



Homeland Discourse – The German Case

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Abstract:

Homeland Discourse is a translation from German “Heimatsdiskurs”. We have introduced this new term into a theory on Societies of Interventions. This neologism has a few relatives in other languages but claims originality insofar as it is inseparably linked to both: the theory of interventions and the fact that societies in those countries that send troops into military interventions develop a specific and powerful discourse with a strong impact on politics and culture. Our main assumption is that Homeland Discourse has become influential to political decisions and the mindset of countries that are engaged in military operations out of area.

Keywords:

Heimatsdiskurs, Homeland Discourse, military intervention, Afghanistan, Bundeswehr, Germany



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1. A Research Report¹

This is a research report, or inception essay. I present the preliminary findings of an ongoing occupation with a discourse – the Homeland Discourse (HD) – that has become an offspring of dealings with military interventions and the German participation in two major interventions, Kosovo and Afghanistan. While interventions have become a significant part of research and political controversies both in international relations and national reflection, the discourse linking the two dimensions has been barely investigated. I shall argue that Germany is a special case in this context. This article is an English summary of our research activities that were directed for obvious reasons towards a German public. In late 2012, a first major publication provided insights, assumptions and preliminary results (Daxner & Neumann, 2012: 13f., 46ff.). Much of the following is based on this book; at the same time, I am trying to explain to non-German readers the specific context, why HD is a “German case”. This article has one obvious problem: many of the striking examples that we have collected over time are written in German or refer to an explicit German public. It would not have made much sense to present them here at length without a detailed interpretation beyond translation. This will make the essay somewhat prim and less colorful than it should be.

1.1 A Starting Point

1989 was a decisive year for Germans and their societies. It also decisively changed the narratives of German *post-war* history. For once, Germany and the world were in tune, if only for a moment. A so-called peace dividend was on the horizon. But the world has changed after 1989. Instead of a bipolar confrontation of two dominant camps, we live in a multi-polar globalized situation in which many actors play diverse roles with increasing elements of *global domestic* policy. It is true that after the end of the bipolar confrontation, traditional wars have become fewer than before; it is also true that humanitarian interventions, in combination with missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter or the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), have gained in significance. They have become *normal*. This is also reflected in scholarly and political controversies about such interventions and the limits and limitations of R2P. After the de-colonization period and the effects of post-colonialism, it is fair to assume that the normative legitimacy of any intervention, foremost military interventions under humanitarian aspects, has grown, while (neo) realist justifications of such interventions encounter more resistance within

¹ I wish to thank Hannah Neumann, MA, for valuable contributions and discussions; and to Robert Clifford Mann and Ilja Sperling for substantial support editing this paper.

the intervening societies. There are many differences in the ways expeditionary military interventions are perceived and judged in the intervening societies. In all this, Germany has a role. Whether that role is acquired or attributed by other powers, if it is wanted or if it is unwillingly accepted, those are questions that I will not discuss at length in this article. But my supposition is that *Germany has changed under the impact of its participation in out-of-area interventions*.

2. Intervention and Homeland

This research is about military or humanitarian interventions and their relations to national mindsets. The question about the degree and intensity of awareness of out-of-area engagements is not trivial for a society's consciousness. This implies also a critical review of our own research process that is not only born out of the slow and systematic flow of normal science, but has been driven by experiences from intervention practices, and from increasing doubts in the adequacy of the routine critique of ideologies on the level of the international system. In other words, some of the concepts have emerged only during our investigations that have started with the paradigm of societies of intervention. It is therefore work in progress. However, the epistemological introspection, asking *how do we know what we know?*, shall accompany most of the following considerations.

2.1. Framework, Intuitions and Concepts

Four years ago, the term *Heimatdiskurs* ("homeland discourse", HD) had just 5 entries in a Google search (Google.de, April 2009); they all were linked to ethnographic studies; four years later, (13 June 2013), there are 1870 entries, most of them related to our neologism and its context. This can be seen as a "scientific success" but HD may also be regarded as an explicative term referring to a phenomenon increasingly affecting the public mindset² for which there is no adequate term yet established. "Homeland" refers to countries that are actively engaged in participating in military interventions, irrespective of mandate, type and duration. There is a broad variance with regard to the character of both the participation and the intervention. Participation can reach from checkbook-diplomacy to the deployment of large

² Today, on 15 August 2013, we find 1830 entries, similar to the findings of June 2013; there are over 6 m entries for *Homeland discourse* in the English version, the first one referring to our research in German language (!) - which shows the indirect manipulation by search engines - but then a long list of related terms that are not connected with our research appear, before there are numerous English reference to HD.

military detachments; and the type of intervention can range from a one-sided invasion (Iraq) to humanitarian interventions under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). However, our approach has narrowed the scope on humanitarian interventions and military components. Thus, HD would apply to a country that is sending troops into an (ongoing) intervention or supporting its start. Such countries will be called “intervener(s)”, while the people in the intervened country are termed as “the intervened” (Michael Daxner, 2010b; Fortna, 2008: 5). Fortna also uses the terms “peacekeepers” and “(the) peacekept” respectively.

We have introduced the term “the intervened” in the course of building a research team on the *Culture of Interventions*. This needs an explanation about the gradual unfolding of our terminology. In 2006, I started systematic research into military assisted interventions. My tenure in Kosovo (UNMIK 2000-2002 as Principal International Officer for Education and Higher Education) had already instigated thoughts about an *anthropology of interventions*; after the beginning of my research and advisory activities in Afghanistan (2003), this idea consolidated, and in 2006, I founded a working group on the Culture of Interventions. With a set of assumptions for the analysis of societies and cultures of interventions, we organized a little conference in Potsdam (2008), the outcome of which was a book (Bonacker, Free, Zürcher, & Daxner, 2010) and a nucleus of researchers focused on specific aspects of societal change through intervention. Of course, analyzing the relationship between interveners and the intervened was not new, but it appeared to be novel under the aspect of the emergence of a *society of intervention*, i.e. a new type of society that is not just a mix between elements of the societies of the interveners and the intervened. While we originally started from the culture of intervention, this segment became only a part, though a significant one, of a broader construction of *intervention theory*. Frankly speaking, this is a theory in the making: some of its main variables must yet be tested (see below).

In observing both the effect of the Kosovo and the Afghanistan interventions on the mindset of the German people we were quick at hand with one major assumption: *the culture of intervention is decisive for a discourse that is powerful in the interveners' countries (in each of them distinctly), and this discourse has a major impact on political decisions and is guiding individual actions on all levels of the intervention*. In a very brief anticipation of our arguments, we can say that it is as important to learn what happens between interveners and intervened as to analyze how this interaction is being *perceived* by either group, interveners and the intervened. Since we come from the interveners' side and are not ethnologists, we primarily analyze the discourses in the interveners' society concerning an intervention, but we also try to develop ways to cooperate with the intervened so as to learn about their discourses as well. From experience we should assume that the *intervention discourse* develops earlier in the interveners' society; but over time we expect to find two separate and parallel HD which are

interdependent but not fully congruent as HD starts to gain ground in the country of the intervened. Therefore, it will be worthwhile to investigate the trajectory of HD, commuting between both societies. While the anticipation and imagination of the intervened society is structuring all elements of an intervention from the beginning, the perception of the intervention by the intervened normally needs some time to develop. There is certain feedback between the perceptions of the interveners' societies and those of the intervened. But this is a technical detail from experience; it plays a major role in intervention theory, but less so in HD studies concentrating on the interveners' societies.

Why don't we call the discourse simply "intervention discourse"? Because it is not born within the intervention, but in a society perceiving, observing, and judging the intervention from a base that we will call "homeland". The obvious questions do not come out of the blue: are we *at war*? What are we doing *there*? Do we need to go *there* with all our problems *here*? What about *our* soldiers killed, our *soldiers* who are fathers, brothers or sisters? These and more questions and their answers are constitutive for a discourse that we call HD. It is related to the intervention discourse, but not congruent with it.

Within this concept, this is the definition of HD:

HD comprises all discursive practices and strategies that refer to legitimacy, recognition and assessment of policies and the engagement of troops out of (national or alliance) area. It is a stream of knowledge without distinct authors and with uneven authority. HD effectively structures the public mindset, the interaction between media and the public, the backstage of political decisions and the policies of legitimacy for out of area engagement and global alliances; in the end, HD is, of course, not restricted to military and humanitarian missions, as could be shown with regard to the fields of international justice, indirect interventions through boycotts and restrictions of movement or support to rebellions and insurgency. In this essay, I shall use the narrower definition as focused on the military humanitarian intervention.

HD influences the mindsets, actions and (pre)conscious orientations of interveners, and with some delay, of the intervened. With the deployment of troops, HD begins to work on the interveners, and not only directly on soldiers or officers. The deferment with which HD arrives in the intervened society is a special target of future research. It will be necessary to learn from the intervened about their HD, but according to some assumptions on societies of intervention, there will be a broad field of overlapping phenomena between the HD in the intervened society and in the countries of the interveners. And, certainly, there will be a semantic difference between the two notions that must be taken account of.

We have started to consider the *German case* for more than one reason: it is the country from which we can observe the intervention with its remarkable variance; it is also the state where research into interventions and the effects of German policies over *there* (in Kosovo, Afghanistan and other out-of-area deployments) affect scientific considerations at the interface between analysis and policy; and it is the society with a rather special account to all out-of-area military engagement, which allows to dissect elements of a special that can be tested for their usability in a broader context. In the case of Germany, HD developed on foreign and defense policies in the context of the Kosovo (1999 -) and Afghanistan (2001 -) missions; it also refers to the context of global domestic policy, the “War on Terror”, the battle against pirates etc.

