ that was bolstered and legitimised by growing international support for its presence on a global stage (2).
As part of this shift towards Germany as an internationally significant country in the centre of Europe, politicians and scholars debate the role of the GDR’s past for German identity and the different characterisations of East German communism. The disputes of Stefan Wolle and Armin Mitter (speaking for the Independent Historians’ League) and Jürgen Kocka (heading the newly founded Forschungsschwerpunkt Zeithistorische Studien der Förderungsgesellschaft Wissenschaftliche Neuvorhaben e.V. – Contemporary History Research Focus of the Promotion Company for New Scholarly Projects) in 1993, during a time of normalisation of foreign policy, about the nature of the dictatorship and how to memorialise it have become known as the ‘new Historikerstreit’ (Fulbrook, “New Historikerstreit” 203-207). The official narrative on the East German past today favours the label of an Unrechtsstaat, focusing on its totalitarian features, whilst former supporters of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party, SED) speak about a failed experiment of ‘real existing socialism’ (Turner 248). Scholars prefer more neutral labels of a ‘modern dictatorship’ (Kocka ‘A Special Kind of Dictatorship” 40), ‘educational dictatorship’, ‘commodious dictatorship’ (Jarausch, “Realer Sozialismus”, 58) or ‘participatory dictatorship’ (Fulbrook, The People’s State 12).

Remembering the GDR is a complex act of negotiating memories of the nation’s division during the Cold War and the archival truths that continue to arise out of declassifying official archives such as the Stasi files (Lewis, “The Secret Lives and Files of Stasi Collaborators” 27). In order to capture these different memorialisations of the GDR in German memory, Sabrow identifies three concurrent modes of remembrance, which I apply in my analysis of the representation and understanding of the GDR in the AFGF later in this chapter. These three modes of remembrance are Arrangementgedächtnis (memory of accommodation), Fortschrittsgedächtnis
(memory of progress) and Diktaturgedächtnis (memory of dictatorship); attached to each memory discourse are ‘places of memory’, or lieu de memoire/Erinnerungsorte.

In his work on the memorialisation of the GDR, Sabrow draws on Pierre Nora’s concept of lieu de memoire (‘Between memory and history’ iv) and Etienne François and Hagen Schulze’s Deutsche Erinnerungsorte – an adaptation of Nora’s concept of places of memory applied to Germany. Nora negotiates the boundary between history and memory by describing places where history is embodied and memory ‘crystallizes and secretes itself’ (‘Between memory and history” 7). In a German context, the three volumes of Deutsche Erinnerungsorte seek to capture German identity and culture through reference to the history, politics and geography that is associated with particular sites of national memory (François & Schulze 27). Sabrow follows Françoise and Schulze’s approach and edited a collection of Erinnerungsorte of the GDR. In their selection of places, the authors seek to illustrate the three different memory discourses dominant in the memorialisation of the GDR (ibid.).

Erinnerungsorte contain a plethora of information and emotion within a single place, image, song, word or idea and are formulated within the linguistic and national context of a time. This means that their meanings can shift or disappear when transported to a different context and that an image that conjures memories and emotion in one cultural context can be meaningless or evoke different ideas in another. In the context of cultural diplomacy and as a productive dialogue between cultures it is important to understand the images conveyed in an Erinnerungsort. In this thesis, the Erinnerungsorte represented in GDR-themed films and events point
out potential misunderstandings, as their wider meanings and symbolisms might be lost in this intercultural setting.

In this chapter, I focus on Erinnerungsorte in the AFGF that evoke Sabrow’s three different memory discourses and situate films and events within its wider framework, including connected concepts, ideologies and histories. An awareness of these different discourses and interpretations allows curators to convey cultural messages to international audiences by helping them to situate and understand films in their wider context. These discourses frame domestic as well as international engagement with the GDR, and guide the discussion of its representation in the AFGF. In the following sections, I outline the three memory discourses in the context of the AFGF and introduce the Erinnerungsorte attached to each.

5.1.1 Arrangementgedächtnis and Ostalgie – Adopting a Nostalgic View

The Arrangementgedächtnis (memory of accommodation) adopts the perspective that the majority of GDR citizens achieved a sense of normality in their daily lives through a range of compromises with the regime. It oscillates between ‘ironic invocations and nostalgic reverence of life in East Germany’ (Ahbe 45). According to Sabrow, the Arrangementgedächtnis is about ‘the everyday struggle for self-preservation under difficult conditions, but also about the in-voluntary and voluntary readiness to participate and to be proud of what the GDR has achieved’ (as cited in Heidel 86).

Part of this discourse is Ostalgie (as noted earlier, a neologism constructed from ‘nostalgia’ and the German word for ‘east’), a form of nostalgic memory for the East that does not focus on dictatorship and human rights abuses but is rather concerned with ‘the search for an identity in place rather than ideology’ (Thompson 97). The
phenomenon started in a series of television shows in the late 1980s with famous figures from the GDR, such as the ‘DDR-Show’ featuring figure-skating champion Katharina Witt and boxer Henry Maske. This nostalgic wave also produced scores of websites offering former East German products. Popular items in this discourse include *Spreewaldgurken* (gherkins from the Spree Forest) and a type of sparkling wine, *Rotkäppchen Sekt; rot-weiß Zahnpasta* (red-white toothpaste), *Spee* (washing powder) as well as the Trabant, the emblematic car of the GDR (Neller 39; Merkel 363-375).

*Ostalgie* is popular in marketing, fiction and film, where the everyday exploration of the GDR as *Heimat* (home or homeland with specific connotations to German culture, society and especially German Romanticism) takes centre stage (Hodgin “Screening the Stasi” 154). This commercial aspect of the *Arrangementgedächtnis* is aligned with Fulbrook’s notion of a participatory dictatorship that emphasises the ‘extent to which democratic centralism in the GDR did involve widespread participation’ and the ways that citizens in the GDR were at the same time constrained by, but also actively and often voluntarily supported, the political system of the GDR (12-23).

This form of memory has become especially visible in the current marketing strategies of Berlin, where instead of an hotel an ‘Ostel’ offers GDR-style accommodation, the food chain Ossi³⁸-burgers offers the emblematic food of capitalism with a GDR twist, and the *Spreewaldgurke* and the *Ampelmännchen*³⁹ (figure 13) shop sells merchandise products adorned with GDR icons (Winkler 19-27).

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³⁸ *Ossi* (Easterner) is a pejorative term for citizens of the GDR.
³⁹ *Ampelmännchen* (traffic light man of the GDR) has become a popular symbol of the GDR. It is one of the few GDR symbols and products that have been adopted by West Germany. After the *wende* it acquired cult status and is today a popular souvenir from Berlin available in the designated *Ampelmännchen* shop (see Figure 12).
This capitalistic use of socialist products is also evident in Australia, where (for example) the Berlin Bar in Melbourne allows its customers to experience the division of Germany in its layout, which is split between plushness in the interior design of its Western section and a type of austere Soviet Cold War modernist aesthetic in its Eastern section (Figure 14).

Figure 13: *Ampelmännchen Shop in Berlin* (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)

Figure 14: *Berlin Bar in Melbourne* (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)
Ampelmännchen, Spreewaldgurken and the Trabant feature in films representing the GDR that reduce and compress everyday life in the GDR into easily recognisable symbols. The most famous filmic examples of this discourse include Leander Haußmann’s Sonnenallee/Sun Alley (1999), a comedy about teenage life in East Berlin, and Becker’s film Good bye, Lenin! (2003). In Good bye, Lenin! Alex recreates the GDR for his mother, who was in a coma during reunification. By doing so, Becker introduces audiences to everyday life in the GDR, but also contributes to its memorialisation. These films were instrumental in establishing certain images as Erinnerungsorte of this Ostalgie debate in both national and international contexts (Frey 107-139; Ludewig 319-326). Erinnerungsorte facilitate this by packaging suitable aspects of GDR life into easily consumable products and images.

5.1.2 Diktaturgedächtnis – Remembering the GDR as a Dictatorship

Significantly different from memory of everyday products, the Diktaturgedächtnis remembers the GDR foremost as a dictatorship. Whilst the Arrangementgedächtnis views the GDR through nostalgia, trauma forms the lens for this memory discourse and focuses on the victims and perpetrators of repression. The Diktaturgedächtnis focuses on the oppressive character of the SED-regime and demands that ‘remembering the GDR for the Stasi is more important than for its childcare system’ (Sabrow 18). The dictatorship memory discourse is central to the German government’s official remembrance of the GDR. The existence of the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur (Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship) attests to this fact. In its research and remembrance work, the
agency focuses on six themes related to state control and imprisonment. By doing so, it actively creates places for remembrance of repression and violence, including museums and memorials, and is primarily devoted to working through the memories of the victims of persecution and exposing the perpetrators. The agency also supports the production of literature and film and promotes their use in schools. The three films screened in the AFGF’s special event in 2014 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the wall were supported by the foundation – the filmmakers received financial support for production and marketing.

The Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit – Ministry for State Security), the East German ministry responsible for the surveillance and control of its citizens, is fundamental to this memory discourse. Memory of this kind aims to expose how systems of blanket state surveillance violated citizens’ privacy and individual freedoms (of expression, movement and association) were suppressed by the regime, both of which are markers of dictatorships (Sabrow 18). Jens Gieseke described the Stasi as ‘the official Erinnerungsort’ of the GDR and as the ‘point where the memory of issues surrounding the everyday of dictatorships crystallizes’ (108). Memory of the Stasi was facilitated by the opening of the Stasi archives to the public in 1992 under Joachim Gauck as the Federal Commissioner for the Die Behörde für die Unterlagen des Staatsicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU) (Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR). The establishment of the ‘Gauck Agency’ followed in the wake of the peaceful revolution in 1989, enabling civil rights activists to access their surveillance files compiled by the Stasi and prevent them from being destroyed (Lewis, “Reading and writing the Stasi file”

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40 1) The 1989/90 peaceful revolutions and German unification; 2) Soviet penal- and labour camps: Gulag; 3) The people’s revolt on the 17th June 1953; 4) The building of the Berlin Wall and escape; 5) The women’s prison (Hoheneck) and forced labour in the GDR.
Roland Jahn, the commissioner since 2011, reiterated the BStU’s rationale for keeping the public archives open, and his pledge that ‘the better we understand dictatorships, the better we can shape democracy’ (n.p.) underpins the BStU’s mission statement.

The media’s use of the Stasi archives, fuelled by a desire to identify perpetrators and collaborators, has not been without controversy (Glajar et al. 7). Consequently, the opening of the archives in 1992 dominated the memory debates of the GDR until the Ostalgie debates in 2003 (ibid. 6). Almost seven million enquiries to the archives in 2014 brought new facts about the surveillance methods and objects of the Stasi to light, shifting the public perception of the GDR further into the realm of a dictatorship and a surveillance state. The most sinister part of the Diktaturgedächtnis includes memories of Mauertote (people shot dead at the Berlin Wall whilst attempting to escape the GDR). Between 1961 and 1989, 136 people were shot dead at the German–German border (Hertle & Nooke 20).

After reunification, the Mauerschützenprozesse (trials against border guards involved in these deaths) were an important symbolic act in reckoning with a criminal past, and a form of transitional justice that had already served Germany well, in particular in calling Nazi perpetrators to account. The unified government of Germany was keen not to repeat the mistakes of the Nazi past and to call perpetrators to account, but it faced legal hurdles such as the principle of nulla poena sine lege, requiring that one cannot be punished for doing something that is not prohibited by law (i.e. the shootings at the Berlin Wall were not prohibited under GDR law). The debates about bringing the perpetrators of the border shootings to justice helped to firmly establish the GDR as a dictatorship and Unrechtstaat (unjust state), and the decision by the
court to allow for retroactive justice\textsuperscript{41} had impacts that far exceeded intra-German issues. It is therefore unsurprising that this issue forms a popular topic of engagement with the GDR internationally and as part of the AFGF.

5.1.3 Fortschrittsgedächtnis – the GDR as the Better Society

As the most delegitimised form of memory, Sabrow’s category of the \textit{Fortschrittsgedächtnis}, or memory of progress, relates to memorial practices that insist on commemorating the original antifascist foundations of the GDR and the desire to build a socialist state, which, so the narrative goes, was prevented only by the mistakes of the SED, political circumstances and the machinations of the West (Sabrow 19). The German parliamentary party \textit{Die Linke} (The Left) is perhaps the most visible marker of this strand of memory, and sections of the party still regard state socialism as a realistic alternative to democracy and capitalism (Meyen 103).

Part of this alternative society remembered in the \textit{Fortschrittsgedächntis} embodies feminist ideals, resulting in the GDR being praised for its approach to gender equality or the so-called \textit{Frauenfrage} (woman question) (Kaminsky 18). The socialist revolution shook the foundation of society and of traditional family life, resulting in large numbers of women entering the workforce and occupying positions traditionally reserved for men (Rueschemeyer & Szelenyi 61). In the 1970s, the GDR experienced the spread of a distinctly socialist form of feminist thought that was enunciated in literature and film (Klocke 140). This ‘GDR feminism’ developed a large corpus of feminist literature and thinking and was grounded in the socialist ideal of an egalitarian society. The GDR provided women with increased maternity benefits, a monthly household day and childcare facilities to facilitate their employment and

\textsuperscript{41} Retroactive law is defined as ‘a law that operates to make criminal or punishable or in any way expressly affects an act done prior to the passing of the law’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 180).
make it compatible with motherhood, among other benefits (Martens 2). This aspect of gender equality forms an important part of the Fortschrittsgedächtnis.

Despite the fact that it is unlikely that the Fortschrittsgedächtnis would be chosen by the German curators as a focus for the AFGF today, it remained possible for it to be a discourse through which Australian audiences could engage with the GDR. The main way in which this has occurred was through retrospective screenings of films made during the lifetime of the GDR regime that propagated the vision of it as a more just and equitable alternative to capitalist Germany, particularly in the regime’s use of its own DEFA films as tools of cultural diplomacy. DEFA films were a focus of the AFGF in 2009, attracting large Australian audiences. The reasons for this attraction are several. For example, as I have noted and will demonstrate, there is a history of engagement of Australians with the GDR during the 40 years of the country’s existence, in particular through political connections, cultural links and cultural diplomatic efforts.

In the next part of this chapter I provide an overview of the complex relations between the GDR and Australia and discuss the geopolitical and cultural setting for GDR films screened at the AFGF. Utilising Lefebvre’s representational space as the physical space or metaphorical ‘house’ of the festival, space 1 describes the curated space of the AFGF and includes films and events curated by the GI.

5.2 Space 1: The GDR through the Australian Lens

In this section, I adapt Lefebvre’s physical space to denote the physical space of the AFGF. This space was formed by the cinema on the one hand and the location of the festival in its national setting on the other. For the purposes of this chapter, this space was inflected by the intercultural and diplomatic relations between Australia and the
GDR and Australian audiences’ memorialisation of the GDR. Despite historical distance making the GDR merely a ‘footnote in world-history’, interest in the topic manifests itself in the AFGF’s healthy attendance at GDR-themed films and events (Harsch 9-25). However, the different memorialisations of the GDR in German and Australian memory landscapes lead to a different engagement with films and events that represent the former country, which is a question at the core of my research.

To make sense of the different structures of memory and perceptions of the GDR, Maier’s metaphorical differentiation between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ memory serves as a useful distinction. Reflecting on the ‘political half-life of fascist and communist memory’, Maier compared the different historical memories of fascism and communism, focusing on Germany. He asked: ‘Why does the black book of Nazism remain, in the consciousness of so many of those preoccupied by the history of the twentieth century, blacker than the black book of Communism?’ (Maier 153). Borrowing a term from nuclear physics, Maier suggested differentiating historical memory according to its half-life. In this, the memory of communism is in the process of becoming ‘cold’ memory, whilst the commemoration of the crimes of National Socialism remains a ‘hot’ topic of discussion.

The AFGF’s curatorship and engagement with the GDR in Australia confirms Maier’s theory, and German film productions about the GDR’s past mirror the three aforementioned memory discourses. GDR films screened at the AFGF can be roughly divided into three categories: films illustrating the terrors of the GDR, those using a nostalgic lens to portray everyday life in the country, and those showcasing the GDR as an alternative way of life. In the following, I analyse the relations between Australia and the GDR that influence the ongoing fascination with this ‘cold’ topic of Germany’s history.
5.2.1 Political Contact Zones

On 19 December 1972, the newly elected Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, announced that he had instructed the Australian ambassador in Moscow to discuss the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries with his colleague from the GDR (Tampke 139). Neither the United Kingdom nor the United States had at this point recognised the GDR. Whitlam described the importance of establishing public relations with the GDR, emphasising the potential value of strategic trade and diplomatic relationships. In particular, Whitlam pointed out:

> I would also like to make the point that in opening discussions with the GDR I am seeking to avoid situations in which Australia takes general decisions in international affairs late. I would rather see Australia in the vanguard than in the rear-guard in coming to its own foreign policy. (Whitlam n.p.)

This announcement followed shifts in attitudes towards collaborations with the GDR in Australia, such as the interdepartmental meeting at the Department of External Affairs in Canberra to discuss the longstanding issue of an East German Trade Office. This recognition not only transformed relations between Australia and the GDR, it provided a symbolically potent expression of the new Australian government’s understanding of its place in the world.

In June 1973 ‘the first consulate of the GDR in a non-socialist country’ opened in Sydney, and in October the Australian embassy was set up in the East Berlin suburb of Pankow (Spittel 191). The relationship between two countries of similar population size and comparable subordinate role in their respective Cold War blocs is twofold. Whilst Australia asserted its independence as a nation through the (controversial)
recognition of the GDR, for the GDR it was a way out of isolation (Monteath, “The German Democratic Republic and Australia” 214). At the frontier of East and West, the GDR was for Australians an exemplar of what a socialist state might look like. For Australian communists, the GDR formed an ideal case study for the practice of socialism, especially because capitalism in Australia was never called into question and the country had been a democracy since the federation of six British self-governing colonies in 1901.

The foreign politics of the GDR positioned the country during the Cold War as the better ‘other Germany’ of the Eastern bloc and it was represented as an antifascist, socialist alternative to West Germany. For the GDR, as a small satellite state of the Soviet Union, cultural diplomacy was an important way to assert its identity in a global context. This was particularly important since the FRG did not recognise the GDR as an independent country, and thus felt the obligation to represent Germany as a whole, including the 18 million Germans that lived under Soviet occupation. The aforementioned Hallstein Doktrin and the West German Alleinvertretungsanspruch (policy of sole representation) meant that contact with the GDR was limited to smaller organisations and based on shared ideologies, political ideas or academic interest.

For Australia, this meant that due to British links and a common democratic political system, ties to West Germany were naturally stronger than to ‘the other Germany’. Despite these differences, however, cultural and political relations to the GDR existed in Australia, namely through the country’s various communist parties, the Australian-GDR Freundschaftsverein (friendship society), as well as literary exchanges. The growing interest in the GDR in the 1970s can therefore be explained by the close diplomatic ties that evolved between the two countries that led on to engagement with the GDR in politics and culture (Monteath & Munt 16). These forms of exchange
established complex connections between Australia and the GDR that continue to influence the perceptions of the GDR in Australia.

5.2.2 The Communist Party of Australia

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) was founded in 1920 and can be seen as ‘an expression of an Australian radical tradition and the product of revolutionary enthusiasm triggered by the Russian Revolution in 1917’ (Symons vii). Difficulties in maintaining coherence within the party itself and within and between Australian and international revolutionary movements led to a near-collapse of the party in 1925 that brought with it significant changes. The party was reorganised along democratic centralist lines, leadership dominance increased and many Russian ‘workerist’ terms were adopted (ibid.). As a result, the party became more coherent and membership increased from around 100 members in the late 1920s to several thousand by the mid-1930s (ibid.). The party’s clear focus on the unemployed, anti-fascists, women and Australia’s Indigenous population had a strong impact, as did its growing presence in the union movement. The depression of the 1930s and the rise of fascist and reactionary movements strengthened the party’s claim to be the centre of anti-capitalist organisations.

The CPA maintained its underground presence throughout WWII, and communist sympathisers and members and activists among Australia’s writers, painters, historians and a political public made a deep impact on Australia’s wartime and postwar cultural developments. At the end of WWII, the CPA enjoyed considerable strength in Australian working-class life and seemed poised to weld the local and international radical traditions into a powerful socialist force (Percy 29). With more
than 20,000 members in 1941, the CPA formed a united front of the Left and was in a strong political position (J. Stevens 81).

However, the emergence of the Cold War and the CPA’s misjudgment about the likely course of postwar economic and political developments gradually marginalised its influence. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the party was subject to close scrutiny by the state, and in 1949, Prime Minister Robert Menzies proclaimed that ‘communism was anti-British, anti-Australian and pro-Russian’ (as cited in Lowe 101). With the escalation of the Cold War, this type of equation became increasingly common and communism became the antithesis of the ‘Australian way of life’ (ibid.).

In 1951 Menzies banned the CPA and gave his ‘Defence Call to the Nation’, in which he portrayed communists as not only as the opposite of Australian society but as a danger to democracy, creating inflation and a threat to the country itself through the unremitting, implacable character of the quest of the Soviet Union for eventual world domination (Knight & Heazle 132). In this hostile environment, the CPA lost ground and many of its non-working-class members, and with them many of its cultural and intellectual activities. Despite having become a small and insignificant part of global communism by the end of the 1960s, the party recovered once again when it was split in two because of increasing conflict between the Chinese-Communist members (the New Left) of the CPA and its Marxist-Leninist-Party members (Douglas 208). This allowed for a repositioning of the party as its new leaders emerged from universities in the 1960s (O’Lincoln 32).

The increasing independence of the New Left from the CPA led to a second split in 1971 and changed the face of Australian communism to a force challenging conventional morality. The ideas of participatory democracy replaced hierarchical
forms of democratic centralism, and a focus on minorities made the party a powerful advocate for women’s rights and Aboriginal land rights (Symons 16). Focusing on social issues rather than a unified political agenda, the party lost its original political doctrine and slowly moved its focus away from political leadership to social services. In March 1991, the diminished party wound itself up (Macintyre 6).

Judged by normal political criteria, the CPA was a failure. Its effect on public policy, however, was significant and its ideology has left a strong mark on Australian academic life (Macintyre 7). Fostering academic and literary exchanges between the GDR and Australia, the CPA played an important role in establishing an alternative understanding of the latter, based on the ideals of global communism. Lokatis here pointed to the exchanges established by Australian writers whose works were translated into German and published in the GDR (35 - 50).

5.2.3 Academic and Literary Contact Zones

Australian universities were at the forefront of establishing cultural ties to the GDR. Universities and academic circles, such as the association of writers PEN International, connected Australian communists with their ‘socialist brothers’ worldwide. At the University of Adelaide, for example, exchanges between writers from the GDR and Australia were established early, when the Head of the German Department at Adelaide University, Derek van Abbe, successfully applied to spend a year of study leave in the GDR in 1954 (Monteath “German Democratic Republic” 20). Other large Australian universities, such as Monash University, the University of Adelaide and the University of Melbourne taught GDR literature in the 1970s, whilst some Australian academics moved to the GDR, considering it more closely aligned to their own communist credo. Among these were Professor Fred Rose and his wife,
who emigrated from Australia to the GDR, where he held a chair of anthropology at the Humboldt University in Berlin and was regarded an expert on everything Australian (Monteath & Munt 1).

