

**language  
education  
&  
the global care work  
economy**

**Mapping structural inequalities in  
Philippine nurse migration to Germany**

Dissertation zur Erlangung des Titels einer Doktorin der Philosophie  
vorgelegt der Philosophisch-Historischen Fakultät der Universität Basel

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And so we continue to do this work across the fictive boundaries of the academy, constantly wrestling with its costs, and knowing that the intellectual, spiritual, and psychic stakes are high, but believing that it is imperative to engage in the struggles over the production of liberatory knowledges and subjectivities in the belly of the imperial beast.

(Alexander and Mohanty 2010: 42)

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This study investigates the role language education plays in the labor migration of Philippine nurses who prepare, and are prepared, for the German market. It shows the ways that language education is central to regulating, facilitating and managing state-initiated migration of so-called skilled workers as well as how their linguistic preparation is set up as a new market. As language work is a vital part of most service work, it has gained importance in economic exchanges. Capitalist markets ask for a flow of workers and a flow of labor-intensive businesses that follow cheap labor paths with colonial and imperial continuity. The globalized market, however, is much more heteroglossic than is often assumed and language education is an important component in facilitating, managing and marketing these flows of labor. Furthermore, language testing helps state authorities to select immigrants and citizens. The need to go through language education and testing impacts the life of Philippine nurses, who go through processes of distinction, deal with regimentation and accept the full financial and ideological responsibility of such preparation. However, the space of language learning also opens moments of solidarity and complicity among those who are subjected to authority (whether the state or employers). A focus on language education serves as a lens to reveal the continuities and discontinuities of our understanding of language and social inequality.

Due to an increasing shortage of care workers, the global care work economy is marked by fierce competition. The following statement of a European Council official illustrates the labor situation on the European healthcare marketplace:

In the long term we may be desperate to get the people we need even though the public doesn't want Africans looking after their mothers. People want Christians, Filipinos, Brazilians, etc. There will be global competition for these people.

(cited from Feldman 2012: 165)

This statement, which reports on blatantly racist preferences, exposes not only the fact that nurses will be needed globally (by those countries who can afford to attract them) and sought after in other countries, but also that they will be chosen according to their cultural background and association with specific categories of race. Hierarchies that stem from the underlying intricate and interwoven dynamics of a society structured by colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist forces become evident. Besides being considered a Christian nation, and therefore supposedly sharing a basic cultural experience, one of the distinct advantages of the Philippines over other populous countries in the Third World used to be command of English, a legacy from the United States' colonial supremacy. However, saturation of the English-speaking market and growing competition between English speaking laborers meant that new marketing strategies had to be found. It is mostly Germany paving the way for a larger scale migration of Philippine nurses. The bilateral labor agreement initiated in 2013 formed a governmental pilot program that envisaged the deployment of 500 Philippine nurses to Germany. The project, called 'Triple Win,' is managed in the Philippines by the Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)<sup>1</sup> and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)<sup>2</sup>. The title is intended to point out the three winners of the labor agreement: The Philippines is able to deploy the unemployed, Germany alleviates its care shortage and migrant nurses can develop their skills and support their families financially in the Philippines. The following study will document how, even though the project has moved more slowly than announced, the path for Philippine nurses to Germany has since been more broadly established.

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<sup>1</sup> The GIZ (Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit) is a federal enterprise that works in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. For the Triple Win project, they are supported by the ZAV (Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung), a part of the Federal Employment Agency. The ZAV is responsible for finding hospitals and elderly homes that seek employees from the Philippines.

<sup>2</sup> The POEA is the institution for workers who are entering a new position overseas for licensing and controlling brokering agencies.

The possible future of this labor migration became visible when the state secretary to the Minister of Health of Germany visited the Philippines in August 2019: She declared the continued interest of Germany in the recruitment of Philippine nurses and proposed more efficient programs to ensure an ever-increasing flow of care workers to Germany (German Federal Ministry of Health 2019).<sup>3</sup> Filipin@s<sup>4</sup> are perceived as language adept and also familiar with Germanic languages because of their profound knowledge of English. Teachers from the Goethe Institute Philippines mentioned this as an advantage compared to Vietnamese, especially concerning their phonetic competence. In order to obtain a visa for work in Germany, Philippine nurses need to possess a job offer in Germany and a language certificate. They need a B1 certificate if they are part of the Triple Win program, and if they are not part of this program, they need to present a B2 certificate<sup>5</sup>. This means that in order to facilitate migration, extensive foreign language training is required in the Philippines. So far it is the Goethe Institute – the official institute of the German state for promoting German language and culture – that handles language testing and the awarding of language certificates.

The following key moment during my ethnographic fieldwork in February 2015 contextualizes the study and introduces different players and discourses in the field:

I learnt about the big up-coming event “Mabuhay Germany” on my first day of fieldwork when I visited the Goethe Institute in Manila. Mabuhay is Tagalog and translates into English as ‘long live’ or ‘hello’. “Mabuhay Germany” is the flagship event of the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI). It is organized in cooperation with the German embassy, the Goethe Institute and the German European School Manila in order to celebrate the friendship between the two countries and to show that “our strong presence in this country,

<sup>3</sup> Film released on August 19, 2019 by the German Federal Ministry of Health.

<sup>4</sup> By using the sign @, I adopt a gender symmetrical writing practice used in Latin languages. The @ graphically connects the ending “a” (in Latin languages typically indicating female gender) and “o” (in Latin languages typically indicating male gender). The combination of “a” and “o” in a new sign also leaves room for queer identities.

<sup>5</sup> The language level corresponds to the common European Framework of Reference for Languages which serves (CEFR). The CEFR is a tool to assess language competency and was initiated in order to promote the international collaboration of language learning institutions and to facilitate inter-European migration.

represented by established companies in different industries, symbolize our unwavering commitment to support Filipinos through commerce and culture” (Press release from the GPCCI, January 30, 2015). By the time the event took place one month later, I was already a little familiar with Manila. It took me by surprise to see the venue in Bonifacio Global City with its shopping street, cafés, pedestrian walks and car-free zones. It is surrounded by smooth grey concrete walls separating it visually as well as physically from one of the poor neighborhoods of Taguig, Manila. Makati, Manila’s business district and home to the German embassy as well as the Goethe Institute is one of the neighboring districts; however, it is separated by heavy traffic like anywhere in Manila, depending on day and time.

The two-day event was set up around a huge stage where business or project presentations, a discussion forum and entertainment productions were held. The white tents, the wooden benches and the German food quarter resembled the atmosphere of a Bavarian Biergarten. Scattered along the walkways there were elaborate stalls by different companies and governmental institutions where a scavenger hunt (games, quizzes and a final raffle) encouraged visitors to drop by. The Goethe Institute was involved in several ways: Together with the German embassy they were part of the main discussion forum called “Tara na sa Germany – learn German and work in Germany!”, the high school kids from their partner school performed an act with a German musician and they had a stall where they were handing out the newly published booklet “Eine kleine Starthilfe für den Krankenhausalltag in Deutschland”, little giveaways, flyers and USB-sticks with the material of their newly launched website “Tara na sa Germany”. The material is mainly in German with English translations or supportive information. The website is announced to soon be translated into Tagalog and Bisaya. The stall of the Goethe Institute was extremely popular and many people – mostly young high school students – were gathering around the table, where the teachers and office workers were busy giving advice and handing out leaflets. The main questions from interested future German students (and nurses) did not address the language course but visa regulations. I said hello to a teacher I already was acquainted with when she asked me in a low voice who these two people are. She pointed to a couple, wearing t-shirts with the lettering “German School Manila” on the back. They carried German flags and were also handing out flyers – right in front of the stall of the Goethe Institute.



I approached them and was quickly involved in a lively conversation with Günther,<sup>6</sup> a stout German doctor in his fifties, and his fiancée Divine, a Filipina in her mid-twenties from Mindanao. Günther seemed to know a lot about the Triple Win project and the German language education of Philippine nurses as well as the flaws thereof. He learnt about the difficulties that hospitals in Germany had with the Philippine nurses, which were mostly caused by their lack of work-specific German skills. He pointed out that the Goethe Institute does not have any medical practitioners in their education program. With his medical background he wants to fill this market niche. He wants to set up a school and currently teaches a student at his own home. They invite me to sit with them. During the “Tara na sa Germany” discussion forum he keeps commenting and criticizing in a loud voice, which did not seem to follow the expected etiquette.

My first interaction with Günther and Divine, triggered by suspicious teachers of the Goethe Institute Manila and framed by the event Mabuhay Germany, shows different actors, connections, and broader discourses on language education and labor migration. The event is collaboratively organized by representatives from business, industry, and government. This structure already uncovers certain elements of the ‘migration infrastructure’ (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). The German embassy is part of the most central discussion round of the event “Tara na sa Germany”. They discuss visa requirements in addition to the economic security and innovative dominance of Germany. With the authority to grant visas, the embassy is the most crucial player of what Xiang and Lindquist (2014) would call ‘regulatory infrastructure’; in other words, the embassy is a key figure in the ‘migration apparatus’ (Feldman 2012). On the other hand, the event is initiated and organized by the German Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The purpose of the chamber and its flagship event is to strengthen business relations between the two countries. As a collaboration of businesses and industrial entrepreneurs, they are part of the ‘commercial infrastructure’ (Xiang and Lindquist 2014), which has also been called the ‘migration industry’ (Castles 2004). The close relations between representatives of the commercial and regulatory infrastructure already point to the intricate relations and intersectionality of different elements of the migration infrastructure; and, language education is at the center of all

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<sup>6</sup> All names of informants are changed.

of it. At the event, the Goethe Institute hands out material specifically designed for future migrants and most of the material is written specifically for nurses. This material positions future migrant workers in their roles as ‘migrant entrepreneurs’ or ‘travelers of the world’. Philippine nurses join the event mainly to learn about the regulations and conditions set by the German state. This focus on regulatory information – such as which language certificate needs to be obtained for a visa – is a first indication of the regimenting quality connected to language education. The round table on learning German in order to work in Germany made clear that the country is only accessible for certain types of skilled workers, such as nurses, and that it is impossible to be granted access without meeting certain requirements. Interestingly, the appearance of Günther, who is trying to access the market, disturbs the picture that is conveyed at the event. He does not fit into the exclusive atmosphere and does not seem to have any connections to the German business elite or embassy officials. He himself feels excluded from German society after going through a divorce and being unable to work after a heart attack. Trying to find a new perspective, he intends to set up a business, legitimating himself as a German teacher for Philippine nurses on the basis of his qualifications as a doctor. This local-level disturbance exposes a broader disturbance: The market is developing and finding its own ways and entrepreneurial actors within the logic of the capitalist economy.

The event uncovered how language education is central to the regulation of workers and border control, how it develops into an industry, and how language learning institutions serve as places where power is reproduced. The role of language in migration has increased dramatically as the demand for so-called skilled migrants has risen. With language competency as a job requirement, language adds value to future migrants. This ethnography is based on a six-month research stay in the Philippines. Through participant observation and interviews, I gained insight into the personal level of migrant workers and teachers. I further accessed the institutional level through participant observation and by collecting and analyzing materials related to the regulatory framework. With a specific focus on language education and labor migration from a country of the global South to a country of the global North, I contribute to research in critical sociolinguistics (see Duchêne and Heller (2012) for an edited volume and McElhinny (2015) for a review). The presented study can, on the one hand, be taken as a situated knowledge on the linguistic preparation of Philippine

nurses migrating to Germany. On the other hand, it is intentionally embedded in the broader context of language and an international division of reproductive labor (Parreñas 2000) in order to provide insight on the connections between language and imperialism (e.g. Tupas 2003), language and capitalism (e.g. Duchêne 2011), and language and state authority (e.g. Gutekunst, 2015) with a more explicit intersectional perspective (e.g. Lorente 2018). Furthermore, this study contributes to applied linguistics research on the conditions of language acquisition (such as motivation in language teaching or anxiety in language testing), through a sociolinguistic perspective that could explain phenomena not visible on an individual or psychological level. Beyond linguistics, it will provide new perspectives in migration and critical border studies, showing the central role of language education in the country of origin and the ways it is used to facilitate and regulate migration flows.

The following three sets of research questions guide this study:

- 1) How does language education serve as a tool for border management?  
How, when, where and by whom are speakers regulated and selected?
- 2) What are the conditions under which language education develops into an industry? How, where and when does the market develop?
- 3) Who gains what from language education and testing? How does language education and testing impact the material living conditions and experiences of students? Who profits from these experiences and how?

After this introduction, which briefly contextualized the ethnographic study and its field site in a critical sociolinguistic tradition and other relevant disciplines, I turn to Chapter 2, which provides an overview of the historical and socio-economic context of the study. This contextual information is further rooted in relevant sociolinguistic research traditions that provide the theoretical background of this study; namely, the intersectionality of unequal distributions of power such as imperialism, capitalism, state authority and patriarchy shape German language education as preparation for nurse migration from the Philippines. Chapter 3 discusses the choice of a decolonial, feminist ethnographic methodology, access to the field as well as the different spaces observed, and types of data obtained. Four analysis chapters follow this theoretical, contextual, and methodological base: Chapter 4 investigates the role of language education in the migration apparatus or regulatory infrastructure, with a focus on the ways this impacts

the preparation of Philippine nurses. It analyzes the (governmental) institutions involved, documents framing and regulating the labor migration and their architectonic arrangement (geopolitical location as well as infrastructural set-up), and salient debates around language education and labor migration. Chapter 5 continues with an analysis of the language education industry as a result of the bilateral labor agreement between Germany and the Philippines develops, expands, and diversifies. It is attentive to the different players on the market: Internationally renowned institutions (the Goethe Institute and Berlitz), smaller privately-owned language schools, and teacher entrepreneurs. The analysis reveals the ways that the players' different measures reinforce existing social inequalities. Chapter 6 exclusively focuses on the role of the Goethe Institute as a node between the states and private industry. Their leading role in the market and in the border management apparatus of Germany, where they become an externalized place of border control, is crucial for the creation of a space for Germany's self-promotion as an attractive destination country (in dire need of a skilled workforce), the positioning of future immigrants as ideal citizens, and its positioning as an institution that pre-selects workers on the basis of their willingness and ability to invest. Chapter 7 turns to the material living conditions and affective responses of Philippine nurses who learn German – it investigates how language education and language testing with their different temporalities help prepare migrants while opening a space and the possibility of solidarities that cannot be completely regulated. I then turn to a conclusion of the findings and a discussion of future directions in Chapter 8, reflecting on the importance of learning more about the intersecting topics that shape this study – language, wage labor, academia, and care.

## Chapter 2

# Language and the circulation of working bodies

### 2.1 Introduction

This study investigates the role of language education and language testing in the production and exacerbation – but also contestation – of different systems of domination and exploitation. The positioning from where I raised questions as well as collected and analyzed data, from a position that aspires to be anti-capitalist, feminist, anti-racist, decolonial and anti-authoritarian. As such, I understand language as a social practice that can never be described, analyzed or understood without being aware of and attentive to its politicality. This study is part of a “sociolinguistics that asks sociological questions” (Heller 2011:49) where language is not merely seen as an analytical lens to study social inequality, domination and exploitation but as part of the social structure.

This chapter provides a background for understanding why these specific questions need to be asked, and why I consider my positioning an attempt to produce “liberatory knowledges” which Alexander and Mohanty (2013: ix) describe as knowledge that provides radical tools for understanding and fighting against social inequality and towards a social revolution. In other words: this chapter lays bare my inspirations in order to make understandable how I came to the analysis presented in the following

chapters. This is the part of an academic work that is most commonly called theory, and I follow Chandra Mohanty's understanding thereof:

I „do“ feminist and antiracist theory as a scholar, teacher, and activist in the U.S. academy – so how do I understand the significance of theory and analysis? I believe that meanings of the “personal” (as in my story) are not static, but that they change through experience, and with knowledge. I am not talking about the personal as “immediate feelings expressed confessionally” but as something that is deeply historical and collective – as determined by our involvement in collectivities and communities and through political engagement. In fact it is this understanding of experience and of the personal that makes theory possible. So for me, theory is a deepening of the political, not a moving away from it: a distillation of experience, and an intensification of the personal. The best theory makes personal experience and individual stories communicable.

(Mohanty 2003: 191)

Theory, therefore, is rooted in the personal experience of a researcher, who carefully situates her informants' experiences and herself. The theoretical framing of a study is reflective of a researcher's personal trajectory, and links to the larger societal structure and its historical continuity have to be made explicit. Heller (2011:35) considers research in critical sociolinguistics to be based on a similar understanding of the personal as political and theory as a distillation of the personal: knowledge production is always marked by the hegemonic distribution of power, which determines who can ask questions and what kind of questions ultimately are being asked. Therefore, the researcher has to be reflective of her own stakes in the research project, considering whom she is accountable to, and if and why there are different intentions for different audiences.

My “judgement or assumption that there is a need for social change” (Gillies and Alldred 2012), which is the starting point of any feminist research, is based on an experience of having been treated differently – mostly more critically or condescendingly – because of being read as female and with a non-academic, lower middle class background.<sup>7</sup> Driven by my previous scholarly engagement with postcolonial literatures on the one hand and feminist lexicography on the other hand,

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<sup>7</sup> I consider these elements crucial for the theoretical underpinnings as well as the analysis of this research but they greatly influenced the definition of and access to the field. This will be further discussed in chapter 3.2.

I developed an interest in intersectional analyses of mechanisms of domination and hierarchization. I began my research by looking into the effects of colonialism and capitalism on Philippine language policy, while struggling with the fact that I am read as white, hold a Swiss passport, and feeling that I do not have any position to observe or discuss the matter. My increasing interest in the European/Swiss migration regime motivated me to read about the initiatives of Germany and Switzerland to employ nurses from the Philippines. When I came across marketing material in Germany that was issued by the Goethe Institute, the role of language education and testing in the global healthcare marketplace became apparent and my own investment into this research grew, as I came to believe that I had something to contribute. My political conviction that theory cannot be separated from practice and that the universal becomes visible in the particular was strengthened: thus, it became clear that anchoring my research in the lived experiences of labor migrants (Philippine nurses preparing for work in Germany) would grant an intricate picture of overlapping layers of domination and the resulting struggles.

The following sub-chapters follow the historical background and theoretical underpinning of my study: I first turn to English language education in the Philippines and its historical continuity of US imperialism while discussing the benefits and dangers of framing it within the sociolinguistic debate around linguistic imperialism. I then turn to the diversification of the language education market in the Philippines, a labor brokerage state on the global market. This development is the background for a discussion of existing research on language and political economy. I then turn to the current state and historical development of German language education outside Germany. Observation of the increasing use of language testing and certification as a part of border control and of the selection of workers allows for a discussion on language education and state authority. I will then focus on the global care work economy by situating the bilateral labor agreement of Germany and the Philippines synchronically as well as diachronically. A discussion at the end of this chapter presents the need for an intersectional analysis that is rooted in decolonial feminism.

## 2.2 English language education in the Philippines

### 2.2.1 *Historical (dis)continuities*

The spread of English and its role in education in the Philippines is marked by social inequality (Tollefson 1991; Tupas 2009; Tupas and Lorente 2014; Lorente 2013). A focus specifically on class in analyzing the position and function of English in Philippine social structure reveals historical continuities and helps with an understanding of current hierarchical distributions of power (Tupas 2003: 13). This section follows these hypotheses and explains how English language education is entailed in the reproduction of class (and consequently its exploitation), how communities struggle against or celebrate English in Philippine education, and how these forms of celebration are marked by an ‘imperial amnesia’ (Tupas 2003) from the origins of English in education.