Many forerunners of HD can be found in colonial and post-colonial times and societies. Germany is in a special role insofar as its post-WWII history is shaped by a long-term backstage role in international politics (this is true for the two Germanys until 1989, the FRG and GDR). Since the country never had a long and intensive colonial history, which definitively ended in 1918, unlike the United Kingdom, France and others, the colonial past is relatively far away; however, there are still a few deep layers of reminiscences that go back either to colonial realities or to the short period of German efforts to keep up with Imperialism (1871-1918). More important is the total reorientation after the defeat of 1945 and the subsequent so-called “pacifist” mindset that underwent several changes till the end of the Cold War³. The united Germany after the Cold War had to learn swiftly that a powerful economic and political player could not abstain from positioning itself in the changing global policies (cf. a traditional approach by Maull (Koenigs, 2011; Maull, 2012), while more recent disciplinary coding always refers to “international relations” instead of “foreign affairs” or “foreign policy”: cf. (Drinkwater, 2005)⁴. See Karl Deutsch 1968 and 1988: *International Relations*; Kenneth Waltz: *International Politics* 1979; Peter Calvocoressi: *World Politics*, are typical landmarks in terminology); the development of alliances, such as NATO, and the emergence of a set of new strong powers, such as India, Brazil, South Africa, and foremost China, challenged German foreign policy that focused on complacent economic expansionism without too many global political ambitions. For a long time it seemed impossible that Germany would even discuss if it should participate “in a war”. But to whom did it seem impossible? It was very clear for the Western Allies that

³ We should distinguish between a commonly shared pacifist mentality that had many sources and resources; and an explicit political “peace-movement” that had some more or less pacifist factions, while other groups linked their peace-approaches with the liberation and decolonization movements or were ostensibly followers of the anti-Western strategies in the Cold War. As a consequence, there are numerous interpretations and explanations of this narrative that has undergone significant changes after 1989. It is not trivial to bring this aspect in context with HD as both politics and P&C research are using it as one of their baselines.

⁴ Acknowledgments to Ingo Peters from OSI who directed my attention to Alfred Zimmern and his early accounts to changes in paradigms of International Relations.

this country must now take over a much bigger share of “responsibility”. *Responsibility* was used as a euphemism for participation in active military politics rather than continuing the traditional “checkbook-diplomacy”. A recent memoir of the former Special Representative of UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission In Afghanistan), Tom Koenigs, clearly names the new dilemma (Koenigs, 2011): “*Do we make Peace or are we at War?*” In the beginning of our research and conceptualizing HD, we decided to review our disciplinary status: the HD-segment of research does not automatically belong to traditional *Peace and Conflict-Studies*, but is integral part of a theory on military or humanitarian intervention and conflict.

I want to make a short digression into broader social science: *Peace* in P&C-Studies has a normative element that may be part of HD, but the field of HD is *conflict* and thus analytical and empirical. This is a much stronger theoretical base as it may seem at a first glance: conflict theory as an ingredient of discourses that are formative for public opinion and political decisions and actions is not so frequently recognized as an analytical tool that makes these opinions and decisions comprehensible. Normally, the public does not argue along the lines of any theory; conflict theory in the tradition of Simmel, Coser, Dahrendorf, Elwert, on the other side, would like to explain social dynamics also by an ongoing emergence and resolution of conflicts. In the tradition of Galtung and others, it is attractive to make *peace-research* an autonomous branch within social sciences, but I hold that it can only be fully understood as a part of *conflict research*. This is certainly not the theme of this essay, but there is certainly also a special importance for the “peace”-element in P&C-studies, given the special sensitivity of Germany coping with its past. The normative element thus has occupied research territory in some cases that should have been reserved for empirical investigations, with a detrimental side effect: whenever you do research on sensitive issues like war, intervention, occupation, drones etc. or draw attention to the fate of soldiers in combat, the suspicion of research “improving war” is not far. The nationwide debate about a so called *civilian clause* (Zivilklausel)⁵ in academic research is one example, very typical for Germany. This has a negative effect on all kinds of investigation and scientific representation. Sometimes, preconceived expectations of the supposed normative agenda of intervention research put an obstacle against substantiated communication within P&C research and between the academic disciplines. However, I think it is prudent to react sensitively to this observation, in particular in cases where

⁵ The advocates of a “Zivilklausel” argue that scientific research is only legitimate if it serves peace, and research on war and conflict, among other topics, does neither serve peace nor prevention and is unethical and politically incorrect. The most extreme speakers for this movement even demand censorship of applications and grants for such projects that are under the verdict of disserving peace. Apart from my arguments on academic freedom my question was how all the peaceful activists have learned about conflicts and wars if not from research: The problem of ambiguity of war is still marginalized. For Researchers, the Baecker paradigm of ambiguity is the most important condensed statement against a positivistic or normative view: (Baecker, 2002) in Daxner and Neumann (2012), p. 46f. The campaign for a civilian clause is a periodically revived offspring from a state-socialist peace movement with origins in the Cold War and an inclination towards Soviet and post-Soviet interpretations.

HD is being explained to an academic public that immediately is likely to want a personal position to the objects of HD, i.e. war and combat.

Meanwhile, the end of the Cold War also brought new frames for global policies: The Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the policy of Human Security, and the increasing need to involve military in regime change instead of conquest or colonization produced a climate in which the idea of potentially taking part in interventions, coined as humanitarian ones, became possible – and real⁶. As a consequence, research on HD emerged from a need to understand a country's engagement in interventions and world-wide operations, even if its territorial integrity has not been affected and its political system has not been challenged. HD analysis aims at uncovering in the mindset of a people those assumptions and perceptions that the analysis of politics alone cannot easily anticipate and structure. A good example is the statement by former Defense Secretary Struck in 2004: "*Germany's security is being defended in the Hindukush*". The source, a government bulletin, became blurred and confused, and soon "security" was frequently replaced by "freedom". This is how HD works (Daxner 2009)⁷.

2.2. Toward a Concept of Interventions

We defined HD as an integral part of the theory on societies of intervention. The research team "Cultures of Intervention" (ASIK, now *International Research Network on Cultures of Intervention*, COINet) at the University of Oldenburg organized a congress in Potsdam, in 2008, when the theory was presented for the first time and the network of interested scholars got a decisive push (cf. p. 2). The notion of a *theory* should be moderately clarified as a theory in the making or a theory-based *concept*. For this qualitative and constructivist approach, it is rather difficult to develop testable hypotheses and define mid-range consequences from the theory. We dare speak of a theory of intervention nevertheless, because it is a concept clearly different from both policy oriented structural theories of interventions – mainly in the traditional *liberal state-building* frame and from the *actor-centered approaches* whose actions are mainly located on the *society* level. While the first is concentrated on the state as the central focus of

⁶ There is a related issue concerning motives and practices of nations supplying troops for peacekeeping missions for the UN. (Just think of HD in Bangla Desh or Pakistan, both being significant suppliers with troops (cf. Daxner and Schrade 2012).

⁷ I first mentioned this phenomenon in a lecture at the University of Giessen in early 2009. At the time of my lecture I had found more than *ten* different dates for the origin of the sentence, ranging from 2002 to 2009, and quite a few versions. Today, Google shows more than 86.000 entries and a rather incomprehensible multitude of comments and quotations in context (viewed 20/9/2011). The original statement by secretary Struck was given at the Bundestag on 11/03/2004 (BT 15/8599), but there are similar versions existing, even from before that date. Certainly, the "freedom"-variety was *not* an original statement.

all considerations, the second is outcome-oriented with regard to the aims and means of the interveners' progress, with the reactions of the intervened as dependent variable.

Normally, intervention theory is state-oriented and considers the effects of a military intervention on the nation intervened. This includes questions of legitimacy, and the limitations of interventions by the sheer resistance of the country intervened. We hold that most of the state-oriented intervention theories concentrate on the outcome, defined by the official and unofficial purposes of the intervention: e.g. gaining a stable ally, opening a free market, reducing violence by institution building, etc.; the intervention itself is a black-box that is sought to become transparent by the time of its progress. Such analysis can be considered necessary, but not sufficient to explain what the *effects and impact on post-intervention societies* will be (including both interveners and intervened). In order to demonstrate how important this aspect is, let us just look at the major part of literature, where we find the terms *post-war* and *post-conflict* more often applied to an ongoing intervention, while *post-intervention* is used only for completed interventions or attribute the "post" to a period of time after the moment of intervention, i.e. the arrival of the intervention force. This kind of arguments can be more easily projected on states, governments, and people in power on a *system* level. On the level of life-world, the diverse *post*-notions are less clearly observable. But we can assume that the perception of people on the level of life-world would have genuine terms of describing the effects of an intervention, while they may also consider themselves as "non-affected": life has not changed for them and will not change.