A strong left-wing tradition of writers forms a further lasting connection to the ideals of communism in Australia, with the Realist Writers Circle in Sydney and the Australian Book Society in Melbourne at the heart of the movement. Ethel Turner, Mary Gilmore and Dorothea Mackellar founded the Sydney PEN in 1931, and in 1977, also in Sydney, the Congress of PEN International (‘Literature: a bridge between Asian and European cultures’) explored the ties between European and Asian literatures, their interaction and mutual enrichment and the development of new literatures in the Pacific. The guests came from many countries, including the GDR, fostering personal exchanges between the global communities of left-wing writers (‘Literature: a bridge between Asian and European cultures’ 19).

Adding to these literary exchanges between the two countries were Australian citizens, some of them former refugees from Nazi Germany, who chose to take up residence in the GDR. They saw the GDR as a ‘phoenix arisen from the ashes of the Third Reich’, offering the opportunity to build new lives for themselves (Dennis & LaPorte 39). One such an individual was Walter Kaufmann, a German-born writer of working-class origins who, after many years of working and travelling in Australia, chose to live in the GDR, where he pursued a successful career as a writer (Kaiser & Kaufmann n.p.). The GDR, as a self-proclaimed Leseland (country of readers), was a regime that prized and protected literature as an important tool in the construction of socialism (Spittel & Moore, “Bobbing up in the Leseland” 117). The ‘reading nation’ boasted a dense web of libraries and bookshops and a rigorous and centralised cultural
administration but also an oppressive system of state censorship that limited the number of titles available (Links 196-207).

Censorship meant that the choice of international books was narrow and that most modernist, post-modernist and avant-garde writers were banned. The GDR was a thoroughly policed and regulated literary marketplace, where writing, reading and publishing were utilised for the promotion and support of the socialist state and where ‘books were considered the blocks with which a new, truly socialist German state could be built’ (Spittel & Moore, “Bobbing up in the Leseland” 118). The Ministry of Culture controlled a hierarchical network of publishers, allocated paper and money, and subjected each new title to a thorough approval process (ibid.). It also had ties to the Ministry for State Security, which was heavily involved in censoring literary works and policing their authors.

From 1950, some of Australia’s most important writers were published in this unique literary setting: Frank Hardy, Marcus Clarke, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Xavier Herbert, Dorothy Hewett, Walter Kaufmann, Thomas Keneally and Patrick White, amongst others (Spittel & Moore, “Bobbing up in the Leseland” 115). Some of them established close ties with their publishers in the GDR and encouraged an active literary exchange between East Germany and Australia. According to Spittel and Moore, a collection of Australian titles translated and published in the GDR forms ‘an alternative canon, a shadowy literary archive that rewrites Australia’s postwar cultural history from behind the iron curtain’ (ibid.). East German publications were also available in Australia and the GI sponsored GDR authors, such as Stefan Heym and Günter Kunert, to visit (ibid.).
Other cultural products from the GDR, such as film, were distributed and periodically showcased to the rest of the world. As a significant part of East German Kulturpolitik, the DEFA-Außenhandel was in charge of film import and export. It mainly bought international productions to screen in the GDR and sold film to other socialist states, but few to non-socialist states. Mainly commercially unsuccessful, these film exports remained within other German-speaking countries; the only successful exports were the DEFA fairy-tale productions that are still shown on German television (Shen 1).

Nevertheless, the East German film production company DEFA was renowned internationally for its feature films and ran multiple festivals to promote them, including in Australia (Wedel et al. 13). The GDR also regularly displayed its artistic achievements at international film festivals. Within the Eastern bloc, the most important venues were Moscow and Karlovy Vary, comparable to Cannes and Venice in Western Europe (Ivanova 100). During Willy Brandt’s period of Ostpolitik - as described earlier - the GDR participated as a sovereign state in the International Film Festival in Berlin from 1975 onwards. Between 1949 and 1989 the GDR entered films at 300 festivals and won 155 prizes and special awards for DEFA productions (de Valck 72). Participation at these international film festivals helped the GDR gain an international reputation and aided the representation of its way of life to the non-socialist world (Yurtaeva 96). Participation at international film festivals and the organisation of GDR film festivals are examples of cinematic diplomacy, and illustrate a shift in the concept from its usage as Cold War propaganda to its contemporary conceptualisation as cultural exchange, as exemplified in the AFGF.

From 1975 the GDR recognised the value of Komplexveranstaltungen, or a collection of themed events curated into a festival, and instituted the DDR-Wochen (or DDR-Tage – ‘GDR Days’) (Abraham 249). The DDR-Wochen utilised a combination of
film, lectures and exhibitions to reach larger audiences and to have a greater political impact through more exposure in local media (ibid.). As elements of foreign politics, these events were highly curated and targeted, and aimed to recruit politicians and members of the public to ‘join the fight for peace of the socialist states’ (ibid. 254).

Three key themes in the diplomatic efforts of the GDR influenced its representation abroad: its anti-fascist foundation and the assertion that fascism continued in West Germany, its claim to be the only legitimate heir of German high culture, and the claim that the well-being of its citizens was at the heart of the socialist state. These themes are also visible in the DDR-Tage or DDR-Filmtage representing the GDR in Australia in 1982 (Kleiner 134).

5.2.4 DDR-Filmtage in Australia

Between the 29th of October and the 4th of November 1982, the GDR held its first film festival in Australia, organised by the Herder Institute and the Foreign Ministry of the GDR (Neues Deutschland 4). The DDR-Filmtage opened in Canberra and screened four DEFA productions: Bürgschaft für ein Jahr/On Probation (Herrmann Zschosche, 1981), Beethoven – Tag aus einem Leben/Beethoven – Days in a Life (Horst Seemann, 1976), Lotte in Weimar (Egon Günther, 1975) and die Verlobte/The Fiancee (Günter Rücker and Günter Reisch, 1980) (ibid.). Two years later, the International Organization of Film Archives organised a summer school in East Berlin with participants from 16 countries, including Tony Barrett from Australia, on the topic of storing and preservation of film reels (Klaue n.p.).
The first film screened at the Filmtage was *Bürgschaft für ein Jahr/On Probation*, a commentary on the progressive role of women in the GDR. As a so-called Frauenfilm (women’s film) it centres on a strong, non-conforming woman who is in conflict with societal expectations of her (Silberman “Narrating Gender” 25-33). Zschosche’s film tells the story of a single mother in state care, struggling to become independent, who in the end relinquishes custody of one of her daughters to the state. By portraying a struggling single mother the film is promoting GDR gender politics, especially the empowerment of women in society. *Bürgschaft für ein Jahr* is part of a long tradition of DEFA Frauenfilme that espouses women’s integration into the workforce and the collective (Creech 100). These films about women featured ‘new women’, who were portrayed as hard-working model communists and often with a de-feminised aesthetic (Rinke, “From models to misfits” 184).

The selection of *Bürgschaft für ein Jahr*, a film about a female protagonist, was part of the diplomatic efforts of the GDR to be perceived as an emancipated country with strong gender equality. The opening night film promoted the GDR’s government as one that takes care of its citizens’ well-being and protects the most vulnerable in society – in the case of Zschosche’s film, a single mother and her children. The role of women played a significant role in the diplomacy of the GDR, where images of working women not only emphasised practical support provided by government, such as childcare, but also the ideals of a classless and gender-equal society based on the contribution of everyone (Kaminski 54). The progressive image of womanhood resonated strongly with Australian audiences, not only with feminist ones but with left-leaning audiences who appreciated its representation of non-traditional images of femininity.

42 The film was entered into the 32nd Berlinale in 1982, where Katrin Saß, starring as the mother, won the Silver Bear for best actress.
The other films screened as part of the DDR-Filmtage highlighted other popular topics of GDR diplomacy and portrayed the GDR in opposition to West Germany as the heir to the German Kulturnation and its anti-fascist counterpart. Utilising historical films, the GDR demonstrated ownership of pre-war German high culture by focusing on the lives of the composer Ludwig van Beethoven and German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The reasons for choosing historical films for its cinematic diplomacy were twofold, as history was seen to facilitate ‘neutral access’ to the GDR’s ideologies and to also demonstrate that ‘the classical inheritance of German culture is being cultivated in the GDR – in contrary to West Germany’ (Timmermann 208).

In addition to its role in the German cultural canon, the GDR presented Ludwig van Beethoven as a civil revolutionary. His life and work therefore helped to position the GDR as a cultured and humanistic state in its cultural and cinematic diplomacy. *Beethoven – Tag aus einem Leben* (Horst Seemann, 1976) is set between 1813 and 1819 at the height of Beethoven’s fame. The biopic depicts the composer’s familial struggles as well as the political difficulties he experienced as a staunch democrat under the reactionary Metternich regime. Like the opening night film, this film is clearly connected to the GDR’s cultural politics and positions the country as the heir to German classicism and romanticism in literature and music (Schittly 18). Even before the formation of the GDR this connection to pre-1933 German culture was an important part of the country’s cultural politics and foreign representations, as evident in Johannes R. Becher’s speech on the 4th of July 1945, in which he called for the establishment of a parliamentarian-democratic republic. Becher was a founding member and Head of the Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands (Cultural Foundation for the Democratic Renewal of Germany) and highlighted
notions of anti-fascism and the rebirth of the German Kultur nation as the ideological foundation for the GDR (as cited in Conradt 2005):

Alle Deutschen, die guten Willens sind, beschwören wir: Es werde Licht.  
Lasst endlich, endlich ein freiheitliches, wahrhaft demokratisches Deutschland auferstehen.

All Germans, who are willing, let us swear: There shall be light. Let us finally, finally resurrect a free, truly democratic Germany (My translation)

The selection of Beethoven – Tage aus einem Leben as part of the DDR-Filmtage and its notions of the GDR as the resurrection of the German Kultur nation was affirmed by a second historical film that focused on one of Germany’s most famous writers, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe was an important part of nation-building in the GDR and his Faust became the leitmotiv of the country. On behalf of the First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party Walter Ulbricht, the lines of the epos ‘Solch ein Gewimmel möchte ich sehn. Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volke stehn’ (‘Such busy, teeming throngs I long to see. Standing on freedom’s soil, a people free’) were engraved in the Stalin-Allee in Berlin, and Johannes R. Becher proclaimed them to be the demand for freedom of contemporary times (Hedges 73).

The DDR-Filmtage’s selection of Lotte in Weimar (Egon Günter, 1975) on the life of Goethe was designed to establish the GDR’s close affinity to Goethe’s works and ideals. Günter’s film, set in 1816, is based on Thomas Mann’s novel by the same name and is set in 1816. The film won the Palme d’Or at the 1975 Cannes Film Festival and was subsequently released in West Germany, where it was received as an ironic take on the cult status of Goethe in the GDR (1975). The film narrates the story of Charlotte Kestner, who arrives in Weimar to see Goethe – the love of her youth –
again, and showcases Goethe’s works as well as the city of Weimar. Weimar and
Weimar classicism were identified as the basis for constructing a ‘better Germany’
and Alexander Abusch, who succeeded Johannes Becher as the Minister for Culture,
highlighted Weimar and Bitterfeld as illustrations of national identity promoted by the
GDR:

Weimar und Bitterfeld – Weimar, wo die großen Dichter des bürgerlichen
Humanismus einst gewaltet, und Bitterfeld wo die arbeitenden Menschen von
heute neue humanistische Maße und Werte schaffen, indem sie auf
sozialistische Art zu arbeiten, zu lernen und zu leben begonnen haben – diese
beiden Begriffe werden eins in dem Begriff des sozialistischen Humanismus
und in der Arbeit für seine weiteste Ausstrahlung in das Leben (Abusch
p.158).

Weimar, where the great writers of the middle-class humanist tradition lived
and worked, and Bitterfeld, where the working people of our day are creating
new standards and values by beginning to work, learn and live in a socialist
way – these two concepts are united in the concept of socialist humanism and
in the striving for its broadest emanation into life. (My translation)

The fact that Lotte in Weimar was chosen to represent the GDR, not only at Cannes
but at the international Filmwochen (Film weeks) around the world underscored the
GDR’s understanding of itself as the continuation of the German Kulturnation. It also
positioned the GDR as a humanist country and showcased Goethe as well as the city
of Weimar and its cultural capital as firm parts of the country’s ideals. As part of the
Filmtage in Canberra the two historical films emphasised differences between the
GDR and West Germany, where the West was the capitalist and political trade partner
of the country, whilst the GDR positioned itself as a country connected to the world through shared cultural values.

This juxtaposition of East and West becomes particularly clear in the anti-fascist representations of the GDR in the closing film of the DDR-Filmtage. Whilst West Germany’s image was tarnished by WWII and the Holocaust, the GDR denied any connections to the Holocaust and highlighted anti-fascism as one of its founding principles. By closing the Filmtage with a film focusing on the imprisonment of a communist during the Third Reich, the GDR emphasised this rejection of fascism on an international stage. *Die Verlobte/The Fiancee* (Günther Rücker & Günter Reisch, 1980) tells the story of Hella Lindau, a political prisoner in Nazi Germany, and her fiancée, who is a member of a communist resistance group. Hella was arrested during a protest and sentenced to 10 years’ incarceration for opposing the Nazis. The film is highly acclaimed as the portrayal of a strong and resilient woman who resists the seductions of Nazi ideology and suffers for her ideals (Byg 158).

*Die Verlobte* won the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 1980 and represented the GDR at the 53rd Academy Awards, where it failed to receive a nomination. The film tells a powerful story, representing communist resistance as an important form of opposition to fascism and thus distancing the GDR from the collective guilt associated with the Third Reich. The screening of the film at international Filmtage can be considered part of the politics of Vergangenheitsbewältigung in the GDR and highlights the anti-fascist self-understanding and international representations of the country.

The Filmtage in Canberra positioned the GDR as an egalitarian society with a strong humanistic foundation and as the real heir to German classicism in literature and
music. By selecting historical films on Beethoven and Goethe, the Filmtage highlighted not only the GDR’s history as rooted in the German Kulturnation but its foundational values as humanistic and egalitarian. Calling on these values, the Filmtage thus promoted the viability of communism around Australia. Anti-fascism, as another important part of GDR diplomacy, was also part of the Filmtage and thus distanced the GDR from the Third Reich and from West Germany. As already noted, anti-fascism was a significant part of the GDR’s foundational myth and dominant rhetoric in foreign politics. However, rather than involving a Vergangenheitsbewältigung of Germany’s past, anti-fascism in the GDR was mainly set up as a contemporary assault on the Bonn government (Herf 163). The logic behind this was the definition of the GDR as anti-fascist and that consequently every enemy of the country must be fascist. This political redefinition of fascism became particularly clear in the Berlin Wall being termed the ‘antifascist protection wall’ in the GDR and in its international political rhetoric (Herf 163).

The DDR-Filmtage was the most significant representation of DEFA films in Australia. Since reunification, DEFA films have been screened in Australia as part of festivals, as special releases and, occasionally on television. For the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 2009, the ACMI organised an East German cinema retrospective. The program covered a variety of films, ranging from early productions, such as Die Mörder sind Unter Uns (Wolfgang Staudte, 1947) to Solo Sunny (Konrad Wolf) from 1980. Significantly different from the Filmwoche in 1982, the ACMI deliberately avoided the output of Stalin-era GDR propaganda (Kretzenbacher n.p.). Similarly, DEFA retrospectives at AFGF portrayed the GDR from a different perspective and with different cultural dimensions. Contemporary,
multifaceted representations of the GDR illustrate memorialisations of the former country in Germany and internationally, of which film forms an important part.

5.2.5 *Australian Perceptions of the GDR Post-Reunification*

Images of the GDR are necessarily mediated and films form part of an ongoing engagement with the former country and the project of socialism that extends beyond the GDR’s existence. The different representations of the GDR act as interpreter and showcaser of socialism and communism, also helping to explain the ideological foundations of current communist countries, such as North Korea, China and Cuba. Whilst the perceptions of present-day socialist states are influenced by the current political and economic climate, as well as shaped by current affairs in these countries, the GDR provides a case study, frozen in time, that allows for analysis and scrutiny, especially of its memory discourses. Films create and present East German *Erinnerungsorte* which provide opportunities for a contemporary engagement with the GDR. These *Erinnerungsorte* represented in the AFGF can be analysed in terms of the ways in which they contributed to the continuation of GDR–Australia relations. This is significant in that the AFGF represented a country that no longer exists, that nonetheless forms a substantial part of Germany’s history and that, as shown above, has shared multiple ties with Australia. The curators of the AFGF and its audience have significantly different level of knowledge about and conceptualisations of the GDR. In the next part of this chapter I scrutinise the curated side of this cultural diplomatic dialogue about the GDR and highlight the *Erinnerungsorte* and memory discourses represented in the AFGF.
5.3 Space 2: GDR-themed Films and Events Curated as part of the AFGF

Space 2, the curated space of the film festival, includes films and events selected and programmed by the GI. Here, I analyse the films that the GI chose to screen and curate into time-events with regard to Sabrow’s three strands of memory discourses and *Erinnerungsorte* (introduced above). Twenty-one films screened at the AFGF between 2002 and 2016 focused on the GDR or its legacy, but only seven were curated as time-events. The two main events that featured the GDR were the screening of DEFA films at the GD Retro in 2009 and the time-events in 2014 for the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. I analyse these time-events in detail, because they illustrate the curatorial decisions of the GI with respect to the representation of the GDR. All films with a GDR-theme are outlined in Table 6 below.
Table 6: GDR Films screened at the AFGF 2002–16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film title</th>
<th>AFGF</th>
<th>Memory discourse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Der Tunnel/The Tunnel</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Bye, Lenin!</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Memory of accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edifice Neubau – VW in Dresden/Edifice</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aus Liebe zum Volk/I love you all</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alles auf Zucker!</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Frau vom Checkpoint Charlie/Border of Despair</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spur der Steine/Trace of Stones</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEFA retrospective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karbid und Sauerampfer/Carbide and Sorrel</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEFA retrospective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jakob der Lügner/Jacob the Liar</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEFA retrospective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Legende von Paul und Paula/The legend of Paul and Paula</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEFA retrospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo Sunny</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEFA retrospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedliche Zeiten/Peaceful Times</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Memory of accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 heißt: Ich liebe dich</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One, Two, Three</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novemberkind/November Child</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weissensee/The Weissensee Saga</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Das System – Alles verstehen heißt alles</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Genre</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westwind</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Progress and dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnenallee</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Memory of accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wir wollten auf’s Meer/Shores of Hope</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zwei Leben</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neufundland/NewFoundLand</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Progress memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Ain’t California</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Memory of accommodation and progress memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Familie</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Einzelkämpfer</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Memory of accommodation and dictatorship memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Duft des Westens/Aroma of the West</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Dictatorship memory</td>
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</tbody>
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5.3.1 Good Bye, Lenin! as the Opening Night Film AFGF 2003

In 2003, Good Bye, Lenin! (Wolfgang Becker, 2003) was the opening night film of the AFGF. It marked the start of a second wave of Ostalgie in Germany and also received much attention abroad (Behrdahl 130). In its first two weeks of domestic release in Germany, Good Bye, Lenin! attracted over 1.8 million cinemagoers (Legg 99). According to Legg, ‘the popularity of the film is part of a broader trend of reminiscence about the GDR internationally’ (ibid.). Good Bye, Lenin! was one of only a few films sold to an Australian distributor (Hopscotch) during the AFGF. Following its Australian premiere at the AFGF, the film received a commercial release in Australian cinemas and screened successfully for more than three months.
Becker’s film has arguably reached more Australians than most other German films and thus plays an important role in the mediated memory discourse of the GDR in Australia.

*Good Bye, Lenin!* represents a post-unification image of the GDR, as it recreates the country through the eyes of West Germans. Daniela Berghahn argued that Becker’s film constructs a simulated memory of the GDR (“Post-1990 screen memories” 1). The film follows Alex and his mother, who fell into a coma and missed the fall of the Wall, and awoke still loyally attached to the GDR regime. Alex, assuming she will not cope with historical events, rebuilds the GDR in her bedroom and leads the audience through everyday life, politics and culture in the GDR while it is in the process of disappearing. In a second storyline, Alex deals with the loss of his father, who left the GDR for West Germany, where he lives with his new family. Alex, however, is unaware that his father had left because of increasing pressure from the Party and had planned for his family to accompany him. His mother, out of fear of losing her children if the family’s escape should fail, decided to stay behind, but regretted and suppressed her decision ever since. For her, becoming a staunch supporter of the GDR government was a way to deal with this decision and the rhetoric of being left behind by her husband for the West was a story useful for her life in the GDR.

*Good bye, Lenin!* has become a meaningful part of memory and history debates in Germany and has been endorsed by the *Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung* for education purposes. The film is situated at the interface of an individual story and national history and actively participates in a reconstruction of history (Gook 150). Through its two storylines, it evokes the GDR as a lost home that is remembered nostalgically through its products as a kind of souvenir, but it also illustrates how this
nostalgia can deny loss and mourning – as is the case for Alex’s mother. Becker therefore illustrates the complex memorialisation of the GDR in an accessible film that represents the GDR through the Arrangementgedächtnis as well as a dictatorship that made a father leave his family behind.

In the construction of these memory discourses, Good bye, Lenin! utilises specific GDR products and situates them as Erinnerungsorte of a disappearing country. Products such as the aforementioned gherkins are given a special place in Becker’s film, as Alex find it increasingly difficult to source the former GDR’s goods in a market overflowing with new Western brands. Disappearing brands form here a part of the quickly dissolving national identity of the GDR, and serve to illustrate the mourning process Gook mentioned (22). Ironically, the brands are featured as disappearing in the film at the same time as they are introduced into the global discourse on the GDR, where they become part of global ostalgic memory of the country.

Highlighted as the AFGF’s opening night film in 2003, Good bye, Lenin! provides access to memory debates in Germany. The film fulfils all the demands of an opening night film, providing light-hearted entertainment but at the same time communicating a contemporary image of Germany. The film introduced the different memorialisations of the GDR and, as one of the first post-unification films of the GDR screened in Australia, the film portrayed the Arrangementgedächtnis as well as the Diktaturgedächtnis in a non-exclusive manner. Hence, the GI chose a film that went beyond representations of the GDR as only a dictatorship or as a country only known for its quirky products by showing a nuanced image of life in and memory of the GDR. The attendance of the starring actor Daniel Brühl further highlighted the
film in the AFGF and gave weight to the memorialisation of the GDR that is ‘torn between fetishism and mourning’ (Gook 151).

5.3.2 Alles auf Zucker as the Opening Night Film 2005

‘The first Jewish comedy in Germany after WWII’ (Biehl n.p.), Dany Levy’s comedy *Alles auf Zucker* (2004) opened the AFGF in 2005. The film reveals a new dimension to the ongoing East-West dialogue within reunified Germany. This dialogue is exemplified in two Jewish brothers, one a resolute communist in the GDR, the other a strict Jew in West Berlin. The two have to overcome personal differences and separation after the death of their mother and within the new setting of unified Germany. Overcoming differences and once again laughing together as Jews and as Germans is at the core of the film, making it a commentary on post-reunification Germany and its ongoing process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung. The Australian newspaper *The Age* concurred with this reading and saw the film as a signal of ‘the willingness of current German filmmakers to use anomalous genres and styles to reflect on their social and political past’ (Kalina n.p.).

Director Dani Levy introduced the film and followed it with a Q&A that encouraged audience participation. In his introduction, Dani Levy spoke about the unexpected success of his film in the ‘shadow of the past’:

I thought people would have such a bad conscience about German history and the treatment of Jews that they would instinctively not go to see the film. Not because they're anti-Semitic, but just because they’re avoiding a wound.

(Molitoriz n.p.)
Levy positioned the film as a part of post-unification *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and used the narrative of reunification as the setting for a new stage in this German/Jewish dialogue. In using comedy to grapple with the Jewish Question, Levy broke one of the taboos of post-1945 German cinema, and the film attracted much attention from national and international media.