The role of English in Philippine education not only encompasses the teaching of the language but also its use as medium of instruction for other school subjects. English was installed as the sole medium of instruction at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when a public-school system was opened under American colonial domination. With the implementation of a bilingual language policy in 1974, English was designated for the instruction of science and math and Filipino was designated for all other subjects (Lorente 2013). Many schools have since advocated English as the sole medium of instruction and explicitly use their focus on English as a marketing measurement. Ultimately, the main rationale lies in the education of ‘globally competitive’ professionals and an in education that ‘meets the demands of the human resource sector.’ The Philippines is a labor brokerage state with a government that is actively involved in finding possible labor positions for Philippine workers around the world; at the same time, it tries to attract companies and industrial branches interested in business process outsourcing (with the call center industry being the most prominent). The Philippine state is engaged in regulating this circulation of workers and in preparing future emigrants on various levels – it has formed governmental institutions for these specific purposes (Guevarra 2009; Rodriguez 2010) and it developed a marketing strategy that advertises Philippine workers as caring, submissive and inexpensive yet skilled (Tollefson 1991; Tyner 2004). The seminal study of Beatriz



Lorente (2018; 2012) on Philippine domestic workers in Singapore revealed the mechanisms of colonial and capitalist domination and exploitation that underlie language, education and the preparation of Philippine workers for overseas work:<sup>8</sup> English language skills are a crucial element of the marketing scheme of Philippine workers – a competitive edge amongst other labor brokerage countries interested in sending cheap labor abroad. The role of English in the Philippine education system ensured that enough students failed and enough were prepared for low-skilled jobs (Tollefson 1991): this helped produce “a hierarchy of labor – with corresponding levels of English skills meant for an externally defined labor market” (Lorente 2018: 47). This ‘hierarchy of labor’ serves the overlapping interests of states and international capital, while transferring the costs onto Filipin@s willing to (or rather forced to) work in bad-paid, low-valued positions (Aguilar 2014; Lorente 2018).<sup>9</sup>

Two main struggles against an English-only policy in language education can be observed: the use of the Philippine national language, Filipino, and the use of mother-tongues (an estimated number of 170 to 180 different languages are spoken in the Philippines). The bilingual language policy in education from 1974 came after decades of debates surrounding the need for a unifying national language as a sign of a postcolonial Philippine nation: Tagalog had been the most popular choice, but because of conflicting views it was renamed Pilipino and later Filipino.<sup>10</sup> However, when Tagalog was finally named the Philippines’ national language in 1987, the strength of English had already been solidified and it remained a language of government and education (Lorente 2013: 192). Part of the opposition against Filipino came from the Cebuano speaking region, which coined the term and campaigned against “Tagalog

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<sup>8</sup> My summary is extremely condensed: the studies by Guevarra (2009), Rodriguez (2010) and Lorente (2018) all provide intricate detail of observation as well as a sharp, historically informed analysis of the Philippine labor brokerage state.

<sup>9</sup> I agree with Aguilar (2014) and Lorente (2018) on the converging interest of state and industry. However, we should not only discuss a ‘hierarchy of labor’ and its effects on social inequality. From a perspective that analyzes the domination of state and capitalist industry, the violent and unequal result of wage labor as such have to be taken into account.

<sup>10</sup> Please see Gonzalez (2006) as well as Tupas and Lorente (2014) for a detailed account of this long political struggle over finding and implementing a national language in the Philippines and its ideological implications.

imperialism' in order to problematize the political and economic dominance of the Tagalog speaking elite in the region around Manila on the rest of the Philippine islands. This opposition, however, allied with pro-English lobbies rather than communities oppressed by the economically strong Tagalog speaking region of Manila and its surroundings. Therefore, the dual stronghold of Tagalog and English has to be seen as the result of elite struggles and negotiations (Tupas 2009).

In addition to initiatives to promote Filipino as medium of instruction, since 2012 the English-only policy has been challenged by the possibility of implementing various local first languages for basic and primary education – the so-called Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) (Parba 2018). The political struggle behind this change in Philippine language policy has been on-going and it is continuously debated and contested in the parliament (Tupas and Martin 2017). MTB-MLE gained a lot of support from linguistic research: the main argument in favor of such a change came from linguistic studies showing how cognitive development improved when children's first language was used as medium of instruction during primary school (Walter and Dekker 2011). Critical sociolinguists have reviewed this policy development and its potential liberatory effect from two main angles: on the one hand, it offers the opportunity of more equitable access to education, as English and Filipino increases social inequality by making large parts of the poorer population illiterate (Parba 2018; Tupas 2009). On the other hand, they raise the concern that it also neatly feeds into the hegemonic celebration of English for economic reasons (Lorente 2013; Tupas and Lorente 2014). Tupas (2009) emphasizes the idea that policy research on mother tongue education in the Philippines should not focus on the cognitive development of children (and its usefulness for access to the job market) but should derive from the wishes of the local population with regard to their social development and poverty alleviation.

English language education and English as a medium of instruction has been celebrated by scholars (see Gonzalez (1985) as discussed in Lorente (2007: 89)) in education and language policy as one of the best and most beneficial moves of the US colonial rule. This celebration has been discussed and heavily criticized by some scholars of Philippine language policy because of its failure to problematize the violence of American usurpation (Lorente 2013; Tupas 2008; Tupas 2003). The

narrative of grandeur attached to such a history of education in the Philippines is only possible through ‘imperial amnesia’ (Tupas 2003).<sup>11</sup>

The imperial annexation of the Philippines by the United States in 1901 followed different principles and justifications than the colonization through Spain three hundred years earlier with direct consequences on language directives and education. Spanish had only been taught to the very elite (see Driesch (1984) for a very detailed analysis with meticulous archival work). In contrast, the US started their imperial rule over the Philippines by sending a ship with more than 500 teachers (the USS Thomas) as soon as they positioned themselves as the winner of the Philippine-American war in 1901. Until the arrival of these teachers, soldiers assumed the duty of teaching English to the people who lived on the islands, revealing the interconnectedness of state, violence and language policy (Tupas 2003: 7). The American colonizers stressed the importance of one language to unite the islands and deemed linguistic diversity highly undesirable: English was their preferred solution (Yule 1925: 111).<sup>12</sup>

Two main objectives of the US choice to promote English in the Philippines have been identified: preparing a cheap workforce and enforcing a racial hierarchy. After the abolition of slavery and without a colony of their own, the United States did not have a source for cheap labor, so they had a strong interest in gaining access to such a labor force – which they thought to have found in the Philippines (Fujita-Rony 2003: 30; Giesecke 1987: 232). The public-school system was intended to reach as many children as possible. The focus of education was on language as well as physical activity, which Giesecke (1987) clearly connects with the objective to train future

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<sup>11</sup> Tupas’ coinage of a postcolonial experience reminds of a similar yet somehow reverse observation in the seminal work by decolonial, Haitian historian Michel Trouillot (1995): in “Silencing the Past” he demonstrates how the revolution of the slaves in Haiti was silenced in the French (and European) press because of the impossibility of thinking that slaves could and would rise up against and kill their masters. Tupas and Trouillot both problematize the silencing of violence in order to construct a historical narrative suitable to the ruling class.

<sup>12</sup> Tupas (2008) gives a detailed account of how the US developed their directives (English as national language and as the language of free schooling) and how the US government formed a commission to gather information on the needs and wishes of the local population. However, this commission consisted of Castilian speaking members of the elite as well as American colonizers. This clearly demonstrates how the education system, the role of language as well as societal structure at large was designed by “the combined power of empire and elite collusion” (Tupas 2008: 63).

workers and “increase the marketability of indigenous labor” (Giesecke 1987: 246). Furthermore, free schooling was only provided at the primary school level. Secondary and higher education were established only upon pressure of the (Spanish speaking) elite that was unwilling to send their children to English speaking primary schools without the possibility of continuing education in the same language (Giesecke 1987: 248-249). This delay of further education, along with the segregation of students through tuition fees, are signs of the United States’ interest in generating a labor force. Aside from such clear economic interests, the United States also promoted their colonial usurpation as ‘benevolent assimilation’: the imperial government established itself as a nation accepting the responsibility that rests with their proclaimed superiority and a sense of duty to educate what they deemed and constructed as less civilized people (Tupas 2002).<sup>13</sup> The authorities saw English as the language of ‘enlightenment’ and thus the right means of “uplifting” the Philippine population by teaching them democracy and Protestantism (see Dawe 2014). The inscription of the US objective of enlightenment shows the continuity of scientifically justified racism inscribed in modernity: equality of men was declared, but these men clearly had to be white (and male) (see for example Trouillot 1995; Buck-Morss 2009). Constantino (1970: 5), one of the most influential Philippine historians, perceives the focus of the US government on educating of the Philippine people as a highly successful move in their colonial policy – he describes it as ‘capturing minds’.

### 2.2.2 *Language and imperialism*

There is a great body of research in English linguistics in the Philippines that focuses on Philippine English as a variety of English either by describing it formally or investigating its role in society (see Bautista and Bolton (2008) or Dayag (2013)). Two of the most influential Philippine researchers on language policy, Andrew Gonzales and Bonifacio Sibayan, ideologically support the need for a national language for the country’s identity. At the same time, they value Philippine English as it is fully appropriated and consequently controlled by Filipin@s. As a result, they declare “linguistic imperialism in the Philippines a thing of the past” (Tupas 2002: 145). Tupas

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<sup>13</sup> Please see Coloma (2004) for an intersectional (explicitly decolonial and feminist) discussion of American imperialism and Philippine education.

(2003: 2) strongly criticizes their evaluation by pointing to the results of the very same policy review: the review also showed that English language competency in the Philippines indicates social class, as it is both economically rewarding and politically powerful. Lorente (2013: 188) strengthens such a critical evaluation of Philippine language policy research by stressing the ideological as well as material consequences that accompany a depoliticized and ahistorical view of English as “neutral” and “beneficial”.

Research on language policy in the Philippines, and the resulting conflicting interpretations are anchored in the widely held debate on the global spread of English. This incited much animosity within the research community, an affective density that might be indicative of a high-stakes topic in academic production. There are different possibilities for categorizing the research strands involved in this debate and I will quickly summarize and combine the accounts provided by Pennycook (2017: vii-xv) as well as Shim and Park (2008: 138-139): (1) ‘World Englishes’ was one of the first scientific responses to analyze the spread of English. Kachru (1996) presented a model that was cognizant of the colonialism behind the global importance of English: the center of English as British or US American was dissolved by demonstrating the local appropriation of Englishes in former colonies and discussing the emergence of English as pluri-centric language. The result was an understanding of Indian English or Philippine English (among others) next to American or British English, as well as a great body of research on the different varieties. (2) Another part of linguistic research has celebrated the effects of the spread of ‘English as a global language’: Whereas a local language might be important for national identity, English is the language that connects the world’s population and eases communication (Crystal 1997). Similarly, research on ‘English as a lingua franca’ (Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2005) marked a move away from an understanding of English divided into national varieties: The mobility of English is stressed and the hierarchical relationship between native and non-native speakers is questioned. (3) Studies on ‘linguistic imperialism’ investigate the globally hegemonic position of English and the imperial design of teaching English as a foreign language. English is seen as instrumental for the reproduction of the United Kingdom and the United States of America’s ruling power (Phillipson 1992).

All of these strands of research on the global spread of English have received much critique (Pennycook 2017; Shim and Park 2008): Firstly, World Englishes often neglects power hierarchies amongst the different varieties of English, as well as the inequalities that accompany them in their specific localities. Secondly, a celebratory analysis of global English has largely neglected any kind of power dimension: this research can be read as a de-historicized account is unable to provide an analysis of class oppression and other types of social inequalities. Thirdly, linguistic imperialism receives critique for its monolithic perspective that remains on a super-structural level silencing the multi-layered experience of English, which can even show emancipatory effects (Canagarajah 1999). The need for a sharp and nuanced analysis of English and its interconnection with power and social inequality is a declared objective of a critical sociolinguistics of English: new strands of research have developed out of engagement with previous research traditions and from the complexification of the ‘linguistic imperialism’. These studies are interested in “the local embeddedness of English” (Pennycook 2017: xi) or in ‘unequal Englishes’ (Tupas and Salonga 2016) with English language education repeatedly identified as an important research site for analyzing the role of English in the reproduction of social inequality.

## **2.3 Diversification of language education in the Philippines**

### *2.3.1 Staying globally competitive – teaching foreign languages*

The language struggles in the Philippines described in the previous section centered around the role of English in education and the need to provide a post-colonial alternative – Filipino – and later a more inclusive option – Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Additionally, language education in the Philippines further diversified with the teaching of foreign languages. There are two main areas where foreign languages are taught in the Philippines: (1) courses for adults as preparation for their overseas work engagement (or for work positions in the BPO industry) and (2) an official program for high school students.

(1) Foreign language courses are offered by the language skills institute of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). TESDA was founded in 1994 with the objective of providing training for Philippine workers at the level of post-

secondary education. Furthermore, TESDA is explicitly asked to foster collaborations with private industry that profits from a skilled workforce (TESDA 1994). The language skills institute of TESDA opened in 2007 and offers courses in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, Nihongo, Italian and Russian, with an option to include further languages if the demand arises. The headquarters are located in Manila with regional branches operating throughout the country. Language courses are offered for free and explicitly comprise of languages spoken in traditional overseas work countries: a program that is a logical result of the Philippine state's brokering of cheap labor abroad and of having modeled its education towards this goal (Lorente 2012). The courses take around 100 to 150 hours in total and admission is given preferentially to those applicants who are likely to be hired or already have a concrete job offer.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) runs crash courses in various languages; these courses only last for a few days or hours and are directed at domestic workers who are soon to leave the country. They learn phrases that might be uttered by their employers, such as short commands, and they are instructed to answer in short phrases of agreement and not to complain. Lorente (2018) discusses these courses and the Philippine government's focus on language skills as part of "scripts of servitude." She reveals how the Philippine labor market is dependent on foreign markets in need of cheap labor and how language skills (and the trained "submissiveness") belong to the "competitive edge" of Philippine workers. As part of an official governmental program, English skills were seen as belonging to a basic set of competencies. Some knowledge of the language of the destination country was an important part of what turned a Philippine domestic worker from a plain maid into a "super maid" (Lorente 2007: 196-197): The program was promoted by pointing to its empowering potential, as future domestic workers could move more freely on the global market and better protect themselves in case of abuse.

In addition to the courses offered by TESDA and OWWA, there are also language programs at major universities' modern language departments, private language schools as well as cultural institutions of foreign governments. There is little information on the motivation (or numbers) of participants of these language programs: Larger scale foreign language education seem to be connected with state-

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<sup>14</sup><http://www.tesda.gov.ph/about/tesda/39>, last accessed on October 17, 2019

facilitated labor migration – besides German, the subject of this study, there have been smaller-scale courses for Finnish and Japanese (both directed at care workers, which will be discussed in section 2.5.4). These types of language learning institutions are similar in that they include a payment of course fees and/or set difficult entry requirements. Furthermore, they have limited geographical availability (another factor that highly increases costs, as will be discussed in detail in sections 5.3 & 7.2.1).

(2) The Special Program in Foreign Languages (SPFL) is offered as an elective subject at selected public high schools in the Philippines. In 2017, a total of 10,526 high school students studied one of the five languages that were part of the program at the time: Spanish (3,531 students), Japanese/Nihongo (3,020 students), Chinese/Mandarin (2,280 students), French (1,112 students), and German (583 students). During the same year, Korean was included in the program (DepEd Feb 2017a). The Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) collaborates with embassies and governmental cultural agencies of the countries who are interested in promoting the languages offered in the program: the embassies of Spain and France as well as the Instituto Cervantes, Alliance Francaise de Manille, Japan Foundation Manila, the Goethe Institute Philippines, the Confucius Institute at Angeles University Foundation and the Korean Cultural Center (Tan 2018: 69-70; DepEd 2012; DepEd 2018). These collaborators are responsible for the language education of high school teachers (DepEd 2017a). The promotion of the SPFL by the DepEd is clearly connected to employability and access for Philippine high school students to the globalized marketplace (DepEd 2017b). When the media critiqued the program of replacing Filipino with foreign languages, the DepEd defended its actions by pointing to the fact that the foreign languages are elective and thus mere additional courses. Furthermore, they used the discourse of global competitiveness to legitimize the SPFL (DepEd 2018).

The historical development of the SPFL is marked by standardization/institutionalization as well as expansion. In 2008, Spanish was presented as part of a pilot project for teaching foreign languages that developed into an approved project to be pursued and expanded: the program additionally mentions French and Japanese in 2009 as well as Chinese and German in 2011 (DepEd 2008; DepEd 2009; DepEd 2011). In 2013, through the Enhanced Basic Education Act, the



Philippines underwent the educational reform K-12 that not only integrated the previously discussed MTB-MLE but also the SPFL (DepEd 2017a).<sup>15</sup> In 2017, Korean was added to the program with a celebratory ceremony, pointing to the growing prestige and public interest that foreign language learning had received by that time. The Spanish language program is interested in expanding to other high schools for which purpose they created Centers of Excellence: These centers marked particularly successful high schools that could function as examples and that received more support from stakeholders (Seameo-Innotech 2014).<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, institutionalization and professionalization can also be seen in measures to make the foreign language teaching career more attractive; the introduction of a specific bachelor program in education studies was suggested for this. It was framed as a response to the fundamental role of teachers and the fact that the scarcity of this resource slows down further expansion (Seameo-Innotech 2014).

Access to the SPFL program is marked by limitations on several levels: the geographical location, infrastructural and financial resources, as well as English language competency. In 2012, Spanish was taught in certain high schools throughout the whole country. All of the other high schools that were part of the program were mainly located in and around Manila (the National Capital Region) with the exception of French that divided its focus on the region around Manila as well as Cebu (the

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<sup>15</sup> One of the major changes of this reform was the increased focus on vocational training for which Germany's vocational training functions as a blueprint. Germany and the Philippines entered an agreement to collaborate on promoting dual learning programs with support from TESDA as well as the German Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI) and German companies operating in the Philippines (Embassy of the Philippines, Berlin 2014). Chapter 4.2 discusses institutions involved in the preparation of Philippine nurses for Germany and points to the increasing interest of German industry in German language education in the Philippines. However, a sociolinguistic study focusing on German teaching in connection with vocational training and the increasing BPO activities of German companies might provide further insight into the role of language education in the current hegemonic distributions of power.

<sup>16</sup> It remains unclear who is mainly responsible for such expansions (the DepEd, the Spanish governmental institutions or individual high schools) – in the case of German, the Goethe Institute is fundamental to the choice of new high schools (chapter 4.5.2 & 6.2.2 provide more details and analysis of the program). However, further comparative research might give new insight into state interest in language promotion.

second biggest city of the country).<sup>17</sup> The distribution of Spanish in all regions of the Philippines was part of the regulations developed for the pilot program (DepEd 2008): This requirement seems to have been neglected for the other languages.<sup>18</sup> An assessment of the Spanish program by a research institute revealed that the program experienced financial struggles for materials and infrastructure: The different high schools were affected to varying degrees because of different treatment by the stakeholders. Additionally, high schools in the provinces faced problems with financing teacher education – although the teaching is borne by the foreign governments, the location of the Instituto Cervantes is located in Manila.<sup>19</sup> This meant that face-to-face teaching involved traveling and accommodation expenses that put provincial high schools at a disadvantage in terms of access to SPFL (Seameo-Innotech 2014).<sup>20</sup> A further limitation of access to the program is the entry criteria of English language competency for high schools, teachers, and students: Only high schools with high English competency, teachers with a bachelor degree in English and students who are deemed to have “adequate” knowledge of English can participate (DepEd 2008; the DepEd memorandum explicitly adds adequate Tagalog skills as an entry requirement for students). Tupas and Lorente (2017) point to the “grip of English”

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<sup>17</sup> Spanish was taught in 65 high schools (10 in the National Capital Region, NCR), German in 9 high schools (all in the NCR), Japanese in 21 high schools (18 in the NCR, 2 in the central Visayas), French in 13 high schools (6 in the NCR, the rest in the central Visayas), Chinese in 32 schools (25 in the NCR, the others distributed around the country), Korean in 10 high schools (all in the NCR) (DepEd 2012; DepEd 2018).