We have decided to use a society-oriented approach. This does not mean that we ignore state and statehood, but we do not necessarily consider them the only framework for our research target; instead, societies continue to exist and to change permanently, when states emerge and disappear. We apply this distinction in the sense used by Migdal's book "Strong Societies and Weak States" (Migdal, 1988). For our purpose, another aspect is especially interesting. An intervention, launched by any actor, - state, agency, organization -, will affect society. Even in the case of an immediate regime change, where only the state and statehood are affected, the impact is on the people, i.e. on society. The concept, on which further considerations are based, reads as follows:

- 1. Each intervention produces a society of intervention.** A society of intervention is one whose structures are basically determined by elements brought by the intervention. It implicates an irreversible change in social order and communication. Conflicts stemming from the intervention and developing in the course of an emerging society of intervention are not causally linked to the "root" conflicts that originally were the reason for the intervention.

2. All societies of intervention are structurally similar and comparable, notwithstanding their diverse cultural embedding. Irrespective of the reasons and causes of an intervention, it will bring some features that appear under any circumstance. This does not contradict the respective impact of cultural contextualization of social phenomena. (The interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan do not share many roots, but the social phenomena in the course of the countries being “intervened” are quite similar).

3. Societies of intervention are characterized by dynamic relations between interveners and the intervened. These relations may lead to partial fusion, to collusive situations and to the development of new social structures; the latter are no simple compromises among interveners and the intervened. The new structures tend to be irreversible.

4. The system-level of these new societies of intervention is in a particular tension with the life-world of the intervened. This directly affects the system of rules (institutions) in such societies and all aspects of governance also on micro-social level (conflict-regulation, tradition, values, habitus). The main reason for this tension is the fact that interveners normally start to focus on and deal with the system-level, while life-world and micro-social structures are neglected⁸.

5. Each society of intervention develops its specific *culture of intervention* (of course, albeit often diachronically, both with the intervened and the interveners.) This follows from the specificities of changes in society: matters of public vs. private, gender issues, value orders and *habitus* are becoming relevant.

6. Shaping the relation between interveners and intervened, the *Homeland Discourse* of the interveners plays a decisive role. (This statement will be explained in the following sections of this article; it is, indeed, its stimulus).

We are well aware that the diverse statements in this concept may all be plausible but are not always hypotheses that can easily be empirically tested and integrated into a strong theory. However, the core proposition of the *society of intervention* seems to be a solid enough assumption as to reconcile the cultural conflicts and the political conflicts during and after an

⁸ Some of the strongly empirical research of the Project C9: *Hearts and Minds, Security and Development in North-East Afghanistan*, within the SFB 700 research unit of the Free University Berlin, reflects this aspect in concrete longitudinal investigations.

intervention cf. (Croissant, Wagschal, Schwank, & Trinn, 2009). It is obvious that the semantics of intervention play a significant role: intervention is a generic term, and, at the same time, a cipher for war, invasion, occupation, legitimate or illegitimate acting on declared or hidden interests. One of the big problems in research is the ambiguity between normative and empirical concepts of intervention. If something is declared “humanitarian” or “peacekeeping”, this is different from being coined as “retribution” or “pre-emptive initiative” serving the interveners’ national security interests. What you need here is a thorough inspection of texts and subtexts. Normally, the real/true interests in interventions are seldom expressed in the same clear manner as liberal-humanitarian justifications because these last have greater chances to gain legitimacy and approval, including for necessary financial resources. Thus, the concept of interventions can profit from critical discourse analysis for HD. And it can provide insights for this HD, as the intervention does not remain the black box that it appears to be in most political discourses. A further assumption that is yet to be tested is that people will understand intervention better within the semantics of occupation or postwar society, notwithstanding the differences.

We can also claim that HD influences the mindsets, actions and (sub)conscious *orientations* of interveners, and with some delay, of the intervened. With the deployment of troops, HD begins to work on the interveners, and not only directly on soldiers or military le. Since interveners rarely originate from only *one* society (or nation), the different HD of several intervener societies interact in significant ways. This can easily be tested in the different uses of history and collective symbols by Germans and Americans in recollecting 9/11 and thus shaping the respective HD (Ackermann, 2011; Leffler, 2011; Weinberger, 2011; Wiggershaus, 2011). More important is the fact that different HD compete with each other or create hybrid discourses as they impact the actions of interveners. If one nation expects heroes, while the other represents a “post-heroic society”, then the communication between the two national discourse actors (soldiers, but also civilian agents) becomes idiosyncratic.

2.3. Homeland and “Heimat”

When we coined HD as *Heimat*diskurs, we put much effort into inventing a term that was supposed to be ironic and pathetic at the same time, and would certainly attract the attention of culturally and politically aware people⁹. Irony and pathos as modes in literary and political criticism are needed when certain terms that are used in everyday language tend to become flat. *Heimat* in German has too much of a context to be used without immediate second

⁹ The modes of irony and pathos are essential ingredients of literary theory.

thoughts. *Heimat* is something different from fatherland and motherland and homeland: Its specific scientific and ideological connotation in Germany is inseparably linked with the notion of “belated” nationhood (Plessner, 1992) and with a patriotism that for a long time had an imaginary culture-nation instead of nation-state as perspective, thus fostering an ungrounded nationalism¹⁰ (Breger, Link, & Parr, 2011; kultuRRRevolution, 2011). To a certain extent, Germany always did and still does share such tendencies with other societies; but many other societies changed their ideas of nationhood, since their nationalism and patriotism had been given a national, i.e. nation-state, frame much earlier. But *Heimat* is certainly not unique, when it comes to popular culture, and continues to be a strong reservoir for resentment and prejudice, including Kitsch or even trash. One particular aspect related to the idea of *Heimat* is migration; it constitutes the difference between here and there. Another aspect is the *war out of area*. It has always needed a strongly appealing mission for legitimizing the sons of the *Heimat* to fight in Russia or Africa, unless soldiers were simply pressed into the army. HD produces certain elements of this legitimizing, both critical or positively. We give special attention to the ongoing transformation of the German *Bundeswehr* into an intervention army. This is another chapter of the changes in German nationhood, and only partially linked to the out-of-area policies; however, the transformation of the national defense forces would not have happened so fast without the Afghan experience.

Before I continue to detail the dimensions of HD, we should look at the semantic components of the term Homeland-Discourse in its English version. This term is both a translation of *Heimatdiskurs* and an interpretation of HD in Anglophone countries, especially in the U.S.. Of course, the term *Homeland* has its own linguistic history¹¹. I do not want to explain the extended history of the term, e.g. by referring to South Africa and the colonial past. In a narrow interpretation, *Homeland* has become a keyword after 9/11. The Department of *Homeland Security* combines two significant terms as part of a powerful discourse after the attack against the U.S. on its own territory. It contains spatial and security issues in a national perspective. *Homeland* has become an ambiguous generic term in the sense of Kuehn’s research¹² because it combines positive and negative associations, especially when compliance is sought beyond the normative call upon patriotism or simply service to the nation. The German term *Heimat* is less associated with a spatial dimension and points more to the specific character of the post-World War II German state and society, for both of whom interventions out of area

¹⁰ The most uncompromising analysis of this field has been for many years the journal *kultuRRRevolution*, with the important discourse analyst and theoretician Jürgen Link as a main contributor. HD is in the center of issue #60 (2011), but frequently referred to in several other issues.

¹¹ Wikipedia is very interesting as a primary source because of its long list of associated keywords. In this respect, many characteristics of the German *Heimat*, as described, apply. However, in the entry “Homeland_Security” there is no account to the terminology of *Homeland* (Wikipedia).

¹² This is an anticipation of Florian Kühn’s (Humboldt University) studies on ambiguity in peace and conflict contexts. He attacks concepts that appear to be without alternative options.

are not at all traditional and embedded in the narratives of Germany after 1945. However, there is another underlying notion of *Heimat* that belongs to philosophy rather than social science: before the German statebuilding in the 19th century gained momentum, *Heimat* was an idealistic term referring to an ideal concept (18th and 19th centuries), or even became an utopian perspective in a revolutionary sense, mainly with the eminent philosopher Ernst Bloch (Bloch, 1995; Daxner, 1984) His ideas on *Heimat* as a utopian future space of democracy and perennial desires has influenced parts of the 1968 movements, during which many present-day politicians in Germany developed their political ideas and concepts. The U.S. has an unbroken history of interventions, but always directed out of “area”, if this area means the territory of the state. In the re-writing of U.S. history ten years after 9/11, new narratives become visible that clearly give HD more weight than ever before; 9/11 is unique, but the following interventions are not (Leffler, 2011)¹³. The changing of narratives is a characteristic of all HD. The strong ethical aspects in HD are a worldwide feature; for the U.S., the post-9/11 context is significant (Danner, 2011), in other countries HD focus often on the problem of ethical legitimacy (Youngs, 2010). In the light of the recent NSA spying scandals, *homeland* gets new connotations, including for allies of the U.S. in ongoing interventions.

Back to the German case: In peaceful post-WWII Germany *Heimat* has become a word either ridiculed or interpreted close to political incorrectness. But the more the term *War* has become common for interventions, it has incorporated a multitude of associations with the “reality” of war: veterans, casualties, dead soldiers, the issue of “learning to kill”¹⁴ (Spiegel 47/2006) and other related terms slowly trickle into everyday language and mindsets. War has become a trigger-term, evoking very significant reactions on all levels of public opinions and political decisions. HD has become caught in the dialectics of a very specific German aspect of the context: The post-WWII narrative of German foreign policy has been based on a rather unanimously accepted principle of “War never again” (Espenhans 2012, Cf. also the paradigmatic works of Dan Diner on the ruptures in civilization (*Zivilisationsbruch*) 2008 et al., where he discusses the changes in narratives of post-war history. For the magisterial post-war history see Tony Judt (2006)¹⁵. Today, public perception, political decisions and even research have to acknowledge that there is war in which “our soldiers”, i.e. the possessive collective imagination of the German soldiers, are entangled; this support to “our soldiers” implies a kind

¹³ This is an important detail in intervention theory. Even if the constellation of each intervention is unique, the intervention itself will be comparable to others.