In the context of the AFGF, the GI’s selection of *Alles auf Zucker* as the opening night film reminded audiences of the ongoing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany post-unification and articulated the German government’s determination not only to master its GDR past but to prevent this recent past from overshadowing or displacing its memory of the Holocaust. It shows that memory of the Holocaust was not in the process of being overwritten or negated, as some might have feared. Germany’s position on mastering both its twentieth-century pasts moreover shows a certain self-confidence – that it can talk about the topic of Jewishness through the medium of a comedy.

To further enhance this position and to embed the screening of *Alles auf Zucker* the AFGF hosted a panel discussion on the topic ‘Cinematic journey through the tumultuous 20th century: Remastering the German past?’ The panel consisted of festival guests Dennis Gansel (director of *The Wave*) and Oliver Hirschbiegel (director of *Downfall*) together with visiting film critic Andreas Kilb, Australian film critic Tom Ryan and three academics from Australian universities with a research focus on German and European Studies (Tony Barta, Modern European History and History and Film, La Trobe University; Axel Fliethmann, School of Languages, Culture and Linguistics and German Studies, Monash University; Michael Hau, School of Historical Studies, Monash University).
The panel discussion looked at German cinema throughout the twentieth century and modern films revisiting the Third Reich and the GDR, such as Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang*, Gansel’s *Die Welle* and Levy’s *Alles auf Zucker*, all screened at AFGF 2005. In framing the discussion in this way and by combining the screening of Levy’s reunification comedy with the panel discussion, the AFGF situated *Alles auf Zucker* in the memory discourse of a second dictatorship, where both traumata of the twentieth century have to be overcome. The panel, consisting of German film and history experts, illustrated a form of expert diplomacy that sought to explain German culture and its films to Australian audiences. Here, the AFGF facilitated access to German experts and knowledge and took its role as a diplomatic event seriously.

The curatorial decision to follow Levy’s comedy with a panel discussion on Germany’s twentieth-century history highlighted the responsibility of the festival director when screening films as time-events, as this was designed to influence the audiences’ reading of the film. The panel on Germany’s approach to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* fostered a reception for *Alles auf Zucker* as part of the ongoing process of coming to terms with both German dictatorships in the twentieth century. The GI here fulfilled its cultural mandate by representing Germany as a country that actively engages with its past and made a stark distinction between cinematic diplomacy and propaganda by allowing for comedy as well as critical discussion on the GDR and the Third Reich.

5.3.3  *AFGF 2009: 20 Years since Reunification*

As the international representative of German culture and language, the GI showcases current German events and topics abroad. In 2009 the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall caused widespread celebration and provided an opportune occasion
for reflections on the progress of reunification in Germany. The AFGF took up this cultural event in 2009 by screening five DEFA films programmed under the heading of GDRetro. In addition to these five DEFA productions, Billy Wilder’s *One Two Three* (1961) displayed a divided Berlin from a western perspective, and two other contemporary productions commented on the former East-West divide. The first, *Friedliche Zeiten* (Neele Leana Vollmar, 2008) is a comedy about a mother pining for the peaceful times in the GDR, clearly evoking an nostalgic representation of the GDR. The second feature film *12 heißt: Ich liebe dich* (Connie Walther, 2007) evokes Sabrow’s dictatorship memory, being based on a true story of a love affair of an accused spy and her Stasi interrogator.

In a conversation on the role that the GDR could play in cultural diplomacy after German unification festival, director Klaus Krischok stressed the importance of an ongoing acknowledgement of Germany’s past. He described this as ‘cathartic and a part of the German psyche, that we are concerned about our history and its repercussions on contemporary life’ (Krischok, 2014, pers. comm.). He emphasised that, ‘we need to keep in mind that unification – as far as it has progressed – is still an ongoing work in progress’ (ibid.) and stated that the Third Reich tended to overshadow the coming to terms with the 40-year division of Germany that is ‘still relatively new and raw’. Krischok here referred to what Maier called the ‘hot-and-cold memory’ (154), in which the memory of the Third Reich remains a hot topic, whereas memories of socialism are becoming cold. In its decision to highlight the GDR in the AFGF 2009, the GI countered this trend and emphasised that it saw the GDR as a significant part of German history and identity. In selecting DEFA films to do this, the GI highlighted the cinematic achievements of the GDR, but also chose to represent the GDR through its own films, thereby providing a seemingly more
authentic image of the former nation than is represented in filmic accounts of the GDR made after its collapse.

Despite this focus on the GDR at the AFGF 2009, the festival opened with the *Baader-Meinhof Komplex* (Uli Edel, 2008), which deals with the national crisis occasioned by the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group active during the 1970s in West Germany. Selecting Edel’s film for the opening night emphasised another part of postwar Germany, screening West German terror as a response to the German postwar establishment that ignored the Nazi past of many of its members. The Baader-Meinhof Gang can be described as the greatest threat to the stability of West Germany after WWII, and its representation within the AFGF drew attention to the importance of ongoing and earnest *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and to West Germany during the 1970s. This balancing out of representations of West and East Germany further emphasised the role of the GI in cultural representation of the two Germanys and strengthened its position as a diplomatic organisation that takes the past of its country seriously. The choice illustrated the desire of the curators to screen a powerful and dramatic opening night film, and also highlighted the economic objectives of the AFGF and its partner Germanfilms to sell German films to Australian distributors.

The GD Retro in 2009 was, like the *Filmtage* in 1982, an example of cinematic diplomacy that illustrated the different understandings of the GDR now and then. The films in 1982 were chosen to reflect the most positive parts of the GDR, whereas the GD Retro in 2009 curated an uncensored and far less flattering image of the country. Whilst the films included in the *Filmtage* could be considered to belong to the *Fortschrittsgedächtnis*, the films selected for the GD Retro can be classified in terms of the *Diktaturgedächtnis*, the *Arrangementgedächtnis* or both. In selecting DEFA
films that were more critical of the GDR, the GI took a self-reflexive stance on memory and encouraged audiences to reflect on film as a socio-critical medium. ‘In 2009, we [were] enriching the program through a section dedicated to the ‘culture of remembrance’, explained Klaus Krischok, the director of the time (cited in IF n.p.) He went on to point out that ‘many pivotal films from the GDR have never before been shown in this country. We are therefore excited to screen milestones from and about the former GDR’ (ibid.).

The films chosen for the GDRetro were well-known productions for the domestic market of the GDR produced in the 1960s. Many were banned by the 11th Plenum of the SED in 1965, signalling a crackdown on the liberalization in culture and politics (Berghahn “Forbidden Films” 40). Hence, the films show a different image of the GDR than the Filmtage in 1982 and a different approach to cinematic diplomacy that moves away from positivistic to self-critical and multifaceted representations that encourage reflection and dialogue. The five DEFA productions screened as part of the AFGF 2009 were: Karbid und Sauerampfer (Frank Beyer, 1963), Spur der Steine (Frank Beyer, 1965/66), Jakob der Lügner (Frank Beyer, 1974), Die Legende von Paul und Paula (Heiner Carow, 1973) and Solo Sunny (Konrad Wolf, 1978). The films selected for the DEFA retrospective at the AFGF 2009 portray many different aspects of the GDR, starting with the immediate postwar period (Karbid und Sauerampfer), the construction years in the sixties (Spur der Steine – banned by the SED for its content critical of the regime, and Jakob der Lügner, a film about a Jewish ghetto under National Socialism that received much acclaim from the authorities), and finally two films produced during a time of relaxed censorship telling stories of women in the GDR: Die Legende von Paul and Paul and a bleak film about a young singer in Solo Sunny.
*Karbid und Sauerampfer* was the first in a series of DEFA films produced in the 1960s that returned to the historical moment of real and symbolic collapse at the end of WWII (Pinkert, “Re-viewing the margins” 23). Produced two years after the construction of the Berlin Wall, the comedy is a narrative about the early construction years of the new socialist Germany (Lindenberger 91-107). The film follows one man’s journey from Wittenberg to Dresden (135 km) without a vehicle at the end of WWII to obtain the carbide necessary to resurrect his factory (Hodgin *Screening The East* 106). The story is a portrayal of a typical *Hamsterfahrt* (foraging trip), in which people would travel into the countryside to barter for food, or in this case carbide. *Karbid und Sauerampfer* is a representation of poverty and hunger in postwar Germany, both therapeutic and critical (Blankenship 131). As part of the AFGF, the film brings attention to the time immediately after WWII that Anne Pinkert referred to as ‘Year Zero’ (Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany* 145-179).

*Karbid und Sauerampfer* is set during the summer of 1945, a year depicted as one of insecurity, chaos, starvation, death and uncertainty about the future. Having been produced in 1963, at a time when the GDR was safely established and the Berlin Wall had just been built, *Karbid und Sauerampfer* emphasises the stability of the situation at the time of its production. The film represents both Nazism and the Red Army in a critical way and makes a statement on the independence and situation of the GDR that is caught between East and West. Beyer’s film is a commentary on life in the GDR, where many citizens accepted compromises – such as being restricted in movement by the Berlin Wall – as a tradeoff for living in a safe and equitable country. As part of the AFGF, the film belongs to the *Arrangementgedächtnis* that emphasises everyday life in the GDR. By providing an insight into the nation-building of the GDR, the GI’s selection also allowed for a representation of the GDR and its social and economic
system as an alternative response to the catastrophe of WWII. Selecting a DEFA film that is critical of the GDR also distanced the film from the official memory of the GDR as a dictatorship.

The GI countered this representation of the GDR as the socialist alternative to West Germany by selecting a film that was censored in the GDR, thereby highlighting the country’s attributes of a dictatorship. *Spur der Steine* is based on the eponymous novel by Erik Neutsch, published in 1964. After its release in 1966, the film was screened only for a few days, before being shelved because of its ‘anti-social’ tendencies. This decision was a direct result of the aforementioned 11th Plenary of the Central Committee that, after a few years of liberalisation in the early sixties, decided to crack down on cultural liberties through increased censorship. Referred to as the *Kahlschlag* – the clearing of all trees in a certain area – this decision banned all forms of art and culture that could in some way be perceived to be critical of the GDR and its government.

In its decision, the GDR leadership retaliated against what were considered ‘nihilistic’ and ‘anarchic’ tendencies among writers and intellectuals. Some of the most talented young writers, such as Günter Kunert and the older Stefan Heym, were censored; others such as Wolf Biermann were blacklisted (Emmerich 23). The *Kahlschlag* had long-lasting effects on the East German film industry, shelving almost the entire production of one year and banning 11 of the leading producers from film productions (Berghahn, *Hollywood Behind the Wall* 140). Many films were never shown in the GDR until after reunification; *Spur der Steine*, however, was granted a release in a ‘handful of poorly marked movie houses’, during which state-organised riots served as the justification for banning the film entirely (Feinstein 184). Only in November 1989, 23 years later, was the film again shown in East Berlin (Schittly 146).
Frank Beyer’s film tells the story of two competing building sites in the fictional towns of Schkona and Leupau (these are allusions to two actual industrial areas near Halle: Schkopau and Leuna). At one of the sites, construction foreman Hannes Balla is expedient in ignoring corrupt practices in the interest of completing the project. As building materials become increasingly scarce, Balla and his clique find ways to secure a continuous supply of building materials to keep the project on track. Party officials, although unhappy with these arrangements, are willing to ignore Balla’s practices because he is bringing the project to completion. When two idealists arrive on the scene (Werner Horrath, a compliant party member and Kati Klee, a young engineer), a romantic triangle develops between Horrath, Klee and Balla. When Klee becomes pregnant with Horrath’s child (who is already married with children), the authorities must decide whether Horrath’s cheating or Balla’s open disregard for authority should be punished harder.

The film can be read as a critical representation of the SED and its detachment from the real life of people in the GDR (Brockmann, *A Critical History of German Film* 233). It is also significant for its reception as a censored film and as an illustration of the history of repression of culture. Although it was screened only briefly, *Spur der Steine* was targeted by the Party, who organised groups of guests to shout down the film. In his autobiography, Frank Beyer described his disbelief when his film was banned, comparing the censoring practices of the SED to those of the Nazis:

I knew that at the beginning of the 1930s the Nazis had gone into movie theatres to shout down the pacifist American *All Quiet on the Western Front*, but I simply could not wrap my head around the fact that the SED, of which I was a member, had organized a similar top-down ‘provocation’. (Beyer 149)
Frank Beyer was banned from all work in the GDR film industry for 10 years following the ‘release’ of Spur der Steine. Screened at the DEFA retrospective in Australia, Beyer’s film, and its history as a censored film, evokes the perception of the GDR as a dictatorship and complements the representations in Karbid und Sauerampfer. The GI chose to also include Frank Beyer’s first theatrical release, Jakob der Lügner, in its DEFA retrospective, thereby including a later and very popular DEFA film as a contrast to the earlier and censored Spur der Steine. Beyer directed Jakob der Lügner in 1974, and it became the only DEFA film ever nominated for an Oscar.

Jakob der Lügner is an anti-fascist comedy based on Jurek Becker’s novel from 1969. It was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1977. The film is set during WWII in a Jewish ghetto, where Jakob, one of the prisoners, pretends to have a radio, on which he hears hopeful news of Russian troops approaching the ghetto to free it from the Nazis. Jakob’s stories buoy the prisoners’ spirits and decrease the suicide rate in the camp, but he finds the continuous lying difficult and entangles himself in his own lies. The latent humour of the film highlights and contrasts with the gloomy subject matter (Kavaloski 32).

Beyer’s film is a good example of the anti-fascist foundations of the GDR. As part of the AFGF, the film provided an alternative to the discourse promoted by many Hollywood productions that situate the Americans as the liberators of Nazi Germany (Ministerrat der DDR n.p.). The film was later reproduced by Peter Kassovitz, starring Robin Williams as Jakob in an Americanised version that highlights Jewish resistance (Dochartaigh 456-471). The starkest difference between the two filmic versions of the novel is in the liberation of the concentration camp: in Beyer’s version
it is heroically freed by Russian troops, whilst Kassovitz directs the Russians (in tanks made in Chicago) to merely free the trains (ibid. 468).

The screening of the DEFA version of *Jakob der Lügner* thus situates the Holocaust in the past and the responsibility for it in the West, creating a discourse of socialism as the liberator from fascism and of the GDR as a country untainted by the Third Reich. By including Soviet troops as anti-fascist and as actively involved in the liberation of concentration camps, the film represents a corrective to the Western representations of the liberation of concentration camps, often focused only on American troops. The screening at the AFGF thus highlighted that West and East German cultural politics actively constructed memories and that history is never entirely objective. By including *Jakob der Lügner* in the DEFA retrospective, the GI screened an inclusive discourse on the Holocaust that included perspectives of the GDR as well as those of West Germany. The GI here signalled that unified Germany was not attempting to erase the messages of DEFA films but was able to cultivate an appreciation of their artistry and their filmic vision.

The GI further emphasised the quality of DEFA productions by including Heiner Carow’s 1972 film *Die Legende von Paul and Paula* in the retrospective of the 2009 AFGF. During the 1970s, audience numbers in East German cinemas decreased as people grew increasingly tired of the propagandistic messages of cultural politics in DEFA films. Heiner Carow thus produced *Die Legende von Paul and Paula* explicitly as ‘a film that people actually wanted to see’ (Rinke, “Sex and Subversion” 52). The film became one of the few East German productions popular in the West, and its status as a cult film in East and West Germany is illustrated today by the love bench at the *Paul-und-Paula-Ufer* (Paul-and-Paula shore) of the river Spree in Berlin.
Although Carow denied any political motivation behind the production, the themes of the film of personal happiness, freedom and self-determination challenged the status quo of DEFA productions that were slowly moving towards a more liberal climate. Die Legende von Paul und Paula can thus be read as a ‘plea for self-determination’, a value opposed to the ‘core tenets of socialism’ (Rinke, “Sex and Subversion” 131). In its representation of Paula as the heroine of the film and a single mother without professional ambitions, but with personal dreams and desires, Paul und Paula is the opposite of a Frauenfilm, such as those screened at the Filmtage in 1982. The couples’ struggle to overcome societal borders and the representation of their personal hopes and dreams was not compatible with the GDR’s self-understanding as a classless society and challenged GDR cultural politics at the time.

After the success of Die Legende von Paul and Paula, Solo Sunny (Konrad Wolf, 1978) was the second pan-German cult film of the era and won the award for the Best Actress in the Berlinale (Heiduschke 115). Solo Sunny is the story of Ingrid Sommer, nicknamed ‘Sunny’, a modestly talented singer touring East Germany as part of a variety show (Elsaesser New German Cinema 339). Sunny’s open and adventurous character leads her to have multiple romances, until an unreciprocated love sends her into a downward spiral of self-doubt that she can only overcome by accepting herself with all her flaws. The representation of Sunny and her position as a rock singer is a deviation from the core values of respectability promoted in the GDR. As a strong-minded and independent woman, Sunny reflected the progressive role the GDR envisioned for women, although her demand for personal freedom and agency represents a critical voice against socialism (Heiduschke 121). Wolf’s suicide just before the Berlinale in 1982 turned the film into his personal legacy.
Solo Sunny, like Die Legende von Paul und Paula, focuses on universal themes of love and the quest of happiness by concentrating on individuals whose lives are not perfect. Sunny suffers from loneliness throughout the film despite being surrounded by people, and Paula is depicted as bored and alone at her workplace amongst her colleagues. Both films are grim depictions of daily life for women in the GDR, in contrast to the films chosen for the DDR-Filmtage. By selecting these films for the DEFA retrospective in 2005, the GI chose popular films that were likely to resonate with Australian audiences as well as provide critical alternatives to the representations during the DDR-Filmtage. Taking into account the political and cultural connections between Australia and the GDR, the GI countered any idealised depictions of the GDR as a classless and gender-equal society. An interpretation of the GDR as a society in which men and women were equal and it was easy for women to combine work and family is part of the Fortschrittsgedächtnis. The selection of Die Legende von Paul und Paula and Solo Sunny countered this perception of the GDR by focusing on the difficulties and limitations women faced.

5.3.4 ‘Eastern Promises’ in the AFGF 2013

Part of curating a film festival is the programming of a thematic focus that allows the packaging of multiple films and events for the purpose of marketing and creating a festival identity. In 2013, two programming categories of the AFGF highlighted the former Eastern bloc as well as the opening night film, which focused on the legacy of the GDR.

5.3.4.1 Zwei Leben as the Opening Night Film of the AFGF 2013

Zwei Leben (Georg Maas, 2012) focuses on a relatively unknown aspect of the GDR. Katrine lives a quiet life with her family in Norway when her past as an agent for the
Stasi comes back to haunt her. As part of the ongoing process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany, a lawyer approaches Katrine, who used the cover of a *Lebensborn* child to get access to Norway in her work for the Stasi. *Lebensborn* was an initiative during the Third Reich that aimed at producing children in accordance with the Nazi ideologies of racial hygiene (Lepage 47). Some children were produced by German soldiers and Norwegian women and then adopted into German families. As a spy for the GDR, Katrine pretended to be one of these children and lived in Norway under this false identity. During the film this adopted identity falls apart during the court case on the *Lebensborn* children, although the old systems of the Stasi are quickly reactivated to hide their involvement. Maas’ film combines the Third Reich and the GDR as Germany’s two dictatorships in the twentieth century and clearly uses the Stasi as the signifying *Erinnerungsort* for a strong dictatorship memory of the GDR.

As the opening night film, the German–Norwegian production challenged the audience of the AFGF as a nation-focused film festival by being neither set in Germany nor being in German. The GI here also made a statement about the AFGF not being an ‘ethnic film festival’ and highlighted its motivation to reach Australian audiences by screening films with a wide appeal (Sölter 4). *Zwei Leben*, with its English dialogue, made the film more accessible to Australian audiences and sponsors invited to the opening night, at the same time as being informative and focused on a particularly German topic. The selection of *Zwei Leben* as the opening night film was an example of the edutaining element of contemporary cinematic diplomacy, in which information is presented in an entertaining way. The fact that *Zwei Leben* was later nominated for the Foreign-Language Film category of the Academy Awards speaks of the wide appeal of the film for international audiences.
5.3.4.2 Eastern Promises

The category ‘Eastern Promises’ contains two films (Wir wollten auf’s Meer by Toke Constantin Hebbeln, 2012 and This Ain’t California by Marten Persiel, 2012) set in the GDR and a time-event embedding one of them.

Wir wollten auf’s Meer is a film clearly depicting the GDR as a restrictive dictatorship. The film tells the story of two friends who are allowed to leave the GDR as merchant seamen in exchange for spying for the Stasi. For one of the friends the wish to escape becomes overwhelming; he attempts to flee the country and ends up in prison, whilst the other friend joins the Stasi and gives up his dream of seeing the world. A reviewer for the German magazine Der Spiegel described the film as clumsy and historically inaccurate, and the depiction of the GDR as a country ‘where not even the sun is allowed to shine’ (Schöning n.p.). The Australian reception of the film was far less critical and ironic, with an online student magazine describing the film as a ‘claustrophobic portrait of an omniscient regime that dominated an already demoralised people for decades’ (Plumridge n.p.). The reception in the German and Australian media firmly located the film in the dictatorship memory. Whilst the German media reflected demands for the memory discourse to move away from reductive portrayals of the East as a dictatorship in which no freedoms were possible, these demands were absent from Australian media, illustrating a continuation in German foreign politics that represented the GDR as a dictatorship. In selecting and highlighting Wir wollten auf’s Meer as part of the AFGF, the GI followed this direction of German politics in representing the GDR in line with Sabrow’s Diktaturgedächtnis.

The issue of constructed memories and the reliability of films was raised again in the second film of ‘Eastern Promises’. This Ain’t California (Marten Persiel, 2012) is a
so-called mockumentary on teenage rebellion and skateboarding in East Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. Persiel’s film combines the *Arrangementgedächtnis* and the *Diktaturgedächtnis* in its illustrations of youth culture in the GDR and rebellion in a state-controlled system. The film was highlighted in the programming by a time-event preceding the screening and the presence of director Marten Persiel.

*This Ain’t California* was launched at Berlinale 2012 under the category ‘*Perspektive Deutsches Kino*’ and became an instant success in German cinemas. The film portrays the GDR as the home of three boys who challenged the system on their skateboards – a system that deemed skating (*Rollbrettfahren*) Western, individualistic, decadent and undisciplined. The skater subculture defies common stereotypes of life under communism. The production intertwines original clips of the ‘wheel-board riders’ directly out of the East German scene in the 1980s with animations and reencounters with the protagonists today. Although skating is often seen as an American dream, protagonist Niko does not understand the GDR-*Rollbretter* as such, but rather sees skating as freedom and as the leitmotif of the film and his youth.

Hannah Pilarczyk and Peter Wensierski (n.p.) of *Der Spiegel* criticised the film for its indistinctive mix of documentary and reenactment. They described the film as ‘not a GDR in nostalgic colours, but a nostalgic view of youth subcultures, where the belief in ‘the subversive potential of pop’ and where skating is resuscitated’. *Die Zeit* reporter Daniel Erk (n.p.) saw the charm of the production in this construction of memory. At the same time, Erk also noticed a problem – the audience could not differentiate between documentary material and reconstructions. Similarly, a *Sydney Morning Herald* reviewer described the film as ‘a documentary that hangs loose with the facts but stays close to the truth’ – alluding to the same false dichotomy between ‘factual memory’ and ‘invented memory’ (*Sydney Morning Herald* n.p.).
In an interview in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (n.p.), Persiel highlighted the differences in audience reactions to his fictional documentary in an interview:

People say, especially in America, ‘This is very accomplished, you did a great job, I was so masterfully fooled,’ and I’m really happy about that. And the other reaction – in, for example, my own country – is the odd person who says, ‘This is fraud, I feel betrayed.’ Really angry reactions sometimes. (ibid.)