<sup>18</sup> This can be read as a sign of the geopolitical reasons behind the geographical location and the interest and power of foreign governments. This observation is another reason for a comparative study that could reveal continuities in the spread of (foreign) languages and social inequality.

<sup>19</sup> The other cultural institutes are set in Manila as well except for the Confucius Institute in Angeles City, which is also located on Luzon and only a two-hour drive away from Manila (There are two other Confucius Institutes in the Philippines located in Manila, research into the choice of Angeles City for the SPFL program might give further insights).

<sup>20</sup> Seameo-Innotech is a research institute of an intergovernmental organization of Southeast Asian countries cooperating on issues of education and it is located at the University of the Philippines Diliman (Quezon City, Metro Manila). It carried out this assessment of the SPFL program on behalf of the Spanish embassy in the Philippines and the DepEd. The results were mainly celebratory of the program. The issues concerning limited access were outside of their focus, however, they were mentioned as aspects to be improved.

that is visible in the SPFL: English competency becomes a minimum requirement and, thus, functions as a gate-keeper for other school subjects.

These developments in foreign language education reveal the continuity of social inequalities. Foreign language education for adults as well as high school students is promoted or legitimized by its attributed usefulness for access to the globalized labor market. And, access to these programs is marked by inequality: On the one hand, it is limited by geographical focus on the capital and the second biggest city in the Philippines. On the other hand, it is exactly the future foreign language students that are supported who have the biggest chances of becoming employed (in the case of TESDA courses), who have the financial means to pay for their education (in the case of specific-work related preparation programs), or who are already more educationally privileged through language competency in English and Filipino (in the case of high school students). Social inequalities that were revealed through research on English and its connection to imperialism can be observed with other foreign languages (such as German) in the Philippines. The sociolinguistic questions raised by the diversification of language education and the expansion of foreign language teaching can be read as capitalist market principles. The historical continuity of the need for language education to gain access to the labor market raises the need to discuss language and capitalism.

### *2.3.2 Language and capitalism*

Within a “sociolinguistics that asks sociological questions” (Heller 2011: 49) there has developed a body of research that analyzes language from the perspective of political economy. It locates the research objective – the role of language – in the current economic conditions of capitalism, most often specified as ‘late capitalism,’ or ‘neoliberalism’ (Duchêne and Heller 2012; Flubacher and Del Percio 2017; Rojo and Del Percio 2019; for an overview of the research in this field see McElhinny (2015) or Del Percio, Flubacher, and Duchêne (2016)).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> There is an extensive discussion on the definition of these terms, a discussion that I do not repeat here (see for example Harvey (2005); Allan and McElhinny (2017) or Ortner (2011)). I consider it important to frame the current hegemonic economic system as capitalist. I prefer this term out of fear that neoliberalism – without firmly naming it as a historical moment of capitalism – has the potential to serve as a

The development of language in Philippine education, especially as a form of preparation for labor migration, demonstrates how the implementation and constancy of English, the consistent continuation of English in education and the move to include other languages is connected to developments of the market. (Late) capitalism is marked by market expansion and saturation as well as tertiarization, making it necessary to problematize previous views on language. Heller and Duchêne (2012: 3) point to a development since the 1990s where language is increasingly seen with regard to its economic valuation; this is in contrast to a previous focus on the interconnections of language with politics and culture (such as “language as whole bounded system”). The former perspective is marked by capitalist market dynamics whereas the latter is strongly connected to the nation state and its formation. These two views shaping language and its speakers compete with, but also nourish, each other; they can be subsumed under the tropes of ‘pride’ and ‘profit’ (Heller and Duchêne 2012).

The current need to focus on language in (late) capitalism is not only the result of this research interest in sociolinguistics but also because of the rise of the service economy that has attributed central importance to language. This development increases the amount of language work which is immediately subjected to market expansion and saturation (and consequently to the search for new markets): Language is a resource that is central in the service industry where it increasingly becomes the product itself (as for example in the call center industry) and is subject to surveillance and control (see Cameron (2000) and for further references see Del Percio, Flubacher, and Duchêne (2016: 58)). This results in ‘language industries’ (for example in the field of interpretation or education; see Heller and Duchêne (2012: 13) for a more extensive list).

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depoliticized euphemism. Allan and McElhinny (2017: 81) point to two main understandings of neoliberalism: firstly, drawing on Harvey (2005) as a “political project to restore class power for a new imperialist capitalist class”, and secondly, as mode of government that stresses ways of governance beyond the state and into the realm of the self. I will use the term ‘neoliberalism’ to describe and discuss observations that point to the second of these understandings.

Research on language and political economy under capitalism stresses the importance of a historically informed perspective on the material conditions of language and of speakers: the focus on speakers is important here as it makes possible an investigation of how people are affected by hierarchical distributions of power. The body of research on this is often marked by a clear political stance against exploitation and domination. The production, distribution and consumption of language is thus investigated in terms of the systemic production or enforcement of social inequality (see Del Percio, Flubacher, and Duchêne (2016) and Allan and McElhinny (2017) for an overview).

Language functions as an important tool for the selection of workers or citizens which is achieved by different processes. Entrepreneurialism as well as distinction (products or workers that promote marketable differences over other products or workers) have been identified as crucial means of selection (Heller and Duchêne 2012). It is these two processes that help discuss the development in the Philippines through a lens of political economy: Entrepreneurialism is the need of the individual to adapt to changes of market needs and is thus a form of flexibilization. Neoliberalism as a mode of governance draws attention to how business (mentality) encroaches on every aspect of life. Along these lines, May (2012) identifies the *entrepreneur* as one of the two dominant figures of neoliberalism (complemented by ‘the consumer’), who “thinks of himself or herself in terms of investing toward the future for the sake of particular returns” (May 2012: 43). Other research identified the entrepreneurial worker and labor migrant as a “bundle of skills” or “skill set”, ever flexible and positioned by governments and employers as fully self-responsible for their competitiveness in the labor market (Del Percio 2017; Feldman 2012; Urciuoli 2008). The fact that workers have internalized their own most profitable management results in less regulatory work for the employers (Urciuoli and LaDousa 2013). Del Percio (2018a) shows that this transformation of a human being into a commodifiable worker is also connected to self-disciplining and self-regulation in the case of unemployed migrants.

Distinction is the process of adding value to a product (and by extension also to workers): If workers are increasingly seen as skillsets, language competency is an added value that gives an advantage towards new or better paid positions on the labor market (Heller and Duchêne 2012: 8-9; Lorente 2012). However, much research has shown that this is not necessarily the case and multilingualism can have reverse effects if there

is a “wrong” combination of languages (Stevenson 2015; Duchêne 2019). A second type of distinction through language can be observed for marketing reasons: Language can add symbolic value to a clearly identified set of consumers (see here the fascinating research by Sebastian Muth (2018) on the preference of Swiss interpreters without Russian as first language by Russian medical tourists).

These processes surrounding the crucial role of language competency for the selection of workers turn language education into an important research site (see for example the edited volumes of Block and Cameron (2002) or Flubacher and Del Percio (2017) as well as the study of Shim and Park (2008)). In this context language education becomes part of the ‘migration industry’ (Castles 2004; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen 2013) which focuses on the involvement of private service providers in the migration process. (Socio-)linguistic analysis has focused here on the English language education industry and revealed the size of this business (mounting into billions in Canada (see Shin (2016)) or New Zealand (see Liu (2005)) and encompasses the whole production chain (which includes teachers, teaching materials and language tests) (Mahboob 2011). This industry is shown to be connected to other education industries (Shin 2016)<sup>22</sup> and/or to immigration regulations (Liu 2005),<sup>23</sup> which can open or close a market. Language myths (the role of English for development and science, the myth of a standard language and the myth of native language teachers) help perpetuate and strengthen the industry (Mahboob 2011).

Furthermore, language learning institutions become a space where people can turn into speakers of new languages or of a higher valued standard variety – a space where they can acquire skills and raise their employability. Shin (2016: 515) continues her analysis

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<sup>22</sup> Shin’s (2016) ethnography on the English language industry of Korean learners shows the co-dependency of the Canadian higher education industry and the English language industry.

<sup>23</sup> Liu (2005) provides a discourse analysis of newspaper reports on the immigration of Asians in New Zealand and only focuses implicitly on language: The more than a billion worth English industry (generating more profit than wool) was a result of the welcoming of Asian immigrants involved in business investment as well as Asian students after policy changes in 2000 and 2001 (Liu 2005: 468). It was also another, this time restrictive, change in immigration policy in 2003 that brought the language education industry to collapse (Liu 2005: 469).

by demonstrating how the language education industry takes part in the transmission of entrepreneurial strategies and understandings on to English learners: the purportedly generated agency in reality hides the unequal access to language learning institutions, increasing not only material inequalities but also emotional distress. Language learning institutions are also spaces where 'legitimate' language is produced, preserved and controlled (Heller 2010: 108): There is an authority that decides what is the 'good' or the 'right' variety of language, which implying processes of standardization and institutionalization. In addition, these studies point to another aspect: The fact that language education is used for regimentation (this will be explored in more detail in section 2.4.3).

The political economic perspective on language makes possible an analysis of the development of foreign language teaching in the Philippines: The choice to start the SPFL program from the perspective of a labor brokerage state; the choice to implement SPFL at a school from the perspective of school directors; the choice to elect a course in a foreign language from the perspective of high school students. All of these choices can be seen as a form of "speculative capital" (Tabiola and Lorente 2017). Offering or acquiring foreign language competency has no clear exchange value (such as a better job or a better pay) but holds the potential of a reward in the future. However, in the case of TESDA, the language courses are strongly connected to a very specific reward, as a job offer is often a pre-requisite for participation. In the case of Philippine nurses, German language education prepares for a language exam, which upon successful completion is part of the requirements to apply for and obtain a work visa for Germany. Although capitalism and the labor market highly shape the dynamics of migration, the work visa is issued by the German state. Therefore, a study on language education and labor migration must include a discussion of language and its connection to state authority. The tensions relating to the interplay of state and industry are situated between the discursive establishment of freedom of movement and open markets and the regimentation and violence of state control (see Duchêne, Moyer, and Roberts (2013) for a short discussion of these conflicting discourses and practices).

## 2.4 German language education for speakers of other languages

### 2.4.1 *The politics of German language education abroad*

The German government celebrated the fact that there were 15.4 million German language learners worldwide in 2015. This number marked the end of a negative trend observed during the previous evaluation period. The increase (most notably observed in Asia) was thus a sign of the spread of German as a foreign language within the years 2010-2015 (Auswärtiges Amt 2015). The number is the outcome of a study published by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and conducted every five years in collaboration with the Goethe Institute, the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen), and the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst). The opening words of the publication by a high official of the Federal Foreign Office attributes an important role for the foreign policy of a nation state to the promotion of language education abroad (Auswärtiges Amt 2015: 3). In the case of Germany, the responsibility of the promotion of German abroad lies with the Federal Foreign Office, which acts as a coordinator of different organizations such as the Goethe Institute and the German Academic Exchange Service (Schneider and Schiller 2000).<sup>24</sup>

Two main activities mark German foreign language policy, which shall serve as the structure of this section: (1) the spread of German within an international competition of political dominance and (2) the controlling of the German language and the selection of who gets access to Germany. These aspects of foreign language policy will be followed by (3) a discussion of the role of language in the assertion of state authority.

### 2.4.2 *Spreading German – facing international competition*

The growing number of German learners abroad that was announced in 2015 came after a period where parliamentary politics in Germany deemed the spread of German a thing of the past corresponding with a subsequent budget cut at the beginning of the

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<sup>24</sup> Please consult Ammon (2014: 959ff and 1091ff) for a comprehensive list of different initiatives and areas for the promotion of German language and culture.



21<sup>st</sup> century (Ammon 2014: 1098): English was credited with a success beyond any further competition. The publication from 2015 shows that this belief has changed and that the promotion of German is again seen as an important element of the country's foreign cultural and educational policy (Auswärtiges Amt 2015: 3). The renewed interest in German language learning abroad is seen in connection with the regained and internationally acknowledged technological and economic strength of Germany (Ammon 2014: 959). During the period of declining interest in the German language, German foreign cultural policy had become mainly concerned with the support of science and technology. When the growing interest led to the revocation of the budget cut for German language teaching, several initiatives were effected: They re-focused on the spread of German but with a clear link to the overall goal of specific foreign policy such as gaining a skilled workforce (Ammon 2014: 1104). Increasing numbers of learners at the Goethe Institutes (and other private language learning institutions) is a sign of the success of this policy objective: The growing number of learners (numbers are only available for the Goethe Institutes) connects with labor migration because of a correlation of a rise of 10-35% in Spain, Portugal, Italy or Greece in 2010 during the financial crisis (Ammon 2014: 975). Furthermore, Germany follows a clear geopolitical strategy in the choice of new locations and the amount of staff for Goethe Institutes (Schneider and Schiller 2000).

The main focus of the renewed interest in German teaching lay at the primary and secondary school level, which total 87% of the main spaces of learners (Auswärtiges Amt 2015: 6). German schools abroad received a substantial, and for the first time long-term, financial support, and in 2008 the Federal Foreign Office launched the initiative PASCH (Partnerschulen der Zukunft [partner schools of the future]) with the mission of implementing German courses in public high schools abroad (Ammon 2014: 959-961). The previously discussed German courses at local Philippine high schools (registered in the Philippines under the SPFL program) is part of the PASCH program for Germany. The Goethe Institute is one of the main coordinators and facilitators of the program and they identified 300 schools to be part of PASCH within the first year (Goethe-Institut 2008: 8). PASCH was hugely successful and by 2014 more than 1700 schools in 115 countries offered German language education (of which 550 schools offered a language certificate of the Goethe Institute designed for

schools) (Ammon 2014: 959). During the celebration of 10 years of PASCH in 2018 the numbers had risen to over 2000 schools in more than 120 countries and with a total 600,000 current and former German learners. The German government spends 51 million Euro on the program each year (and in 2018 it had budgeted a total of 415 million Euro since the beginning of the project) (Auswärtiges Amt 2018: 13).

PASCH schools serve as beacon in the countries and areas where they are located and have the objective of motivating further schools to participate (Auswärtiges Amt 2015: 5). The focus lies on the acquisition of schools that are known for their strength in (and focus on) science and technology. This desire to expand connects back to the aforementioned Centers of Excellence that are created within the SPFL program in the Philippines: the promotion of German language teaching (and from a Philippine perspective foreign language education) is therefore in the interest of both nation states with seemingly similar goals: The preparation of adequately skilled workers. The Federal Foreign Office describes the project's goals in one of its first position papers with clarity: Next to the strengthening German industry PASCH shall foster the creation of a global network with strong partners in economy, politics, culture especially in areas of geopolitical interest (such as Asia and the Middle East) and help "die „besten Köpfe“ für Deutschland gewinnen" [gain the «best minds» for Germany] (Auswärtiges Amt 2009: 12). PASCH and German companies cooperate for job and internship positions for former participants of the initiative. Furthermore, PASCH offers scholarships for the most excellent students to join German higher educational institutions as well as additional support for the transition to university in natural science and (information) technology disciplines (Auswärtiges Amt 2019: 13-14). This focus shows a clear connection to the interest of attracting workers through the promotion of the language.

This clear instrumentalization of German learners abroad is coupled with a second, salient argumentation concerning Germany's main motivation for investing in German education abroad: teaching German for intercultural understanding and development aid: PASCH is framed as an initiative to increase the economic and societal development in countries that are on the list for „Official Development Assistance“

(Auswärtiges Amt 2009: 12).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the initiative shall help increase access to multilingualism and education in the understanding that new prospects and horizons will follow and provide the departing point from which to “als internationale Lerngemeinschaft gemeinsam Zukunftsprobleme lösen” [solve problems of the future as an international learning community] (Auswärtiges Amt 2009: 13). PASCH solely promotes German language education instead of working on projects that teach languages spoken by the participants (such as Tagalog and Bisaya in the Philippines) to children in Germany in order to reach the professed goal of multicultural understanding: such an imbalance reveals that the framing of PASCH as a project to foster multilingualism is misleading. If German education is promoted within foreign language teaching around the world as an alternative to English, it becomes clear that multilingualism is clearly hierarchized (please see Duchêne (2019) for a discussion).

The two lines of argumentation for the spread of German, one celebrating it as a means to attract the best workers and the other as a form of humanist education can be seen as in tension; this is especially true as they mirror the positions of the two wings of German parliamentary politics: Left-wing politicians usually connect it with development aid while right-wing politicians see it as a form of economic investment or as part of security policy. However, both views appear in the same lists of the Federal Foreign Office in 2009 (Auswärtiges Amt 2009: 13) and ten years later they appear in the same speech of a government official (Auswärtiges Amt 2019: 5) and, thus, reveal how free market ideology can be fused with an organization of geographical units into nation states.

Historically the focus on language spread during times of economic (as well as technological and military) success correspond to the time when German language learning abroad was at its height (at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century): German became part of foreign language education at schools and universities across all technologically advanced countries (Ammon 2014: 101). This spread was halted when Germany lost political and economic power after the First World War: For Germany the loss of the

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<sup>25</sup> In an overview and evaluation of the PASCH initiative by Goethe Institute employees, they attribute the addition of this goal to budget reasons: Germany is allowed to add financial support for a project that develops countries on this list to its balance for development aid (Hoffmann, Hunold and Hoischen 2019: 430).

colonial property meant a defeat against the spread of English and French, and the loss of border areas meant that the space where German was taught and used decreased considerably. After the Second World War, the focus of German foreign language policy shifted towards the promotion of a different, positive image of Germany (Ammon 2014: 102-103).

### *2.4.3 Controlling language – selecting bodies*

The second dynamic of German foreign language policy focuses on the control and limitation of access to German. The use of language (competency and its certification) for the selection of immigrants and citizens might not traditionally be categorized as foreign language policy. However, changes to the Goethe Institute's areas of responsibility clearly demonstrate that language control (or rather, control through language) is part of Germany's foreign policy. Traditionally the Goethe Institute, as the foreign cultural agency of Germany, has the directive of the government to promote German language and culture abroad. Since 2005, integration and language became parts of German migration policy and the Goethe Institute came to act as an institution of Germany's border management (or border control) (Gutekunst 2015: 548). German language competency is not only a compulsory part of the process of gaining German citizenship but also a visa requirement for immigration. Stevenson (2015: 78) discusses the "dilemma" faced by people involved in teaching and testing. They either had to refuse their complicity in immigration control or continue their work with the aspiration of helping enforce a professional standard: The Goethe Institute chose the latter and introduced a program of "pre-integration" (language learning in the country of origin), "transition management" (measures during the waiting period before the actual migration) and "integration" (language courses upon arriving in Germany). The Goethe Institute receives funding from the European Integration Fund and the German Interior Ministry for these programs (Stevenson 2015: 78); this additional financial support to the budget primarily shouldered by the Federal Foreign office, reflects its expanding responsibilities.

Language testing has become a part of the regulation of new German citizens as well as potential immigrants (their evaluations are scheduled prior to entering Germany). Language certificates count as measurement and they follow the Common European

Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Stevenson 2015). The CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe in order to ease cooperation among educational institutions in Europe, evaluating language proficiency by defining levels of competency from the basic A1 to the proficient C2 (with the intermediate categories of A2, B1, B2 and C1) (Extra, Spotti and Van Avermaet 2009: 15-18).<sup>26</sup> The use of language certificates as visa requirements is marked by a system of hierarchization and selection that ranges from blocking immigration to the explicit attraction of potential (labor) migrants. Gutekunst (2015) showed how language serves as border control in the case of marriage migration from Morocco to Germany: The visa requirement of an A1 certificate, which was introduced in 2007, mostly serves to hierarchically organize prospective migrants. Less affluent people, or those living in the provinces, have much lower chances of passing the exam. Furthermore, the need for language learning in order to procure the certificate serves as a tool for prolonging the migration process with further stages of selection. Institutions that award certificates recognized by the German embassy in Morocco become part of the border regime (Gutekunst 2015: 550).