¹⁴ First mentioned in the weekly DER SPIEGEL 47/2006 (cover). In Google-search there are ca. 580.000 entries as of recently (viewed 9/20/2011), and still there are more<<. 5,7 m (viewed 9/10/2013). The aspect of getting a “real” army has become virulent recently, when Germany dissolves its main Afghan camp in Kunduz (October 2013)

¹⁵ By the way, this may be one reason, why German conflict research has been baptized “Peace and Conflict Studies”, which under scientific rules is slightly illogical, but bears the normative priority of “peace”: this preference of peace to conflict corresponds also to a strong mistrust of state-sponsored peace-research (Leithäuser, 1969) Leithäuser provides one of the earliest accounts this context.

of involuntary “Yes”, even if one still does not want to be identified with a nation for which war is normal (Baecker, 2002). For social scientists in Germany, this is a real challenge because many critics argue that research that “acknowledges” war as a reality investigates interventions in order to “improve” them, thus lacking the normative guideline of “peace” present in concepts such as peace-keeping or peace-building. In other words: if you do research on war and conflict without the immediate purpose being directed to peace, you get into arguments. Baecker and others, including our HD approach, want to demonstrate that dealing with war as an object of investigation is ambivalent, whether you want to support the military actions or plea for a peaceful alternative.

In other societies, this critique is less common. In any case, the negligence of the analysis of HD would weaken the analytical ability of scholars and decision makers alike and would leave too much to the unconscious elements of HD undisclosed.

2.4. Homeland Discourse and Media

All communication is also about translation. Given the British and/or American attitudes towards the Germans, forged by so many experiences from hot and cold wars, partnership and alienation, it is no surprise that a German term for homeland, fatherland, motherland etc. would be difficult to translate and, at the same time, transport particles from numerous discourses that might make for the context.

At a very early stage of our research we decided to embed our media analysis into a broader analytical concept that would comprise the tools of hermeneutics, critique of ideologies and critical discourse analysis. How to apply and combine these tools is a methodological question that deserves an extra description. We have based our work on a few authors and concepts that can be compared with each other: we call them “soft” or *applied* critical discourse analysis, which simply means they are less rigid than approaches that seek a direct application of Foucault’s theories (e.g. in kRR 64/2013). Ruth Wodak is an authority in this field (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), another one is Rainer Keller (Keller, 2004); here, it may suffice to say that the analysis of texts, images and audio information make obvious sense and the preliminary results justify an eclectic approach. In any case, we are not at the end of the methodological road, but it is also clear that we do not want to add directly to discourse theory.

We find that it is very important to focus on certain themes in the context of the interventions and Germany’s role in order to find out how the media is driven by HD. The extent of media involvement is significant for the relation between HD and politics. Its importance can be retrieved from the comparison to Portugal, where the Afghan intervention is not being debated

at all, although the country has been engaged there from the beginning. In a comparative approach, a CES workshop (Lisbon) and a research team from Marburg and Coimbra discussed the awareness in Portugal and Germany of the intervention in Afghanistan¹⁶: in Portugal there is either no evident HD of the intervention, or there is a strong unconscious awareness of it; the same is true for many East European members of NATO missions or coalitions of the willing. In Germany, HD is gaining increased importance on both dimensions of awareness and discussion. The topic becoming *thematic* is one meaning of a discourse. The strength of HD can be shown by its persistency and durability, and by the events that trigger bigger or lesser visibility. We have no intention to repeat and differentiate discourse theory and its application on the intervention issue to an extent that would create a meta-level of reflection. We reduce complexity insofar as we take the discursive level as the starting point of our investigation. Methodologically, it is interesting that starting with Foucault would be no surprise, but reconciling his discourse theory with analyses that are mainly based on his antagonist's Bourdieu's empirical and methodical work makes a lot of sense (Free, 2010); in the practice of analyzing texts, based on Jäger's praxeology (M. Jaeger & Jaeger, 2007) the results are at least satisfactory (Heinecke, 2011). The interface with stark critique of ideology can be seen in an exemplary comment on the reform of the German Bundeswehr (S. Jaeger, 2011).

It is important to understand that our approach is not competing with critical media-analysis, while using some of the identical material and sources. Our interest is not primarily focused on what the media do with the elements of HD, but how within HD themes or media and lay-persons and experts and politicians are being featured. We had several controversial debates when press-officers for some of the agencies involved claimed that they "were making the themes" and would not accept their own dependency on the discourses. Our second interest is the way strategies, tactics and new elements find their way back into HD, through media and other channels.

A naïve approach would be comfortable to discover the signs of HD in the media and other communication that makes public opinions. But media analysis that is dearly needed barely gives answers to the questions about how the HD has found its way to media and public, and how it shapes media coverage, and finally how it impacts on political decisions shaping the course of the intervention. It is almost trivial to say that the media are as much driven by HD as they (partially) influence it; and that the "consciousness" by which the way of HD into the media and to the public can be investigated, is very limited.

¹⁶ Lisbon 9/13/2011, organized by Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Martin Löffelholz (Löffelholz, 2007, 2004; Löffelholz, Trippe, & Hoffman, 2007, 2008) provides a comprehensive account of the achievements of media research towards understanding how the media reports on wars and how such reporting is shaped by external circumstances such as a professionalization of military communication, a continuing economization, journalistic routines and the introduction of real time reporting due to new communication technologies. But such research remains limited as it fails to explain why within all these changes certain events and spins are preferred over others. News values theory provides explanations for such questions and remains to be frequently consulted, especially in popular science. One example should be enough to show the difference between media analyses and our approach at this point. Central to the theory of news values is the aspect of reference to elite nations and persons¹⁷. Events concerned with the rich, powerful, famous or infamous get more coverage than others. The fact whether an event is concerned with such actors or organizations can easily be coded and counted, but the underlying question of how an actor or an organization gained such fame or infamous reputation remains one to be answered by discourse analysis. The Taleban were not identical or congruent with the anti-Soviet Djihadis; however, the question is important for the perception of the insurgents by the West: how did they come under influence from Al Qaeda? Why did they become an “incarnation of evil” as well, when it would have been sufficient to brand them as ruthless dictators during their rule after 1995? And how can we reconcile such apodictic labeling with the opinion that there is no way out without including the Taleban in the negotiation about the post-transition period. If we want to know how the “Taleban” enter the public awareness, even subconsciously, an analysis of HD and based on it and its underlying images and changing connotations is necessary. The images are often related to narratives that become powerful because they are mutually shared, national narratives in modification and multinational negotiation processes about the interpretation of global events, which again might rely on conflicting interpretations of such events. First approaches to take such underlying dynamics into account are promising, but comprehensive accounts uniting media analysis and discourse analysis with a focus on the German discussion are missing.

It should be mentioned that further research in the field will include a turn to other media, e.g. digging deeper into the web. So far, we did not need to, because some significant discursive “leaders” were still in print media, but this likely to change. And other sections of non-print become important almost by exponential growth: movies, TV series, photo series and cartoons¹⁸. In another extension of our work, we are just going to publish an anthology with

¹⁷ The origins of the news values theory interestingly lie in peace studies: (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

¹⁸ I cannot even superficially touch this wide field of partly distorted and partly oppressed history. But in the course of our research we have found many accounts to special relations with Germany, based either on the Aryan myth (even Vaidik, from the Indian Council of Foreign Relations, used this account at a conference in Herat 2007); or on the antagonism between German and British policies towards the

individual contributions by both experts or persons with another distinguished role within HD. We shall call this book “Germany in Afghanistan” and try to conceptualize a reader against too short a half-life memory of the intervention.

2.5. The present situation

Afghanistan as a theme of general interest has begun disappearing again. After the Bonn Conference of 2011 and the Tokyo Conference of 2012, the period of time after 2014, i.e. *Transformation*¹⁹, (presidential elections and exit of combat troops) has become a main focus for politicians, but less so for the public. Many previous interventions have had a short half-life in public awareness. Afghanistan has been highlighted again – after the decision to pull out when awareness was triggered by very particular events, e.g., the Conference in Bonn (5 December 2011) with the stark German role in it, or the absence of Pakistan at the same conference because of U.S. drone attacks on Pakistan military a few days before the event. If there is any debate about Afghanistan at all, then it is about *what are our boys are still doing down there*. These observations are not yet systematic, but they are showing the viewpoints under which we observe the situation.

Becoming *thematic* means for the public: Does our intervention make any sense; has it made sense at any time? A nasty shortened explanation would be that the Afghans are disappearing from discourse, although they never really entered it if they weren't “Taleban” – This short-cut is, of course, no joke, but one of the most common pattern among laypersons discussing the intervention. A very sublime subtext is the traditional tight relationship between Germany and Afghanistan throughout the 20th century, both under the democratic and dictatorial rules in Germany. (We have not gone into this aspect, because until now we cannot see any effective

region; or on the German models for King Amanullah's reform policies in the 1920s; or on the fact that Afghanistan had been the preferred target of German development aid before 1979. But this is clearly one of the research areas that must be better included into HD research. Affirmative overviews can be found at the regular country pages of the German Foreign Office or at www.bpb.de/internationales/asien/afghanistan/48614/deutschlands-engagement?p=all (viewed 9/10/2013). Critical approaches on German self-perception are rare outside the out-of-area context. Cf. (kultuRRevolution, 2011). In all cases, the contributions of ethnologists and anthropologists play a big role. In a public TV series “Unser Krieg” (Our War) (I) on 8/10/2013 ZDF), the “special relations” between Afghans and Germans were mentioned by a ranking military, regretting the deteriorated relations in the course of the intervention.