By ridiculing the bureaucratic absurdity of socialism in the GDR, at the same time as screening and describing brutal interventions and arrests by the Stasi, the film abides by Sabrow’s *Ostalgie*, as well as the *Diktaturgedächtnis*. By mixing old footage, contemporary interviews and animation, to reconstruct scenes, the film actively negotiates and partakes in memory debates about the GDR as a dictatorship as well as through a nostalgic lens. Focusing on youth and subcultures, the film shows that certain freedoms of expression and levels of rebellion were possible in the GDR, a finding that stands in contrast to the depictions of the GDR as a dictatorship. However, the film also evokes *Erinnerungsorte* of the dictatorship memory when it depicts the Stasi, surveillance and arrests of skateboarders for taking their freedoms and rebellion too far.

The screening of Persiel’s mockumentary as part of ‘Eastern Promises’ represents an awareness of different memorialisations of the GDR and the aforementioned demands for more holistic representations of the country. It also illustrates the independence of the GI when it comes to cinematic diplomacy, in that the curators of the AFGF could screen films that did not meet MFA guidelines. Persiel’s film *This Ain’t California* actively recreates the past by combining old and new footage, undistinguishable for the audiences. By doing so, he questioned the reliability of memory and history and
made a statement about the validity of what he referred to as ‘emotional truths’ and to the nostalgic lens through which everyone sees their youth and childhood.

The special event surrounding *This Ain’t California* consisted of three parts: a pre-screening skate workshop with Marten Persiel, the screening with Q&A, and an after-party. The pre-screening at a riverside skate park was supported and advertised by local skate shops, thus shifting the focus of the event away from Germany to skating. The after-parties in the CBDs of Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne allowed for more informal chats with the director, the German staff of the GI and the audiences.

In terms of cultural and cinematic diplomacy, the time-event surrounding Persiel’s film was very successful, reaching audiences not usually interested in German cultural events by using film and a special interest as a bridge and instigator for dialogue. The Q&A further allowed for an open discussion of contemporary and historic Germany, as well as the wider issues of authenticity in film and particular in documentaries. The presence of Marten Persiel and the discussions with him allowed the AFGF to embed the documentary - or mockumentary - that deviates from the historical past into a more educational and reliable framework. Framing the film in this way illustrated an awareness of the difficulties that AFGF audiences might have had in distinguishing true and fictional parts in the film. The time-event also helped to couch the deviation from official memorialisation of the GDR as a dictatorship presented in the film in terms of real subcultures. Including the skateboarding community in Australia in this event made the context of subcultures more relatable and the differences between them and the mainstream in the GDR more plausible. In terms of cinematic diplomacy, the screening and framing of *This Ain’t California* can thus be seen as a successful example of using film as the starting point of a critical
conversation, carefully framed by a time-event that helped audiences to situate the film within wider societal discussions.

5.3.4.3 The Fall of the Wall at the AFGF in 2014

In 2014 the GDR was afforded a special place in the curating of the AFGF, because of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The three films chosen for the event all had strong biographical themes and centred on the legacy of the GDR for its former citizens. Besides screening the two documentaries, the time-event ‘Fall of the Wall’ included one short film, musical entertainment and food in the interval. The focus of the event was principally on entertainment, but education also played an important role, placing the films in the context of what is sometimes referred to as ‘edutainment’ (Göbel, Becker & Feix 168). This context located the event on Schulze’s (“Erlebnisgesellschaft” 139) spectrum of edutainment, which ranges from pure entertainment to an educational event. There are tensions between these aims: on the one hand the festival needed to satisfy a wide range of different audience expectations, on the other, it had to fulfil its curatorial aims in terms of cinematic diplomacy.

The GI chose two documentaries to commemorate the occasion, a decision which appeared to avoid the contentious issue of how the GDR should be represented in feature film, since documentaries are seen to portray factual or ‘true’ stories. However, questions of representation of the GDR inevitably arose, particularly since the films were curated around the other elements of the time-event. The two films chosen were contemporary documentaries about individuals’ lives in the GDR, representing an array of personal stories and an engagement with socialism that ranged from the lives of patriotic Olympians who won gold medals (Einzelkämpfer by Sandra Kudelka, 2013) to the victims of Stasi persecution and shootings at the East
German border (*die Familie* by Stefan Weinert, 2013). The aim of the curators (specifically of then director Arpad Sölter) in the selection of these films was to ‘provide multiple opportunities for audiences to identify with the issues represented in the film, especially in terms of sports and border control’ (Sölter, 2014, pers. comm.). Both documentaries invite a critical reflection on GDR history and society as well as the question of individual responsibility and agency in a dictatorship. As I will show, this is key to a contemporary form of cinematic diplomacy in Germany.

The double screening with time-event allowed for an immersion into a range of perspectives and issues to do with the topic and for a variety of opinions and voices to be heard. The films selected for the event include all three of Sabrow’s memory discourses and thereby represent the complex memorialisation of the GDR in collective and individual memories. The first film of the evening, *Einzellkämpfer* (Kaudelka, 2013) attracted much attention in the German media upon its release. It premiered at the 2013 Berlinale and tells the story of four elite athletes of the GDR: Britta Baldus, Udo Beyer, Ines Geipel and Marita Koch. Whilst the film broaches the well-known topic of doping in GDR sport, its focus is on the ambivalent memories of the country and the personal legacy of the totalitarian state on the four athletes. The various representations of the country paint a diverse image, as the athletes are given the opportunity to share personal memories of their lives in the GDR.

Through their recollections, which range from condemnation to nostalgia, the film reveals the complex nature of GDR memory, its different legacies, and provides a sympathetic space for vastly different individual experiences of the GDR to emerge. The athletes and their memories illustrate the difficulties in negotiating memory of the GDR. Ines Geipel, who was a victim of doping and Stasi harassment of the most brutal kind, condemns GDR sport for being inhumane, whilst Udo Beyer, who was
equally doped, presents a very different understanding of the GDR’s past. For him, the GDR was his childhood home and he believes that the regime had no negative impact on his health or his private life. Although Beyer admits to having been doped whilst winning an Olympic medal, he is convinced that hard work and determination were much more influential in this success than state-administered doping.

Through personal stories, *Einzelkämpfer* draws on two of Sabrow’s various memory discourses. Whilst Ines Geipel’s memories closely align the GDR with a dictatorship, Udo Beyer’s fond memories of his childhood can be situated in the *Arrangementgedächtnis*. The selection of *Einzelkämpfer* for the special event in 2014 illustrated a shift in the cultural diplomatic work of the GI, in that the film was screened without a panel and thus not embedded in a didactic framework, but rather screened with the intention of encouraging audiences to critically reflect. This approach gives more agency to the audiences, who are deemed to being able to come their own conclusions on the topic represented in the film. This approach is visible in the entire time-event of the ‘Fall of the Wall’; the films were screened without an associated expert panel discussion, but these serious documentaries were offset by an entertaining and light-hearted event between the screenings. This approach is a clear move away from earlier events at the AFGF, when time-events educated and interpreted filmic content for audiences.

The second film of the event was another biographical documentary, focusing on a heightened emotional topic: *Mauertote* (people shot dead at the German–German border). In an interview for German TV channel 3Sat, director Stefan Weinert described his motivation for making a film on this topic as a reaction to the ‘increasing trivialisation of the GDR’ (n.p.). In this comment, Weinert referred to the increasing popularity of *Ostalgie* and films such as *Good bye, Lenin!* that he saw as
representing the GDR in a nostalgic light. In *Die Familie* he offered a counter-narrative by focusing on one of the darkest facets of the GDR, the *Mauertote* (Weinert, 2014). The film was partially sponsored by the *Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur* and received a ‘high recommendation’ from the *Deutsche Film- und Medienbewertung* (German film-rating agency). Being sponsored and officially endorsed by the German government, the film represents the official political discourse of the GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* and dictatorship.

Like *Einzelkämpfer*, *Die Familie* gives a voice to the victims of the GDR and provides space for the articulation of their different personal recollections and stories. Through the use of interviews and conversations, without voice-over commentary or music, the film allows the audience to interpret the stories for themselves, within the framework of their own preconceived ideas, experiences and values. In keeping with Weinert’s opinion that ‘real emotions don’t need an orchestra’ (Gebel n.p.), many scenes are shown with little overt editing. Weinert’s film is an example of what Nichols described as a participatory documentary, in which the audience experiences the acute encounter between the filmmaker and the interviewee (Nichols *Introduction to Documentary* 139). This gives the audience a sense of authenticity and acute awareness of the feelings of the interviewees.

The contrast between victims’ emotional accounts and the bureaucratic language used to describe their deaths in the Stasi files and in the letters to their families exposes the GDR regime as a dictatorship in subtle and effective ways. The film therefore is an exemplar of Sabrow’s *Diktaturgedächtnis*, exposing the GDR as a surveillance state and *Unrechtsstaat*. *Die Familie* concludes with a failed attempt at reconciliation between the son of a victim and the former border guard who shot his father. The reaction of the border guard that the attempt to contact him had ‘spoiled his
Christmas’ shows that many perpetrators and many in positions of power in the GDR now have remorse for the crimes they committed. This also stresses the problem of the aforementioned Mauerschützenprozesse, in that perpetrators of the GDR regime referenced the principle of *nulla poene sine lege* in their defense. *Die Familie* also poses the question of whether reconciliation between perpetrator and victim is even possible. As part of the special event, Weinert’s film expanded on some of the themes from *Einzelkämpfer* but added mentions of more sinister parts of life in the GDR and pointed to other aspects of its legacy such as the difficulties of achieving closure, healing and reconciliation. By doing so, the film raised general questions of individual and state responsibility, a topic that forms an important part of German cultural diplomacy.

An animated short film was screened before *Die Familie* and *Einzelkämpfer*, telling another personal story of the GDR. Originally the undergraduate thesis of two film students, *Der Duft des Westens* received much attention and was supported and endorsed by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED Diktatur. It is recommended as a pedagogical tool for high school students and is accessible through the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.

*Der Duft des Westens* tells the story of the escape of director Mark Huff’s father from the GDR. He flees first on a scooter and then runs across the border, and is chased by dogs and shot at by border guards. Throughout the short film a voice-over narrates his thoughts and fears and provides insight into the thoughts of the man fleeing the GDR. The film uses these Erinnerungsorte, such as the Westpaket (parcel from the West), the Ostalgie show and the Volkswagen (VW) to condense a detailed storyline and much information into a few minutes. In doing so, it invites the audience into the memory of the film and conveys emotions tied to these topics.
Right at the beginning of the film, the memory discourse of Ostalgie is introduced by referencing a comedy on German TV (called Ostalgie show) that explores the products, media and culture of the GDR as a trivial account of past times. In Der Duft des Westens the TV show displays popular memory of the GDR, and this stands in contrast to the story of Huff’s father’s persecution. The show also functions as the first Erinnerungsort that appears in the short film, referencing Sabrow’s Arrangementgedächtnis and the commercialised Ostalgie discourse. By way of contrast with views set in contemporary Germany, the scenes depicting escape, arrest and interrogation in the GDR are made from GDR newspaper and mainly black and white, while scenes in the West and Western products are coloured (figure 15). The filmmakers set up this contrast between East and West early on to evoke a stark perception of the GDR as a dictatorship, supported by popular Erinnerungsorte.

Figure 15: The Protagonist of Duft des Westens wearing the symbols of the West on his jacket (image from Irina Herrschner; Aroma des Westens, 2014)
One of these GDR Erinnerungsorte is the Westpaket (Kabus 441). The parcel includes Western products such as coffee, chocolate, soap, cigarettes and Dr Oetker Vanille Pudding that were unavailable in the GDR. As an Erinnerungsort, the Westpaket embodies dreams of luxury and abundance in the West. In Der Duft des Westens, the products in the parcel are coloured, whilst its surroundings remain grey. The starkest Erinnerungsort, symbolising the restrictions on personal freedom and the power of the totalitarian state over its people, is a square drawn on the floor of the prison cell.

The film ends when the protagonist has reached the West, which he recognises when he sees a VW Beetle. As a post-unification Erinnerungsort, the VW stands for values of progress and freedom, as François and Schulze explained in their collection of German Erinnerungsorte:

Volkswagen was the Beetle, and that wasn’t only and absolutely the car of West Germans, but at the same time the rolling economic miracle, the good conscience and the solid fortress of those who have decided to live their modest prosperity modestly, but well. (My translation)

In including Duft des Westens in the AFGF, the GI had selected another film that adds to the understanding of GDR as a dictatorship and one that takes a critical stance on Ostalgie. As a short film, the directors employ Erinnerungsorte to condense many discourses around GDR memorialisation into five minutes. However, being specific
to a national and cultural context, the use of these *Erinnerungsorte* bears risks for cultural diplomacy, in which they can be misunderstood. In *Der Duft des Westens*, the *Erinnerungsorte* are used to portray the GDR as a dictatorship that limited and controlled its people. This is clearly depicted as the square on the floor of a cell during an interrogation, but also in the Western symbols on the protagonists’ clothes and the *Westpaket* that embodies everything unavailable to citizens of the GDR. To German audiences, these *Erinnerungsorte* are familiar and the anti-Ostalgie message of the film is thus clear. However, for people outside of this sphere, *Erinnerungsorte* are unfamiliar and not connected to the same memory discourse. When taken out of their mnemonic system, these images can lose their meaning or be misunderstood. To help with this interpretation, the GI curated time-events to frame films that might potentially be misunderstood. For the ‘Fall of the Wall’ celebration, the time in between the screenings was designed to balance the representations of dictatorship memory present in all three films by an event drawing from the Ostalgie discourse.

Between the two screenings, a band entertained the audience and *Spreewaldgurken* and cookies in the shape of *Ampelmännchen* especially baked by volunteers of the GI were offered, whilst a cardboard Trabant offered an opportunity for photos (see Figure 16 below). Again, drawing on *Erinnerungsorte*, the GI curated an ostalgic space for entertainment, where the GDR was represented through its most popular commercialised products today. The rather shallow popular images of Germany and the GDR’s past stand in opposition to the films screened and represent a film-festival version of Sabrow’s *Arrangementgedächtnis*. The GI integrated this part of GDR memory into the event and by doing so offset the serious films, arguably creating a more entertaining and holistic representation of GDR memory. In these curatorial efforts, it used popular and easily recognizable *Erinnerungsorte* such as food and cars
to symbolise other aspects of the GDR’s past and mobilised an opposing discourse around its legacy to that represented in the films.

Figure 16: Cardboard Trabant and Ampelmännchen Cookies at the AFGF 2014 (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)

Hence, the Ampelmännchen cookies on offer can be seen as representative of those parts of GDR history that are ‘entirely untainted by the negative aspects of GDR life […]’ (Duckenfield & Calhoun 54-69). As mentioned above, gherkins have become everyday icons of the GDR, especially since the film Good Bye, Lenin! introduced the Spreewaldgurke as a symbol for Eastern products that were no longer produced after reunification. The choice of a cabaret pop-band, The Beez, added to the ‘quirkiness of the GDR’ by their performance of GDR music in clothes from the time and their marketing in the promotional material as an ‘authentic Berlin band’.

The GI’s framing of the two documentary films added another curatorial layer to the festival’s mobilising of memory discourses about the GDR. The gherkins and music are part of Ostalgie that today also functions as a marketing and city-branding tool for
Berlin. The light-hearted and harmless framing of two documentaries about prosecution and terror can also be interpreted as the communication of a jarring and conflicted message about the GDR. Moreover, the event did not engage in critical discussion of the GDR as a dictatorship and the wider issues of human rights violations raised in the films. The curatorship of this time-event also raises the issue of the value attributed to these events by the GI, as German volunteers are the main organisers. Their curatorship of ‘Fall of the Wall’ showed a lack of awareness of the level of local knowledge of the GDR in Australia, emphasising the need for collaboration with locals in the curatorship of time-events and the risks that a non-didactic approach to cinematic diplomacy bears.

5.4 Space 3: Audience Perceptions

The counterpart to the curatorial efforts of the GI is the audience interpreting and making sense of the event through the contexts of their own lives. As mentioned previously, the reception of Germany and Germanness through the AFGF is influenced by the understanding of the AFGF as an ethnic film festival, organised by the GI, that was set in the physical space of an art-house cinema in Australia. This physical space influences perceptions of the films as reliable and high in quality, as well as the perceptions of the GDR before and independent of the AFGF. The status of the GI as the official representative of Germany further impacted on reception and emphasised the role of its curatorship. Time-events, as shown above, influenced the readings of film and German culture by the audiences.

I employ focus group discussions to understand AFGF audiences’ perceptions of the GDR. In these focus groups, participants explored all three GDR memory discourses: the *Diktaturgedächtnis*, the *Arrangementgedächtnis* and to a lesser degree the
Fortschrittsgedächtnis, which continues to legitimise the East German state and its former political elites (Sabrow 20). This highlights that, despite the German government’s official representation of the GDR as a dictatorship, the audiences were aware of other ways that the GDR is memorialised today.

For young Australians, knowledge of the GDR is often based on accounts mediated in film and literature, such as Becker’s Good Bye, Lenin! (2003), Florian Henkel von Donnersmarck’s Das Leben der Anderen/The Lives of Others (2007) and Anna Funder’s novel Stasiland, as these quotes from the focus group exemplify:

The first time I heard of the GDR was when I watched Good Bye, Lenin! And I’ve been interested since then… (focus group 3, male, 23, Australian)

The only things I know about the GDR are from films like Good Bye, Lenin! ...The weird singing, the uniforms and no Coca-Cola. (focus group 3, female, 35, Australian)

The audience perception of films and events on the GDR is consistently one of fascination with the former country, interest in its political and economic system and a keenness to compare it to other states and political systems (audience survey, 2013/14). This interest may be explained by the cultural links between Australia and the GDR that facilitated long-lasting political and literary engagement. As discussed earlier, the GDR also enables thinking through other political possibilities for the young nation of Australia, where for 40 years after WWII the GDR presented an alternative to capitalism for sections of the left. As became clear in the focus groups, the AFGF’s films were often interpreted against the backdrop of a re-examination of the utopian hopes and expectations surrounding socialism as an alternative to
capitalism, as well as the disappointment in some sections of the left with reunification (Enns 475-491).

When discussing the short film Der Duft des Westens, one audience member drew on her preconceived image of the GDR as a dictatorship to interpret the film, observing:

... it really ticks all the boxes! Escape, state control and limiting of personal freedom. (focus group 3, female, Australian, 45-54)

Whilst many in the audience were familiar with the short film’s theme of escapes across the Wall, the specific Erinnerungsorte may have been lost on some. This lack of knowledge led one participant to become confused about the geographical and temporal positioning of the short film and a conflation of the GDR and the Third Reich:

I don’t really understand this – I mean the guy ran away from a camp, didn’t he? I guess because he was scared of getting gassed…? (focus group 3, female, Australian, 55-64)

Other audience members differentiated clearly between the ‘two dictatorships’, pointing out obvious differences between the two regimes:

It is strange, as nobody will complain about the presence of two GDR flags in the cinema. If for in a third Reich movie there were two Nazi flags would be hung [sic], it would have made headlines! (Audience survey 2014)

This is a good illustration of the difficulties of cultural diplomacy, in that national signifiers are not necessarily understood the same way in the target culture of the film festival. Additional information would be required to achieve the same information transfer.
In contrast to the story of escape in Der Duft des Westens, Einzelkämpfer enabled more room for personal interpretation and identification with the protagonists. In a country like Australia, where sport is a major part of national identity, most audience members would have been familiar with the doping scandals in the GDR, but the film provided the audience with an opportunity to create a more nuanced image of this dark chapter of GDR history and to empathise with the plight of victims. As one participant in the focus groups said:

It was fascinating to see the different experiences each athlete had and how they’re dealing with that today. Like, Udo Beyer – he enjoyed his life then and now! He didn’t really care about state control, but enjoyed that he was allowed to eat more than the others. (Focus group 3, male, Australian, 45-54)

Similar to Einzelkämpfer, the personal accounts and individual stories in Die Familie made an especially strong impression on focus group participants. The film provoked reflections on the division of Germany through the existence of the Berlin Wall; one Australian participant (focus group 3, female, 35-44) stated that she had ‘never thought about the Berlin Wall outside of Berlin before; but I guess that’s just what we called the ‘Iron Curtain’.’

Two focus group members compared their impressions of the remnants of the Berlin Wall from a visit to post-reunification Berlin and their the portrayal in the films, and agreed that their personal impressions during their visit were at odds to the political issues explored in the films:

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43 In the documentary, Udo Beyer explains that as an elite athlete he was given food otherwise unavailable, in particular mandarins and oranges.
When I was in Berlin I felt like all of this is over and more a museum now, than anything that still impacts people ... but I guess it’s not long ago at all and the [German] government probably prefers to show that it’s all over than the cover ups that are still going on … (focus group 3, female, Australian, 65+)

The cover-ups referred to in this quote are represented in the film by the continuing struggle of family members for information on the death of loved ones. The attempted reconciliation between a son of a Mauertote and the border guard responsible for his death provoked a discussion in one group of the role and responsibilities of the German government today. Focus group participants wondered about the extent to which the present-day government was complicit in covering up the crimes of the GDR regime, alluding to the aforementioned Fortschrittsgedächtnis, through which the GDR continues to be legitimised in some sections of the population.

In the focus group discussions, audiences alluded to the different memory discourses of the GDR (as defined by Sabrow) in their varied perceptions of the GDR’s past. Ostalgie and the Diktaturgedächtnis were clearly part of the audience’s imaginary of the GDR, and some focus group members explicitly mentioned their struggle to reconcile the different, rather contradictory aspects of the GDR.

The ‘ostalgic’ perception of the GDR is moreover one that is often confirmed by visits to Berlin, where Ampelmännchen dominate the cityscape, as one focus group member pointed out. This is not surprising, as the city of Berlin actively promotes ostalgic images in its marketing campaigns. Audiences further referred to the discourse of Ostalgie when talking about everyday life in the GDR. Life in the GDR was described by one participant as ‘a different world, but normal to them then’ (Focus group, male, Australian, 65+). One focus group participant recalled the
GDRetro and the DEFA films as allowing him ‘to see the normal life of the GDR through their films’ (focus group 3, male, Australian, 65+). Comments about the economic situation of the GDR fell within the discourse of Ostalgie, with focus group participants focusing mainly on consumer products that weren’t available in the East; even a well-known ‘banana joke’ made it into the discussion. The economic system of the GDR was considered separate from its politics; the former was seen as more benign, the latter was viewed with horror.

The focus group participants described political life in the GDR using strong and unequivocal terms such as ‘dictatorship’ (in the context of state control, lack of freedom, surveillance, torture, lack of human rights). Surveillance and state control were the main points of the discussions on the political life of the GDR. Although many of the GDR films screened, mostly documentaries, showed politics through private eyes – such as the state-sponsored sport system from the perspective of the affected athletes – audiences did not always connect the private everyday with the political system. Focus group participants continuously referred to ‘the system’ that was controlling individuals. ‘The system’ was explained as omnipresent and omnipotent, although without a clear leading figure of power. This understanding of the GDR as a surveillance state is an example of the Diktaturgedächtnis.

The discussions of this ‘system’ and the question of state control was framed in terms of dictatorships infringing on human rights, in particular within the context of Die Familie (Weinert, 2013) and its demonstration of the restrictive nature of the GDR. Freedom of speech was another issue discussed within this context. The Berlin Wall was the obvious symbol of limited freedom and the starting point for discussions.