Language testing is also needed in some cases of labor migration for occupations that have high shortages. A nation state holds the power to form labor agreements, and, thus, to block or facilitate mobility in its best interest. Language competency may be seen as an important part of care work and thus a legitimate requirement for nurses to enter work positions in Germany. However, a comparative analysis of entry regulations shows that language acquisition and certification prior to entering Germany is not considered necessary for (1) EU nationals, (2) EU-BlueCard holders for third-country labor migrants as well as (3) nurses who migrated to Germany in the 1970s. These groups will be explained in turn.

(1) Nurses of EU nationality can work without any knowledge of German up until recognition of their nursing degree, at which point they need a B2 certificate.<sup>27</sup> Because of the freedom of movement inside the EU, it is not possible for the German state to ask for a language certificate; entry requirements are therefore entirely left up to the

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<sup>26</sup> Please see Extra, Spott and Van Avermaet (2009: 15-18) for an analysis of the use of the CEFR for immigration and citizenship with a focus on its inadequacy for the task.

<sup>27</sup> The recognition of the certificates will result in a payrise.

employers. German care homes and hospitals mainly recruit nurses from Italy, Spain and Portugal. Nurses from these locations have been reported to come to Germany without any prior knowledge of German and are provided with room and board by their employer during an intensive German course before they start their work (Pauly 2012).

(2) Non-EU labor migrants can apply for an employment visa for professionals with higher education in so-called qualified occupations (the BlueCard). For this type of visa, the German embassy in the Philippines asks for an employment contract and a proof of the recognition of their degree; in this case, B1 language competency is recommended but not mandatory (Federal Government of Germany 2019). Technically, Philippine nurses fulfill this requirement as they hold higher education degrees and even work in occupations that are on Germany's whitelist. Yet, the specific visa for them includes more surveillance, such as medical tests, and requirements, such as the B2 language certificate. There are two reasons why nurses cannot apply for the beneficial BlueCard, which allows working in any EU country after the first 18 months of residency. First, their profession is less highly qualified in Germany than in the Philippines, as German nurses do not need a university degree to practice. Second, their wages as nurses in Germany are too low: The annual income of a BlueCard holder has to exceed 53,600 Euro or 41,808 Euro (Federal Government of Germany 2019) in the case of a doctors and employees in natural science and technology; to the 27,000 Euro for nurses and 22,800 Euro for nurse assistants that Philippine nurses earn upon their arrival is not sufficient. Low wages for care workers – a heavily disputed topic amongst unions in Germany and a prime example of patriarchal valuations of reproductive labor – are used to impose a language requirement and less favorable treatment on these migrants.

(3) To relieve a care shortage in the 1960s and 1970s, nurses arrived in West-Germany from South Korea, Southern India (Kerala) and the Philippines. This labor migration was part of the so-called Gastarbeiter (guestworker) agreements: Through bilateral labor agreements, western and central European countries, including Germany and Switzerland, recruited a temporary workforce from Southern and Southeastern Europe. This formalization of migration helped cover these nation states' economic needs while receiving the opportunity to segregate and racially discriminate people who

do not hold the country's citizenship (Settele 2012).<sup>28</sup> The agreements asked for a pre-departure examination of each worker's health and qualifications but did not include a language test (Settele 2012: 74). Thus, nurses did not receive any language training prior to their departure to Germany; instead they usually started with a two-month intensive course upon arrival. Some media reported difficulties in communication between the newly arrived nurses and the German nursing team (Fischer 2014) and in some regions nurses were asked to start work two days after arrival before any language training (Han 2016). Other reports explicitly mention that there were never serious difficulties, as workers learnt the language on the job and through weekly classes for the first three months (bpa-Magazin 2012: 4).

In the case of marriage migrants: the language certificate as visa requirement is used as tool for border control. However, as Germany faces a growing care shortage and seeks bilateral labor agreements to bring nurses from abroad, the direct hinderance or blocking of nurse migration cannot be the goal. Indeed, the president of the German Federation of Private Social Services Providers (BPA) clearly opposed the language requirement in an editorial to their magazine in 2012. He views it as a great obstacle in the attraction of skilled workers, noting that “neighbouring countries such as Belgium, Norway or Sweden, who openly rejoice about the local prevention of skilled migration through the proverbial German thoroughness” (Maurer 2012: 3). He does not view the language requirement as useful for hospitals, instead classifying it as a business opportunity for language examiners. He points to the successful labor migration of nurses in the 1970s and suggests that nurses could be gradually given more tasks as they learn the language. This obvious tension between state regulation and the industry interests calls into question the function of language as an entry requirement, further grounding the motivation of this study.

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<sup>28</sup>Settele (2012) traces the laws regulating guest workers to the *Ausländerpolizeiverordnung* [police regulation on aliens/foreigners] from 1938, a law which for the first time addressed only non-German citizens: The historical continuity with a law from Nazi Germany was covered up by the adoption of the term “Gastarbeiter“ [guestworker] instead of “Fremdarbeiter” [alienworker] used during national-socialism.

The interconnection of language and control can be traced back to the Nazi regime and to German colonialism. During national-socialism the focus of German foreign language policy was to force German upon those who were deemed racially worthy (“rassisch wertvoll”) and prevent others from learning it (Ammon (2014: 103), who draws on research by Dirk Scholten (2000)). Scholten (2000) shows how German teaching to those categorized as inferior was restricted to basic knowledge of commands – a type of language competency similar to the language preparation courses for Philippine domestic workers discussed by Lorente (2018). A similar reluctance to spread the language can be observed during German colonialism. Unlike some of the other colonial usurpers in Africa (such as England and France), German colonizers were reluctant to teach German: they feared a unifying effect on the local populations and subsequent uprisings, they attributed limited intelligence and worthiness to indigenous peoples, they wanted to prevent eavesdropping by the colonized, and they faced infrastructural difficulties (Engelberg 2014: 312-313). However this reluctance of spreading German stood in tension with other language policy initiatives as the wish to establish a simplified version of German demonstrates.

<sup>29</sup> The main motivations of initiatives in favor of the spread of German lay in the assumption that it would help create loyalties in the competition with the UK and France (Engelberg 2014). Furthermore, language teaching became part of a movement to establish a school system, as the increasing capitalist interest of German companies in the colonies demanded an adequately educated workforce (Mehnert 1993).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See Mühleisen (2009) for a structural as well as sociolinguistic analysis.

<sup>30</sup> Mehnert’s (1993) important historical contribution to education and German colonialism includes detailed archival work. The study asks for similar research from a sociolinguistic perspective with a clear focus on the interconnection of language teaching and the needs of the labor market. Engelberg (2014) could serve as a starting point as it provides important sociolinguistic insight based on detailed and fascinating archival work. The colonial activities of Germany are a greatly neglected topic in the country’s historical narrative, making continuities before and after national-socialism and fascism less visible (see Ayata (2016) for a discussion). This can also be seen in the history of the Goethe Institute which has its origin in the Deutsche Akademie. The Deutsche Akademie was founded in 1923 and became the main propaganda machine for cultural politics of the Nazi-regime. The roots of the Goethe Institute founded anew in 1951 are visible in continuities amongst the employees and in acceptance of the Akademie’s financial resources. However, this legacy is rarely mentioned in the Goethe Institute’s own narrative of its history (see Michels (2005) for a detailed account). German colonialism has largely been omitted in historical linguistics (Faulstich 2009) with the edited volume by Ingo H. Warnke (2009) a first step to



Language was important for trade and for work in plantations and mining, which became particularly relevant with the rise of wage labor, the resulting internal migration, and the formation of multilingual work teams (Engelberg 2014: 313). There is also historical continuity of this use of language education for the skilling of a foreign workforce in tension with a fear of including unwanted, illegitimate people in the community of German speaking people. It is clear that social inequalities stemming from language education for labor migration have to be seen in connection with imperialism, capitalism, and state power (well beyond its imperial and capitalist inflections).

#### *2.4.4 Language and state authority*

German language education for speakers of other languages organized by the German state has shown two main tendencies: it is the result of initiatives that actively help its spread and it helps to manage Germany's borders in the selection of current and future immigrants. This interest in language spread is closely connected to the previous discussion on language and imperialism. The second motivation, that of using language for control and selection, adds a crucial perspective to understanding the role of language education in labor migration; specifically, it reveals the need to add state authority as an axis of power and domination. This is especially the case within a capitalist system where state power is often neglected or reduced to its capitalist interest.

The motivations behind these two approaches to language are complicated and sometimes even openly contradictory. Spreading German supports the needs of industry by skilling workers or aiding competition with other nation states. It also stems from the nation's self-perception of its moral, cultural, economic and military superiority. However, the exact same self-perception could lead to the opposite language policy – one that supports the building of boundaries and exclusion in an

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working through this neglect; it shows research gaps and raises awareness. Thus, there remains little available on Germany's interest in gaining power over the Philippines when Spain was struggling to keep its colonial dominance at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Schult 2000) or on German traders doing business in the country under the protection of the German military (Salazar 1997).

understanding that difference is deficit. These trends are not restricted to Germany but are observed in different nation states of western and central Europe.

Sociolinguistic research has discussed the key role of language in “selection, social mobility and gatekeeping processes” (Duchêne, Moyer, and Roberts 2013): Governmental institutions are key sites for granting mobility needed in the capitalist economy; they are also key sites for using language to control and regiment. This observation of the role of language in institutions is connected to two main poles of mobility for human beings in global capitalism:

Neoliberalism in the early twenty-first century is marked by market-based governance practices on the one hand (the privatization, commodification, and proliferation of difference) and authoritarian, national-security-driven penal state practices on the other. Thus, while neoliberal states facilitate mobility and cosmopolitanism (travel across borders) for some economically privileged communities, it is at the expense of the criminalization and incarceration (the holding in place) of impoverished communities.

(Mohanty 2013: 970)

Mohanty points us to the fact that the state grants free movement to some but is brutally violent (physically, emotionally and psychologically) to others: This is especially the case for illegalized and criminalized people inside or at the borders of a state. The way that irregular migration is treated by states has to be seen as the climax (“Kulminationspunkt”) of a state’s constant need to establish boundaries (Meyer and Purtschert 2008:150): A state constantly has to authorize who is part of the population, who is a citizen of the state, who is wanted, who is not wanted and who is criminal. The management of labor migrants, particularly those that have been actively recruited, is one aspect of this hierarchical system of societal organization. Feldman (2012) points to this tension in Europe’s migration apparatus: It simultaneously promotes labor migration for some and blocks entry for others. The analysis of different policies and discourses from security to labor or development shows how they “interweave” and form a “decentralized regime of migration management” (Feldman 2012: 34). In order to understand labor migration, the fact that nation states and their ‘proliferation of borders’ (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) are only partially permeable is taken to account in this study.

Capitalist forces have led to an increase in the circulation of goods and capital as conservative politics have tried to restrict the circulation of human beings. However,

the commodity of labor power needs the bodies that are supposed to perform it. It is in these cases – when labor power is needed for tasks that cannot be fulfilled through outsourcing – that borders become managed (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 19). State intervention in the form of regulation is legitimized by an understanding that migration cannot be prevented (Meyer and Purtschert 2008: 152). This understanding allows for the idea that regulating and selecting migrants is not a political decision but a way of dealing with “natural” economic processes. Lorente (2018) demasks this ideology of naturalness of economic processes by revealing how language becomes part of capitalist interests and state intervention, as she combines and discusses prevalent discourses, policies, laws and institutions while showing historical (dis)continuities. Language circulates in nation states as a symbol of unity, promising the opportunity to unite and overcome borders; at the same time, it constructs a boundary amongst insiders and outsiders (Heller and Duchêne 2012: 4). If migrants cannot meet these regulations, the discourse ensures that individuals and their “underdeveloped brains, weakness, emotionality, inability to concentrate, or stupidity” are at fault (Heller and Duchêne 2012: 5).

The state’s main tool in the regulation and selection of immigrants are language certificates, which in turn led to the formation of testing regimes (Stevenson 2015). Language proficiency exams have already drawn scholarly attention with regard to their exercise of power and control in educational systems (McNamara and Roever 2006; Shohamy 2014), their function of blocking immigration in the case for marriage migration (Gutekunst 2015) and their gate-keeping role for residence permits and citizenship (Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero and Stevenson 2009; Piller 2001; Piller and Lising 2014). This last use of language certificates is closely linked to the discourse of “language as key to integration” which has been the subject of a detailed discourse analytical study by Flubacher (2014) in the context of Switzerland (see Lehner (2017) for Austria and Stevenson and Schanze (2009) for Germany). The debate around the need for integration and its connection with language originates in the 1990s and helps the state regulate access to citizenship, which promises privileged rights.<sup>31</sup> However, a

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<sup>31</sup> Kien Nghi Ha (2015) forcefully demonstrates how integration itself is a key term for the regulation of people categorized as foreigners that surfaced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century: German integration policy can be seen as the continuation of colonial practices,

study of the regulation of migrants in Swiss unemployment offices shows how language competency is judged more from a perspective of investment than integration (Flubacher, Coray and Duchêne 2016): Support of language learning was only granted when this investment promised returns in the form of jobs. This discourse of language skills and employability is entangled with the discourse of language skills as a measurable scale of an immigrant's integration: while they might appear to be conflicting, in practice they fuel each other. As such, an analysis of language education and labor migration must consider state authority and its complicity with capitalist industry.

## **2.5 Embracing an 'empire of care'**

### *2.5.1 Introduction*

The need for labor migrants to gain high language competency is a result of German immigration laws. It follows that the preparation of Philippine nurses for the German market is shaped by German state authority. Correspondingly, the fact that German is increasingly taught in Philippine high schools is mainly based on Germany's desire to attract a skilled workforce. Language competency is a form of investment for students as it promises an advantage when they are selling their labor power. The conditions of foreign language learning and its close connection to international market interests in the Philippines is based on a historical continuity of the imperial exploitation of the US and a streamlining of the country's labor market by its ruling elite that positions a large part of its population as a resource: Cheap labor power for overseas work or business process outsourcing. The specificity of why Germany is interesting for the Philippines, why the Philippines is interesting for Germany, and why the two countries enter into a bilateral labor agreement is rooted in yet another dynamic that structures social inequality: The simultaneous societal importance and devaluation of care and resulting working conditions within the care work economy.

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between a civilizing mission as well as the punishment of outsiders and the security of German citizens.

### 2.5.2 Transnational care extractivism

Germany has faced a care shortage for many years: One evaluation in 2012 predicted that there will be between 434,000 and 492,000 vacant full-time positions for care workers by 2030 (a number that can be reduced to 263,000 if there are intense support of home care arrangements) (Rothgang, Müller and Unger 2012). In 2015, there were already vacant care worker positions in 61% of all institutions in Germany (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 5). In addition to a growing population in need of care (which is said to rise from 2.5 million in 2015 to 4.7 million in 2050), this devastating effect is the result of not attracting (or keeping) enough care workers (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 5).

As a result, Germany must compete for workers on the global care market. Feminist sociologists have described the societal consequences of this development. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (2000) introduced the influential concept of an *international division of reproductive labor* that was taken up by Arlie Russell Hochschild (2000), who describes the phenomenon as *global care chains*. The less well-known concept of *transnationaler Sorgeextraktivismus* [care extractivism] that focuses on Germany was introduced by Christa Wichterich (2016). Together these concepts highlight the (1) patriarchal and (2) colonial/racist structure of the global care economy.

(1) Reproductive labor is paid or unpaid work that is performed in order to provide the opportunity for others to perform productive labor; this includes domestic and care work of children, adults and the elderly, and has traditionally been called ‘women’s work’. Taken more holistically, the concept can be extended to agricultural subsistence (Wichterich 2016: 54). The focus on reproductive labor came from Marxist feminists, who fought for a wage for housework to highlight the idea that women’s work forms a part of political economy (and should thus also be observed in a critique of it) (e.g. Federici 1975). However, because of the hegemonic distribution of power, as soon as reproductive labor, especially domestic work, became part of paid work, it was considered “unskilled” (Lorente 2007). As it came without redistribution, the valuation of women’s work remains low despite recognition (in line with Nancy Fraser’s (2003) argumentation).

In the concept of care extractivism, care (or the German term ‘Sorge’) refers to the same type of paid and unpaid, feminized responsibilities as reproductive labor. However, it does not restrict its focus on “labor”. Such a focus implies an exclusively economic/capitalist understanding of these responsibilities that are subsumed under “reproductive labor” or “care work” such as child raising, nursing or domestic work. There are elements of responsibilities within this type of work, such as informality and intimacy, that remain outside economic logic and cannot be economically valued: this larger understanding is encompassed in the concept of care (“Sorge”) which opens the possibility of a radical critique of the wage labor system as exploitative structure (Wichterich 2016: 58). Considering, for example, ‘labor strikes’ as forms of resistance in productive labor, it becomes clear that they are not easily or completely transferrable to care work (as the well-being and lives of patients or family members is at stake): a focus on ‘care’ or ‘Sorge’ demands new forms of emancipation with moments of solidarity-building in a direction of a system beyond wage labor (Precarias a la deriva 2011).

(2) The global care economy is also marked by the racialization of this type of work, further naturalizing hegemonic power hierarchies (Mohanty 2013: 5). The previously introduced concepts draw attention to this by discussing an *international* division of reproductive labor, *global care chains*, or *transnational care extractivism*. Parreñas (2000) anchored her research in the lives of Philippine domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles and showed how these Philippine women took up reproductive labor that was previously performed by local women in post-industrialized countries. They were themselves replaced by poorer Philippine women in their home country. Guevarra (2009: ch 5) finds that a marketing scheme promotes the idealness of Filipinas<sup>32</sup> because of their US American education, English language proficiency, subservience, flexibility, modesty and innate ability for tender loving care (TLC): This promotion focuses on an “added export value” of Philippine nurses and domestic workers (similar to the “competitive edge” described by Lorente (2012)). Hochschild’s (2000) concept

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<sup>32</sup> Guevarra (2009) bases her analysis on the concept of “productive femininity” by Salzinger (2003). This concept explicitly states that although the marketing scheme uses the image of women, these feminized and racialized ideals can also be transferred to men in order to be included as potential nurse migrants (in the case of Guevarra) or factory workers (in the case of Salzinger).

of care chains (with the most privileged countries on one end and the least privileged on the other) emphasizes the moment of substitution that happens when women travel to richer places to perform feminized and racialized care work. In the poorest countries, positions are filled by the poorest women up to a point at which the supply gap stays unfilled and there are vast stretches of society where people are not cared for; this has been shown to be the case in Moldova (Bopp 2018). In the German speaking case, studies focused on 24-hour care described care chains linking Western and Eastern European countries (see for example Schilliger 2013; Weicht and Österle 2016). Wichterich (2016) points to the perceived “natural” component of caring in women through terminology used to describe the exploitation of natural resource: resource extractivism. She emphasizes the imperialist bases of the hierarchical power relationship, as rich countries export their care crisis to already poor countries. It is expected that the feminization of this work will intensify as a result of the migratory biographies and their devaluation in a racialized society (Wichterich 2016: 60).