¹⁹ It is interesting that the wording, Transformation following Transition, did never cause a major controversy: Transition means handover of security and governance responsibility to the Afghans, and Transformation means what it says: the transformation of society and state. Implicitly, this transformation has never really taken place under the rules of intervention between 2001 and today... Which, of course, is also not entirely true, because the society of intervention has changed many of its structures; however, an intentional transformation under afghan rule has not yet begun to root in society.

impact on the present HD, but whenever politicians call upon the “traditional friendship among our two peoples”, it rings a bell)²⁰.

The real problems for research lie in a somewhat paradoxical situation. On the one hand, we are starting to understand the deep impact of the intervention much better than before. This is because we can use data collected over a long period of time; and we understand some of the mechanisms that are being mobilized in the life-world (“*Lebenswelt*”)²¹ of the Afghans, i.e. regarding perceptions in the countryside of security and wealth, or participation in development projects as a result from the intervention. This knowledge does not automatically allow valid prognostication for the time of transformation, but slowly we learn how the society of intervention is changing Afghanistan. Many of our insights come either from our own research or from comparable or related investigations by other experts.²² On the other hand, a certain complacency because of the pull-out and a magic acquiescence by the approach of the “Transformation” phase seems to marginalize HD; and certainly one factor is the overlaying of Afghanistan by indirectly related more acute events and discourses, such as Libya, Syria, NSA and drones²³.

3. Examples and Precedents

The construction of HD is futile without examples from reality and their arrangement in a specific order. As in any discourse, the origins and roots of HD are partially covered under heaps of other discourses; there are overlaps and extinctions by interference etc. In our specific context, we try to reconstruct HD in a plausible and transparent way. We set the beginning of HD after the decision of Germany to participate in the Kosovo intervention (1999)

²⁰ Cf. FN 17;

²¹ We prefer the original *Lebenswelt* as an established term in Social Science; however, *Life-world* can be understood in context and will be easier to confront with its counterpart *System*. Since Habermas is a global authority, we should use *Lebenswelt* freely; in any case, the wordbook translation *life environment* is not applicable.

²² Cf. i.a. (Jan Koehler, 2010, 2012; Jan; Koehler, Gosztonyi, & Böhnke, 2013; J. K. G. Koehler, 2011): Jan Koehler being the main researcher in the field, i.e. NE-Afghanistan. All this has entered the project C1/C9 within the SFB 700 at the Free University, and will probably allow us to complete the twelve-year longitudinal study on security and development in NE-Afghanistan (till 2017). Our complete bibliography for the last 10 years comprises some 700+ titles, the most relevant documents being cited in our research. In this context it is interesting to observe which part of expert literature (scientific, high class journalism, fact books) reach the public as influencing HD. While we do not have hard facts about this, we can assume that only very little of this expertise does really reach political decisions, while a lot of it is being used to feed the immediate environment of decision making, e.g. by the parliamentary research units (CRS in the U.S.) or think-tanks and GO-consultings (e.g. SWP or ZIF in Germany).

²³ All of these fields have an indirect relation to German out-of-area engagement and policies, but they were seen often as contingent events. We do not have the impression that there is a strong national or even European discourse on the global interdependency of interventions and the respective HD in different countries.

and the surfacing on a broad scale after 9/11, focusing on Afghanistan, in December 2001 (1st Bonn Conference, often referred to as *Petersberg Conference*; indeed, there were even more conferences on Afghanistan in Bonn, of lesser importance, until 2011 the 2nd “big” one (*Petersberg II*) marked a certain end-point of the pro-active (military) engagement). It is important to note that in the beginning nobody argued within a common concept of HD; but soon, HD could be investigated as a part of *normality* that was significant for the intervention itself.

- One example²⁴ for this is that with the growing number of killed and wounded soldiers their misfortune could no longer be described as “accidents, while doing development aid”.²⁵ They became framed as casualties, victims or veterans, as the *normal* consequence of fighting a war.
- The reconstruction of the German engagement in Afghanistan has become thematic only lately, e.g., at the occasion of the 10th anniversary of 9/11.²⁶ There was no real interest in the history of the engagement. Thus, the half-time of the events in collective memory has been very short²⁷.
- Each upcoming parliamentary debate on extension and changes in the mandate for German troops had some forerunning debates in which elements of the HD appeared, only to be buried again after the decisions were taken.²⁸
- *Hindukush* became a collective symbol and a metonymic term at once, when secretary Struck declared that “German security was defended in the Hindukush”. The link between *security*, and shortly later, *freedom*, and Afghanistan has become a running quotation.²⁹
- Events with a singular quality gained some significance for elements of HD that should become more important a few years later. The “skull affair” of 2004 looks, in retrospect, like an anticipation of the hefty debate on German soldiers and the army reform at large. German soldiers had played with scattered skulls and other bones in a non-

²⁴ For these five examples and some other it is a problem that the reader either is familiar with the event or case described or would need an extended *narrative*. It is exactly this relative distance in perception that creates many faults in receiving messages from HD. The footnotes to each example just serve as a first step into more in-depth search if so wanted.

²⁵ Our documentation bears numerous articles, where soldiers (active and returnees) complain that they have been misled by the rhetoric nature of the mission. (Heinecke, 2011: 13f.,46ff.) and many retrospective accounts by politicians. Implicitly, however difficult to prove, is the allegation that not only the public and the soldiers, but they themselves had been misled.

²⁶ No other politician has followed the deployment of German personnel and the discursive company more closely than Winfried Nachtwei, a former MP for the Green Party. His accounts enjoy non-partisan respect. See: <http://www.nachtwei.de/index.php/articles>

²⁷ This is a highly important aspect of public perception of history and events past. The concept has best been defined by (Maier, 2002).

²⁸ This is one observation of our ongoing advanced study research project.

²⁹ The juristic side of this aspect gets in the focus (Holzinger, 2011).

combat situation and took indecent pictures of the alleged desecration of Muslim remains. When the press learned about the affair two years later, there was a scandalizing in many directions – and a subcutaneous fear of retaliation of militant Islamists because of the alleged desecration. From this we can learn about the “constructivist power” of and within HD³⁰.

The topic of “War” has become paradigmatic for HD. Whether or not, and if, what happened in Kosovo, and more so in Afghanistan, is “war”, had become an issue of concern for the *public* only after a while. One day, a headline in a leading upper middle-class daily newspaper was “Merkel calls it war” (*Merkel nennt es Krieg*: FAZ 19/12/2010). By this time newspaper readers would understand the “it” as the one and only reference to *Afghanistan* – there is no other war, and no symbolic war that anyone would read from the “it”³¹. Politicians had tried, sometime before the chancellor’s apodictic *disentanglement* of the term, to enter into their personal linguistic turn: a former Minister of Defense, Mr. zu Guttenberg, said that in *everyday language* what happens in Afghanistan can be understood as war, while jurists correctly said that a *non-international conflict* according to international law is no “war”. This debate angered the people who have been sensitized for the issue, their position in HD had little to do with the legal definitions of international law, and they feel rightly excluded from another discourse on system level only, concentrating on formal institutions. There are good reasons why international law sometimes uses a terminology far away from everyday discourse. But in our case, the politicians and media should have started to educate and enlighten the people much earlier.

HD developed a certain dynamic and gained in momentum when the issue had become urgent, if Germany is a *nation at war*. The implications of war are multifold: HD diversified into a delta of sub-streams and has become so complex that it is regularly overstressing the capacity of *all* participants in the debate. HD has been employed with a variety of rhetorical strategies, the defense mechanisms against such strategies have multiplied accordingly.

Some examples reach a broader public more easily than others. Let us begin with military: each and every German soldier killed evokes different reactions from news reporting compared to other NATO or ISAF casualties or Taleban killed in combat. The “fallen” (“Gefallene”), i.e. those killed in combat, were a term buried in the German past, only referred to in memorials or in contextualized narrations. Now we have those killed in war and we have veterans³²; we

³⁰ www.google.de/#-totenkopf+affäre+2006 (viewed 9/10/2013, 369.000 hits). Cf. ZEIT Online 25/10/2006; SPIEGEL.de 13/11/2006; Stern.de 31/10/2006.

³¹ The association of war with the War on Terror did not occur automatically at any time.