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44 Jokes about the unavailability of imported fruit, such as bananas, became popular after reunification, and citizens from the GDR bought bananas for West Germans with exaggerated enthusiasm.
Images of East Germans ‘flooding the West’ after the fall of the Wall, screened in the international media in 1989, confirmed these perceptions. In discussions, the Wall not only symbolised curtailment of the freedom of movement, but limits to freedom in general. Interesting to note is also a split in the imaginary of East Germany between the GDR and the city of East Berlin; East Germany, as a signifier, appears to be more strongly connected to the Diktaturgedächtnis, whilst East Berlin as a signifier appears connected to Ostalgie:

When we travelled through Germany, the East is still really grim. Berlin is great – the East still has the old architecture and the GDR museum is fun. (focus group 1, Female, Australian, 45-54)

Most participants were also familiar with blanket systems of surveillance through von Donnersmarck’s feature film Das Leben der Anderen (2006). The issue of surveillance sparked a discussion of current issues of cyber-privacy in some focus groups, utilising the GDR as a ‘site of projection’, meaning contemporary debates could be sparked by an historical fictional space. Saunders and Pinfold used ‘a site of projection’ to describe the variety of types of memorialisation of the GDR within its political, literary and filmic discourses (4).

Here, I understand the memorialisation of the GDR in Australia during the AFGF as a site of projection for ideas and ideals that are transnational and trans-historical, also highlighting a potential for discussion and curating by the GI. This festival space offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on wide-ranging present-day issues of freedom and security. Within the focus group discussions, the GDR was often thematised in broader contexts, such as freedom, surveillance, community and
terrorism. A focus group participant for instance referred to the Stasi, linking it to today’s hackers, but also to the anti-terror laws in Australia. He explained:

Everything was controlled and the state knew everything. It’s a bit as if it was legal for the government today to read your emails and see your Facebook – I guess for terrorists it kind of does... (focus group 3, Male, 25, Australian)

For him, engaging with the GDR allowed for tapping into current debates surrounding surveillance, internet privacy laws and the NSA spying scandal45.

The perception of the GDR within the audiences of the AFGF was thus twofold: it manifested as both a dictatorship and the peculiar failed alternative to capitalism and West Germany. Documentaries and educational panel discussions affirmed this understanding; audience members commented in questionnaires that ‘the fall of the Wall is still a very sensitive topic’ and that ‘people are getting more conscious about the history’ (audience survey, 2014). Within the context of Ostalgie, the country also occupies the space of the Other that is reaffirmed by feature films and edutaining time-events.

Part of the wider discussion about remembering the GDR were comments made in focus groups about the value of an individual’s life over the security of the state. These debates were timely, since recent discussions on terrorism have led to renegotiations of these values (Barns & Talbot n.p.; Moulds 1). The recent introduction of anti-terror laws in Australia has sparked a public debate on the right of the state to impinge on personal freedom when there are grounds to suspect terrorist connections (Beckman 24; A. Lynch 11).

45 In 2013 news reports in the international media have revealed operational details of the NSA (National Security Agency) spying on international governments; this included tapping chancellor Merkel’s mobile phone (https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-06/nsa-ausschuss-handys-angela-merkel-ausspaehen).
For AFGF audiences, the GDR provided the starting point for these types of discussions and acted as a space for working through theoretical concepts and ideas. Transporting these debates into the transnational and transcultural space of a film festival and into the fictional and historical environment of mediated memory allowed for a more distanced and objective engagement with the concepts themselves. In today’s context, the Stasi forms the extreme example of what can happen when societies are unable to protect individuals’ privacy and state control is unchecked. Such perceptions have become more commonplace through recent discussions on cyber-privacy and political whistle-blowing that have started to occupy the media globally.

AFGF audiences’ varied perceptions of the GDR stand in contrast to the understanding of WWII detailed in the earlier chapter. Audiences understood the GDR as a dictatorship, but also as a site of projection and through a nostalgic discourse that sometimes trivialised and commercialised memories of the country. In contrast, memories of the Holocaust and WWII mobilised discourses on German guilt and responsibility. These different memorialisations are an illustration of what Maier referred to as the hot memory of fascism and the cold memory of communism (153-165). He saw the main differences between these memory discourses in the tropes of shame and complicity. Whereas the Holocaust has resulted in the collective guilt of the German nation and memory of fascism demands us to think about whether we would have been active in opposing the system, memory of communism is more diverse and less connected to shame. This is particularly evident in discussions of the economy of GDR and as the other Germany, and the engagement with socialism as an alternative to capitalism.
5.5 Conclusions

The GDR was a significant element of the AFGF. The GI curated four time-events illustrating different memorialisations of the GDR, and was influenced in its curatorship mainly by the Diktaturgedächtnis and the Arrangementgedächtnis. The development of time-events illustrates a shift in cultural diplomacy, in that earlier time-events were more didactic in their approach to cultural diplomacy than later events. This is particularly visible in the curating of Alles auf Zucker, with a panel discussion on the topic ‘Cinematic journey through the tumultuous 20th century: Remastering the German past?’ in 2005, in contrast to the more edutaining ‘Fall of the Wall’ event in 2013.

Although the films chosen for inclusion in the AFGF encompass portraits of victims of abuses of state power and doping, further curating helped to diversify one-dimensional notions of the GDR as a brutal dictatorship. In the context of Sabrow’s Erinnerungsorte, the curatorial selection of films on the GDR was aligned by and large with the official Diktaturgedächtnis of the GDR, counterbalanced in turn by the curating of the time-events, which presented other less violent and bleak aspects of GDR memory.

The entertainment during the interval break and the decoration of the cinema drew on symbols connected to the discourse of Ostalgie and thus fall within the definition of Sabrow’s Arrangementgedächtnis. In doing so, the GI made small concessions to the more popular discourses of nostalgia, while at the same time largely adhering to the objectives of the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung zur SED-Diktatur. The foundation also supported Duft des Westens and Die Familie to provide a ‘space for resonance that includes national and cultural borders, in which different memories of national
and social groups can be compared’ (Bundessiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur n.p.).

This demonstrates two things; firstly, the official memory discourse of Germany is that of a Diktaturgedächtnis and highlights the demand in Germany for coming to terms with the SED-dictatorship and to work through its past in a similar way to the Vergangenheitsbewältigung of the Third Reich. This is illustrated in the decision to open the Stasi archives in 1992. Secondly, the curating of the GI also illustrates the complex memory discourse surrounding the GDR, in that the German curators found it necessary to offset the filmic representations of the Stasi and the SED with a time-event. The time-event represented the GDR through its ostalgic Erinnerungsorte, such as Ampelmännchen cookies, Spreewald gherkins, Berlin disco beats with jelly vodka shots and the omnipresent Trabant.

Erinnerungsorte are an important issue in cultural curatorship for an international audience, particularly when used to include a film, book or artifact in a wider conversation by compressing a whole discourse in one image (e.g. the Westpaket). These are, however, highly context-dependent and hence are susceptible to misinterpretation or misunderstanding by individuals from a different cultural and national context. An example of such misunderstanding became apparent when screening Huff and Breusing’s (2012) Der Duft des Westens. The short film, screened in 2014, draws on multiple Erinnerungsorte to include the wider story of the GDR. However, many aspects of the Erinnerungsorte were hard to read or unintelligible to audiences, and hence needed more mediation or contextualisation. This was provided in the time-events by either explaining discourses in Q&As or panel discussion, as was the case for the time-event following the screening of This Ain’t California. In other cases, such as the ‘Fall of the Wall’, Erinnerungsorte were displayed without
explanation. This exemplified an unawareness of local knowledge and diminished the function of the AFGF as *Kulturaustausch* and dialogue.

Time-events curated around GDR films did not address the notion of the GDR as a dictatorship, but tended to reinforce the more popular understandings of the GDR by referring to established memory discourses. The event preceding the screening of *This Ain’t California* (Marten Persiel, 2012) was the only GDR-themed time-event that was aimed at creating a conversation around the various aspects of the GDR, such as its creative subcultures. The event also offered an opportunity to discuss the liminal space between historical and fictional GDR memory with the filmmaker himself. Using the trope of skateboarding helped to access different audiences as well as to start a discussion to broaden understanding of the GDR. In doing so, the GI actively encouraged consideration of the different aspects of the GDR and initiated discussions on contemporary political and societal debates, using the GDR as a site of projection. Other time-events, however, were rather jarring in their representations of the GDR through food, music and ostalgic symbols before or after a documentary exposing the GDR as a dictatorship.

For the GI, the GDR is a rewarding and fruitful topic for a film festival, as it encourages a serious discussion in a mass entertainment medium of contemporary social and political issues through German history. A longstanding historical engagement and fascination with East German communism and the Cold War makes films and events on the topic a popular choice for AFGF audiences. Understanding the GDR as a site of projection situated the AFGF within the wider framework of a space to discuss contemporary social and political issues. The representation of the GDR in the festival space offered a backdrop for these discussions. This enabled the GI to use the AFGF to encourage intercultural communication through the festival, as
well as positioning Germany as a country at the forefront of social debate with a wealth of experience to draw from.

The potential of the GDR as a site of projection and a space that can provide opportunities for reflection on politics and society in general was possibly underused in the AFGF in this regard, as were the time-events. The curatorial value of the time-event should not be underestimated, and whilst the desire to balance a serious film with a light-hearted event is certainly understandable, doing so was tricky. The memory of the GDR demands careful curating of films and time-events. The framework of the dominant Erinnerungsorte in relation to the GDR past can serve here as a useful tool to scrutinise images, messages and their value for cultural diplomacy. In making decisions about which aspect of memory to highlight in time-events, curators must weigh the benefits of tapping into popular touristic discourses of the GDR past and of edutainment against the risks to cross-cultural dialogue or Kulturaustausch of trivialising aspects of recent history.
Chapter 6: German Multiculturalism Screened at the AFGF

Throughout the AFGF’s history, special events – including Culinary Comedies in 2011, Soulkitchen in 2013 and Oriental Night in 2014 – were devoted to the portrayal of multiculturalism in Germany. Films and events emphasised the value of multicultural films for cinematic representations of Germany, still widely regarded abroad as a monocultural country (Green, “Germany: A Changing country of immigration” 334). This international image of Germany still dominates despite the country being a popular destination for immigrants, as exemplified by the recent refugee influx from Syria and the Balkans, adding to the existing diversity of Germany’s multicultural profile. For the GI, the deconstruction of hackneyed stereotypes of small villages and traditional Germanic societies that tends to prevail in foreigners’ imaginaries of Germany is central to its diplomatic efforts, intent on showcasing the contemporary nation as more than the sum of its generalised and outdated conceptualisations (Grolig & Schlageter 547).

In terms of cultural diplomacy, Multikulturalismus (multiculturalism) and its merits are the topic of enduring discussion in Australia and Germany, highlighting vital commonalities between the two. Both nations have experienced mass migration since the end of the Second World War and have since grappled with the impact of this migration on national identity. Unlike Australia, Germany has until recently not been perceived as a nation of immigration, neither from within nor without, and its national image has been dominated by more-or-less clichéd images of ‘Germanness’ (Sölter 5). This tendency provides fertile ground for cultural diplomacy that aims to add to and diversify national imaginaries. For the AFGF, the screening of multicultural German films facilitates the showcase of a lesser-known facet of Germany to Australian audiences and thus adds to the festival’s cartographic agency. The concept
of cartographic cinema guides my analysis in this chapter and allows me to describe the use of film to reveal new geographical and cultural terrain to audiences. The theory is introduced in more detail below.

The cartographic agency of the AFGF was a key motivation for its foundation, with its principal aim being to represent and portray contemporary Germany and Germanness in Australia. However, and in a wider context with relevance to the AFGF, this raises the argument that a scholarly link that synthesises the discourses of cinematic and cultural diplomacy and cinematic cartography is yet to be fully established. The aforementioned concepts have independently received significant scholarly attention; cinematic cartographies and mental mapping have been explored in the field of human geography and perception studies of art and cinema, while cinematic cartography has been defined as the ‘different ways film maps, and film mapping might be understood as geographical productions of knowledge’ (L. Roberts 68).

In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical framework of cinematic cartography and then employ Lefebvre’s three social spaces to analyse the representation, as well as the perception, of multicultural Germany in the AFGF. Additionally, in this chapter I examine and contextualise the wider societal aspects of multicultural societies, in particular the ways in which Australian multicultural experiences shape the lens through which German films are viewed in Australia.

6.1 **Cinematic cartography**

Cinematic cartography describes a process whereby an understanding of the world is mapped through cinema. Accordingly, a country and culture are conceptualised and understood through their representations in film, ranging from the obvious visual
impressions of cultural and physical landscapes and cityscapes to the subtler representations of culture as depicted in the mundane and ordinary, as well as the extraordinary and particular. To some extent this process is present in every film, but becomes particularly apparent when the production provides access to unknown or lesser-known and understood cultural and geographical terrain. Irrespective of the type of cinematic diplomacy intended, cinematic cartography is central to objectives and intentions of diplomacy, although it is often seemingly unintended and not obviously reflected. I use cinematic cartography to give a more textured account of cinematic diplomacy in the AFGF, and to understand how films and film festivals might enable audiences to connect more meaningfully and productively with cultures other than their own.

Tom Conley analyses the cartographic agency of cinema as a cinematic idiom, similar to that of any geographic map that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and considers ‘maps and films as strangely coextensive’ (1). Furthermore, Conley reads film as a ‘map that plots and colonizes the imagination of the public it is said to invent’ (ibid. 17). Conley appreciates film as an image that localises and configures the imagination of its spectators, akin to a topographic map. In the case of the AFGF, Germany and Germanness were mapped for Australian audiences through film programming. The curating of associated events, public relations material and ephemera further curated Germany and Germanness for festival audiences.

Understanding how geographic cartography translates to the moving image and toward defining the human mapping impulse is vital in this project. Therefore, I reference Castro’s understanding of this as the processes that underlie the understanding of space in general, rather than actual geographical information pictured in film (Castro 12). In the same vein, Caquard and Taylor define cinematic
cartography as a mapping of the world through a ‘systematic collection of images […]’, where ‘the camera becomes a cartographic tool that can tell all kinds of geospatial stories, with the film maker as a cartographer materializing, and archiving elements of the world’ (5).

Accordingly, cinematic memory is integral to the discourse on cartographies, wherein film can help with the construction of archives for the Zeitgeist of times past. Indeed, particular forms of collective memory and stereotypes are illustrations of the GI’s attempts to challenge and remodel perceptions of the country through the program of films at the AFGF. As a tool of cultural diplomacy, the creation of a contemporary image of Germany is fundamental to the GI’s cultural mandate. The screening of shared universal tropes such as love, loss and humanity, rather than divisive and hackneyed imagery, enables cinema to serve as a tool of cultural diplomacy. Multiculturalism is a case in point; the AFGF deliberately selected and showed films that portray societal and mutually common discourses around multiculturalism and the way that they play out.

As outlined in chapter 1, cinematic diplomacy originated during the Cold War when contrasting political and economic systems in the former Eastern and Western block prevailed. Since then, a contemporary notion of cinematic diplomacy has become popular with film festival organisers who promote and emphasise their festivals’ role in contributing to reshaping and encouraging forms of intercultural communication and engagement. Multiculturalism can be considered fundamental to the efforts of contemporary cinematic diplomacy striving to promote diversity and a respect for cultural differences. Accordingly, appraising Australian understandings and manifestations of multiculturalism and juxtaposing these against German concepts of Multikulturalismus and Leitkultur is a vital initiative of my study. This highlights the
potential for cinematic mapping of Germany at the AFGF and illustrates how this unfolded through the deliberative efforts of programming and associated curated time-events.

6.2 Space 1: Multikulturalismus and Australian Multiculturalism

The different multicultural histories of Australia and Germany are the lens through which Australian audiences and German curators understand multicultural films. Disparities and differences regarding understandings of multiculturalism for German and Australian stakeholders underscore the potential behind curatorial interpretation and the GI’s public relations capacities. This is reflected in the way Australian audiences’ understandings of German films could be shaped to make way for the construction of mapping processes during the AFGF. In accordance with Lefebvre’s concept of physical space, I scrutinise the setting of the AFGF in Australia in the context of German perceptions of Multikulturalismus and the Australian understanding of multiculturalism. The differences between the two understandings of multiculturalism and of nationhood in general represent the space that cultural diplomacy has to bridge in order to establish a mutually constructive conversation. Whilst these differences provide a chance for a productive cultural exchange to take place as part of the AFGF, they also bear risks of misunderstandings. Understanding the different concepts of Multikulturalismus and multiculturalism is therefore essential for the analysis of the AFGF, its curatorship and audience perceptions.

6.2.1 Multikulturalismus in Germany

Whilst the concept of multiculturalism gained momentum and acknowledgement in the 1970s in countries such as Canada and Australia, globalisation and increased global mobility for migration and travel have arguably enhanced its relevance today
In the case of Germany, however, there is an enduring ambivalence and objection to seeing itself as an *Einwanderungsland*. This became evident when on October 17, 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared the death of *Multikulturalismus*, pronouncing that the concept had ‘utterly failed’, yet at the same time pronouncing the Turkish–German population an integral and permanent presence in Germany (Chin 281).

Merkel’s seeming conundrum illustrates the complex and contradictory nature of cultural diversity in Germany and how its politicisation serves to obfuscate the realities of contemporary Germany. The binary and heated nature of this debate is further illustrated by the acrimonious and spirited debates surrounding the controversial book *Deutschland schafft sich ab*, written by the former social democratic politician and *Bundesbank* executive Thilo Sarrazin. Sarrazin argues that Germany’s future stability and well-being were threatened by immigrants from Muslim countries. In addition to embarrassing his political party, Sarrazin’s assertions lend authority to stereotypical perceptions of Turks and other immigrants, and stirred debate concerning German national identities in politics, media, film and literature. In 2014–15 the arrival of large numbers of refugees from (mainly) Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq served to inflame this debate and popularised Sarrazin’s central thesis, provoking tensions around the nature, risks and benefits of immigration and multiculturalism. Sarrazin’s newly published book *Wunschdenken* (*Wishful Thinking*) builds on the controversy of 2010, arguing that Chancellor Angela Merkel’s refugee politics, and in particular her *Willkommenskultur*46 were ‘the biggest mistake in German politics since the end of World War II’ (n.p.).

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46 German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for the concept of *Willkommenskultur* (welcoming culture) in response to the influx of large numbers of refugees to Germany in 2014–15.
The question of whether Germany is a country of immigration remains mired in debate and unresolved, ignoring the reality that Germany has already become a multicultural society. From being a country of emigration, principally to the United States but also to Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporary Germany has experienced large-scale immigration of considerable diversity since the end of WWII (Brinkmann & Sammartino 85). Immediately after the end of WWII, approximately 12 million refugees arrived in Germany via an East to West migration pattern, and in the 1950s an additional four million ethnic Germans migrated to West Germany from Poland, Romania and the countries of the former Soviet Union (Fassmann & Münz 526).

Large-scale non-ethnic-German immigration has its genesis in 1955 with the commencement of the guest worker program, a policy that recruited Gastarbeiter (guest workers) as labourers during the so-called German economic miracle. Agreements were made with countries including Greece, Portugal, Spain, Morocco and Italy, but the largest group came from Turkey. The program continued until 1973, when the SPD-FDP government under Willy Brandt called for an end to guest worker recruitment (Meier-Braun 97). A large percentage of Gastarbeiter remained in Germany, and this prompted a new form of immigration that became known as ‘dependent migration’, meaning guest workers were able to settle permanently in Germany with their dependents. However, beginning in 1979, asylum became the most significant source of immigration. Between 1979 and 2000 more than 2.6 million people from the Eastern bloc and developing countries claimed asylum in Germany (Green The Politics of Exclusion 2).

In 2000, Germany introduced a new citizenship law that better reflects contemporary German multiculturalism. The law marks a significant shift from an ethno-cultural
and ‘Wilhelmine goal of maintaining an ethnically and culturally pure citizenry’,
towards a more inclusive citizenship law defined by greater diversity and plurality
(Green “Beyond Ethnoculturalism” 105). In 2016, 18.6 million people in Germany
were counted as having non-German heritage (Migrationshintergrund)\(^{47}\). Turkish-
Germans make up the largest part of this ‘foreign’ population in Germany (1.5
million), followed by immigrants from the former Yugoslavia (1.1 million), with
Polish (0.7 million) and Italian immigrants (0.6 million) rounding out the list of top
source countries (Statista “Bevölkerung” n.p.). Unsurprisingly, new definitions of
national identity that no longer see the nation as a clearly defined and one-
dimensional concept have emerged, giving rise to heated debates on the legitimacy of
multiculturalism and what exactly makes up a German Leitkultur (Pearce 108). In a
sense, such debates are inevitable given the quickening pace with which the make-up
of the German populace is changing, as well as wider global trends that are underlined
by rising nationalism and scepticism towards globalisation.

Film and literature have explored the different facets of German multiculturalism.
Films such as Fatih Akin’s Gegen die Wand (2004) illustrate that Germans define
themselves as a pluralistic and diverse people and nation, and this helps characterise
what is ostensibly a newly defined self-imaginary of Germany (Wasmer 163).
Filmmakers such as Akin locate ‘postmigrants’ at the centre of their films; the central
characters create what amounts to a hybrid personal identity, not necessarily tied to
long-held conceptualisations of what makes up a nation, but instead drawing from the
spectrum of contexts within which people co-exist in Germany (Brockmann A
Critical History 481). Turkish-German cinema in particular has provided an ideal
platform for discussions of identity and discrimination, given that Turkish-Germans

\(^{47}\) These numbers do not reflect migrants who have since received German citizenship and have been
naturalised.
form the lion’s share of the postmigrant population, and also on account of their prominence in contemporary German life.

The screenings of multicultural-themed German cinema at the AFGF – accompanied by time events including panel discussions, Q&A sessions with guest actors, academics and film critics and other curated cultural events – set out to challenge long-held stereotypes about Germany as culturally homogenous (Goethe-Institut 1). Similarly, the GI states that its aims are ‘to paint a contemporary portrait of Germany, promoting international discourse on the key concerns of what is becoming an increasingly global society’ (ibid.). The AFGF had a critical role in ensuring that German multiculturalism and the contemporary context was portrayed in a manner that impressed upon audiences that the country is far more complex and diverse than Lederhosen, Hitler and the Holocaust, and that its development since the early postwar years has been dramatic and far-reaching (Sölter 4).

Differing conceptualisations of multiculturalism in Germany and Australia are apparent in the different public perceptions in each country. For instance, while just over half of Germans (54%) report contact with immigrants in their neighbourhoods, only 30% of them see Germany as a multicultural society (Statista, “Gesellschaftliche”). By contrast, in Australia, there is strong public support for immigration and multiculturalism: the Mapping Social Cohesion Report shows that since 2013, support for multiculturalism has ranged from 83% to 86% (Markus 2). Perhaps the weaker embracing and acknowledgement of immigration and multiculturalism in Germany is reflected in external perceptions of it as less multicultural than Australia. This perception of Germany as more traditional and monocultural was indicated also in my focus group discussions and the comments in audience questionnaires (2014–15).
6.2.2 *Australian Multiculturalism*

In contrast to Germany, Australia is a settler society and one that has arguably been multicultural since British settlers began arriving in the late eighteenth century (Povinelli 6; Lloyd & Metzer 1-43). Immigration has since been central to nation-building and has helped shaped Australian narratives of itself (Moran 169). This is best exemplified by the gold rush in the mid-1800s, when migrants began arriving from Germany, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as China and the United States, followed by Afghans, Pakistanis and Turks; this continued until the early 1900s and the implementation of the White Australia Policy (see chapter 2). In the post-WWII decades, large numbers of migrants arrived from the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Malta, Germany and Turkey (Jupp “Hidden Migrants” 512). Immigrants from Vietnam followed in the 1970s as a result of the Vietnam War, and since the 1980s, Australia has oriented increasingly towards Asia in trade, diplomatic and migration terms (Ang 109). Australia’s present migration context is characterised by intensifying migration from China and India, and this has reoriented the ‘culturally European nation to its geographical neighbours in the Asia-Pacific’ with China now contributing the greatest number of migrants to Australia annually (Lok-Sun Ngan & Kwok-bun 1).