### *2.5.3 The professional life of nurses in the Philippines and in Germany*

The professional life of nurses in the Philippines and in Germany is marked by similarities in an extremely high workload and comparatively low wages. The main difference from the nursing profession lies in the training program and the orientation of a Philippine nurse’s biography towards overseas work. In the Philippines, state hospitals pay a wage (starting at 20,000 Peso) double the amount of private hospitals (8,000 – 10,000 Peso). However, positions at state institutions are difficult to access as they are often linked to personal connections with government officials. Furthermore, the patient/nurse ratio is much higher; this is why nurses sometimes prefer working in private hospitals. Even with the wage at a state hospital, working full time as a nurse is not enough to support a family and is often not even enough for the worker’s own sustenance. Nurses earn around 3,139 Euro in Western Germany and 2,738 Euro in Eastern Germany, and nurse assistant wages are 20% and 30% lower (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 16-17). A comparison of wages among skilled workers in Germany suggests that nurses earn a lot in comparison to nurse assistants. Other research, however, explicitly shows how the low wages are one of the profession’s main drawbacks (see for example Langer 2010). Hospitals in the Philippines as well as in Germany do not allocate enough positions for care workers (see Hug (2012) for a

summary of the working conditions in the Philippines). Nurses in Germany face a physical, and even more so, psychological toll as they are statistically much more prone to sick leaves (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 18). The union for service workers in Germany released an evaluation on work hours in hospitals (ver.di 2018):<sup>33</sup> It revealed that hospital employees generate so much overtime that hospitals would have to shut down around the 24th or 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month if breaks and work times followed the law.

There are two fundamental differences with regard to the nursing profession in the Philippines and in Germany. First, the professional duties differ as Philippine nurses perform highly medical tasks as opposed to German nurses, who are often only allowed to perform basic care. Second, the professional training is differently structured. In Germany, nursing education is a three-year vocational training divided into general, pediatric and elder care nursing. This division is seen as old-fashioned: Pediatric and elder care nurses are disadvantaged through qualifications that are not internationally recognized, and it is at a lower wage. The nursing program includes theory and practice (the latter takes up slightly more than half of the time) (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015). The German model is marked by less “professionalization” than other European countries and university-level nursing programs are rare and not yet fully recognized (Kuhlmann and Larsen 2015: 1639). There seems to be a development towards academization of care work in Germany; however, the low paid positions of nurses are not seen as suitable for academically trained nurses (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 15). In the Philippines, nursing is a four-year college degree – a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)— and requires a national board exam. As a direct consequence of US colonialism, the training is synchronized with the US model of nurses and is highly medical (Ceniza Choy 2003).

Nursing is one of the main professions for overseas work in the Philippines, which promises the outlook of supporting the family with remittances. Many young people invest in this future as useable and suitable wage laborer. Together with their families, they pay for high school and four-year college. State education is (almost) free but

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<sup>33</sup> Health care workers organize together with exponents of other professions that are subsumed under service work by the union itself: the professional areas range from education, social work and the creative industry to telecommunication and logistics (ver.di 2019: 17).



private high schools promise smaller class sizes and better success at gaining access to college courses. Training places for the pursuance of a BSN at a state school are far below the demand and private college education is highly expensive: This results in high expenses for future labor migrants and the financial burden continues even after they start work. The need for a minimum of two-year work experience for overseas engagement forces young nurses to volunteer: Hospitals can thus offer unpaid positions and they sometimes even ask for a fee to volunteer. Paid work positions at private hospitals are thus highly coveted. Therefore, the time after passing the board exam is decisive of future careers and highly hierarchizing: Young individuals with enough familial and financial support might be able to work for free (or even pay) in order to fulfill the requirement of work experience. However, those nurses who are economically less privileged may become salespersons for pharmaceutical companies or start work in non-health related positions in call centers or fast-food chains with the hope of being able to capitalize on their certificate at a later date.

#### *2.5.4 Initiatives for the promotion of labor migration of care workers*

Care workers in Germany and the Philippines have fought for a better wage. Outward migration is a common trajectory for nurses in the Philippines; at the same time, nurses leave Germany for countries with better working conditions such as Switzerland, which offers higher wages and additional training opportunities (Ognyanva and Busse 211: 5). Germany increasingly works to attract nurses from outside the country through bilateral agreements as current societal conditions make it impossible to solve its “care crisis” differently. Additionally, the Philippine government supports state-led migration under the framework of protection and security of their workers (Lanto 2015: 4). A summary of the initiatives fostered by the Philippines and Germany follows.

In what has been called an “empire of care,” medical training in the Philippines triggered a migration flow of nurses to the United States (Ceniza Choy 2003) and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s (Damasco 2012). The peak of the nursing boom was in 2000 when the UK opened its market for nurses from India, South Africa and the Philippines (in 2001 a total of 5,388 Philippine nurses arrived). After the labor shortage was relieved in 2006, the UK ended its agreements and adopted increasingly restrictive

immigration laws (Makulec 2014: 20-21). Since the 1990s, Philippine nurses have also migrated to the Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia and Libya), where knowledge of Arabic is not a requirement; either English is the work language or they are accompanied by interpreters. Access to Middle Eastern countries as well as Singapore, the main destination country in Asia, is relatively unrestricted and usually fast.

For all of these destination countries, language requirements are fulfilled with English. When these markets were saturated, the Philippines tried to negotiate labor agreements in Asia with Japan and in Europe with Finland, Norway and Switzerland: The agreements with Finland and Norway were never concluded and the conditions of those with Japan and Switzerland were unfavorable. Philippine nurse migration to Japan is strictly regulated – since 2008 registered nurses with a minimum of three-year work experience can apply for a six months language and culture course at TESDA (Encinas-Franco 2010: 300-301). After completion Philippine nurses move to care homes in Japan, where they are only paid allowances until they pass the board exam which they have to pass within the first two years: especially the language level is difficult to obtain within such a short period of time and the continuing language courses that have to be provided by the employers are of low quality and frequency (as it would reduce their availability for work) (Makulec 2014: 28). The low numbers of nurse migrants are due to the nurses' unwillingness to learn Japanese with low chances of passing the exam while additionally receiving low wages. Employers on the other hand are reluctant because of the high costs of language investment in their future employees especially as many Philippine nurses have plans to later transfer to the US or to Europe (Makulec 2014: 30). Switzerland has difficult linguistic entry requirements as well and Philippine nurses can only receive the status of an intern (under the so-called 'stagiaire agreement' from 2002), with correspondingly lower wages. A private recruitment agency from Switzerland (CarePers) tried to foster Philippine labor migration to Switzerland in the beginning of the 2010s (Hug 2012), but has since shifted its focus on the German market, which has higher resulting migration numbers.

In the case of Finland (Vartiainen et al. 2016: 43) as well as Norway (Makulec 2014: 15), the governments terminated their negotiations with the Philippines and decided to leave the recruitment to employers. Norway seemed to be able to mainly rely on inner-EU nurse migration, so the agreement that asked for the Norwegian government

to pay for six-month language courses was not attractive (Makulec 2014: 17). Finland refrained from an agreement as well, but attracts migrants with the help of an international collaboration of Finnish and Philippine recruitment agencies (Vartiainen et al. 2016: 32-33). Philippine nurses mainly fill open labor positions as nurse assistants with a lower wage than registered nurses, a position they can usually only receive after an additional apprenticeship (Vartiainen et al. 2016). Language training is part of a pre-departure preparation but the observation of language competency seems to lie with the employers themselves. It is the effort of learning Finnish that is the main motivation of Philippine nurses to stay in Finland (Vartiainen et al. 2016: 42-44).

Germany also mainly relied on inner-EU migration, with Spain as the main source country; 61% of employers engage in the recruitment of care workers (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 5). The financial crisis and resulting high levels of unemployment after 2008 were the reason for this migration (Galbany-Estragués and Nelson 2016). As reported earlier, nurses from EU-countries can start working in the position of nurse assistants without a language certificate and hospitals as well as care homes have individual employment practices. However, nurse migration from Spain remained low in numbers: The collaboration was marked by nurses' frustration regarding salary and medical work. On the side of the employers there was also reluctance due to the high rate of dropouts (nurses who returned home or changed the employer, mostly from a care home to a hospital). Care homes tried and failed to accommodate them through programs including a paid language course and reduced work hours in the beginning months (Kuhlmann and Larsen 2015: 1639).

The recruitment of a labor force outside the European Union was only possible since 2013, when the German government opened its borders for foreign workers in shortage occupations (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 30). In the same year of the market opening, Germany launched initiatives with China, Vietnam and the flagship program 'Triple Win' with the Philippines, Serbia and Bosnia (which will be discussed in the following chapter) and further attracts nurses from Russia, Moldova and the Ukraine without official programs (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 43). The program with China started in 2013 and is facilitated by the Central Placement Office of the German Federal Employment Agency (Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung, ZVA) in cooperation with the association of employers in the care

economy (Arbeitgeberverband Pflege). It is directed at Chinese nurses for work in German care homes and includes an eight-month preparation program with language and medical courses focused on elderly care (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 32). The initiative with Vietnam is facilitated by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ). The program is advertised as providing medical training to Vietnamese workers with the aim of offering opportunities to young people in developing countries: They can start the vocational training in elderly care after successful completion of a preparatory language course in Vietnam (during the first phase of the program it was a six-month course which was then changed to a B2 certificate that should be obtained after one year).<sup>34</sup> Although the program mainly advertises itself as an education program, the Vietnamese participants are all trained nurses with a university degree. After the launch of the project it developed into a further collaboration where parts of the German education of elderly care workers are already given in Vietnam (Bonin, Braeseke and Ganserer 2015: 33).

#### *2.5.5 Philippine nurses for Germany and the Triple Win program*

The bilateral labor agreement between the Philippines and Germany went into effect in 2013. In 2019, the German embassy of the Philippines announced that the Philippine government accepted 1500 applications of nurses for work in Germany in the first half of 2019 (German Embassy Manila 2019).<sup>35</sup> Looking at numbers of new hires in Philippine nurse migration from 2010 The most recent available data from the official statistics of new hires in Philippine nurse migration from 2010 does not include Germany at all (which means zero hires) (POEA 2010). Table 2.1 shows data from 2010 which reveals that United Kingdom is the only European country that hired more than 50 Philippine nurses (with a total of 350 nurses). The main destination countries of Philippine nurses are in the Middle East.

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<sup>34</sup><https://www.giz.de/de/weltweit/18715.html>, last accessed October 18, 2019

<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain any data on German nurse migration to the Philippines from before 2019.

<i>Destination country</i>	<i>Number of nurses</i>
Saudi Arabia	8513
Singapore	722
United Arab Emirates	473
Libya	417
Kuwait	409
United Kingdom	350
Qatar	294
Taiwan	186
Jordan	112
Oman	92
Bahrain	91
United States	83
Brunei	63
Canada	58
Egypt	55

**Table 2.1** | Destination countries of Philippine nurses (more than 50) in 2010 (numbers from POEA (2010))

Together with Serbia and Bosnia, the Philippines is part of Germany's Triple Win program. Project participants must undergo language training and need to pass a B1 exam in order to obtain a work visa.<sup>36</sup> Nurses who start working in Germany from outside the European Union earn 1700 Euro until the recognition of their qualification (for which they need a B2 certificate) with a professed increase to 2200 Euro thereafter. This means that at least for the first few years wages are lower (than the already low wages) for newly arrived nurses, even if they already have high qualifications and work experience abroad. It is no surprise that Germany announced the Philippines as its preferred choice of foreign nurses after the first few years of the project duration.<sup>37</sup>

The employment of care workers from abroad is widely debated politically and publicly and Germany concentrates on the promotion of major aspects of the program to legitimize recruitment efforts: They adhere to ethical guidelines and even contribute to developmental work. The project title 'Triple Win' stands for the three parties involved in the migration process, who are all professed to profit: The sending country because

<sup>36</sup> An in-depth analysis of this requirement is provided in chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/germany-needs-200000-nurses-till-2020-baldoz/> last accessed October, 18, 2019

they deploy their unemployed, the receiving country because they relieve the care shortage and the nurses because they can expand their knowledge, earn higher salaries and support their families in the country of origin. The Triple Win project is advertised as a complementary strategy to initiatives in Germany, but no further description is given. The title makes use of a migration management tool that has gained prominence: The so-called triple win effect is used as an argument to support circular migration (described by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (2016: 3) as a type of labor (or study) migration where the migrant moves back and forth between country of origin and destination country (or countries). Circular migration became part of the debate by international organizations concerned with migration policy at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: In 2005 the International Organization of Migration (IOM) praised circular migration for its potential for developmental countries and the European Commission took up the concept to support their mobility partnerships with “third countries” in 2007 (Castles and Ozkul 2014: 27). Germany’s Triple Win project earned a badge of ‘best practice’ by the the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Trade Union Confederation (PSI).<sup>38</sup> Under the surveillance of the World Health Organization’s (WHO), Germany wants to ensure ethical recruitment of health care workers by not recruiting from a list of 57 countries who have a critical care shortage. The Philippines is not on this list but instead is considered to have high unemployment rates among nurses.<sup>39</sup> The GiZ focuses on their adherence to the WHO guidelines for ethical recruitment.

Critics of circular migration argue that advantages lie with the destination countries (the real winners) as they regulate labor force needs while soothing local racism by promising the disappearance of the workers after they fulfill their purpose (Castles and Ozkul 2014). This critique of circular migration points to the management tool’s continuity with guest worker agreements (Gasterarbeiterabkommen) from the 1950s to 1970s. And indeed, there is historical continuity in the case of German-Philippine nurse migration: Germany employed nurses from Korea, the Philippines, as well as

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<sup>38</sup><https://www.giz.de/en/mediacenter/55638.html>, accessed on April 7, 2018

<sup>39</sup> Anette Hug (2012) provides a critical insight on this assumption when reviewing the discourse for the possible attraction of Philippine nurses for Switzerland. She shows how the unemployment stems much more from the lack of paid positions than from an actual labor surplus.

Kerala in order to ease an acute care shortage. Germany and Korea signed a bilateral labor agreement in 1963 and by 1977 around 8,000 Korean miners and 10,000 Korean nurses had migrated to Germany (Thomas 2013). The migration of Philippine nurses to Germany started in 1962 through a German priest who brought ten Philippine nurses from the island of Cebu to his hometown near Aachen. Other hospitals started to employ Philippine nurses and by 1977 around 5,000 Filipin@s worked in Germany (including around 1,500 seafarers, the other major professional group from the Philippines). Germany was not the final destination for many Philippine nurses who took the opportunity to later transfer to the United States. From 1976 onwards Germany stopped employing migrant workers from outside the EEC because of a recession (Christ 2011). As a result many lost their jobs and had to leave Germany; by 1982, there were 1,500 nurses left of the 7,000 that had worked in Germany at the height of employment (other sources claim a number of 10,000 to 12,000 (Lünser 2010: 9-11)). This development shows how the first wave of Philippine nurses recruited for the German market had restricted options after the labor situation in Germany shifted. It shows an exploitative and unequal relationship between the different parties – especially the relationship between individual nurses and state authority. During the second recruitment period, the parties are all called winners and historical connections to earlier periods are neglected in the states' promotion.

Language competency has shaped migration movements of care workers in most of the initiatives discussed here. During the establishment of medical training of nurses in the Philippines through the US, English was part of the curriculum as well as part of the board exam (next to medical subjects such as anatomy) (Ceniza Choy 2003: 43). The 'empire of care' supplied the United States with care workers and later provided context for the recruitment of nurses in other English speaking countries/settler colonies. There are only a few examples of Philippine nurse migration to destination countries that required language competencies other than English. Countries such as Norway or Switzerland at the very privileged end of the care chain had limited need making state investment superfluous. Labor migration of Philippine nurses to Japan or Finland required a high investment mostly because of the intense and difficult language courses that accompany employment in these destination countries. In the case of Finland this investment is valued by employers because it is one of the main reasons Philippine nurses remain loyal to their destination country. A research report

by health care providers in Germany sees Southeast Asia as a major resource for care workers in the future because of political support and the number, training and disposition of prospective work migrants, despite the financial investment needed for language education (Merda, Braeseke and Kähler 2014). The intensification of labor migration from the Philippines to Germany – where a long period of language education and a high language certificate are part of a pre-departure preparation – is unprecedented and, therefore, needs careful sociolinguistic analysis, as Germany embraces the infrastructure of an empire of care.

## **2.6 Discussing language education and intersecting dimensions of oppression**

There are historical socio-economic conditions that led to the bilateral labor agreement in 2013 and the subsequent rise of the German language education industry in the Philippines. The following conditions provide the basis and context of an analysis of the role of language education and testing of Philippine nurses as preparation for the German market: the English language education and nursing training as well as an early and increasing connection to the education of an adequately trained workforce in the Philippines fostered by the United States and their imperial domination objectives; the diversification of language education in the Philippines (as a labor brokerage state) to foreign languages as a result of market saturation of foreign workers in English speaking countries; the German state's policies that have fostered the spread of German abroad (mostly for civilizing and/or economic purposes) in addition to its restrictive language policies in order to regulate, limit or even block access to citizenship, to working or living inside Germany or – in national-socialist and colonial times – explicitly preventing so-called uncivilized, unworthy people from accessing high German values, culture and intellect.

These historical socio-economic conditions of current social inequalities raise different sociolinguistic questions that are rooted in and influenced by research traditions and analytical perspectives: the spread of English in the Philippines can be analyzed from a perspective of linguistic imperialism that is attentive to unequal power relations. However, such an approach could not draw the connections between foreign language policy developments concerning languages other than English: an interconnected



perspective, however, could reveal how economic, cultural, and linguistic domination are based on circuits of capital. At the same time, a focus limited on capitalism might hide how state authorities raise hierarchies amongst human beings that although useful for capitalist exploitation are rooted in inequalities that oppress parts of the population not purely in economic terms. In a review of sociolinguistic research within neoliberalism, Allan and McElhinny (2017: 92) propose that future directions in the field should not fall into the trap of over-emphasizing neoliberalism but should instead contextualize particular knowledge about a research site and its history, which is often marked by racialization and colonization. The historical context of the socio-linguistic research site of Philippine nurse migration to Germany exposed this need for an intersectional analysis in order to analyze the role of language education and testing for the perpetuation and/or reinforcement of social inequalities.

Intersectionality is a key concept in feminist theory and was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). It pays attention to the fact that there are different categories of socially relevant (socially hierarchizing) difference (such as gender, race or sexuality): these differences, however, are not separate but intersecting which results in multidimensional oppression that goes beyond a simple aggregation of the individual categories (Hancock 2007: 251). Xiang and Lindquist (2014) proposed the concept of 'migration infrastructure' that uses "intersectionality as an operational logic of how migration is actually constituted" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014: 135) and thus makes it useful for an intersectional approach in sociolinguistic studies on labor migration (Del Percio 2018a). Xiang and Lindquist's (2014) proposition of the concept is based on their ethnographic studies on migration of "low-skilled" workers from China and Indonesia. 'Migration infrastructure' analyzes the conditions that make (labor) migration happen in the sending country, revealing the high degree to which it is dynamically mediated but still coherent; it is thus more inclusive than other concepts that attempt to grasp (labor) migration. Such inclusiveness is achieved by the overarching understanding of 'migration infrastructure' that encompasses five dimensions (without claiming to be exhaustive) (Xiang and Lindquist 2014: 124): the commercial (linked to 'migration industry' (e.g. Castles 2004), the regulatory (linked to the 'migration apparatus' (e.g. Feldman 2012)), the technological, the humanitarian, and the social infrastructure (linked to migratory networks (e.g. Massey et al. 1993)). These different dimensions of the migration infrastructure differ in "the leading actors,

the driving forces, the central strategies and rationalities, and the defining *modus operandi*” (Xiang and Lindquist 2014: 124). The intersectional concept gives the possibility of including contradictory moments – moments of conflict or overlap – between these dimensions, which more isolating concepts do not allow. It allows, for example, through the linking of the regulatory and the commercial infrastructure a better understanding of such phenomena as the participation of private actors in the regulatory infrastructure increases (Xiang and Lindquist 2014: 134).