³² Personalization happens in an article titled „The Veteran“: (ZEIT online, 12/13/2007); The growing popularity of the theme is taken up by the daily (DIE WELT online, 01/24/2011) It is important that in this article the coinciding diffusion of a related weekly crime and the most sophisticated talk-show focus on the veteran-issue. Secretary of Defense, Thomas de Maizière, has used the term only recently and promised to make the issue one of his key agendas: (SPIEGEL online, 09/22/2011).

are learning about PTSD, the post traumatic stress disorder³³; we are hiding invalids, or we are not competent to deal with them. But then, “our” position towards the German Army is changing: do we have relatives in Afghanistan, do we know parents who have lost a son or daughter? Do we identify with those deployed, or fighting? There is an unavoidable pressure to define a collective self-positioning. Who are “we”? Germans, allies in NATO, brothers in arms of the United States, relatives to fighting soldiers, etc³⁴. Most significant is the fact that while the transition period for Afghanistan is being planned, Germany is undertaking radical reform of its armed forces. The change from a conscription system towards a professional army of volunteers is not directly caused by the Afghan engagement, but of course, it happens in its context. The new army will be one focused on humanitarian interventions and peace-keeping actions – out of area and within a supra-national frame yet to be developed. This is linked to new debates on military values (“honor”), military jurisdiction (“impunity”), and a new relationship between military and “civilians” in so far as the integrative concept of the *citizen in uniform* that was part of Germany’s rehabilitation after 1945 has become at stake. HD plays a big role in all this, as at once the pacifistic Post-WWII-narrative is changing: Germany has to “learn how to fight”, and the nation is losing its “innocence”. The weekly DER SPIEGEL subtitled that Afghanistan “now becomes a serious affair”, linking the seriousness to the capacity (and readiness) to fight and consequently to kill. A minority, of course, has abused this to become more proud of being involved in a “real” war, but these voices still are rare.

Thus, the awareness that the country is at war is slowly trickling down into the consciousness of many citizens, if not a majority. It has left the spheres of experts and politics and becomes common discourse. There are an increasing number of literary accounts of the experience of war; they are in many ways different from post-WWII war literature. The new books have not yet created a *genre*. There is already a certain diversification along lines between reporting and fiction, between experience and commentary. Our assumption is that all of this production is driven by HD rather than influencing it, with a few exceptions that shall be discussed a bit later in this text. A growing number of personal accounts are edited reports from the “field” e.g., (Baumann, 2011; Brinkmann & Hoppe, 2010). Other books reflect the changes in the perception of military (Timmermann-Levanas & Richter, 2010). This title is already reflecting a programmatic critique: *They talk, while we die. How our soldiers become victims of Germany politics* (my translation). Another kind of political account is made in journalistic reflections on the war and the intervention, e.g. (Kornelius, 2009, 2010), or with political message, e.g., (Reichelt & Meyer, 2010). This last book reflects the new perception of the army in another

³³ Cf. (Senn, 2008). Twice diffusion had been postponed (for soccer once and for US elections overlapping).. The public learned among other details about PTSD. This disorder had become thematic in the Parliament shortly after the feature.

³⁴ See also the recent “Deutschland in Afghanistan”, published by the author in 2014.

way. Its first chapter takes account of the bombing of the Kunduz trucks on 4 September 2009 and the role of the German commander, Col. Klein. The complex situation is well reflected, even Klein's mistake of not following COMISAF's strict orders is noted (p. 40), but then the whole situation is blurred into a vague accusation of politics and mistakes and the incompetence of the decision makers. The book may be regarded as mainstream reporters' routine; but I want to draw attention to three aspects: first of all, the decision of the government not even to launch a disciplinary investigation on Klein's behavior follows the nebulous arguments in analyzing the situation by the authors³⁵. Secondly, Klein is quoted in a Parliamentary hearing: "As a Christian and a responsible military commander I felt certain about the range of my decision (to order bombing)"(p. 28f., my translation). The position given to the fact that the man is a "Christian" is important insofar as we could have expected a priority given to the role as military leader, and if another attribute is sought, we could have expected a word like "patriot". But "Christian" is crossing into another discourse, opening a field of debate in the direction of just war and religious duty to serve as an officer. In a subtext the quotation may also refer to the discussion within the Bundeswehr about "Innere Führung" (the official translation "internal leadership" does not hit the entire meaning: the democratic structure of the army should be underlined by a conscious internal mindset instead of the traditional surface of following wrong or meaningless orders). For our analysis of HD it is, thirdly, most significant that the authors implicate that German politics has turned away from the "original aims of war"; German soldiers had been fighting for many years, and they "were fighting for these aims" (15). This is in some ways a fabrication of a historical narrative, because there may have been many political aims for Germany, but never any one to make a war. By omitting the difference between making a war and being involved in a war, there is a change in an essential aspect of HD. Here, as in other texts, the question of pride in the army, and the notion of the tradition of *warrior* and *hero* gain value in the subtext.

So far, comparative HD research is not an established sub-discipline. Traces can be discovered in all kinds of history of war and in exercises demonstrating the homeland discourse in one country as better, more legitimate or more convincing than in others. Comparisons between military cultures are quite useful, cf. the recent account of Bundeswehr and British Forces by Sangar (Sangar, 2013). However, this has not been our focus. But there is one aspect that we have been starting to investigate more thoroughly. Differences between

³⁵ On 8/19/2011 the government decided not to let Col. Klein be investigated for a possible disciplinary sanction of the Kunduz bombardment. Earlier, the prosecutors in regular justice had already decided not to follow the case. The Kunduz-Affair has become a turning point in the intervention narrative. The German engagement in Afghanistan and its military aspect will never be discussed without the notion of Kunduz. Meanwhile, the narrative has reached artistic representation. Cf. Arte: *Eine mörderische Entscheidung* (a murderous decision): 30/08/2013, repeated 19/09/2013. Raymond Ley, Director. This was certainly the most artistic and sophisticated documentary fiction on the Kunduz-Affair and the war in Afghanistan.

national HD can be studied when we compare, as a striking example, German journalistic accounts of the Afghan engagement and a highly recognized book like Sebastian Junger's *War* (Junger, 2010). The American journalist does not shy away from commenting and reporting from combat zones and from the immediate personal situation of soldiers inside this zone, being amidst the permanent threat of not surviving the next hour, or the next day. This has certainly to do with the American people being more familiar with their country being at war. The German approach is mainly retrospective. It makes people learn how it feels, or will feel if the country is at war. Both approaches could be interpreted as different dimensions of *normalization*, as mentioned above. This does not mean that Junger's approach is less reflective or nuanced. I want to point out one common denominator in both cultures: (all?) soldiers want to learn from their supreme commanders or government why they are doing what they are doing (they do not want comments on *how* they are doing it, because there they feel that either they shoot or they get killed – which is a running reduction of complexity in many accounts to combat). Junger also worked with the famous photographer, the late Tim Hetherington, on the battle of *Korengal* in Afghanistan. *Restrepo* is one of the most impressive accounts of a different HD (Hetherington, 2010). Since the German post-WWII does not know the function of the fighter and warrior, it is useful to learn about the U.S. HD in the field, because then we can easier understand the reactions at home and inside the army. The direct and indirect influence of HD on the soldier's behavior and attitudes has always played a role, but has never been sufficiently investigated. Future HD research shall ask to what extent HD affects the deployed soldiers.³⁶

In a bizarre and perhaps non-representative attempt, a Special Forces commander blogs his personal justification: Major Jim Gant presents his "private ethnology" while using one local group as a base for fighting another one (Gant, 2009). In an analysis I tried to deconstruct his self-image as an effective warrior (Michael Daxner, 2010c). One of the most stunning details is that Gant calls his local counterpart "Sitting Bull". This follows the line of baptizing U.S. military devices *Chinook*, *Black Hawk* and *Apache*, and to coin the covert operation that lead to Osama bin Laden's killing after *Geronimo*. To name martial tools after nearly extinguished peoples has something archaic and superstitious, but more so it shows suppressed guilt

³⁶ I do not want to directly relate this problem with wartime propaganda, when POWs were coined as "cowards" or where manipulative expectations were transported directly into fighting soldiers' behavior. But we assume that there is some relation. Cf. www.ZEIT.de/online/2008/06/Afghanistan-zion; www.jurablogs.de/afghanistan/feiglinge-1; www.bild.de/news/bild-english/guttenberg...11197650/html; all viewed 9/10/2013. The debate, stirred by U.S. and other NATO generals pointed at the ambiguous fact that in the beginning of COIN the North (German security zone) was indeed quieter than the South-East. But with ISAF victories in the South-East, many insurgents were squeezed to the North and merged there with other insurgent forces toward a more dangerous challenge for German troops. Diplomacy acted poorly on both sides, and different cultures of reporting fighting, casualties and losses also play a role.

(Ackermann 2011); do the Germans act innocently when calling their vehicles mainly after animals.... I do not think that these details reach the conscious perception of a broad public, but subconsciously they may work effectively.

After this short trip into comparative HD, I shall return to the German case. I had already mentioned Tom Koenigs recent account of his tenure as SRSG of UNAMA (Koenigs, 2011): he is representative for a what I would like to call *subjective documentary*. His very accurate letters to family and friends had been carefully edited, but neither fictionalized nor censored; he strongly meets the scientific problem to act as observer of the system of which one is part of – this is not only Luhmann's big question, but the problem of every intellectual in exposed positions. Other than in previously mentioned books, Koenigs' criticism is implicit. A corresponding complement is fiction at its best. The journalist and novelist Dirk Kurbjuweit has written a novel about a female soldier in Afghanistan (Kurbjuweit, 2011). The book reveals more about Germany than about Afghanistan, despite the love stories including an Afghan school teacher. It is like a personification of HD, and, at the same time, the *objectivation* of collective personal experience in one single character. Implicitly, the book also shows that societies of intervention can feature analogous problems in both cultures, the interveners' and the one of the intervened.