Unlike the ambiguous and vague German understanding of *Multikulturalismus* and its colloquial and negatively connotated adjective *multikulti*, multiculturalism in political terms in Australia is clearly defined. The end of the White Australia Policy saw Australia become one of the first countries to make multiculturalism a basis for migrant settlement, welfare and social-cultural policy, and in 1975, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam made the first reference to Australia as a multicultural nation (Armillei & Masciatelli 115). In a continuation of the Whitlam government’s
initiatives, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser demonstrated strong bipartisan support for migration and the nurturing of a multicultural Australia (Galligan & Roberts 82). In 1978 Fraser made multiculturalism official government policy, and since then it has become embedded in policy and accepted by society at large (L. Foster 31). During the Hawke and Keating governments (1986–96), multiculturalism was regarded as a key to Australian national identity and governance. However, not everyone supported the policy; in 1988, the Opposition Leader John Howard called for the abandonment of the term ‘multiculturalism’ and a focus instead on what he referred to as ‘One Australia’ (Moran 77). The electoral defeat of the Keating government in 1996 meant that his progressive multicultural policies were never implemented, and with John Howard as the new Prime Minister, many key agencies presiding over multiculturalism were abolished. However, in the face of public criticism, Howard was quick to launch a new multicultural policy statement entitled *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (ibid. 125). Despite this official policy position, strict regulation and notions of economic rationalism and immigration as human capital shaped much of the debate around multiculturalism and immigration throughout Howard’s tenure as Prime Minister. Howard’s clearly stated agenda regarding multiculturalism in Australia has arguably endured between 1996-2007, which was largely underlined by conservative Australian governments (Jupp “Howard’s Agenda” 163).

With the election of a Labor government (initially led by Kevin Rudd) in 2007, the Australian Multicultural Advisory Committee was established and multiculturalism once again became a key component of policymaking and national identity, particularly focusing on immigration from Asia (Levey *Political Theory* 7). Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s commissioning of the white paper ‘Australia in the
Asian Century’ in 2011 was a further attempt to highlight Australia’s links with Asia. This bolstered the return of the multicultural project in government policy, and from an international perspective this affirmation of multiculturalism seemed to go against the global trend, as exemplified by extant American and European sociopolitical contexts. This turn against multiculturalism is visible in Angela Merkel’s claim that multiculturalism had ‘utterly failed’, and further pronouncements by former British Prime Minister David Cameron condemning multiculturalism as ‘a failed state response to cultural diversity’ (Levey Political Theory xiii) that was almost prescient in light of the Brexit that was to follow.

In Australia, despite popular support, immigration and multiculturalism policy has always been controversial and was ‘always a conceptual muddle of prescription and description’ suggesting that it was driven by politics and prevailing electorate sentiments (Galligan & Roberts 96). Accordingly, debates around social cohesion and the integration of migrant communities in Australia have emerged on the back of events such as the Cronulla Beach race-based riots in 2005, attacks on Indian foreign students in Melbourne between 2008 and 2009, as well as the anxiety and political campaigning over undocumented boat arrivals synonymous with the Howard government (1996–2007) (Dunn 76-94; Johanson & Glow 37-43). Nonetheless, current Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s declaration that ‘Australia’s diverse population was more valuable than the nation’s mining resources’ demonstrated a reaffirmation in the multiculturalist agenda. In an address to the National Press Club in 2016, Turnbull praised the diversity of Australian people, saying ‘they are our greatest assets, not the rocks under the ground’ (Turnbull n.p.).

Despite the ever-growing numbers of migrants from Asia, South America and Africa, the contemporary nation of Australia is still rooted in its European and British
heritage to a large extent (Meaney 118; O’Reagan 308). The dominant discourses around national identity still relate to explorers, diggers, farmers and surfers, and the concept of nation has been defined almost exclusively on white settler terms (K. Saunders 102). The enduring colonial-era imaginaries of Australia fostered a monocultural image of what is in reality an increasingly multicultural society, and this has served to shape extant conversations regarding multiculturalism (Moran 2). Similar to imaginaries of Germany, the image of Australia that dominates international perceptions is thus reductive and clichéd (Sölter 4). European cultures continue to dominate images of Australia, given the enduring (albeit declining) demographic preponderance of Australians with European heritage. In the Australian census of 2016, over half of Australia’s population claimed to have British or European ancestry, and a further 25% simply categorised themselves as Australians (ABS n.p.). This prevailing background and context in Australia suggests an enduring orientation to Europe and Britain, one that the AFGF leveraged to connect Australia to Europe and ‘neo-Europe’ and shape conceptions of European multiculturalism. Neo-European places are geographically distant from Europe, but have been culturally assimilated to Europe by settlers and colonialists (Crosby 148). The term is useful for understanding cultural dimensions of settler societies such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand and analysing international perceptions of these nations.

A major attraction of the AFGF was its broader status as a festival of European cultures beyond Germany. This is exemplified by its integration into the ‘festival circuit’ in Australia, thereby attracting audiences wanting to experience and learn about German culture, as well as those with a more general interest in European cinematic culture. In my survey of audiences in 2014 and 2015, this was obvious in the stated motivations for visiting the AFGF, as was equally strong interest in visiting
the Italian, French, Jewish and Spanish Film Festivals. Only a very small percentage (7%) reported visiting the Indonesian, Chinese or Malaysian Film Festivals, although they are of comparable size. Moreover, the decision to hold the AFGF in art-house cinemas in affluent, inner-city and urban areas is significant, given that this plays to a more established and well-heeled demographic, as opposed to immigrant strongholds. Moreover, AFGF audience demographics show that it was comprised of 70% Australians whose ancestors migrated from Europe and Britain and 30% individuals of other nationalities, mostly German.

Different understandings of nation, culture and immigration have developed under different historical and contemporary circumstances and therefore the symbolisms and narratives maintain differing meanings and connotations. Whilst multiculturalism has long been government policy and is officially celebrated in Australia, Germany does not see itself as an immigrant country despite large numbers of Germans having migrant backgrounds. The curatorship of the AFGF had to straddle these different conceptualisations in order to utilise the festival for its cartographic agency and contemporary cinematic diplomacy. Multicultural cinema and events are staged to encourage a diversification of the image of Germany in Australia and provide relatable stories of migration, cultural differences and national identity. In the following sections, I scrutinise the curatorship around the topic of multicultural Germany as part of the AFGF, with a particular focus on time-events illustrating the cultural diplomatic work of the GI.

48 Detailed numbers and analysis of these audience figures are provided in chapter 3 of this thesis.
6.3 Space 2: The Films and Time-Events: Films of Hybridity and Accented Cinema

The twin concepts of home and homecoming are central to multicultural film. Hamed Naficy employed Bakhtin’s concept of a chronotope of the homeland as a method to map the field of accented cinema – cinema that draws heavily from migrant mobilities and the attendant issues of identity and belonging (152). Chronotopes describe the temporal and spatial settings in which stories unfold, and in accented cinema these mainly include home, exile and transitional sites that link the chronotope of ‘the homeland to the constructed space-time of the exile and diaspora’ (ibid.). These multiple chronotopes reflect a double consciousness that is fundamental to the notion of accented cinema (ibid. 22). In describing a cinematic ‘response to the experiences of displacement through exile, migration or diaspora’ the term ‘accented cinema’ encompasses different types of film made by exilic and diasporic ethnic filmmakers (ibid. 10). In discourses around immigration and multiculturalism, accented cinema raises questions about personhood and nationhood, and the attendant outcome for audiences is a reappraisal of conceptions and misconceptions about countries and their people.

In regard to multiculturalism and the potential of film to act as a cultural diplomatic resource, Petek was adamant that in the context of New German Cinema, cinema in general and film music in particular has the ‘potential to provide a common ground, where majority and minority cultures can comfortably meet’ (177). Petek’s emphasis on the transnational potential of New German Cinema also reflects the contemporary understanding of German-Turkish filmmakers as the new wave of auteurs. These new auteurs, including Fatih Akin, Thomas Arslan, Yüksel Yavuz and Ayse Polat (among others) form a new generation of German filmmaking that can potentially reshape
German cinema to reconnect to the international acclaim it enjoyed during the times of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders and Alexander Kluge (ibid.). In large part this embodies the underlying ambition of the AFGF: to influence audience understandings and conceptions of Germany and her people.

During the period 2002–16, the AFGF and its previous incarnations screened 26 films with multicultural themes but only curated a handful of time-events around multicultural cinema. This illustrates curatorship and an understanding that multicultural films might not require the same curatorial attention as the popular historical tropes of the world wars and the GDR, which were curated into a larger number of time-events. Subdividing the 79 AFGF films by the represented countries of emigration shows that they align with general developments around multiculturalism in Germany. Multicultural time-events include *Almanya-Wilkommen in Deutschland/Almanya: Welcome in Germany* (Yasemin Samderely, 2011) as the opening night film in 2011, *Türkisch für Anfänger/Turkish for Beginners* (Bora Dağtekin, 2012 – which won the audience award in 2013), Culinary Comedies in 2011, the Oriental Night in 2014, and the Soulkitchen event in 2015. These time-events were often framed around accompanying mechanisms such as music, food and cultural displays. Each multicultural time-event is explored in detail below.

As illustrated in Table 7, films with a Turkish-German theme dominate the representations of multiculturalism on display at the AFGF during 2002–16. This is a direct correlation to the large Turkish-German community in Germany, especially in urban centres, and also reflects the growing cultural currency of this group. The Turkish immigrant community is now in its third and fourth generations, with many maintaining hybrid identities, shaped by German society and culture as well as drawing on their ethnicity. Many of the films made since the 1960s tell the story of
the problems of dislocation and integration, familiar tropes for migrants, and
evidenced in the so-called ‘cinema of the affected’ (Clarke *German Cinema* 133),
‘confessional cinema’ (Curtis & Fenner 10) and *Migrantenkino* (migrant cinema)
(Berghahn & Sternberg 12). Whilst earlier Turkish-German films were criticised for
their focus on female victimhood, the genre has developed to portray nuanced stories
and images of migration, but also of its influences on Germany as a contemporary and
multicultural nation (Göktürk 66). The multicultural films and events held at the
AFGF 2002-16 are summarised in table 7.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>AFGF</th>
<th>Cultural Diaspora</th>
<th>Time-event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Im Juli/In July</em> (Fatih Akin, 2000)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Turkish-German</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Karamuk</em> (Verena S. Freytag, 2002)</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td><em>Kleine Freiheit/A little bit of freedom</em> (Yüksel Yavuz, 2003)</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Kebab Connection</em> (Anno Saul, 2004)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Culinary Comedy</td>
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<td><em>Wut/Can – his World has its own Rules</em> (Züli Aladag, 2006)</td>
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<td><em>Auf der Anderen Seite</em> (Fatih Akin, 2007)</td>
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<td><em>Jerichow</em> (Christian Petzold, 2008)</td>
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<td><em>Crossing the bridge: The Sound of Istanbul</em> (Fatih Akin, 2009)</td>
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<td><em>Die Fremde/When we Leave</em> (Feo Aladag, 2010)</td>
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<td><em>Almanya: Willkommen in Deutschland</em> (Yasemin Samdereli, 2011)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Opening Night</td>
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<td><em>Türkisch für Anfänger</em> (Bora Dagtekin, 2012)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Golden Gnome</td>
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<td><em>Deine Schönheit ist Nichts Wert/Your beauty is Worth Nothing</em> (Hüseyin Tabak, 2012)</td>
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<td><em>Ummah – Unter Freunden/Ummah – Among Friends</em> (Cüneyt Kaya, 2014)</td>
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<td><em>Bella Martha/Mostly Martha</em> (Sandra Nettelbeck, 2001)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Italian-German</td>
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<td><em>Solino</em> (Fatih Akin, 2001)</td>
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<td><em>Basta – Rotwein oder Totsein/C(r)ook</em> (Pepe Danquart, 2004)</td>
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<td>Maria, ihm Schmeckt Nicht!/Wedding fever in Campobello</td>
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<td>Culinary Comedy</td>
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<td>Blindgängen/The Blindflyers</td>
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<td>Russendisko</td>
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<td>Die Brücke am Ibar/My Beautiful Country</td>
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<td>Herz über Kopf/Heart over Head</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Polish-German</td>
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<td>Agniezska</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Tandoori Love</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Indian-German Culinary Comedy</td>
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<td>Kafkanistan/After Spring comes Fall</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Syrian-German</td>
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<td>Anderswo/Anywhere else</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Israeli-German</td>
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<td>Soul Kitchen</td>
<td>2010, 2015</td>
<td>Multicultural Germany Soulkitchen</td>
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<td>Exit Marrakech</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Oriental Night</td>
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Next to cinema generated by Turkish-German directors, representations of the East were part of another highly curated genre embedded in AFGF programming. Once again, this acknowledged and was in alignment with the second largest immigrant population in Germany, the Polish, followed by Russians and others from the former Soviet Union. The longstanding history of migration and interaction between Germany and Eastern Europe swells the number of film productions that draw on this heritage. From 2002 onwards, and parallel with the debates around Poland’s accession
to the EU, the German–Polish border was the focus of multiple film screenings at the AFGF. Immigration from Asia and increasing global mobility is manifest in the rise in Asian–German cinematic productions that were shown at the AFGF, often centring on immigration trajectories from Asia to Germany or touristic ventures from Germany to Asia. All of this indicates that immigration contexts have a large influence on the themes treated in contemporary film productions in Germany and illustrates the GI’s intention to showcase the multicultural dimensions of contemporary Germany.

6.3.1 Multicultural Time-Events: Negotiating the Self and Other

The AFGF 2011 opened with one of the most prominent examples of a multicultural comedy or ethno-comedy, *Almany, Willkommen in Deutschland* (Yasemin Samdereli & Nesrin Samdereli, 2010). The film is a humorous take on the journey of the director’s family from Turkey to Germany and their life, spanning three generations. Reflecting Naficy’s definition of accented cinema, the film is situated in Germany, Turkey and the transitional space where Turkish-German identities are typically negotiated. *Almany, Willkommen in Deutschland* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2011 as part of the celebration of 50 years of labour migration from Turkey to Germany.

Central to the ethno-comedy genre as illustrated in *Almany, Willkommen in Deutschland* are the underpinning narratives that provoke questions concerning national identity for migrants and how this manifests relative to their two homes. Typically, generational dramas illustrate each generation’s struggles with identity and belonging through the family’s experiences in the new country. To provide coverage of the initial arrivals in Germany in the 1960s and Germany today, the film is comprised of two time levels, one told as family history and the other one being the
present-day life of the family. Following a circular journey, the film commences in Turkey, tracing the family’s move to and life in Germany, and returns to Turkey at the very same time that the protagonists come to accept their hybrid identities as a net positive consequence of migration.

Positioned as the opening night film of the AFGF in 2011, the Samderelis’ ethno-comedy provided light-hearted access to the multicultural trope in contemporary German cinema. The film renegotiates national identity and reconciles what in the ‘cinema of the affected’ was portrayed as a conflict between cultures as a productive hybridity of Turkish and German identities. For Australian audiences, the film is a relatable story of multicultural belonging and by selecting it as the opening night film, the GI lend considerable weight to the topic of multiculturalism and guest worker migration. As much of the humour in the film is derived from cultural differences and misunderstandings, this German comedy is relatable and entertaining for Australian audiences, while at the same time introducing the topic of guest worker migration.

The GI views comedies as an accessible means of broaching difficult and contentious themes, as depicted in another ethno-comedy, Türkisch für Anfänger (Bora Dagtekin, 2011), and the large AFGF audiences that attended comedy screenings illustrate their audience appeal. Dagtekin’s film was partially written by the directors of Almanya-Willkommen in Deutschland and received the AFGF audience award (the Golden Gnome) in 2013. All screenings of Türkisch für Anfänger were sold out in advance, despite the programming of parallel screenings in two separate cinemas. Audience surveys highlighted that secondary school groups and young Germans on working or leisure holidays made up the majority of the audience.
Türkisch für Anfänger followed a successful TV series of the same name, underscoring the mainstream allure of the themes depicted in the film. The film portrays a planeload of people bound for Thailand having to land and being stranded on a remote island, after which a struggle between opposing groups with contrasting cultures and worldviews ensues. In a sense this film tries to emulate the German contemporary context, with the story framed around a romance between a bourgeois German woman and a loud and boisterous Turkish-German man. Central to the film is how key protagonists overcome cultural and personal differences through mutual acceptance and understanding, tropes that are fundamental to efforts to promote multiculturalism. Simon Foster, a film reviewer on Australia’s multicultural television station, SBS, described Türkisch für Anfänger as ‘a silly, sweet confection that pushes all of the low-brow romantic comedy buttons but exceeds none of its boundaries’ (S. Foster, n.p.).

Notwithstanding its success at the AFGF, no Australian distributor purchased the screening rights for Türkisch für Anfänger. It is likely that its potential audience, Germans abroad who were familiar with the TV series, was fully catered for by the AFGF and that the film would have little resonance beyond this context. For the co-organiser Germanfilms, this distribution and marketing role of the AFGF was most important, whereas for the AFGF audience numbers were more important. The success of this film within the festival but its failure to pick up a broader release is a prime example of the sometime conflicting objectives of the AFGF, the GI and Germanfilms. In terms of the identity of the AFGF as cultural diplomacy, Türkisch für Anfänger also highlights its secondary role as a diaspora festival that provided a meeting place for German migrants. Whilst many multicultural films at the AFGF were comedies, the GI highlighted a particular combination of culinary comedies in
2010 in an effort to highlight multiculturalism in its programming and also in line with a more general move towards culinary cinema.

6.3.2 Culinary Comedies at the AFGF 2010

The AFGF in 2010 was unprecedented in the prominence it gave to the multicultural theme. The opening night film at the festival was Turkish-German filmmaker Fatih Akin’s comedy *Soul Kitchen* (2009), showcased alongside a mini-retrospective of his films including *Kurz und Schmerzlos* (1998), *Kebab Connection* (2004) and *Crossing the Bridge: Sound of Istanbul* (2005). All of Akin’s work approaches issues of identity, belonging and the interstitial places that migrant communities inhabit. Multiculturalism was also highlighted in the AFGF’s Culinary Comedies thematic, which focused on the way food acts as a carrier of identity. The Culinary Comedy theme comprised three multicultural food-based offerings: *Tandoori Love* (Oliver Paulus, 2008), *Maria, ihm Schmeckt’s Nicht!* (Neele Leana Vollmar, 2009) and *Kebab Connection* (Anno Saul, 2004).

Scholars have described food films as an emerging genre of contemporary cinema and pointed towards the dimensions that food brings to discussions concerning multiculturalism and immigration (Bower 8-20; Keller 1; Poole 2). Cultural Studies scholars have also acknowledged the relationship between food and film, and in particular as it relates to cultural citizenship. In this regard, Watson and Caldwell’s description of food as an opportunity for intercultural understanding in an increasingly globalised world is embraced in the production of culinary comedies:

Continued attention to the most mundane and intimate aspects of people’s ordinary lives (in this case, how they relate to food) can help us understand the big issues of twenty-first-century politics: State formation and collapse, global
flows, and anti-global reactions, and new notions of identity and the rebirth of nationalism. (Watson & Caldwell 2)

This accords with Hoecherl-Alden and Lindenfeld’s view on German culinary cinema, which they argue ‘has served as a key space for the negotiation of cultural citizenship and has functioned as an important facilitator of the debate on multiculturalism and intercultural identity’ (116). As part of the AFGF, food assumed two roles: firstly, as a filmic space, where identities and nationalities were represented and negotiated through food and, secondly, as part of events, where the audiences themselves consumed different foods and experienced their attendant cultures through music, dance and other cultural manifestations. At the 2010 AFGF four films were part of a culinary theme, while in 2015, one film was curated as a time-event around the food it represented. In the following text I analyse these films and events in more detail and for their use of food as a dimension of multiculturalism and as a tool for film festival-based cultural diplomacy.

Selected under the category of ‘Our Neighbours’ and as an event for the Swiss community in Australia, Oliver Paulus’s Tandoori Love is a culture-clash comedy contrasting Swiss and Indian cultural stereotypes. The director utilised cultural clichés of Switzerland and India to highlight cultural differences between what is positioned as two opposing ways of life. His motivation for the film, that he ‘[…] just loved the idea of the Indian chaos, the colorfulness, the cheerfulness and the craziness coming to Switzerland to a very organized little village and mixing everything up’ (as cited in Thomas n.p.), emphasises this use of clichés as integral parts of a comedy focusing on cultural clashes and differences. Food plays an important role in the film, illustrating these differences, but also allowing for the mixing of Indian and Swiss culture.
In *Tandoori Love*, an Indian film crew comes to Switzerland to shoot a Bollywood drama. The cook, as the main character of the film, falls in love with a stereotypically blonde Swiss woman and charms her with his Swiss-Indian cuisine, that is ‘Swiss-Indian style. A rare combination – spiceless but still very very hot.’ (Thomas n.p.)

During many Bollywood-inspired dance scenes in the film, food takes on a persona and zucchini and calamari join in the dance. Traditional Indian and Swiss music is used to further highlight the exoticisation of Indians as the Other, whilst depicting food that is able to bridge the gap between the two cultures. Unlike Turkish-German and Italian-German films, in which a bi-national identity is possible, India is clearly identified as foreign. The attraction between the two opposing cultures is illustrated in the love affair between the Indian cook and the Swiss waitress and is a clear romanticisation of the attractions of the foreign and exotic Other.

*Tandoori Love* is an example of what Clifford termed ‘travelling cultures’, in which authenticity becomes increasingly complex due to globalisation (96). Paulus utilises food, humour and music as assemblages of travelling cultures that showcase cultural difference and the processes of cross-cultural communication. Bollywood is the embodiment of India’s soft power strategy and has become a trope for globalisation. Its inclusion in the AFGF illustrates two key developments (Athique 277-294): the festival’s transnational dimension, but also the risk of Othering and populist curatorship when programming multicultural films as events. As a Swiss-German production featuring Bollywood elements, *Tandoori Love* is an example of the transnational aspect of the AFGF and its selection can thus be seen as an extension of its ethnic dimension and as an example of contemporary cinematic diplomacy in which Australia and Germany are presented a common story of immigration.

However, the juxtaposition of Swiss and Indian culture as a form of exoticising
humour screened as part of a German film festival to a predominantly white audience also has to be seen critically as a form of Othering. Whilst the film might be relatable and entertaining for Australian audiences, it underscores colonial similarities between Europe and Neo-Europe in highlighting cultural differences with India. The focus on food further heightens this aspect of the film and illustrates the danger of multicultural cinema at the AFGF as a form of Othering and essentialising.

Whilst the Indian-Swiss film is the story of a short love affair, the Italian-German film *Maria – ihm Schmeckts Nicht!* (Neele Leana Vollmar, 2009) is about planning a life together and about finding compromises that overcome cultural differences. Screened as part of the AFGF, the two films illustrate Germany’s vastly differing relationships with India and Italy. Indian–German relations are mainly touristic and there are few Indian migrants to Germany, while Italian–German relations are close and based on long-term migration and a large diaspora. With long-term migration from Italy to Australia, and a large Italian diaspora as a result, *Maria – ihm Schmeckts Nicht!* also presented a relatable story to AFGF audiences.