The intersectional perspective of ‘migration infrastructure’ makes it highly useful for the investigation of the German language education in the Philippine care work economy. However, there are several reasons why I consider it paramount to connect ‘migration infrastructure’ more strongly with the origins of ‘intersectionality’ in anti-racist feminist research. Xiang and Lindquist (2014: 135) consider a feminist understanding of intersectionality unsuitable for their endeavor to analyze “sites” because it focuses on “individual lives”. However, such a definition of an anti-racist, feminist understanding of intersectionality misreads one of its main achievements as it exactly addresses the connection between the individual and institutional (Hancock 2007: 251). Intersectionality indeed starts by investigating lived experiences of different forms of oppression. It has been taken up by third wave feminism, which, as Angeli R. Diaz (2003: 10) problematizes, can be argued to carry the danger of being caught in “the celebration of diversity”; such celebration would neglect the starkly contrasted material living conditions of women in first and third world countries that need to be discussed in order to reveal the hierarchical distribution of power shaped by property and colonial history (Diaz 2003: 15). However, an anti-capitalist understanding of intersectionality follows Diaz’s proposition: the situated knowledge of individual lives help prevent monolithic understandings of women but serve as an entry point for uncovering the workings of systemic power and domination. This is achieved by analyzing the experiences and material living conditions of marginalized communities of women (Mohanty 2003): while this study focuses on the experiences of Philippine nurses, women as well as men, it is the marginalized women’s perspective from where the experiences are analyzed (which in my case are young, female nurses from poor families in the province).

This study understands the theoretical and contextual underpinnings of German language education in the Philippines as a form of migration infrastructure that provides an entry point for the analysis of intersecting oppressive mechanisms that foster social inequalities. I thus employ a decolonial as well as feminist approach and – although there are arguably many different forms of feminisms – a uniting principle is its clearly political positioning and the need to work for emancipation (Wibben 2011: 591). The following chapter on German language education in the Philippines as a research site starts from this principle: it first reflects on ethnography as a methodology that contributes to a political project (that is feminism) and how it provides the means to focus on material living conditions and lived experiences without being forced to exclude an analysis of structural oppression. The chapter continues with a description of this study's field site, my access to it as well as the different types of data I could obtain. It concludes by discussing my accountability as researcher before turning to the four analysis chapters.



## Chapter 3

# German language education in the Philippines as a research site

### 3.1 An ethnographic approach

This study investigates language education, its role within migration infrastructure shaping the lives of Philippine nurses who learn German, and the ways it fuels (or subverts) current highly unequal distributions of power. At the same time, this study is interested in the effects of a capitalist, (neo-)colonial, patriarchal society—experiencing a renewal of racism—on language education, and in the effects of its complicity, potential subversiveness, or moments of outright opposition. This analysis centers on the speakers, the human beings that are part of the education industry: These are teachers and students (and those who desire to be students but cannot for economic or social reasons). The aim of this sub-section is to explain the methodological approach of this study which is guided by the wish to analyze the role of language education in the exacerbation of structural inequalities without negating the agency, particular knowledges and experiences of language learners.

The decolonial, feminist framing of this study that looks at the hierarchizing effects of language education in the ‘migration infrastructure’ makes it a political project invested in emancipation. Such a study has to address the problem briefly discussed in the previous chapter: an understanding of people either as “puppets” or “heroes”

(Hannerz 2002). On the one hand, the perception of human beings as “puppets” (Hannerz 2002: 59-61) – which happens often in political economic analyses of unequal distributions of power – would leave Philippine nurses who learn German in order to work in Germany completely without agency. This perspective would not consider the individual decisions of people, in this case of Filipin@s who would be seen to be simply wandering preset paths formed by oppressors and oppressive mechanisms. On the other hand, the people who are the subjects of the study could be understood as “heroes” (Hannerz 2002: 59-61) as is often done in biographical approaches and corresponds with the previously mentioned specific type of feminist celebration of “diversity”. Philippine nurses would then become heroines and heroes who shoulder the burden of an unequal society and suffer heroically from unfair conditions in order to provide their families with alternative means. They would be understood as heroines and heroes because of their brave choice of abandoning the typical path to English speaking countries or the Middle East, instead having accessed a new space.

Neither the understanding or presupposition of human beings as “puppets” or “heroes & heroines” can support a project of emancipation. The concepts of “thick description” and “weak theory” (as proposed by Gibson-Graham (2014)) provides a tool to escape this dilemma: The need to develop theory is exchanged for the practice of thinking theoretically through in-depth observation and analysis of the ways that lives are shaped by material living conditions, including experiences of and affective responses to the lifeworld around the researcher and researched. Ulf Hannerz has widely published on ethnographic methodology and reflects on the dilemma of structure versus agency with respect to a study he conducted on internationally operating news moderators; his own ethnographic work provides him with the tools to escape both the “media imperialism” of previous political economic studies and the heroism in biographical accounts (Hannerz 2002). If particularized knowledge is the starting point, it is impossible to present people as nothing more than a playball of structures – neither Philippine nurses, nor German teachers traveling the world, nor bureaucratic officials of governmental organizations. The aspiration of emancipation does not allow an individualist perspective and therefore asks for an analysis that builds on particularized knowledge to reveal possible connecting factors and solidarities: ethnography (being there, observing and describing from the living conditions) helps

researchers to see the global in the local (Marcus 1995: 97), to make the universal visible in the particular (Mohanty 2003: 223), and to refute the binary opposition of micro and macro (Heller 2011: 34).

In order to achieve this overarching aim of producing results that allow an analysis that combines the micro and the macro, this section discusses (1) anti-racist/decolonial, feminist ethnography which provides the methodological framework that make possible to address this wish. The focus such an ethnographic approach is more closely described in (2) knowledge of material living conditions and affective responses of speakers provides the grounding of this data collection. I then turn to (3) the way that this type of focus can be addressed - with a form of *dérive* (critical drift) that opens opportunities of seeing the infrastructure (at work).

(1) An analysis of the intersection of imperialism, capitalism, state authority and patriarchy in this particular setting demands an ethnographic approach rooted in a decolonial feminist tradition. This positioning is important because of the colonial history of ethnography as a discipline, theory and methodology. Ethnography (and anthropology) are linked to Western expansionism and the wish to see the origins of civilization (Scott 1989). To this end, (white male) researchers observed indigenous peoples in places that were secluded from and exoticized by the Western world. The anti-racist and decolonial, feminist tradition of ethnography offers “an unsettling of the boundaries that have been central to its identity as a discipline of the self-studying other” (Abu-Lughod 1990: 26). Feminist theory reveals that there is no “neutral” standpoint, as any kind of knowledge production is situated within particular political and social conditions (Ackerly and True 2010: 465). Therefore, the unsettling change brought forth by a feminist tradition of ethnography is the need for the researcher to position herself in every aspect of her study (Gillies and Alldred 2012: 48). The researcher has to reflect on why certain questions are asked, which data are collected, how she makes sense of it, and what her own stakes are in the project. All of these elements of a study are shaped by the researcher’s perspective and material living conditions (including but not limited to the fact that academic studies are often linked to obtaining degrees or furthering individual careers). Decolonial, feminist ethnography has to reflect on and take measures to prevent potentially harmful uses

of the study;<sup>40</sup> further, it has to be politically relevant for those we study (Craven and Davis 2014) and provide elements for action that can foster emancipation (Ackerly and True 2010: 465).

Researchers such as myself who align themselves with a decolonial feminist research tradition need to be aware of the danger of colonial traces in ethnography, such as the pattern of white middle-class women talking about working-class women in the Third World. This is highly relevant to the research situation of this study, as I am a Swiss researcher working on Philippine nurse migration. I see my engagement as “an instrumental, political choice, rather than an abstract, theoretical ethical dilemma” (Gillies and Alldred 2012: 51) and have to be particularly explicit about adhering to decolonial, feminist ethnographic research standards. Rather than speaking for others I consider myself to speak “in solidarity with” (Mohanty 2003: 228) the Philippine nurses who learn German in order to work in Germany.

(2) Decolonial, feminist theory aims to uncover the workings of systemic power and domination. This means that the standpoint (and not necessarily the main focus) of a study has to be based on the life experiences of the least privileged, because it grants the most “inclusive view” of oppressive dynamics (Mohanty 2003: 232). Ethnography can be attentive to the multi-layered complexity of the material living conditions and experiences of marginalized communities of women (Mohanty 2003) by analyzing how individuals make meaning of their work, space, and—in the case of this study—decision to migrate and learn a new language. It is important to note that experiences should not only focus on material living conditions but also on affective responses. Affect (structures of feelings or emotions)<sup>41</sup> describes the intersubjective dimension of feelings and problematizes a simple division of body and mind; it considers bodily reactions to be connected to affective responses (Degener and Zimmermann 2014).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Heller (2001: 119), who considers this the basis of all kinds of critical sociolinguistics.

<sup>41</sup> Different terms are used among researchers whose studies are often subsumed under “affect studies” and there are debates over which terminology offers which (dis)advantages. See Degener and Zimmermann (2014: 6-8) for a discussion of the debate.

<sup>42</sup> See McElhinny (2010), for a comprehensive (but not recent) review of work on affect in sociolinguistics (or work in affect studies relevant for sociolinguistics) and Park’s (2015) intriguing analysis of how individually perceived feelings of anxiety towards



This move politicizes an aspect of life which is largely taken as private and individual and, thus, has the capacity to reveal how affective responses are potentially caused and exploited by socio-political and economic conditions (Degener and Zimmermann 2014). Therefore, an analysis of the experiences and material living conditions of individuals has to take the managerial or regulatory potential of affective responses into account. This is achieved by the conceptualization of “affective capitalism” (Karppi et al. 2016), which demonstrates how affect or emotions are capitalized on by the economy and “affective states” (Stoler 2004) revealing how the state promotes “the care and governing of the affective self” (Stoler 2004: 10) in order to stabilize its power.<sup>43</sup> Affect is thus a form of “world making” (see Ahmed (2013: 12), who uses the term “emotion”) that can provide a map of hegemonic power dynamics, for example in the migration infrastructure that facilitates the preparation of Philippine nurses for Germany.

(3) It is a critical drift, a *dérive*, through the migration infrastructure that allows for such ethnographic data collection (that reflects experience, material living conditions and affect in connection with systemic inequalities). A *dérive* is a method for finding out how power dynamics run through and shape a specific place by (mostly collective) walking. It is not random, but rather “shaped by social and cultural forces” (Pinder 1996: 420) as it reveals that some places repulse while others attract (Debord 1958). To go on a *dérive* “means wandering attentive to the billboard that assaults you, the bench which attracts, the building which suffocates, the people who come and go” (Precarias a la deriva 2003). It is attentive to the affective dimension of moving through a specific space and specifically allows confusion, possibilities and noise (Pinder 1996).

The tool was originally developed by the Situationists<sup>44</sup> as a method of “psychogeography” that studies how geography (with an intense focus on the city)

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English in Korea can be connected with a history of US imperialism. Park values this connection as an entry point to fight social inequalities around English in South Korea.

<sup>43</sup> Ann Stoler’s (2004) seminal study on states’ use of affect in order to govern is based on extensive archival work on the Dutch colonial state in Indonesia – the provocative finding is an important milestone to dismantling the image of the rational state guided by science, especially in the colony inhabited by indigenous people portrayed as emotionally-driven.

<sup>44</sup> The Situationists are an avant-garde art movement with Marxist theoretical underpinnings that produced knowledge collectively between 1957 and 1972 in Europe (Pinder 1996).

impacts human beings, effecting, suppressing or steering their emotions and behaviors (Pinder 1996: 415). The *dérive* is the basis for creating maps and additionally poses an opportunity for intervention in highly unequal cities. *Precarias a la deriva* – a collective of women focusing on the documentation of their precarious work life – use *dérive* throughout the city (Madrid, in their case) in order to document the transformations of labor (*Precarias a la deriva* 2003).<sup>45</sup> The wandering perspective reveals “diverse metropolitan circuits of female precariousness” (*Precarias a la deriva* 2003), reaching those who are constantly on the move for work. Furthermore, it allows insight into the immediacy of experience (Bridger 2013).

For this study, the *dérive* is an interesting tool for the creation of a map of power dynamics, borders, and bordering mechanisms in the migration infrastructure. It is a physical and metaphorical drifting in order to describe and analyze the material reality, experiences and affective responses of Philippine nurses who prepare for Germany. Allan and McElhinny (2017: 81), who discuss ‘border as method’ (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) for sociolinguistics, see it as a possibility for mapping inequalities and tension that could provide a basis from which to contest it. I agree with this potential and consider ‘border as method’ to be a way of analyzing space from the fault lines; it is a way of critically drifting through the migration infrastructure in order to collect and analyze data that might generate knowledge useful for the project of emancipation.

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<sup>45</sup> Their initial need to start their journey and collectively organize was the general strike in Spain in 2003, which revealed the inadequacy of this tool of resistance in the case of feminized, precarious labor positions: “the invisible, unregulated, unmoored jobs” that were not even regulated by the laws against which the strike was organized in the first place (*Precarias a la deriva* 2003).

### 3.2 Access to the field

A study on the role of German language education for Philippine nurses who prepare for work in Germany requires access to different spaces and people: The primary focus is on care workers who intend to or have already become students of German. However, language education also involves teachers, the infrastructure of language schools, and (especially in the case of the preparation for labor migration) governmental institutions and brokering agencies. These institutions, their officials and materials, language schools, teachers and students are also actors in this study's research site. Access to documents, as opposed to spaces and people, differed greatly. The collection of materials was restricted to documents open to the public – either physically (and thus connected to the (limited) access to spaces) or digitally. The access to spaces and people, on the other hand, was marked to a great deal by my own life trajectory (including markers of identity and material living conditions).

Reflection on the influence of one's personality on field access is not a banal and personal issue; instead, it is a highly political issue and reflection is essential for any ethnography that intends to adhere to feminist standards. I consider the following aspects of my identity and material living condition as crucial for my fieldwork: I am read as white, Swiss, cis female<sup>46</sup>, heterosexual, and atheist; further, I am a German native speaker with a Swiss accent, and I am proficient in English. I come from a Swiss university and am associated with a German university as well as with one of the most prestigious (and expensive) private universities in the Philippines. My association with academia (and especially a feminist research tradition) asked for an in-depth reflection on ethical standards (the Philippine university additionally asked for and provided an official ethical clearance of the project). This means that one of the first instances determining field access was whether or not institutions wanted to give access to me; people decided to share their thoughts and experiences on the basis of being informed about my research contents and intentions: I informed teachers and students mostly in conversations but also in e-mail and Facebook exchange before they gave me their

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<sup>46</sup> The gender I feel comfortable with corresponds with the gender that was designated at my birth.

consent to participate. The institutions I contacted received an abstract of the project and were informed about the Swiss, German and Philippine university affiliations.

These strong markers of being an academic were challenged by the fact that I come from a completely non-academic background. The two most important private connections of mine that functioned as identity markers were one of my sisters, who works as a nurse in a Swiss hospital, and my long-term romantic relationship with a half-Swiss/half-Filipino man, who grew up in the Philippines. I always had to work while studying but soon found comparatively well-paid positions at university. During the fieldwork, I had just started to receive a three-year, generously calculated, monthly disbursed scholarship. This allowed me not only “a room of one’s own” (Virginia Woolf) but also opened the opportunity of staying in the Philippines for half a year. Furthermore, it allowed me to be mobile in the Philippines, where traveling between islands either meant (not inexpensive) flights or days of traveling by ferry.

These elements of my life trajectory became relevant in different spaces and with different people. Certain elements hindered or facilitated access to spaces and people. I could observe how I sometimes deliberately, sometimes unconsciously (of which my fieldnotes are testimony) played with my personality: At times I tried to gain trust or better access by accentuating aspects of my identity (such as my academic background and my PhD program’s association with a German university<sup>47</sup> when talking with Goethe Institute officials) or downplaying other aspects (such as discussing my atheist conviction with deeply religious people). This type of behavior of researchers in the field is called ‘covering’ (Daza 2008).<sup>48</sup> At first, such revelations (to the researcher herself but also to the informants and later to the readership) could appear manipulative but they are the only way of reflecting on one’s own authenticity and ethical behavior in the field and in relation to informants; this reflection will, in turn, impact the analysis. The following paragraphs discuss how the different groups of informants (or spaces) were (in)accessible on the basis of which elements of my personal trajectory: (1) institutions (governmental institutions as well as bigger

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<sup>47</sup> I was part of a joint graduate program between the University of Basel and the University of Freiburg i. Br, the “Hermann Paul School of Linguistics.”

<sup>48</sup> Daza introduced the term ‘covering’ (drawing on a New York Times Magazine article by Kenji Yoshino (2006)) to decolonial, feminist ethnography. She provides a brilliant analysis of researcher authenticity by analyzing her own access to the field.

language schools) and their officials; (2) teachers and brokers and (3) students of German.

(1) Institutions were mainly accessible to me on the basis of written contact, a clear affiliation with a European university, and submission of an abstract declaring the contents and goal of my study as well as my intended methods: In essence, institutions were mostly interested in the amount of work load they would have with me and my research as well as the potential gain or harm that could come from me. The Goethe Institute was very open to my research: Several months in advance of my fieldwork they promised to welcome me when I was in the Philippines. I entered the Institute through the head of the language section, who provided me with information and materials as well as assistance in getting in contact with the head of the Goethe Institute, project coordinators working on material publication, teachers, the librarian, and security guards observing the entry of the building. Similarly, I was welcomed by the GiZ official, who accepted to be interviewed after reading about my research, and by the Berlitz language school where I needed to acquire the approval of the Triple Win coordinator. The latter was very open because they had already been informed about the approval of my research by the GiZ. The GiZ, as well as Berlitz, were especially convinced by the idea of academic research, as they had received a lot of interest from the media before.

My attempts to visit the POEA and the German embassy, however, were not as fruitful. Unfortunately, I only contacted the institutions via e-mail. During my only visit to the POEA I was allowed to enter without even showing an identity card at the security posts (this was probably due to the fact that I am read as white). I went there during my last days of fieldwork, after I did not hear back, in order to simply see the building – an experience which I should have done earlier and that could have granted me access. Similarly, I could have searched for opportunities to get in contact with German embassy officials at events; however, it is possible that the fact that my nationality is Swiss reduced the urgency of answering my request. This assumption is based on my experience with the Swiss embassy: During the Mabuhay Germany event, I started to talk to the Swiss ambassador to the Philippines, who was very approachable and extremely interested in my research project. He mentioned that the Swiss embassy would be very interested in receiving a copy of my dissertation and let me know that I

could contact them anytime and that they would assist me in any way possible – an offer which remained open because of conflicting schedules on the embassy’s as well as my side, and a declining persistence on my part because of my increasing focus on Germany.

(2) Establishing contact with teachers and brokers largely depended on the overlapping parts of our biographies. Upon my arrival at the Goethe Institute, I was allowed to enter the teacher’s room, where I had one of my first interviews. It was scheduled by the head of the language section and was with a teacher who was also one of the authors of transition management material. He was to tell me about their digital language course for nurses (see section 6.3.4 for a presentation and analysis). My presence in the teacher’s room and my present, which was a dictionary of German collocations that I was one of the authors of, immediately acquainted me with a young woman who had also just recently arrived in the Philippines from Germany and who felt overwhelmed and lonely. We began to talk about adjusting to life in Manila and she invited me to join her and three other teachers on a day trip outside the city. I connected in a similar way with the teachers at Berlitz, who spent their time in the Philippines as a part of a gap year; they were mostly students, young and had a wish to see the world. My points of connection were very different with German teachers working for small language schools. I met most of them through advanced contacting upon hearing about them from former students or potential future students. They often were brokers or involved in brokering and most of them were of German origin, came to the Philippines close to or after retirement and had young Philippine wives. I judged them, as they corresponded to the stereotypical arrangement of old white men who use their privileges to exploit young foreign women. I expected them to know about my prejudices and refuse talking to me – an assumption of which I was proven wrong. However, they shared their views very openly and treated me and my research with great respect. It was this unexpected openness that revealed to me how my view of them as well as their wives and girlfriends was reduced and condescending. Because of their roots in Philippine society, many of these German teachers had a much greater understanding of what it means for students to learn German in order to work overseas – and of having had to go through medical education, gain work experience and invest time in studying. They were often much more political than the younger teachers who travelled the world but had not yet acquired the background knowledge of the

particular space they moved in. Furthermore, the Philippine wives and girlfriends of the German retirees were much more complex, lively and determined than I granted them at the beginning of our acquaintance.