3.1. Archeology of a Discourse

HD is not a new discourse; ever since interventions, wars and colonization happened beyond a country's borders, the enemy's territory have become object of discursive constructions in the homeland. One of its main characteristics is a construction marking the distance between *us* (the society and country of the interveners) and *them* (the country of the intervened). One aspect among others is relevant for our present research: HD transports an imagination of the circumstances under which our soldiers fight; this includes a subtext asking if the reasons for fighting *there* are sufficient to lead to acceptance *here*. The reasons for fighting are tightly linked to the perceived dignity of sources, mainly of knowledge and authenticity. This means that action and experience per se justify the context within which they take place. Those who have been "in it" and those who have "seen", enjoy a larger credibility and expertise, even if their experience is neither significant nor valid (cf. (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2012). Inventing Afghanistan becomes popular, not least because it is shortening the distance between here and there. The imagination of Afghanistan does not need to correspond with hard facts and empirical information; it must meet the desire for legitimacy and for the possibility to take a position in the competition of opinions. Forerunners of our investigations are Edward Said's *Orientalism* ((Varela, 2005) or Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans*.(Todorova, 1997). In

the case of Afghanistan, we can reconstruct how the country is being constructed during the course of the intervention (Daxner 2010a). The imaginative element has a strong impact on the hardening of structures and language. Public radio and TV have coined the term “the radical-Islamic Taleban”, whenever they speak of the insurgents. Not only is the term factually questionable, it evokes an anti-Islamic prejudice that prevents a differentiated view. A similar pattern can be observed for ambushes and bombing. Whenever a blast was reported, those accused were reported to have links to Al Qaeda, until the Arab spring showed how weak this organization in reality was.

Popular literature provides a good base for invented realities of interventions; there are models from the past, in Germany e.g., the popular writer *Karl May* a century ago. The deconstruction of subtexts in HD also creates unease with responsible actors, because it reveals *their* cultural texture, - that means the cultural context of the interveners. Thus, one of the main propositions of the theory of societies of interventions gains additional support: it is not enough that the interveners “know” about the intervened. They learn about them in modes of more or less legitimate political anthropology and ethnology. But the interveners don’t know enough about themselves. HD is something like a hidden curriculum for this purpose, but it does not provide a learning program. Some trigger words have become standing quotations and equations in common language, e.g., Taleban = Terrorist, tribal structures = backward civilization, Islamic = Islamistic = Terrorist, Taleban = Al Qaeda, etc. Information policy has been underdeveloped. The belated attempt of the German Foreign Office to brief the Parliament and the politically aware public (Bundesregierung, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013) is a light change into the direction of more transparency. However, the progress reports are too much prisoners of the very HD to enable the addressees to become more competent in understanding the impact of HD on politics (Janzen, 2011).

Many of the elements of HD evoke associations that are by no means grounded in facts. A good example is the recent attack on the former President and late President of the Peace Jirga, Burhannuddin Rabbani, in September 2011. This man, who was – cautiously speaking – hated by the majority rather than positively recognized – is now posthumously styled as a peaceful mediator not only by the Afghan establishment; German media largely support this view. This is an element of rewriting history, rather typical for HD. And, it is not just a question of controversial *opinions*. The attack by the insurgents on Rabbani provides legitimacy to change policy towards the Taleban that would have been in the program of many actors anyway, but now gains solidity through the assassination of the “peace-builder” Rabbani. The whole dilemma became visible when Secretary Clinton first visited Kabul on 10/20/2011 and simultaneously urged the Taleban to resume the talks or to face new attacks, and a day later,

met much resistance in Islamabad, when she wanted to strengthen ties with Pakistani counter-insurgent actions³⁷.

One last example that links the military discourse with public perceptions: In Kurbjuweit's docu-fictional novel, there is one key passage. When the main character, the female officer, is interviewed by her commander about a fatal incident, his main concern is to learn if there were civilians in the house that had been bombed by Americans on request of the German officer; because it would be absolutely necessary for the army not to let the German public know if that was the case. Civilian casualties are the enemy of legitimacy. I do not tell the story of the incident, because the argument of the commander is totally detached from the events ((Kurbjuweit, 2011: 256-258). The blueprint for that sort of story was written in Kunduz, 4 September 2009.

3.2. 4 September 2009

The bombing of two trucks on 4 September in Kunduz on German orders has shaken up the self-perception of Germany as the other, the "better" partner, in the Afghan intervention. Until today, the bombing has been a standing account on morals, strategies and the German role in ISAF. We will not retell the story and its ramifications, including the findings of parliamentary hearings and the continuous account in the media³⁸. There is sufficient evidence and documentary available by now. Instead, we will use some aspects of the effects of the bombing to explain other aspects of HD. Since the government and the military were reluctant to tell the truth about the events of 9/4/2009, it is no surprise that some journalists started to investigate. One of the best investigative journalists in Germany, Christoph Reuter, launched a story in the weekly magazine *Stern* and later published a book with the photographer Marcel Mettelsiefen (Mettelsiefen, 2010). On 4/23/2010, an exhibition under the title "Kunduz, 4. September 2009" opened in Potsdam. There was a prominent opening and an equally prominent line of visitors, including then Secretary of Defense, zu Guttenberg. The media was excited. Apart from two instructive maps and landscapes, the exhibition only showed the portraits of the relatives of the 90 victims of the bombings. The portraits were the end of a complicated research that was not connected directly with the pictures. Most of them were ritual, dignified and distanced. And

³⁷ I happened to follow this argument, because my own assumption was that Rabbani's death would have a lasting effect on what I have called the option of "Hizbollahization", i.e. the systematic integration of Taleban into official institutions and finally government positions by the time of transition. Today, mid 2013, the chances for this option are still vague, but more likely than a total breach with the Taleban.

³⁸ Wikipedia gives a first impression on the importance and significance of the event: a meticulous description and a good bibliography are provided: www.e.wikipedia.org/wiki/luftangriff_bei_kunduz
www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kunduz_airstrike

there were personal documents and photos displayed of those killed. These objects were much smaller. Reuter and Mettelsiefen explain their tireless research in the book; and they explain how it was possible to find the names and the age of the victims and their relatives and their origin. But the visitors were left alone with the scarce information and the photographs. Knowledge met sensual impressions and formed a part of HD on the spot. In a way, the art of Mettelsiefen corresponds to Hetherington's portraits in *Infidel*, but of course, his models were U.S. soldiers. Parallel to the exhibition, the Potsdam *Hans-Otto-Theatre* produced a documentary play for an entire season with a follow-up public discussion. The Potsdam events are a good example for the trickling down of the reality of the Afghan intervention from the expert level to the lay public, and that means also from the system level to the life-world of people. This example also shows that public perception does not need to be *congruent* with HD. 6 and 7 October, 2013, saw a rather emotional ceremony: The German camp in Kunduz is now ready for handover to the Afghans and naturally 4 September 2009 is omnipresent. It is obvious that there is an attempt by the German officials to transfer the event to the cultural memory, not pointing at perpetrators and victims, but abstracting: "People have died". By such strategy the public will become immunized³⁹. However, since there will be court suit by relatives of the victims seeking compensation, the issue may be kept alive for a while. The promotion of Col. Klein to Brigadier General in 2012 is also a highly controversial issue, because he clearly has violated rules, even if not broken laws.

4. Preliminary conclusions

4.1. Critique

There are limitations and objective limits to our approach that I will neither deny nor marginalize. They are challenges to the approach and the interpretation of results. I will start with some aspects of methodology: I hold that the research procedures in selecting and interpreting the texts used for our first anthology are state of the art; but, of course, we have been criticized for limiting ourselves to relevant print media that already narrow the public scope. Until now, further steps into a broader diversification of media (photo, film, TV, and the

³⁹ This is also true for the first part of a series "Unser Krieg" (Our War) in Public TV (ZDF), 8/10/2013; Directors Michael Renz and Christian Deick. It is emotional, honest from the side of the interviewees (mainly petty officers of the Bundeswehr and families of killed soldiers), but highly superficial and partially one-sided from the side of politicians and high ranking officials. Other TV features, like Martin Gerner's *Generation Kunduz* (2011), are more instructive and critical. The "genre" of documentary fiction has been opened in Germany by "Auslandseinsatz" (Out-of-area engagement), Director:Till Endermann).

Web) do not falsify our results, but tend to open new dimensions in the analysis⁴⁰. And, once again: we do not compete with media critics and the art of deconstructing messages under the aspect of media politics. There will be new and broader follow ups to this research.