*Maria – ihm Schmeckts Nicht!* is based on Jan Weiler’s homonymous German bestseller, and follows Ian and Sara during their wedding planning in Italy. The couple lives in Germany, but Sara’s parents reside in Campobello in Italy. The film places particular focuses on two things: Ian’s insecurities about the culture and family he is marrying into, and the tensions behind Sara’s second cultural identity that only become visible when she is with her family in Italy. In playfully dealing with cultural stereotypes of uptight Germans and a loud, large Italian family, Vollmar highlights the acute cultural differences between the two countries. Sara’s situation reflects the bi-cultural identity of many Italian-Germans, who are part of Germany’s multicultural landscape. This is a topic relevant to many Australians who, like Sara, hold multiple
identities, and the film outlines commonalities between Australia and Germany and the respective ways those countries deal with multiculturalism. The film also represents a relatable story to Australian audiences, as people of Italian heritage are an important part of Australian society.

Unlike the Indian food represented in *Tandoori Love*, Italian food has made it into the mainstream in Germany and Australia and illustrates the contributions of migration rather than cultural differences. Although focusing on cultural differences, *Maria – ihm Schmeckt Nicht!* portrays different cultural identities that are present in contemporary Germany, which – like formerly foreign foods – have become part of Germany and her identity.

Just as Italian pizza and pasta restaurants have become commonplace in Germany, Greek gyro shops and Turkish kebab shops form part of the streetscape in many German towns. The Turkish and Greek diasporas and the continuation of traditions from their countries of origin in Germany are at the core of Anno Saul’s *Kebab Connection*. The film is set entirely in Hamburg and focuses on the conflicts between the Greek and Turkish communities. *Kebab Connection* (2004) leverages the enduring political tensions between Greece and Turkey, and this is exemplified in the intense competition between the Turkish kebab restaurant and the Greek tavern across the street. Despite integration into life in Germany, both families stubbornly cling to long-held grievances that emanate from their home countries. The protagonist is the son of the kebab restaurant’s owner, and with his German girlfriend’s pregnancy, creates yet another cultural and generational conflict between the first-generation immigrants and their Turkish-German children. The film can be seen as a commentary on the changing complexion of diaspora in Germany and the stark
cultural differences that typically arise between first and second generations of immigrants.

As a comedy, *Kebab Connection* also stresses the diverse diaspora living in Germany today. By intertwining narratives about the Greek and Turkish diasporas with life and normality in Germany, the film first and foremost illustrates Hamburg as a multicultural city. In a review for the German Multicultural Project blog at Berkeley University, Sara Sellami asserted that *Kebab Connection* ‘uses the theme of multiculturalism not to depict the issues that may arise, but to portray a part of German society that accepts its diversity’ (n.p.). She highlighted contemporary Germany as a multicultural society, in which foods and peoples from many countries have become commonplace, underlining a new diversity. For Australian audiences, *Kebab Connection*’s migration story underpinned by the narrative of food is familiar. The fact that this is portrayed in a German context adds to their understandings of Germany as a multicultural country. This also speaks to the objective of German cultural diplomacy to provide images of contemporary Germany that diversify stereotypical understandings of it as a monocultural country.

The three multicultural culinary comedies selected for the AFGF 2010 showcase the varied faces of multiculturalism in Germany. Food is featured as an expression of cultural identity, and its consumption by others of different cultural groupings is a symbol of acceptance and cultural understanding. Depending on the cultural group the film focuses on, food is utilised to represent cultural differences: in *Tandoori Love* and *Maria – ihm Schmeckt’s Nicht!* as cultural identity connected with food, and in *Kebab Connection* as a visible symbol of diaspora and their specific histories. Humour makes the topic of multiculturalism accessible, but also bears the risk of oversimplification and essentialising what is represented as the Other.
Curating time-events to highlight films and to diversify the audience experience, the GI organises events in which food often plays an integral part. This combination of food as an event was alluded to before, when the ‘Fall of the Wall’ event offered *Ampelmännchen*-shaped cookies and gherkins as accessories of the GDR. Traditionally, the *Hofbräuhaus* catered for the opening nights of the AFGF with traditionally Bavarian food. In both cases, food was a reductionist representation of the topic, in that memorialisation of the GDR was reduced to an ostalgic discourse and Germany was represented through its most stereotypical state, Bavaria. In the case of multicultural Germany similar reductionist tendencies become clear, but also two different approaches to utilising food as part of a film festival. These two approaches are illustrated in the following analyses of two time-events: Soulkitchen in 2015 and the Oriental Night in 2014.

6.3.3 Soul Kitchen: Film, Food and Music

Fatih Akin’s *Soul Kitchen* was screened twice as part of the AFGF, in 2010 and in 2015. The first time it was programmed as the opening night film and as part of Culinary Comedies; the film won the Golden Gnome audience award. In 2015, Akin’s film was curated into a special time-event and embodied an approach to curatorship of the AFGF in recent years that embedded films into an entertaining framework adding to the topic of the film. *Soul Kitchen* is set in Hamburg and centres on Zinos, the owner of the restaurant Soul Kitchen, located at the centre of a pan-European multicultural community in Hamburg. When Zinos hires a new upmarket chef, the business soars and Zinos’ quiet life becomes chaotic. The film revolves around multiculturalism as a simple fact of modern life, embodied by people of all ages and backgrounds and traversing national borders as they pursue their destinies in Hamburg. *Soul Kitchen* took Australian audiences on a cinematic journey to Hamburg.
and was received with widespread critical acclaim. Julie Rigg of Australia’s Radio National wrote that the particularity of the film’s location meant that ‘the film brilliantly conveys a particular time, place, and its people’ (n.p.). Again, this aligned nicely with the AFGF’s mission to exemplify the diversity of contemporary Germany.

Fatih Akin is arguably one of Germany’s most prominent contemporary film directors and is considered the Turkish-German director ‘whose trajectory from the margins to the mainstream has been most successful’ (Berghahn, “No Place Like Home” 141). Akin was born in 1973 in Hamburg and started making his own films when ‘he was no longer willing to play the “stereotype Turk” in film productions where “migrants could only appear in one guise: as a problem”’ (as cited in Burns 142). Akin stated that Soul Kitchen ‘is about home – that’s the general theme. Zinos [the protagonist] doesn’t want a new identity. He knows where he belongs and he has to fight for that and protect it’ (as cited in Mathieson “Soul Kitchen” n.p.). Although the AFGF 2010 focused largely on Akin’s fame by curating a mini-retrospective of his previous films, the AFGF 2015 re-screened the film and curated it into a time-event featuring ‘Soul Kitchen: Taste Soul Food - Hear Soul Music and Indulge’ (Goethe-Institut, “Minimag Festival of German Films” 5).

The food featured in the film is an account of a current culinary renaissance in Germany without actually engaging with the issues of food; at first the apparent culinary genius ironically reworks Zinos’ fast food ingredients and arranges them into haute cuisine dishes. Framed as Culinary Cinema, the AFGF 2015 took Soul Kitchen out of its place in the cinema and into a temporary pop-up cinema in a city shopping centre after hours (South Wharf in Melbourne’s Central Business District). The audience was seated on deck chairs on the second floor of the shopping centre, each listening to the film on an individual headset (figure 17). Taking the cinema out of the
cinema as part of a film festival highlighted its unique temporality, placing it firmly within the context of what Janet Harbord described as a time-event (99-115). As part of the cultural diplomacy agenda, the heightened temporal character of the event contributed to what Bennett, Woodward and Taylor designated as the Festivalisation of Culture.

Figure 17: Screening of Soulkitchen in a shopping centre and showbag with breze and Jägermeister (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)

Adding further to the culinary dimension of the time-event was a show bag on each deck chair containing German ‘soul food’: a Breze, a small bottle of Jägermeister and some Gummibärchen49 (figure 17). Following the film screening, the audience moved to a Bavarian bierhalle in the same shopping centre where German wine, beer and finger food was served. Beverages were advertised as a ‘delectable choice of the finest German beers, Austrian white wine from Niederösterreich and red wine from the Burgenland region’ (Goethe-Institut, “Minimag Festival of German Films” 5).

49 Breze (pretzel) is a traditional baked good, Gummibärchen (Gummi bears) are a fruit gums made in Bonn, Germany, and Jägermeister a traditional herbal digestif from Lower-Saxony.
The menu offered was designed to complement the film’s take on cosmopolitanism and contemporary cuisines and food items ranging from oysters and mini-burgers to spring rolls. However, the audiences expected more stereotypically German food and were disappointed with the lack of Germanness in the menu (audience questionnaire 2015). These findings demonstrate that the expectations of the Australian and German audience of time-events were a reaffirmation of their ideas about Germany that focus on its national particularities. They also emphasise the understanding of the AFGF as an ethnic film festival and the perception of Germany as monocultural and influenced mainly by Bavarian cultural attributes.

The selection of Soul Kitchen and accompanying cosmopolitan foods that portrayed multicultural Germany created a time-event that invited discussions and provoked rethinking of popular notions of contemporary multiculturalism. Other than the opening night, where food highlighted Germanness, at the Soul Kitchen time-event food was paired closely with the theme of the film for optimum impact. In regard to the curating of culinary time-events, this suggests that food choices must be clearly communicated to the audience in order to optimise the extent to which they complement the associated film. As the AFGF was a festival of German films, the audience would most likely have expected stereotypically German dishes (e.g. Bavarian cuisine), as previous research on the consumption of cultures through national cuisines and culinary diplomacy suggests (Chapple-Sokol 165; Tellström, Gustafsson & Mossberg 132).

The featuring of Soul Kitchen at the AFGF in 2015 demonstrated a shift in curatorial focus. Whereas earlier time-events focused on the topic of the film, later events, such as Soul Kitchen, added to the film festival space by curating thematically matched entertainment following the screening. For multicultural time-events, this also
demonstrated a shift in the understanding of multiculturalism in Germany and by the GI. Early time-events focused on the directors and their personal stories, but later events added to the ‘Otherness’ represented in the films through ethnic food and music. The framing of multicultural events relied on music and food that translate personal experiences of exile or diaspora into cinema. In curating entertaining time-events that arguably neglected diplomatic responsibility, GI interns sometimes departed from the GI’s diplomatic mandate and cultural authority within the Australian public sphere. The curating of events for the purpose of popularity with the audience and with entertainment at their core illustrate a populist turn that ran the risk of tipping over into Othering and exoticisation for the purposes of entertainment. Examples of this are the culinary and musical attributes of the Oriental Night (discussed in detail below), at which homemade hummus and belly dancing illustrated the cultural (mis-)conceptions of the German curators more than the film and its topic.

6.3.4 An Oriental Night in the Cinema

In 2014, an Oriental Night screened Cüneyt Kaya’s *Ummah – Unter Freunden* (2013) and Caroline Link’s *Exit Marrakech* (2013), framing what was promoted as an ‘orientally inspired’ event featuring belly dancing and oriental food. The Oriental Night was very well attended and consisted of a double screening framed by food, music, dance and décor in the cinema. The two films selected for the event showed very different aspects of multiculturalism and globalisation in Germany; whilst *Ummah – Unter Freunden* focuses on the Turkish-German community in Berlin, *Exit Marrakech* portrays the story of a young German travelling in Morocco.

*Ummah – Unter Freunden* is set in one of Berlin’s most multicultural suburbs, Neukölln, and tells the story of Daniel, a German secret service agent whose first task
was to survey the Turkish community but subsequently became friends with the subjects of his investigation. The film exposes contemporary stereotypes centred on Islamophobia and emphasises cultural stereotypes by portraying a storyline opposing popular discourses in which the police are portrayed as honest and well-meaning and migrants are either villains or victims. This is exemplified early on in the film when Daniel buys a TV from Abbas, a Turkish salesman, and when the TV turns out to be broken, he instantly concludes that he was sold a defective TV. However, it is not the TV that is broken but the cable that Daniel has used, and after Abbas replaces the cable for free, the two become friends. Thereafter Daniel quickly finds more friends in his new neighbourhood, and when he is invited to a wedding – inappropriately bringing alcohol as a present – it is the German police who destroy the peaceful celebration by arresting Daniel’s new friends on suspicion of terrorism.

In *Ummah – Unter Freunden*, the Turkish-German community is portrayed as inherently law abiding, whilst the German police and secret service are characterised as corrupt and driven by cultural and racial prejudice. The reactions to the film at AFGF 2014 demonstrated the audience’s low level of knowledge of Germany’s Turkish community. In the audience survey and focus group discussions that followed, the differences between conceptualisations of Australian and German multiculturalism were discussed. The history of migration to Germany and the current debates on multiculturalism were unfamiliar to many in the audience, and the film contributed to creating reframed understandings of contemporary German society. A respondent quote highlights the festival’s cartographic agency:

I had never thought about Germany in that way… (Focus group 4, Australian, male, 35-44)
The representation of multiculturalism in Germany in *Ummah – Unter Freunden* maps a relatively unknown issue for Australian audiences and is an important function of cinematic diplomacy. One audience member expressed disbelief at the depiction of Germany in the film, underscoring the importance of the interpretative frame of the AFGF, since it appeared to lend legitimacy to the images of Germany presented in the films programmed. This audience member disregarded previous notions of functioning multiculturalism in Germany based on his trust in the GI’s curating of the festival:

After all, the film festival (AFGF) is organised by the GI and the film is German, so why wouldn’t it be true? (Audience questionnaire, 2014)

This comment expresses an awareness of the AFGF’s role as an agent of cultural diplomacy, providing evidence of the fact that the AFGF’s offerings were placed above the ‘usual’ filmic representations of foreign cultures. By highlighting the film as a special event in programming, cartographic agency in mapping German multiculturalism was heightened and the film’s selected representation of Germany was given more weight. In the selection of *Ummah – Unter Freunden* as a story critical of the German police and exposing stereotypes of Turkish migrants as wrong, the GI asserted its curatorial independence and its objective to portray a realistic image of Germany. Different to earlier understandings of cinematic diplomacy, the GI here highlighted a film that is critical of contemporary Germany and presents an adverse image of the country. The socio-critical film was counterbalanced with a light-hearted story of coming-of-age and of travel as a rite of passage, described below.
*Exit Marrakech* is the story of Ben, a young, privileged German, travelling through Marrakech to ‘find himself’ in a more authentic society. *Exit Marrakech* was reviewed in the left-liberal German newspaper, *Die Zeit*, and was described as a ‘clichéd and trivial coming-of-age story of a young man in the grip of an identity crisis’ (Probst, “Film ‘Exit Marrakech’” n.p.). Whilst Probst viewed the film’s message as a call to ‘break routine and to be open for adventure’ and an appeal to ‘conquer life’, Australian focus group participants (2014) saw a direct link between the young man’s quest for identity and post-Auschwitz questions of national identity. Ben’s aspirations to explore different cultures, immerse himself in a foreign culture and accept differences were perceived to be in harmony with the postwar approach to German national identity or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, as practised by younger German generations. This contrasts with the older generations, represented in the film by Ben’s parents, who espouse a capitalistic and patriotic understanding of nation. As my interviews and questionnaires revealed, personal narratives of travelling, of being immersed in a different culture and of experiencing alternative ways of living, collectively influenced audience perceptions of *Exit Marrakech*. This illustrates how audiences utilise films to complement their personal experiences and how audience perceptions of films are therefore influenced by previous, personal experiences and ideas. This process forms the basis of cinematic cartography, and also supports the understanding of the film festival space through a triad of spaces consisting of physical location, curated content and individual understandings. This further stresses the importance of the public discourse created by the film and time-event, and the question of how to enable critical debate that challenges stereotypes and makes way for new ideas. In terms of the cartographic agency of the AFGF, *Exit Marrakech* offered post-national and national models of contemporary German identity. Post-
national identity is here seen as a form of shared identity, attached to the non-territorial values of constitutionalism and democratic rights, rather than abiding by traditional notions of nationality as bound by territory, language or blood ties (Habermas, Lennox & Lennox 49-55).

*Exit Marrakech* (Caroline Link, 2013) was selected as the thematic basis for a time-event, largely because of Charlotte Link’s status as a director of note. However, rather than focus on Link and a retrospective of her films, the curators organised an entertaining event based on the country depicted in her film. This included special décor applied to the cinema that was ‘oriental themed’, oriental dishes upon which food was served, oriental-inspired furniture, and a tea ceremony in which the director of the GI partook whilst wearing traditional Moroccan attire (see Figure 18). ‘Orientally inspired’ food included homemade hummus, pita-bread and olives while music was performed live and accompanied by a belly-dance performance before the screening of the first film.

![Tea ceremony as part of the Oriental Night (Photo credit: Irina Herrschner)](image)
Through all of its elements, the time-event enhanced the atmosphere of Eastern exoticism and created a particular setting and interpretative framework for *Exit Marrakech*’s reception. Oriental music and belly dancing introduced the evening with a stereotypical representation of the ‘Orient’. In my view, the clichéd curating of Oriental culture was deficient and did not align with any of the GI’s goals. Through what was essentially exoticised Othering, the time-event served to enhance the dichotomy between the Western cultures of Australia and Germany and their migrant populations from the East. In particular, the belly-dancing performance (Figure 19) and the tea ceremony in costume, including donning of a fez (see Figure 18), evoked ideas of ethnic drag (Benbow 517-536; Sieg 4).

The fez featured in the time-event for *Exit Marrakech* was representative of the traditional headgear of Turkish men, initially a symbol of Ottoman modernity. However, the fez came to be perceived as part of a disapproved Oriental cultural identity, and was banned in the early Turkish republic as a symbol of Ottoman backwardness. In featuring this orientalist symbol as part of the time-event, the GI director highlighted the Otherness of the people shown on screen, in a way that ran
counter to the messages about contemporary German multiculturalism in the film

_Ummah – Unter Freunden_. This incident of cultural appropriation received much attention in popular and social media in Australia following novelist Lionel Shriver’s speech at the Brisbane Writers Festival (2016) in which she expressed her hope that identity politics and the concept of cultural appropriation would turn out to be passing fads, whilst donning a sombrero herself (Tolentino n.p.).

Between the screenings, the Middle-Eastern music and the ‘Orientally inspired buffet’ provided a space for reflection and conversations for the audience, thus positioning the AFGF as an _Erfahrungsraum_, as defined by Stringer, and adding to an enhanced sense of uniqueness. This meant that space was created in which the audience was encouraged to consider the film as a unique cultural work, rather than ‘just a film’ that can be repeated. Food and music can provide a less didactic and more experiential approach to cinematic diplomacy. In doing so, an event can add to a _Kulturaustausch_, the leading notion of contemporary German cultural diplomacy, in which a glaring distinction is made between a one-way, propagandistic representation of nation and a two-way conversation between different nations. To facilitate this space, food and music must provide a starting point for reflective dialogues and enable extension of the themes raised in the film.

The use of food and music as part of the Oriental Night time-event could have facilitated a conversation on different aspects of multicultural societies; instead it presented a stereotypical and fetishised image of Morocco. An undifferentiated portrayal of the Orient (including, in this case, Morocco and Turkey) calling on cultural and culinary clichés does not communicate an image of multicultural Germany, but rather portrays outdated ideas of the Orient. Despite the diplomatic potential of multicultural cinema to promote discussions of an aspect of contemporary
Germany to the audience, the Oriental Night focused on Otherness from a German point of view and in an arguably stereotypical fashion. By giving the responsibility to curate time-events largely to volunteers, the GI undervalued the role of these special events for the purposes of cinematic diplomacy. As in the case of Oriental Night, this led to inadvertent essentialising of the Other. In an attempt to balance serious films with light-hearted events, the curators shifted the time-event completely into the realm of entertainment and away from any educational or didactic purpose. Naming the event ‘Oriental Night’ was here the first step towards orientalising the event for the purposes of entertainment and audience numbers. The event itself followed this sentiment through its selection of food, music and décor, thus neglecting one of the core ideals of German cultural diplomacy to engage foreign audiences in a conversation about contemporary Germany.

Audience responses to the time-event highlighted the dilemma of curatorship, between the AFGF’s role as an entertaining event with financial objectives and as a tool for German cultural diplomacy. An audience member’s feedback reinforced the inherent tensions of dual agendas: ‘Better food – hummus was terrible’, (audience questionnaire 2015), emphasising the importance of food as part of the festival experience. However, the audience’s understanding and appreciation of the AFGF’s mission to be entertaining was clear in comments from the 2014 survey:

I love the care taken in this festival and the commitment to adding value with guest drinks. The quality of the film offering is outstanding! (Audience questionnaire 2014)

I think that especially in the last three years, the festival has improved – e.g. the Moroccan night with extras. (Audience questionnaire 2014)
Fantastic films, directors, actors and great question and answer sessions and drinks and snacks after. (Audience questionnaire 2014)

The value of time-events to the AFGF was reinforced in the audience surveys: ‘the Q&A sessions are great’ (audience questionnaire 2014). Also the suggestion that ‘…the GI could coordinate ‘discussion sessions’ – like the Q&A but without celebrity guests after each film?’ (audience questionnaire 2015) is instructive. The demand for a balance between edutainment and education is a challenge for festival curators, in particular when it comes to multicultural cinema, because some members of the audience combine demand for both entertainment and a lesser focus on genre films (e.g. horror) with requests for more documentaries.

The choice of music and food for multicultural time-events enhanced the entertaining character of the AFGF and contributed profitably to its festivalisation of culture. It did, however, run the risk of trivialising the chosen theme through the food and event. Whilst the Soul Kitchen time-event provided non-clichéd foods that complemented the theme of the film, the food at the Oriental Night time-event was stereotypical and enabled the trivialising and Othering nature of the event.

6.4 Space 3: Audience Perceptions

Audience perceptions of the AFGF demonstrate the potential of film and of film festivals to act as an effective medium for cultural diplomacy. The realism of film and the immersion of the audience in the filmic experience can generate rewarding personal experiences; the festival atmosphere elevates this experience in both temporality/uniqueness and perceived authenticity. The audience at the AFGF viewed German multiculturalism through the lens of the camera, but also through the trust engendered in the GI’s curatorship.
Films portraying multicultural German society attracted a substantial response in terms of participant numbers in Q&A sessions and length of discussion. Focus group attendees commented on their lack of knowledge regarding this aspect of Germany: ‘I don’t really see Germany as a multicultural country’ (focus group 4, female, 45+, Australian).

The surveys conducted in 2014/15 highlighted similar responses to the question ‘what have you learned about Germany?’. These included:

- Multiculturalism and perspectives of Islam
- Cultural aspects of Germany
- Cultural division between Germans and Islam
- Culture differences within the Islamic community
- I didn’t know anything about Neukölln
- Really gritty – shows migrant life in Germany
- An interesting concept and discussion on multicultural issues in Germany
- Turkish culture in Germany
- The film describes the life in Berlin very accurately, but I lived in Berlin in summer for 6-7 months and it is untrue that the Police treat Muslims like that!
- Reinforced already acquired knowledge through books and visiting Berlin.

These comments emphasise the cartographic agency of the AFGF in terms of the effectiveness of multicultural films in promoting cinematic diplomacy, and this remains a largely uncharted aspect of German culture in Australia. The last two
comments in the list above illustrate an interesting characteristic of this mapping, in that fictional representations in the film are contrasted to real ‘lived experiences’. Naturally, the so-called real experience is valued higher and it is clear that the film contributed to these understandings.