(3) It was a long journey to come into contact with students of German, as I was not allowed to join their classes or observe teaching/learning situations. I was very shy to approach the students learning at the library or sitting outside the Goethe Institute, mostly because I always expected that I would bother them and that they would feel uncomfortable talking with me. Contact with them was gradual and, in the end, was the result of a snowball technique – after I acquainted myself with a few students that I had met at the Goethe Institute, they introduced me to their friends. Often they would put pictures of themselves with me on Facebook; this made me known in this scene very quickly and I realized that people were smiling at me and talking more openly. I was even contacted by distant online acquaintances of my informants who self-selected themselves as interviewees, sharing their biographies and asking if I was interested in talking to them. The fact that I am female and read as white was an important factor for some; this became clear when I saw what happened with those pictures once they were on social media. These photos had many more likes than other pictures on their timelines. While this interest can certainly be attributed to general curiosity for unusual encounters, there were also comments that more clearly reduced me to my looks and gender (“wow, beautiful woman”) or congratulated my informant for having achieved something noteworthy (“well done”). These moments made me extremely insecure – while it gave me access, it was to an extent on the basis of a hierarchical distribution of power that I am fighting against.

I realized that many of the students of German I met were more open to me upon hearing about my relationship with a Filipino and about my sister who is a nurse. My knowledge of life of an overseas worker, the importance and difficulty of sending home remittances, my acquaintance with Philippine history (mostly due to my engagement with Philippine literature as part of my Master degree in English literature and linguistics) as well as my (very limited) knowledge of Bisaya (a Philippine language spoken by a large part of the population in the country’s geographical center and South) helped immensely – not only in terms of being acquainted with social codes (which made me able to participate in but resistant to heavy banter, a type of social

bonding often considered rude by foreigners with cultural roots in Germany or Switzerland), but also in terms of them being able to talk to me about issues that I could understand. On the other hand, my sister's professional choice seems to not only have sparked my own interest in the care work economy, but in the end, also helped me to connect with the nurses more easily, as I could sometimes share a hospital story or understand more easily the details of medical work and the working conditions in Switzerland. They mentioned the fact that I could probably relate to them so well because my sister is a nurse. Furthermore, my sister also helped when I needed to check if some of the nurses' wages were accurate.

During interviews and informal conversations, I always tried to make my critical stance towards the privileges of central Europe clear, connecting it to colonial exploitation whenever possible. My authenticity needed to fulfill certain standards with them (this was different with, for example, the brokers). My interventions often did not seem to be taken up the way I might have intended. The extent of my privileged position, although I did not want to conceal it, must have become clear in many instances (such as my choice of elite cafés for the interviews). These instances might have been reasons (along with having a Swiss passport and being read as white) that I would always be considered an outsider (not just because of my position as researcher). This aspect demonstrates how, although I did get access to meeting and talking with German students, there were parts that I was not able to access: There were instances that made clear the existence of levels that I might not be able to know – most often, criticism of the migration process or of Germany. I only realized this after returning to Switzerland and voicing my dilemma with seeing so much complicity from the nurses in praising Germany. During a workshop with Chandra Mohanty at the University of Basel in 2017, she mentioned that I was probably not the right person to speak to about such concerns and wondered if there were instances in my data that showed caution or restraint on this topic. I only found these moments after becoming aware of this aspect of my positionality. Most explicitly, I found the limitations of what I could hear during my interview with Tim and Rob, two Triple Win candidates, who have already completed their German training and were amongst my closest informants. I asked them about their opinion on the wage difference between nurses in Germany and in the Philippines. Rob starts by talking about tax differences and insurance covering and then discusses the general undervaluation of care work:



- Rob Although people thinks that giving care to other people could be done by anyone, it is not, I mean, I think they should look up or they should invest more to it, because, aah, especially in Germany, because they are an old country. I mean, the population of that country is getting older. So I think, although, I although, I think that the government is making, the government of Germany are making steps, ah, for the coming future regarding the aging population. I think that they should give more importance, since those who make the laws or managing the government will someday receiving the same care or in the future, so I think somehow they should appreciate that more. I mean in comparison with the
- Stef In what sense?
- Rob I mean, I'm not sure if the condition, because I'm not there first hand, but somehow from the (*xxxx unintelligible*) information or some information that when compared, I mean the salary, so I am not sure, if that that's, if that means that this jobs are not, are being neglected or not been given importance, I am not sure if, but somehow
- Stef You mean the salaries within Germany
- Rob Yeah, within in Germany I'm not sure that's how they, how people perceive it there, the nurses, but somehow I think that the nurses there are thinking it that way?
- Stef Yeah
- Rob Too, I'm not sure, I think that
- Stef Yes, they do
- Rob Yeah ... soo since all the people some day in Germany, the aging population perhaps, I mean the law maker should take that in mind, it's they who are the ones being taken care of, they are the ones that are going to be served or be taken care of
- Tim tries to say something*
- Rob I think that's in the same way here in the Philippines.
- Tim laughs*
- Rob I mean
- Stef Yeah
- Rob I mean the responsibility doesn't match up with the what we are getting, I mean that's my opinion, I'm not sure (*laughs, Tim laughs too*) sorry (*laughs*)
- Stef No it's
- Tim The good thing in Germany, they manage properly the benefits. They manage properly the for example the taxes, you can see the improvement, but here (*breaks off*)

Interview with Rob and Tim, Makati City, Manila, June 20, 2015<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> All excerpts shown from interviews were recorded, transcribed and – in case of interviews conducted in German – translated by the author. The original language is always shown first, the translation follows in square brackets.

The excerpt shows one of the few instances where I heard a criticism and analysis of exploitative labor structures relating to a devaluation of care that I had expected or hoped to hear. Rob voices his opinion on the low value – material and immaterial – that is given to nurses in Germany and explicitly by the German government. He reminds of the fact that every person will at some point be in need of care, which should already be reason enough to adequately recognize the importance and the professional complexity of care labor not least with a better pay. This strong analysis of Rob on the unjust redistribution effort of the German state concerning care work is replete with hedges (especially “I mean” or “I think”) that have a softening effect. He wants to share his opinion with me but seems to feel uncomfortable about its sharpness. He then relativizes his words by making clear that he himself has not been in Germany but continues with his condemnation of the way nurses are valued. Tim grows increasingly uncomfortable and tries to interrupt upon which Rob immediately concludes that the same happens in the Philippines, a statement which clearly shows that he does not want to position “his” country as superior. Tim starts to laugh uncomfortably towards the end of this excerpt and when Rob ends his turn by apologizing for his opinion, Tim finally takes over and ends the topic by praising those aspects of care work in Germany and establishes a hierarchy where the Philippines is explicitly mentioned as lower.

This instance in my data collection makes it clear that access to data, and especially to specific kinds of data, is limited. Field access is marked by the researcher’s positionality, her identity markers and material living conditions: some spaces and people can be approached more easily than others – and as the previous paragraphs showed some knowledge is possible to be obtained and other knowledge is impossible to obtain. I would have loved to hear nurses explicitly denounce inequalities fostered by Germany, a wish which might not only stem from a simplified view of the life experience of Philippine nurses who prepare for overseas work but also from a blindness towards my own positionality and its effects on the relation with my informants. An awareness on the limits of field access is crucial when reflecting on what can be asked by whom, when, where and how, just as it is when presenting (and later analyzing) the data.

### 3.3 A web of data

As mentioned in the previous section, my entry point into German language education in the Philippines was the Goethe Institute in Makati City, Metro Manila. I spent hours, days and weeks in the teacher's room and in the rooms open to the public with a very clear preference for the library and the tables outside the library (they are separated by glass, so in either location I had plain view of both sites). The Goethe Institute was a form of node or intersection – not only as a point of analysis as will be discussed in chapter 6 – but simply for me and the development of my data. The importance of such a highly frequented meeting point is related to a type of study such as the one from Lauser (2005), whose data collection centered around an Asian food store (in an unspecified German city) that functioned as a socio-economic network (“sozio-ökonomisches Netzwerk”) where relationships were established, strengthened or managed and information was traded. This development of data collection is in many ways also similar to that of Bernardino Tavares (2017), a sociolinguistic ethnography and linguistic landscape study that started from a food store and mapped the Cape Verdean community in Luxembourg. My intensive stay at the Goethe Institute made clear how important the actual physical “being there” is for data collection, and it served as a nodal point from which the web of my data spread. This web of data comprised of the different language schools I was able to visit and observe is summarized in Table 3.1. I spent a very different amount of time at each of these sites and did not follow up on others at all: This is based on the fact that staying in one place always means that other places have to be neglected, whether completely or temporarily. This experience is described by Nieswand (2008: 91), who sees it as a form of finding balance between different (im)possibilities of combinations of field sites. The connections between sites are an interesting object of study in itself, and they are sometimes easier to understand than in the case of migration (where sites can be very loosely connected and thus difficult to study). Either way these connections and combinations tell much about the organization of the field (Burawoy 2000: 30).

<i>Location</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Data collected</i>
<b>Manila</b>	Goethe Institute	Governmentally financed, worldwide operating cultural institution of Germany	(1) Extensive participant observation in and in front of the library, the teacher's room and during cultural events; (2) Interviews with the head of the language section, a project developer, teachers and students (both of the Goethe Institute as well as other schools); (3) Teaching and advertising material published by the Manila branch
	Berlitz	International company, they provide courses in various languages	(1) Interviews with the Triple Win program coordinator, a teacher and several students; (2) Participant observation in class (one week) and in the lobby
	Small start-up enterprise	One-man business of a German immigrant/teacher	An interview and several informal conversations
<b>Cebu</b>	Small, established language school	Owned by a Filipino businessman	(1) Interviews with a teacher and students; (2) Participant observation of a German-class for nurses (one day)
	Small, established language school	Owned by a German immigrant/teacher, they also provide courses in Bisaya and Tagalog	Interview with teacher/owner
<b>Provincial cities</b>	Small start-up enterprise	Two-man business (owner and teacher), pilot project to send young female nurses to Germany as au-pairs	(1) Interviews with founders (owner and teacher), students, students' families; (2) trip to a medical school and interview with heads of school
	Private high school/college	Member of a partner school program by the German state, facilitated by the Goethe Institute, German for high school and as complementary subject in college	(1) Participant observation in class and on the compound (two days); (2) Interviews with heads of school, teachers, high school students and former nursing students who took up German

**Table 3.1** | List of language schools that were field sites

The fact that language education necessarily takes a long time meant that there was a big field to cover, and the fact that Manila is a hub allowed me to closely observe the connections between sites. Decisions about where I would spend more time were

determined by permission, socio-geographic access, the liberty of my movements, and by the realization that some (albeit interesting) sites moved my research too far away from the topic of my study: These were the reasons that led me to focus on the Goethe institute and Berlitz rather than on smaller language schools in poorer areas of Manila; access would have been difficult due to traffic, my visits to Cebu only lasted a few days, and my connections were stronger in Manila.

During my time in these spaces I collected different forms of data – the main element was participant observation that I recorded in my fieldnotes. I always had a booklet with me that was filled with notes. Mostly, I wrote notes down on my own time, but during class observation or non-recorded interviews I took notes while my informants were talking. This sometimes led to irritations that showed in my informants' reaction, who would ask me about the contents of my notes, or, once, glancing at them.

The type of information that is possible to receive from participant observation is connected to the intensity that accompanies the bodily presence of the researcher, the possibility of seeing other bodies, and of feeling and smelling at the site (Nieswand 2008: 84). Indeed, my bodily presence at the Goethe Institute was vital to understanding the intensity of such intensive learning periods where students needed to continue, nearing total fatigue, struggling on. At other times it was possible to discern the levels of comfort between some of the students and classmates or the desperate feeling of a family who lives impoverished in a rural area and is afraid for their young daughter/sister alone in Germany, not knowing if she can stay and find work as a nurse after finishing her au pair contract. The long period of time spent in one place and with the same people also means that the researched (and the researcher) will not be able to hide (Nieswand 2008: 86) or, to use the aforementioned term, to keep up much 'covering'. Such a presence revealed to me emotional moments that some of the informants tried to hide, including moments of hopelessness about the approaching exam or the fact that they did not yet have an employer in Germany, one of the necessary requirements for migration. From my side, it made it impossible to hide my atheism from my informants with whom I had friendly ties when we visited churches together and I could not bring myself to make the sign of the cross – these were delicate moments that made a big difference in the data collection and the sensitivity of the analysis.

Furthermore, I collected as many documents that I physically encountered (such as information brochures and advertising material) as possible and conducted a systematic online-research of governmental documents. I followed the online presence of language schools and brokering agencies by adopting a method I was taught by one of my informants: Rob, a Triple Win candidate who had completed his language course but was still looking for an employer, explained how liking on Facebook and adding friends helps him stay up-to-date in this ever-expanding and increasingly privatized jungle of the migration industry. He showed me all of the different brokering agencies online and told me about projects that are developing. He explained who is currently just testing the market, who is sending German delegates for information days, and who has expansion plans. I followed his instructions of liking and adding friends on Facebook which helped me throughout the rest of my stay as well as when observing the development once I returned to Switzerland.

Furthermore, my research heavily relied on interviews, which I analyzed with regard to who says what to whom, when and where – as “situated performances in and of themselves” (Heller 2011: 44). Furthermore, I consider my informants perfectly able to make sense of their world and to have great knowledge on the process that they are a part of; I therefore consider interviews with informants a way of learning from them about processes. I interviewed a total of 56 informants in 38 interviews (of which 31 are recorded and transcribed, a total of 49 hours), where we talked in sessions varying in length from 40 minutes to four hours. The different informants who shared their experience in interviews are listed in Table 3.2. I interviewed 26 nurses studying German, most of whom I knew also from classes or the library at the Goethe Institute. About a third of the nurses were part of Triple Win, the governmental pilot project, a third worked with private brokering agencies, and the remaining third were still looking for projects and agencies. Contrary to the portrayal of brokering agencies in media, many male nurses were learning German; about half of the nurses I interviewed were men. This number, however, is not statistically representative but developed instead due to a greater willingness on the part of male nurses to talk to me. Other reasons for the high percentage of men might be the preference of men by German employers, as stated by the Triple Win coordinator at GiZ in Manila, or because as one of my male informants told me, Germany is open to men in care work (as opposed to the situation in Saudi and Singapore where women are preferred hires).

<b>Nurses/ German students</b>	General info	26, gender balanced, 10 were held in German (of which 4 were held in Germany), 4 had overseas experience in Singapore, Saudi Arabia (two) and Libya Except two nurses in their mid-30s, all of them were in their mid- to late-20s
	School	7 Goethe Institute, 8 Berlitz, 11 from small language schools (3 in Manila, 4 in Cebu and 4 from smaller cities)
	Brokering agency	9 Triple Win candidates 10 from individual brokers, teacher/brokers or small agencies 1 from a major Philippine brokering agency 6 without an agency
	Interview location	18 Manila (of which only 1 is originally from Manila, 4 from the National Capital Region) 4 in smaller cities in the Philippines 4 in Germany
	Language level	2 A1, 5 A2, 11 B1, 8 B2
	Future job position	3 in hospitals, 7 care homes/daycares (Altenpflege), 11 still open 1 reha, 2 social work, 2 au pairs
	<b>Teachers</b>	General
School		4 Goethe Institute, 1 Berlitz, 1 employed by a small school, 3 teacher brokers (one established with own school, two new; with background in education and one in medicine), 4 at PASCH-Schools (2 in Manila, 2 in a smaller city)
Origin/Age		- Goethe Institute/Berlitz: mobile (from Germany, Vietnam, Philippines, Poland – but all with having spent parts of their life in Germany), 4 in their 20s, one woman over 50 - Smaller language schools: 4 elder men (3 Germans, who have migrated to the Philippines a longer time ago, 1 Filipino, who has lived in Germany for many years) - PASCH: Philippine women in their 30s-50s
<b>Others</b>	Other German learners	5 high school students, one doctor and one marriage migrant (and a mother of a nurse who learned German)
	Coordinators of German education	1 PASCH coordinator at a high school The head of the language section at the Goethe Institute (who is also responsible for PASCH and Triple Win coordination) 1 GIZ employee, responsible for the Triple Win project in the Philippines 1 Berlitz Triple Win project coordinator
	Brokers	2 brokers (one in Germany) who are both closely collaborating with teachers in the Philippines (rather than schools) (additionally, two of the teachers at small schools operate as brokers)
	Medical training personnel	At a provincial college specializing in medical training: the head of the school, the dean of nursing and a nursing instructor

**Table 3.2** | List of all 56 informants who were interviewed

Almost all my informants were in their mid- to late-twenties, which seemed to be the average age of most of the students I met. The interviews were conducted in either English or German. With German speakers it was exclusively in German. With six of the nurses, I did several interviews and also built up stronger, personal relationships; this allowed me to hear about deeper motivations for migration and affective responses to the language-learning period. My main other interview partners were teachers, program coordinators, heads of school, brokers, high school students and family members of prospective migrant workers. At the Goethe Institute, I started to be perceived as part of the team by most of the teachers, as I was invited to their social gatherings as well as work dinners. These relationships were not only personally valuable but also important to understand the complex and important role of language teachers in the migration process.

I heavily relied on group interviews, especially with the nurses, who often decided to talk to me together with friends and classmates. I only spoke with 6 of the 26 interviewees individually. The rest were group interviews between two and four people. In the beginning I wondered if the group interviews were the right format for sharing experiences of preparation for work in Germany. After having completed many interviews, both individual and group, I became convinced that this type of conversation also mirrored an important experience of them being companions in fate – and in case of those who were selected as Triple Win candidates, the “lucky, chosen ones”. One of the dangers of leading group interviews was the possibility that the more outspoken would take time for themselves and away from others. In such cases, I tried to arrange additional, individual interviews with those whom I thought were not able to share the thoughts they wanted to.

Elements of the interviews also showed how they were not only useful for me as a researcher but for some my informants as well: First, this can be seen in the length of the interviews and in the “trading” of information about the migration process and about life experiences (talking about what it is like to live in Germany and travel in Europe). Furthermore, it can be seen in the fact that nurses also sometimes explicitly asked to be interviewed in order to practice their German, others chose English to ensure that they could convey what they wanted to.



### 3.4 Discussing accountability in and beyond the field

A decolonial feminist ethnography asks for a researcher's accountability, their clear positioning in a project of emancipation and a study that improves the situation of those it studies. However, there are various accountabilities to negotiate in a study such as this one. On the one hand, there is the accountability towards Philippine nurses. On the other hand, this study is the result of a graduate program and is intended to provide me with an academic title – my accountability therefore is also towards the academic community in general and my examiners in particular. I have an additional accountability towards myself and my political standpoint. These different accountabilities can come into conflict, which explicitly showed in moments where I discussed the potential impact of this study with the Philippine nurses. A case in point was a moment towards the end of an interview with Rob, a Triple Win candidate who had completed the language course and still had to find an employer. Following a long break, he asked me during our second of three interviews:

Und du? Was denkst du? [And you? What do you think?] What do you think about the experiences of those people you interviewed so far? Regarding the Germany, the Germany, I hope that someone would make it easier for those who are planning to apply in the future, I hope.