4.2. Comparative Research, centered on the United States

At several moments in our research we have pointed at the necessity of *comparative* research, while concentrating on the German case. Even if we have been using quite a few comparative aspects regarding the U.S., we know well that these do not suffice to create a solid base for more meaningful contrasting of the two HD – and their cultural impact. The present debate about use and abuse of data by the NSA sheds a bright light on the poorly reflected differences in both countries' perceptions and conclusions. Human rights, security, privacy etc., gain unexpected significance in a debate which is far from common grounds and interests. A similar debate can be observed in the context of the drone debate, especially on the different aspects of reconnaissance – similar to the data scandal – and targeted killing. HD affects the special relationship between Germany and the U.S. While on military terms, the U.K. is the most appreciated ally of the U.S. in all kinds of interventions, sometimes even denounced as a “poodle”, the links with Germany are more complex. Before 1945, the U.S. were sometimes admired, but generally despised by the conservative groups in Germany for their materialist *civilization* as opposed to the German *culture*. This became an underground subtext to many anti-American outbursts, also on the left. On the other hand, the left and a majority of all social layers have adopted the American lifestyle as an ever-changing model. Together with an original and honest gratitude after 1945 – from liberation and CARE-parcels to democracy and jazz – the friendship with the U.S. became a standing characteristic of Germany's development. Vietnam and other U.S. adventures in foreign policy for a long time did not hamper this attachment, because Germany did not consider itself an international or global player on politics. This has changed. Paradoxically, the gratitude for the U.S. support in the unification process 1989 was overarched by the awareness that there were not so many common interests as continually asserted. Multi-lateralism, the growing German importance in economic and military matters, and a certain divergence in interests have cooled down the friendship to a point where the often conjured identity of values becomes questionable. This

⁴⁰ Caroline Stehr has written a strong account on blogs in her MA-thesis: *Der Heimatdiskurs bei deutschen Auslandseinsätzen: Diskursanalyse eines deutschsprachigen Weblogs zum Einsatz der Bundeswehr in Afghanistan* (HD in out-of-area-engagement of the Bundeswehr: discourse analysis of a German weblog on out-of-area engagement), analyzing the Blog “Augen geradeaus” (“Eyes straight!”) and working with the tools developed during the research phase for the book (cf. Daxner and Neumann 2012, 167-199); quite a few theses and PhD dissertations are in the making, some of them ready to be published.

could be well observed when Germany did not join the U.S. in the Iraq war 2003, and it has become evident in issues like the drone wars or the spying of U.S. agencies. Until now, it is still a taboo to question the common interests with the U.S., but a fragile one. Our tentative hypothesis here is that the German-American relationship will remain stable on the level of the NATO Alliance and possibly in most economic areas, but that the relations on the political level will be downgraded to a certain “normality” – that is, rather an interest-based “partnership” than a value-based “friendship”. This has already effects on HD and will have more.

Comparative HD is not entirely new under the aspects of cultural comparison and quite a few resentments, prejudice and condescendence. But as a scientific concept, it will get its shape under the aspect of globalization insofar as HD changes the cultural and political communication among actors that cannot distinguish as easily between *domestic* and *foreign* as in the past.

4.3. Politics

HD certainly has an impact on political decisions and, at the same time, it shapes and drives public awareness about military engagement out of area. It is too early to formulate a consistent theory of HD. But first findings and research show a much bigger influence by HD than the ordinary interplay between actors and media suggest. From many talks with decision makers and eye-witnesses both of decision making and the reality in Afghanistan we know how HD is influencing decisions. This is the way of ethnographers’ observation rather than sociologists’ objectivizing research⁴¹. Sometimes one can see the logic in the gaining of impact by HD, though not always as easily as with the PTSD event in the German Parliament. We can generalize the very unpopular assumption that *most of the effects of HD affect our German society and the context within which we Germans place ourselves*; consequently, Afghanistan and the Afghans, even the engagement of troops, tend to be marginalized whenever more important events eclipse the theme (as is presently the case with the crisis of the finance market and the events in Libya or Syria). On the other hand, events like the pull-out from Kunduz allow the representatives of the state to set a memorial date, after which Germany has not been the same as before. In this sense, working with a critical analysis of HD means looking behind the making of news and themes regarding the military engagement. *It is hard to understand for relevant actors that they are not masters of the discourse, and their capacity to set the thematic frames is limited*. Such relevant actors are not only politicians, commanders

⁴¹ *Objectivation* is a special term in Bourdieu’s theory, meaning the process of transferring subjective observations into objective constructions. This is important for understanding the transition from ethnology to sociology.

and consultants, but also the media that pretend to make the public opinion on exactly the themes that are determined to be relevant. HD suggests that many anonymous or less prominent contributors to the “murmuring” of the discourse are more impactful than the spin-doctors of opinion-making.

Germany is the place where the first Afghanistan agreement was forged. The so called “Petersberg Agreement” was the incomplete albeit partially effective blueprint for state-building after 30 years of war in Afghanistan. It was also a conference under the spell of 9/11. Many mistakes and erroneous assumptions that were guiding the participants of the first conference had either undergone more or less painful corrections or provided continuous negative effects on the intervention in Afghanistan. In December 2011, Bonn was again the venue of the “Petersberg II” conference under the leadership of the Afghan government, which was dedicated to the road map towards transition and the exit of foreign military combat troops. This conference was preceded by a two-day civil society forum, where all delegates and numerous experts and the interested public had the opportunity to discuss Afghan problems from a less abstract level than the foreign ministers at the summit. Everybody concerned had the chance to attend quite a few preliminary workshops, conferences, meetings and round-tables anticipating the conference. This had some impact on HD, but less than could be expected. One reason for this is that the financial crisis of Europe overshadows everything; another reason is that Afghanistan is no longer in the focus, because the exit date for combat troops has now been fixed - and the intervention has as short a half-life as any other out of area deployment, as long as there are not too many casualties. Thus, HD did not really change under the auspices of the conference. But there are two underlying elements that should not be ignored. The conference was mildly unsuccessful because of the absence of Pakistan⁴². Involuntarily, the assessment is based on the acknowledgment that Pakistan is one of the key-players, if not *the* key-player during transition and talks with the Taleban. Another aspect that will play a much bigger role in the future is the fact that the so-called peace-camp has lost its safe ground, demanding the exit of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Since exit has been decided, the political actions have returned to the abstract and moral rhetoric of peace-movements in the past (“disarmament now”, “exit now”, “no foreign military bases” etc.). Thus, a small manifestation of activists showed up in Bonn, and allegedly they were joined by Afghans belonging to less peaceful factions in the present constellation. This is the bridge towards a new stage of HD, when Germany will discuss how to support the new Afghanistan, a country with no foreign troops on its territory. This will be the hour of the R2P and human

⁴² The reasons for the absence are mainly to be found in the relations between Pakistan and the U.S. that have reached a negative climax after a fatal drone attack on Pakistan military in the border region with Afghanistan.

rights elements, re-entering the discourse that had been dominated by military elements from all sides.

A few months later, the conclusion has become even more convincing. Afghanistan as a real intervention is a lost case. It is politically incorrect to name it that way, and, of course, there are many promising projects and programs that will continue to support the country and some of its major constituencies. But whatever the good reasons for intervening in 2001, the positive effects of the intervention must be questioned. (My own résumé would be that the intervention was partially justified, partially successful, but in the end did fail because of the errors and mistakes made by the interveners; but this also only one facet of scientific assessment under the influence of HD). We are now in the endgame of the intervention in *real* Afghanistan (cf. (Michael Daxner, 2013).

The *symbolic* Afghanistan plays another, presumably more important role. It serves many purposes: in contrasting it to Iraq, the better legitimacy of the Afghan intervention does not necessarily bring better outcome; for other types of intervention (Libya) or for more cautious approaches to new ones (Syria), Afghanistan is a warning and blueprint for errors to be avoided; and while Afghanistan is still object of assessment and evaluation, it has begun to add to the new narratives of recent German history, also due to the Homeland Discourse.

At the border between the real and the imaginary Afghanistan we find phenomena that are new to the everyday discourses. The whole complex of veterans, returnees, Afghan aides to German civilian and military missions is becoming an increasingly sensitive and irritating. The rising numbers of “German Taliban” are disquieting because Afghanistan is no longer “there” and we are no longer “here” as the globalization of Islamistic movements includes our own society. HD is rearranging its constituent elements. Referring to Struck’s statement, it does no longer make sense to insist that Germany’s security is defended on Hindukush, if the security on Hindukush is also destabilized by German proselytes... All this needs to be investigated and analyzed. HD produces too much hearsay and ideologies as some of its strategic streams; there is a broad and differentiated field of further research ready.

Another dimension of future research will be the element of oblivion inside HD. It is plausible that events or images become forgotten, when they no longer appear in the media and when nothing happens to catch broad and public attention. It is less clear when and under what circumstances such events resurface and enter the more active streams of HD. It will be highly important to look into the effects on decision making of a policy of oblivion or repression.

4.4. Personal Résumé

It is not so easy to describe intermediate results. The research field on HD is not yet fully developed and certainly has not attained a position beyond an interesting niche. A trans-disciplinary concept meets as much mistrust from established disciplines as it offers new potentialities to each of them. This is *normal* science. What I am observing on top of this is a certain irritation about the deeper invasion of professional and public mindsets. Politicians more than colleagues do not know what to make out of some assumptions and concepts presented: I have made this ambiguous experience when presenting research designs on veterans and on a history text book on Germany in Afghanistan. I met a kind of “sympathy without support”. Who should be responsible to open this box of *Pandora*? It is also challenging to understand HD as an object of empirical social research rather than a constructivist building of models.

The high level of subjective input also plays a role: the question is not only the epistemological *How do we know what we know?* It is also the question about the random access to material and information *before* systematic data collection: of course, my newspaper reading, my information channel selection, my communication in both academia and politics all become relevant context variables when it comes to ordering the material. But then, the reflection of *habitus* and a mutual understanding within a social group of intellectuals comes into the picture. This aspect creates a meta-level in the HD debate. *Habitus* does not necessarily meet interests of stake-holders. This makes it often difficult to communicate the problems of HD to particular groups, e.g., diplomats, the military or the media.

For the time being I am reflecting how to collect and systematize the growing mass of material and single documents referring to the mushrooming market that HD has created. To be continued.

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