A further comment on the same film (Ummah – Unter Freunden) highlights the trust placed in the film as part of the AFGF:

I was in Berlin before and didn’t think that the German police treated immigrants badly. But now I’m wondering what else I haven’t noticed…

(Audience questionnaire 2014)

As already mentioned, films screened as part of the AFGF were interpreted by audiences as official, curated images of Germany. This means that audiences automatically placed a higher level of trust and perception of authenticity on films screened as part of the AFGF than in other outlets. This also illustrates the dilemma of German cultural diplomacy that sets out to self-critically represent Germany, while audiences tend to read this as divisive propaganda. The objective of cultural diplomacy under the umbrella of Kulturaustausch and the AFGF as a non-didactic event encourages critical thinking and reflection by audiences who accept the representations of Germany at the AFGF as reliable. This also confirms Gienow-Hecht and Donfried’s finding that cultural diplomacy is more successful when there is a greater distance between event and government, and when there is greater potential for audience participation (23).

In focus group discussions, comparisons between Germany and Australia and judgments of ‘real experiences’ of multicultural films tended to frame discussions of films that sought to portray multicultural Germany. This meant that films were
interpreted in comparison and in contrast to contemporary Australia and through personal experiences in Germany and of German culture. As many audience members had visited or lived in Germany, direct comparison to their experience was the starting point for the focus group to go beyond the film and discuss Australian multiculturalism. The disparity that audience members demonstrated between their personal experiences in Germany and the representations of the country in multicultural films led to an acknowledgement of feature film as a socio-critical medium. One focus group participant highlighted this and pointed towards his surprise that a narrative film chosen for the AFGF was critical of Germany.

After seeing *The Phantom* and *Ummah*, I have realised that even fictional movies have become quite critical of the widely accepted establishment again […] (Focus group 4, male, Australian, 25-34)

This quote further highlights the understanding of German cinema as self-critical, an opinion related to the ongoing processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that included contemporary Germanness as a whole, rather than only relating to reconciling with the Holocaust. A similar understanding was expressed when interpreting Charlotte Link’s coming-of-age drama as a commentary on Germans abroad and their self-doubts about nationhood. For German cinematic diplomacy, this understanding of German cinema offers the opportunity to showcase critical films and thereby actively promote Germany as a socially conscious country.

At the core of a productive *Kulturaustausch* stands the idea of promoting commonalities rather than meditating on differences. Here, the trope of multiculturalism is a case in point, with both Australia and Germany having been transformed significantly as a result of migration. It was, however, the differences
between the countries that encouraged a deeper engagement with multicultural films screened at the AFGF.

An important aspect of cinematic diplomacy is the focus on shared human traits that are seen to enhance compassion, empathy and intercultural communication. German multicultural cinema tells stories that most audience members in Australia can relate to, either as migrants themselves or as members of a multicultural society. In this regard, films can be interpreted for their universal values, such as the 2014 production of *Woyzeck* in multicultural Berlin portraying a story of ‘lost souls in all cultures trying to find a way through life’ (audience questionnaire 2015, German/Australian, 45-54) and *Exit Marrakech* as a ‘universal family story’ (audience questionnaire 2014, Italian/Australian, 25-34).

The idea of *Kulturaustausch*, however, entails more than the common denominators and encourages reflection through a critical comparison of the familiar and the foreign culture. At the AFGF, the question of German multiculturalism indirectly raised issues about Australian multiculturalism. One respondent commented: ‘I haven’t really thought about the discrimination of foreigners, especially by the police’ (audience questionnaire, 2014). This comment suggests that this must also apply to Australia and the world in general, highlighting one of the key traits of cinematic diplomacy – via the AFGF – to go beyond the national boundaries of Germany. This is relevant to the AFGF’s cultural diplomacy agenda, and helped it distance itself from earlier definitions of the concept as propaganda through programming of films that are critical of the nation, such as multicultural films.
6.5 Conclusions

A generation of post-migrants has revolutionised German cinema and added a new understanding to the concept of German multiculturalism. Stories about friendship and/or love overcoming cultural differences are typical of second-generation migrants and the creation of a hybrid society. The acceptance of this multicultural Germany by filmmakers and German curators stands in contrast to by Australian audiences’ largely monocultural understanding of Germanness. Multicultural films thus have the potential to map uncharted German cultural territory in Australia, and add to the understanding of nation and people. In the AFGF, the GI achieved this goal by curating multiple time-events that embedded films into a wider curatorial framework of discussion, dialogue and cultural paraphernalia, such as food and music.

Whilst the cartographic potential of multicultural film as part of the AFGF is evident in my research and aligns with the objectives of the GI for the AFGF, this understanding also brings a responsibility for careful curation and framing of films. Time-events, part of the AFGF from its inception, have not always made a useful contribution to cinematic diplomacy around German films about multiculturalism, even to the point of exoticising the multicultural Other. The audience interpreted the curating of the festival as recreating Germany in Australia, and films screened within the festival context were, as such, displays of Germany and interpreted in the context of Germanness.

The AFGF partook in a process of cinematic cartography in which cinema encouraged reflection on a different culture and – in this case – a different approach to multiculturalism. This process took place on an individual as well as a communal level and was a negotiation between personal experiences and the festival experience. The large German migrant community in Australia and their personal migratory
experiences were especially influential, as during Q&As and discussion, they provided a sounding board for all new filmic ideas presented in the festival. German multicultural, films as interpreted in the context of the Australian settler nation, have the potential to form new knowledge of German multiculturalism and lead to different notions of multiculturalism.

If we take into account the cartographic potential of the festival through the three social spaces the AFGF produced, its potential and responsibility for German cultural diplomacy comes into sharp relief. The festival functioned as a tool of cultural or cinematic diplomacy in screening a form of German culture in Australia. Whilst the films themselves are subjective expressions of the collaborative creativity of their filmmakers and producers, their role is altered when curated as part of a national or national-language based festival. This was borne out by the fact that many respondents to the questionnaires and participants in the focus groups stressed the national character of the films shown, interpreting them as a commentary on German national identity or on national character of a semi-official nature. The goal of the GI to challenge cultural stereotypes is thus only possible to achieve if the organisers provide culturally sensitive interpretations of the films.
7 Final Discussion and Conclusion

The Audi Festival of German Film, held in Australia between 2002 and 2016, was an illustration of a new kind of German and transnational Vergangenheitsbewältigung. It took a leadership role in the discussion of controversial and difficult issues about the German past and advocated not only the right to free speech, but the duty to speak up against injustice. Despite recent far-right demonstrations in Germany, the country has adopted an attitude to never be silent again, an attitude that informed all aspects of the AFGF from curatorship to audience reception. This continuing process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung acted as a useful reminder of the value of advocating social justice in the world and was apparent in a multitude of the AFGF’s films and curated events.

Despite Germany’s shameful twentieth-century past, it has arguably become one of the most compassionate and socially progressive countries. If anything good came from the Third Reich and Nazism, it is Germany’s present-day imperative to uphold social justice and human rights. German guilt has its roots in WWII and has since developed into a national condition; it has become integral to contemporary Germanness and the Australian understanding of Germany.

The AFGF encouraged critical thinking by foregrounding social justice issues and creating space for discussion of topics that are often deemed taboo. It thus participated in a more than one-directional representation of the German nation, and actively took on the role of human rights advocacy in alignment with recent EU trends and policy on public memory. After all, the concept of nation has already caused too much suffering. Today it allows the perpetrator a position of responsibility and agency to prevent the repetition of genocide. Denazification after WWII was the
beginning of recasting Germany, first enforced by the Allies and later continued as a long process of societal and mental *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Nearly six decades after the end of WWII, this process has changed the face of Germany. *Nie Wieder* (Never Again) has become a national slogan. The obligation to show the world that Germany is learning from its past characterises contemporary German cultural expression and still informs all aspects of public and cultural diplomacy. Literature, film, visual and performing arts all embody the pursuit of a rehabilitated German psyche.

Art and cultural diplomacy allow insights into the national psyche by taking the audience on a ‘cinematic journey’ through time and place. From a German perspective, Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang* (2004) and Rothemund’s *Sophie Scholl* (2005) are emblematic of this. Both films incite the audience to ask: ‘if I was there, would I have become a Nazi?’ The AFGF expanded on this question and transferred it to a contemporary, Australian or global context, thereby using the cinema as a critical public sphere for reflection and exchange of opinions and experiences.

Cinematic diplomacy emerged during the Cold War to promote respective political ideologies to the Other, and took the form of national film festivals from (e.g.) the communist Eastern bloc staged in non-communist countries. Contemporary film festivals were central to this practice, creating deeper empathies between nations, for example, between nations from Europe and Asia, and between more and less-developed countries. In Australia, film festivals overcome the ‘tyranny of distance’, allowing access to contemporary representations of many European and Asian nations and their peoples. The French Film Festival seduces its audience with champagne and macaroons while the Italian Film Festival upholds the romance of *la dolce vita*. By contrast with these, the AFGF was unable to draw on nostalgic narratives or
romanticised clichés. Instead it tended to leverage its dark past to encourage wider and more critical conversations about social justice and human rights as an extension to what Habermas called ‘einen in unsere nationale Geschichte eingebrannten moralischen Imperfekts’ (a moral imperfect that is burned into our national history) (‘vom öffentlichen Gebrauch’ n.p.).

Through film screenings and debates, the AFGF communicated effectively about Germany’s past, present and future and invoked a nuanced sense of Germanness through contemporary and classic German films. This focus on global issues rather than German national guilt could be seen as an obfuscation of the country’s dark past. However, I argue that this is a necessary move away from guilt to responsibility. Guilt is retrospective and disabling, while responsibility looks to ensure that a repugnant past is not repeated. This is in alignment with transnational memories, and the Holocaust in particular stands out as the world’s paradigmatic genocide (A. Assmann, pg x).

In this analysis, I showed that the AFGF established itself as a powerful site for the projection of national and sub-national images for audiences. When combined with Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the mission of atonement for Germany’s criminal Nazi past and its problematic GDR past, the AFGF served an important purpose in promoting transnational memory politics and advocacy for global human rights. Despite being part of a recognised series of European national film festivals screened in inner-suburban Australian cinemas, audiences entered the space of the cinema willing to engage in serious issues and with the expectation that German film would take a lead in discussions on war, war crimes and a global civil society.
The AFGF’s representation of the GDR formed a rather different site of projection, in which political and social alternatives could be discussed and explored within the safe space of the cinema. My surveys showed that audiences engaged with the GDR as a dystopia and an example of a different kind of order, sometimes comparable to the totalitarian regime of the Third Reich. All three of Sabrow’s modes of memory (see chapter 4) influenced the perception of the GDR in Australia and its discussion, and the AFGF established the GDR as a topic of continuing fascination for Australian audiences. The impact of media representations as part of German cultural diplomacy also became apparent in audience discussions, in which films formed the frame of reference for engaging with the country.

The issue of multicultural Germany established itself as the category of film with the least-established preconceptions in Australia and as such the greatest potential for cultural diplomacy, and also as the one with the closest links to the Australian audience. Whilst a distance between story and audience experience defines the films on wars and the GDR, multiculturalism proved to be the topic that best connected the audience to the films of Germany. At the same time, the representation of German multiculturalism provided a space to challenge multicultural norms in Australia and an opportunity to map contemporary Germany for festival audiences.

This mapping potential and audience interpretations highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive curating that positioned the AFGF as an ‘edutaining’ event delivering entertainment, but also respecting its educational and diplomatic role. Within a contemporary *Eventkultur* and in the context of the ‘festivalisation of culture’, the AFGF evolved from a purely cinematic event to an ‘edutaining’ festival communicating through a variety of means. For practitioners of cultural diplomacy
and event organisers alike, this demanded equal attention and importance paid to all parts of the festival, as its communication with audiences functioned as a whole.

The role of time-events for cultural diplomacy should not be underestimated, as they allow for dialogue between curators and different segments of the audience. Understanding the festival within its wider temporal context, with audiences bringing preconceived ideas of Germany and Germanness, negotiating these within the immediate festival context and communicating and sharing them after the festival illustrates the role of the AFGF for cultural diplomacy as well as its role as an active medium and mediator of a Deutschlandbild.

For a limited period of time and every year from 2002 to 2016 the AFGF forged a public sphere in several Australian cities, where ideas were discussed and new concepts explored, and thus formed part of German cinematic diplomacy. Understanding it as such can help to appreciate how this short-term public sphere operated and highlight potentially contentious issues of curatorship. The AFGF was part of the festival circuit in Australia and participated in the festivalisation of other cultures, with one important difference: German culture became a proxy for European culture while also signifying a socially and historically interesting country that produces intellectually challenging and self-critical films. These two aspects of how German culture was presented and represented formed a large part of the AFGF’s economic and diplomatic potential that could be utilised and enhanced through the curating of suitable time-events.

The AFGF was positioned between these two developments of a growing Eventkultur, in which culture is increasingly commodified in a neo-European understanding of an elite European culture, and where higher value and cultural capital is associated with
European cultural productions. The AFGF needed to negotiate these two demands in order to remain an attractive product for Australian cinephile and Germanophile audiences, as well as the German diaspora.

As a film festival, the AFGF further needed to satisfy the economic demands of Germanfilms and festival sponsors to position German film and German goods as attractive, high-value products. These different motivations between the cultural mandate of the GI and the economic demands of its sponsors often caused conflict. Focusing on their shared core message and on high-quality German products and cinema could satisfy both demands as well as audience expectations of intellectually challenging and high-quality films and events.

As a tool of cultural diplomacy, the AFGF played an important role in representing Germany, and this role remained a constant over the 15-year history of the festival. As part of the festival circuit and Australian society and culture, the festival was always also connected to the notion of Europe as a whole. The festival was thus positioned in an elitist understanding of European high culture and the audiences’ motivations; festival experience and interpretations of the content presented were informed by this notion. Incoming curators and directors increasingly moved away from a didactic understanding of cultural diplomacy, especially within the German context of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, but the intellectual demands of the audience and main motivation of visiting the festival ‘to learn something new’ should not be underestimated. This is particularly true for the wider societal and political notions of a civil society, the GDR as a site of projection of nostalgic memories and multiculturalism as a contemporary challenge of global mobilities. In the case of the AFGF, the GI played an authoritative role for all things German and films displayed a heightened sense of authenticity when screened as part of the AFGF. Germany further
continued to be perceived as a *Kulturnation*, a notion that conveys a sense of cultural authority that brings potential and responsibility for any kind of German cultural diplomacy.

The AFGF demonstrated the potential to illustrate what German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier refers to as the *Sechsaugenprinzip* ‘six-eye-principle’ (Konferenz: Dialog und Erfahrung des Anderen, Berlin, 2015): the phenomenon of seeing ourselves at the same time through our own eyes, with the eyes of the other and through a shared perspective (Steinmeier n.p.). The festival could achieve this potential through well-curated time-events and intellectually stimulating films.

Germany has become an advocate for human rights and civil society because of its traumatic experiences during the Third Reich and its continuing dedication to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in a EU transnational memory framework. This position brings responsibility and possibly further untapped potential for a festival of German films as a tool of contemporary German cultural diplomacy.

In 2018, the Australian cinema chain Palace Cinema took on the role as main organiser of the AFGF, now called: German Film Fest. Palace continues the collaboration with Germanfilms and the GI continues to curate a particular section for children as part of the new German Film Fest. This development situates the festival further into the particularly Australian film festival circuit and redefines the festival from a cultural diplomatic initiative to a commercial programming decision. With Palace as distributor, the festival’s role as a marketplace and ‘testing ground’ for the market potential of new German films in Australia is heightened. A comparison between the character of the former AFGF and the current German Film Fest will allow for interesting conclusions on the evolving character of film festivals.
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9 Appendix

9.1 Interview guides: Goethe Institute and Germanfilms

1. Funding
   - How much does it cost to stage a festival in your case?
   - What are the main budget areas for the AGFF?
   - What percentage of the total cost structure does each budget area account for?
   - Who are your major funding providers for the AGFF?
   - How much do they contribute to the AGFF each year?
   - What is the percentage of commercial sponsorship contributing to your budget of the AGFF?
   - Could you give me any information on the situation of breaking even/loss/profit for your festival? And, if it is not a profit-making enterprise, what makes the AGFF worthwhile for you?

2. Film programming
   - Who are the people responsible for the programming and how has that changed over time?
   - What are their key objectives for the AGFF and have they changed since the festivals inception in 2002?
   - How does the collaboration between the Goethe Institute and German films work?
   - What are the guidelines for programming decisions and how have they been established and communicated (formal, written guidelines or informal patterns)?

3. Audience
   - Who makes up the audiences of the AGFF and do you perceive significant differences in audience demographics across the various cities of the festival? If so, does this affect the programming decisions?
   - Is there a desired audience, the AGFF seeks to target and have perceptions of this desired audience changed over time?
   - How are these audiences reached?
   - Are films programmed especially to target the audiences?
   - What role does the Third Reich, the GDR and contemporary German issues play in your programming?

4. Cultural diplomacy
   - Where do you see role of your organization in German cultural diplomacy in general and in regards to the AGFF?
   - What kind of images would you like to show of Germany and why?
5. Australian context

- What do you think are the challenges for the AGFF in Australia?
- What images of Germany dominate in Australia in general and in the AGFF? And which images and stereotypes of Germany would you like to combat or reinforce within the AGFF?
- Do you think the images Australians have of Germany have changed over the last decade?

6. German Film

- What distinguishes German film from other national cinemas?
- What do you consider as the most significant images embedded in German film?
- What challenges brings German film for the intercultural communication intended by your organization?
- What trends have you observed in German film since the inception of the AGFF in 2002 and what future developments do you suppose?
- What would be the contemporary film you feel would represent Germany and Germanness most representatively?
### 9.2 List of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Arpad Sölter</td>
<td>Goethe-Institute</td>
<td>26/11/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>And multiple unrecorded conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriele Urban</td>
<td>Goethe-Institute</td>
<td>16/09/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>And multiple unrecorded conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ralf Eppeneder</td>
<td>Goethe-Institute</td>
<td>17/11/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Klaus Krischok</td>
<td>Goethe-Institute</td>
<td>13/01/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Krausz</td>
<td>Member of film Jury</td>
<td>11/01/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And multiple unrecorded conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariette Rissenbeek</td>
<td>German films</td>
<td>14/01/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernhard Simek</td>
<td>German films</td>
<td>14/01/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Claus</td>
<td>German film journalist</td>
<td>26/05/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonja Griegoschweski</td>
<td>Goethe-Institut Australia</td>
<td>01/05/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3 Focus groups schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Duration of the discussion</th>
<th>Focus of the discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April 2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April 2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2hrs</td>
<td>AFGF representing Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2014</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.5 hrs</td>
<td>GDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June 2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2hrs</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.4 Focus group questions

1. What do you think about the representation of Germany in the AGFF this year?

2. Germany’s past
   - What are your opinions on how Germany’s past is represented in the AGFF this year?
   - What did you learn about Germany’s past in this year’s AGFF?

3. Contemporary Germany
   - What have you learned about contemporary Germany in the AGFF?
   - What do you think about the representation of Germany in this year’s AGFF?
   - What do you think about the representation of Austria and Switzerland in the AGFF?
   - In what ways does (or doesn’t) the image of Germany represented in the AGFF adhere to your images and impressions of Germany?

4. German cinema
   - What, in your opinion, differentiates German cinema from other national cinemas?
   - What motivates you to watch German films?
   - What do you think about the film/s you saw as part of the AGFF?

5. Cultural diplomacy
   - Do you think the AGFF helps Germany to position itself as a modern, multicultural country?
   - What did you think of the description and introduction of the film you just saw?

Did you come to any Q&A sessions or special events of the AGFF? Did they change the way you remember and interpret the film?
Survey – Festival of German Films 2015

1. Personal information
   - Gender: □ Female □ Male
   - Age: 18-24 □ 25-34 □ 35-44 □ 45-54 □ 55+ □
   - Nationality: ________________
   - Profession: ________________
   - Suburb: ________________

2. Please name your attended session: ________________

3. Please rate your attended session from 1-5 (5=excellent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disappointing</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural value</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational value</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic value</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate representation of German culture</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What did you like/dislike about the film?
   - Like: ______________________
   - Dislike: ____________________

5. How many screenings of this year’s Festival are you planning to attend in total? ________(screenings)

6. Who are you here with? Are they German?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this person/Are these persons German?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. For how many years have you been coming to the Audi Festival of German films? _________

8. Which other national film festivals have you visited in Australia?
   - French □ Jewish □ Italian □ British □ other ________________

For questions and comments please contact Irina Herrschner at irina.herrschner@unimelb.edu.au
9. How often do you usually watch foreign language films (cinema, TV, DVD, online)?
   At least once a week □
   At least once a month □
   I never watch foreign language films □
   I only watch foreign language films as part of film festivals □

10. Have you spent most of your life in Australia?
   Yes □ No □
   If no, in which country have you spent the most time?
   ____________________________
   If no, how many years have you lived in Australia? ______

11. Do you speak German?
   Yes, fluently □ Yes, reasonably fluently □
   Yes, some knowledge □ No □

12. What new things did you learn about Germany today?

13. How did you find out about the Festival of German Films
   Goethe institute (direct contact) □
   Newsletter □
   Website □
   Radio □
   Magazine □
   Word of mouth □
   Minimag (leaflet) □
   Cinema □
   Festival trailer □
   Other: ___________________________ (please specify) □

14. How could the film festival be improved upon?

15. Additional comments:

THANK YOU! VIELEN DANK!

For questions and comments please contact Irina Herrschner at irina.herrschner@unimelb.edu.au
9.6 Plain Language Statement

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Prof Alison Lewis (supervisor)
School of Languages & Linguistics
German studies
Ph.: 03 8344 5103

Ms Irina Herrschner (PhD candidate)
Ph.: 04 5904 9064

Project: “Reframing the ‘National Question: Screening Germany in Australia”

Introduction
As someone who visited the Audi Festival of German Films in Australia, I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. The aim of the study is to investigate the role of the Audi Festival of German Films in the representation of Germany and Germaness in Australia; this project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

What will I be asked to do?
Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to participate in a focus group interview of about 15 minutes, exploring your perception and understanding of the Audi Festival of German Films, German film and most importantly Germany. With your permission, the interview would be digitally recorded so that I can make an accurate record of what you say. When the recording has been transcribed, you would be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct and/or request deletions. We estimate that the total time commitment required of you would not exceed 20 minutes.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers, for example, in order to know where we should send your interview transcript for checking. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. The data will be kept securely in the Department of Languages and Linguistics for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

How will I receive feedback?
Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you on application at the Department Language and Linguistics. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences and in academic papers.

Do I have to take part?
Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will not affect your relationship with this department or affect any services you may receive now or in the future.

Where can I get further information?
Please contact the researchers if you have any questions or if you would like more information about the project. The contact telephone number is: 0459049064

How do I agree to participate?
If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the consent form.

I have read and understood the information above and would like to participate in the study

Place and date: ___________________________
Participant's signature: ___________________________
9.7 Consent Form

Consent form for persons participating in a research project

PROJECT TITLE: Reframing the National Question: Screening Germany in Australia

Name of participant:

Name of investigator: Irina Herrschner

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation will involve an interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:
   
   (a) The possible effects of participating in the interview have been explained to my satisfaction;
   
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research;
   
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   
   (e) I have been informed that with my consent the interview will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;
   
   (f) My name will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research;
   
   (g) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

I consent to this interview being audio-taped □ yes □ no (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings □ yes □ no (please tick)

Participant signature: Date:
Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
Herrschner, Irina Veronika

Title:
Screening Germany in Australia: analyzing the Australian Festival of German Films as cultural diplomacy

Date:
2018

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/216442

File Description:
Screening Germany in Australia: Analyzing the Australian Festival of German Films as Cultural Diplomacy

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