Interview with Rob, Makati City, Manila, May 18, 2015<sup>50</sup>

Rob's question came after a discussion of the exhaustive waiting process. He already held his B2 certificate (although a B1 is already enough for candidates of the governmental pilot program) but had been waiting to be allocated to an employer for many months. He was desperate and one of his main worries was connected to the fact that the Triple Win program was rumored to be slow and that employers in Germany were getting increasingly anxious. Rob feared that the employers might think that the slow process is the fault of Philippine nurses with a low dedication to learn the language instead of realizing that it is a problem of the institutions involved in the brokerage (he mainly accused the GiZ). After having asked for my opinion, it became clear that his main intention was to let me know that my research could (and should?) make a difference. The difference he envisaged was one that would make the brokering

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<sup>50</sup> The original language is always shown first, the translation follows in square brackets.

process smoother and the procedure faster – especially for Philippine nurses, who have to go through this demanding and grueling journey. This was not the only instance of this kind during my research – I had other informants similarly expecting that my research could be a “real game-changer.”

A project that would facilitate Philippine nurse migration to Germany would not be an academic endeavor and certainly would not be a decolonial, anti-capitalist, feminist project. It is my position as a researcher that I have the time and authority to present my research the way I deem right (Gillies and Alldred 2012: 52). At the same time, the fact that a study can be a stepping stone (or obstacle) in my professional career might influence the study not only during its set up but also during the writing process— a radical critique might be tamed or forbidden in and from academia (Gillies and Alldred 2012: 55). However, the stakes of offering a radical critique are not as high for myself as they are for those who are struggling to cross borders (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 11). It is the experiences— of the Philippine nurses who learn German, and of German teachers, brokers and government officials, all who were willing to share with me— that are the basis of this study. Among these, it is the Philippine nurses and German students that I am most deeply accountable to. This accountability shapes my analysis as well as my conclusions as I negotiate through and with my political and academic accountability.

The following four chapters are the core of this study – the analysis of the data presented in this chapter, embedded in the historical context and theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter. The last of these analysis chapters exclusively focuses on the lived experiences of Philippine nurses who learn German – the people and their space I feel most accountable to. This gives me the opportunity to sharpen the focus onto the situated knowledge and explicitly to combine the micro and the macro, show the universal in the particular. The first three chapters on the other hand, focus on the mapping and navigating of dynamics of state and industry and their hierarchizing effects of and through language education and testing, with the special consideration of the Goethe Institute as a nodal point.

## Chapter 4

# Managing the border through language

### 4.1 Introduction

On March 19, 2013, Hans Leo J. Cacdac, the administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), and Monika Varnhagen, the director of the Federal Employment Agency of Germany (BA – Bundesagentur für Arbeit), signed a bilateral labor agreement on the placement of Philippine nurses in Germany. Pictures and reports of the signing in Manila demonstrate a ceremonial, diplomatic and celebratory atmosphere: Formally dressed representatives from the Philippines and Germany gather in a room decorated with gold and mahogany stucco. Flags of the two countries are arranged on the table and projected to the back wall, framed by pictures of the president of the Philippines. The German Minister for Labor and Social Affairs, Ursula von der Leyen, and Philippine Labor Secretary, Rosalinda Baldoz, observed the signing as witnesses. The labor ministers from the Philippines and Germany asked the parties involved to collaborate closely. Von der Leyen praised Philippine nurses for their high qualifications and their “pleasant nature and caring disposition” (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2013b). She emphasized the values, beliefs and cultural background that the two countries share. Maria Cleofe R. Natividad, the Philippine ambassador to Germany, reported on the path of negotiations that led to the agreement: As far back as 2011, Philippine embassy officials in Germany were aware of the care shortage and had started to promote a labor agreement with the Philippines. At the end of the same year, the German Federation of Private Social Services Providers (BPA) visited the Philippines to discuss possibilities of Philippine nurses working in Germany; they

developed a pilot project – a commitment praised by Natividad. The question on language competency and visa requirements seems to have been dealt with rapidly and the requirements were vague— mention was simply made of the “successful completion of basic German language course” (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2013b).

The ceremony offers a first glimpse into the regulatory infrastructure of Philippine nurse migration to Germany, a glimpse of the “disparate elements that coalesce in particular historical conjunctures” (Feldman 2012: 32) to make up a ‘migration apparatus’. Representatives of these two nation states sign a labor agreement and draw on prevalent debates to justify and advertise their initiative. It is a moment of coalescence of the disparate elements: (1) institutions, represented in the form of Philippine and German government ministers and high officials of the POEA and the BA, (2) legal and policy decisions, in the form of the actual document enabling, structuring and advertising of Philippine nurse migration to Germany, (3) the architectural arrangement of the decorated, prestigious room where the signing took place, (4) the institutional debate and thought patterns regarding the idea of caring Philippine nurses. Furthermore, the Philippine ambassador’s praise of the private service providers’ involvement uncovers moments of overlap and, with regard to the BPA’s sharp criticism of language qualification as a visa requirement as shown in section 2.4.3, possible moments of friction between the regulatory and commercial infrastructure; that is, between state regulation and the interests of the industry.

The role of language is marginalized as the press release only mentions that “basic German” is necessary. This formulation is particularly noteworthy as it clearly deviates from the descriptions of the different language levels offered by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) that is taken as the basis of the language certificate accepted within the regulatory infrastructure. “Basic” is used for the first two levels of language competency – A1 shows “very basic language skills”<sup>51</sup> and A2 calls for the need to “demonstrate that you have a basic knowledge of German”.<sup>52</sup> However, Philippine nurses do not need an A1 or A2 certificate in order

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<sup>51</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/spr/prf/gzsd1.html>, last accessed on June 12, 2018

<sup>52</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/spr/prf/gzsd2.html>, last accessed on June 12, 2018

to obtain visa but a B1 or a B2: B1 certifies “independent users of the German language”<sup>53</sup> and B2 “certifies that candidates have acquired advanced language skills”<sup>54</sup>. This discrepancy between the portrayed and the actual effort needed to obtain such a high level of German serves as an anchor point for this chapter: It reveals the central role of language education and testing as a result of the language qualification visa requirement for state authorities even as its disparate elements engage in neglecting or marginalizing language.

This chapter follows an analysis of the different elements that constitute the regulatory infrastructure. It traces the institutions involved and the journey Philippine nurses make through these institutions; additionally, it analyses relevant documents and laws, describes spatiality and architectonic arrangements and traces prevalent institutional debates and thought patterns. While Xiang and Lindquist (2014) mainly analyze procedures of documentation within the regulatory infrastructure, I explicitly include elements of the ‘migration apparatus,’ a concept they consider closely related.<sup>55</sup> The regulatory infrastructure that is mapped out through such an analysis is highly complex and at times contradicting. It starts with (1) the institutions involved, which are presented chronologically according to when a Philippine nurse encounters them in their migration process to Germany. It then turns to (2) an analysis of different documents and laws, focusing on the bilateral labor agreement from 2013 and its 2016 amendment, official GiZ descriptions of the Triple Win project and different visa descriptions released by the German embassy. (3) It describes the spatiality and architectonic arrangements of the different institutions with a strong focus on their geographical location within Manila. The last part of this chapter (4) looks at the prevalent institutional debates of ‘bagong bayani – Filipin@s as ideal workers’, ‘language as work skill’, ‘Germany – land of innovational and economic prowess’ and ‘development aid’. These elements operate in different ways and on different levels: Some of them are tangible such as streets, buildings, employees of institutions and actual documents, while others are non-material such as the architectonics imagined

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<sup>53</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/spr/prf/gzb1.html>, last accessed on June 12, 2018

<sup>54</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/spr/prf/gzb2.html>, last accessed on June 12, 2018

<sup>55</sup> Please see section 2.6 for a more detailed discussion of these concepts.

and discourses promoted by the institutions. Each element of this multi-layered apparatus facilitates the selection and regulation of the desired workforce by establishing a complex yet expedient infrastructure with language education and language testing as crucial management tools.

## **4.2 Institutions involved and requirements**

The different institutions operating in the regulatory infrastructure of Philippine nurse migration to Germany are presented in the order in which Philippine nurses encounter them on their migratory journey. I am going to follow the experience of Carlos, whom I met when he was close to finishing his German language training. The discussion of a personal trajectory helps embed the experience in the historical (dis)continuities that have been laid out so far. Carlos' story serves as a prologue to the excursions through the migration infrastructure and the different effects and processes that are enhanced when seen through personal experience (an approach which will be taken in chapter 7). It allows a counter-narrative to the analytical dissection of personal experience, on which a lot of this study is based. Carlos' trajectory serves as introductory vignette to each of the subsections. It will be graphically set apart from the rest of the text and subsequently analyzed and discussed. This graphical arrangement allows two different readings, depending on the reader's preference: This section can either be read by following Carlos' experience and then returning to the different subsections where the institutions are more closely analyzed or it can be read following the linearity of the text, intermingling Carlos' personal experience with the institutional set-up.

Carlos is part of the governmental pilot project 'Triple Win,' which introduced nurse migration to Germany after the signing of the bilateral labor agreement in 2012. The project is administered by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) on the Philippine side and by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)<sup>56</sup> and the International Placement Services (ZAV, Zentrale für Auslands- und Fachvermittlung) of the Federal Employment Agency (BA – Bundesagentur für Arbeit) on the German side. 'Triple Win' candidates meet more

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<sup>56</sup> The GIZ does not translate its name into English – an English version could be "German Corporation for International Cooperation".

actors of the regulatory infrastructure than nurses outside of the program do – a difference which will be discussed at the end of this section.

#### 4.2.1 POEA

Carlos was an integral member of the German class at Berlitz, which I could join and observe for one week in May 2015. His contributions in class were marked by insecurity on the one hand and subtle, sharp wit on the other. He was extremely affectionate with his classmates and his teacher, Daniel, offering support wherever he could and readily accepting support wherever he needed it himself. Seven weeks after class observation I met him for an interview which turned into a more than three-hour long conversation over good food and pistachio milkshakes at Ayala Triangle, a small and expensive green oasis in the middle of some main traffic routes through Makati. We mostly spoke in English supplemented with words and sentences in German, whenever they came to Carlos' mind faster – revealing the intense immersion of months-long language training.

Carlos is in his late twenties and enjoys being a nurse. This has not always been the case as he chose to take up the profession on his parents' wishes. Rather than hotel and restaurant management (HRM), which Carlos is most passionate about, the family regarded a nursing career as more promising for their son. He could, thus, follow in the footsteps of many of his relatives when nurses were in high demand after his graduation from high school in 2004. He remembers how more than half of his classmates chose the same professional path at a time which is regarded a peak in nurse education in the Philippines.

Carlos decided to leave the Philippines and look for overseas labor due to the low wage. His family wanted him to find a position in Saudi Arabia, where he could join one of his uncles. "But I don't want," Carlos said emphatically during our interview, "I have Angst with Saudi. I don't know." The country would not allow him to openly live his homosexuality. He was looking for work opportunities in Canada, where one of his grandmothers lives, or in Singapore, which attracted him because of the climate shared

with the Philippines. His eventual choice of Germany for overseas labor seems rather incidental.

Carlos first learnt about the work opportunity in Germany through his uncle, whom he was supposed to join in Saudi Arabia. The uncle wrote to his daughter and his nephew – the two nurses in the family looking for overseas employment – after he read about the Triple Win program on the internet. Carlos checked the details and found the advertisement of the POEA. Within one week he had to collect all the documents needed and he amazed himself when he managed to hand in everything on time. He brought his application to the local POEA branch in his home province in Luzon only three hours before the pile of dossiers would be taken to the POEA headquarters in Mandaluyong, Manila. He felt extremely lucky but did not expect much success because of his limited work experience of four years compared to the ten years of experience of other candidates – which he learnt from a glimpse he could cast on the officer's list. He felt extremely lucky again when, contrary to his expectations, he was amongst the candidates shortlisted by the POEA after they reviewed all of the 5000 applications.

The POEA regulates workers who are entering a new work position overseas. The administration is also responsible for licensing and controlling brokering agencies, acting under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Its establishment in 1982 marked a decisive period in the Philippines' stabilization as a labor brokerage state.

In the case of the Triple Win project, the POEA works as a coordinator from the Philippine side and ensures that the whole procedure is under Philippine law. They pre-select the applicants before referring suitable profiles to their German cooperation partners (the GiZ). The POEA's pre-selection criteria include the applicants' knowledge of or affinity to the German language, their field of medical specialization, and a minimum of two years of work experience. They received 5000 applications during the first Triple Win call, which they reduced to 1500 dossiers to be handed over to the GiZ (information obtained through the GiZ coordinator for Triple Win). The



POEA further organizes a destination country specific pre-departure orientation seminar for all labor migrants. Philippine nurses leaving for Germany (Triple Win candidates as well as others) visit this course shortly before deployment. It lasts for one day and claims to prepare the nurses culturally for Germany – they learn rules of conduct, such as not eating with their hands, being on time, using bike lanes, and not asking someone’s age (information received from a participant). Before leaving the Philippines, every labor migrant needs to be registered and cleared by the POEA.

The features that the POEA promoted most in a presentation on the Triple Win project were governmental involvement, social security, standard contracts for nurses, and the ethical recruitment of workers “ensuring against mass recruitment from a health facility” (Cacdac 2015). They advertise the “low mobilization cost for applicants,” as there is no placement fee and German language training is covered by the employer. The main argument of the presentation was in the demonstration of “best practices” of this government-to-government hiring program that was intended to serve as blueprint for future projects. As section 7.2.1 will show in more detail, the language learning period requires enormous financial investment from the nurses, even if the course fee is paid by the employer. This investment adds to the considerable expenses every Philippine labor migrant has to pay in order to become employable for overseas work, a fact which is not problematized by the POEA.

The role of the POEA is criticized by various other players in the regulatory as well as commercial migration infrastructure, including the German embassy and small language schools. During the roundtable at Mabuhay Germany in 2015, the head of the visa section evaded a question about if nurses could be directly hired or if they need to go through the POEA:

Of course this is a question for the Filipino authorities. This is nothing we are proficient in and we care about. (...) We look at our requirements and issue the visa and whatever is necessary on the Philippine side from the POEA is a different story and needs to be observed by the nurse. But we, obviously, are not the ones to force it or to, ahem to, to look into that. But yes, ahm, direct hire is possible. And it happens, sure.

Head of visa section of the German embassy, round table discussion at the Mabuhay Germany event,<sup>57</sup> Taguig City, Manila, February 21, 2015

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<sup>57</sup> Recorded and transcribed by author

In contrast to a language of diplomacy and cooperation, the head of the visa section clearly marks their interest as disconnected to the interest of the Philippines and the POEA. Direct-hiring from the German side is possible and if this should be illegal from the Philippine side, he rejects any kind of responsibility or German interest in implementing Philippine rules.

Teachers of small, private language schools share their frustrations with the fact that the POEA is itself a brokering labor force through the Triple Win project. The governmental institution is accused of acting beyond its mandate, which is simply to administer and observe private brokering agencies. In 2015, a petition on change.org was launched that problematized the monopoly of the Triple Win project and accused the POEA of deliberately blocking nurses who have already undergone German language training, passed the language test, and even have an approval of the ZAV (Rolands 2015). Apart from 116 signatures, the petition did not seem to have had much influence; still, it can be read as an example of the developing market and competition within the migration of Philippine nurses to Germany. This frustration, criticism and political action indicates the language school's own interest in brokering and their struggle for market access because of the Triple Win project's exclusive collaboration with the Goethe Institute and Berlitz.

#### 4.2.2 *GiZ*

It was yet another feeling Carlos describes as pure luck when he was called by Mr. Mercene, the GiZ project coordinator for 'Triple Win' and invited to an interview in Manila. After having been pre-selected by the POEA he was now amongst those nurses considered by the GiZ. After the interview he was officially part of the first 500 candidates selected for the 'Triple Win' program. A few months later he was called again by Mr. Mercene, who was always called Sir Randy by the Triple Win candidates, who informed him about the start of his German language training in Manila. Sir Randy stayed a central figure for Carlos and his classmates during the rest of the preparatory period. It was him they approached with questions about the process and requirements and it was him, who informed them about delays and difficulties. Carlos related his concern about the project coordinator's

frankness on problems the project was facing and he was well aware of Sir Randy's role in the monitoring of their German language progress.

The GIZ is a federal enterprise (a governmental institution as well as a business) that works in the field of “international cooperation services for sustainable development”<sup>58</sup>. The GiZ's developmental work relies on the promotion of “German and European values.”<sup>59</sup> According to their website, the GiZ Philippines “concentrates on the areas of peace and security, climate change and biodiversity, and economic and human development (agriculture, urban infrastructure, employment, microinsurance, and health in schools).”<sup>60</sup> ‘Triple Win’ is hard to find on the GiZ Philippines website, where it is the last project mentioned under the last sub-category of economic and human development. It can only be reached through extensive clicking on the website. This corresponds with the GiZ's self-presentation at their stall and in their information brochures – the “Education and Training, made in Germany” distributed by the GPCCI and their own expensively produced brochure on GiZ Philippines (November 2013) – during the Mabuhay Germany event in 2015. While the former omits the project completely, the latter lists it at the bottom of its very last page, describing it in only two sentences. This limited space is in stark contrast to other projects on climate change or peace that are presented with extensive descriptions, figures, and photographs. In contrast to the neglect of ‘Triple Win’ in the publications of GiZ Philippines, the GiZ draws attention to the project in Germany and globally: The ‘Triple Win’ project is presented on its own website, hosted by the BA in cooperation with the GiZ, presumably directed at the German market (as it is only available in German and lists their range of services for interested employers). On the general GiZ website it appears as a featured project is linked on their focus page ‘shaping migration.’<sup>61</sup> While ‘Triple Win’ seems to be a flagship project globally (they received a best practice award by the IOM) as well as in Germany, its promotion within the development aid paradigm seems to be neglected in the Philippines. This paradigm implicates a clear hierarchical distribution of power, with the Philippines positioned as

<sup>58</sup><https://www.giz.de/en/aboutgiz/profile.html>, last accessed on October 18, 2019

<sup>59</sup><https://www.giz.de/en/aboutgiz/profile.html>, last accessed on October 18, 2019

<sup>60</sup><https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/376.html>, last accessed on October 18, 2019

<sup>61</sup><https://www.giz.de/en/ourservices/55868.html>, last accessed October 18, 2019

in need of Germany's help – however, the constructed nature of this discourse is more difficult to sustain when addressing the opposite party of the agreement.

Within the Triple Win project, the GiZ acts as the main coordinator with its office in Makati. In Germany, the ZAV brokers, facilitates and integrates labor from outside Germany as well as skilled workers for specific areas within Germany. For the Triple Win project, the ZAV is responsible for finding job positions at interested hospitals and care homes. They make a second selection after the POEA and place the applicants in different priority groups according to their familiarity with German language and/or culture. The GiZ then tries to match the applicants with the interested employers; they arrange job interviews, organize German language training and help the candidates through the different stages of their application process.

For the Triple Win project, the GiZ Philippines employs a full-time local coordinator with a dedicated office. He had a great interest in talking to me, especially because of the critique 'Triple Win' had received, as it had clearly underachieved its goal of sending 500 nurses to Germany by the end of 2014. He told me about the difficulties the project faced in the beginning, especially with finding interested employers in Germany and the underestimation of the time for German language training (they initially allocated six months, which had to be raised to eight or more months). They only gradually realized that language training is the biggest part of the project and the coordinator became sure that "it's just the language that is holding them back". He stays in contact with the nurses who already started work in Germany and language seems to remain the most difficult aspect of this labor migration. He draws a difference between nurses working in hospitals and care homes: The workplace setting is easier to adapt to in care homes than in hospitals; however, the linguistic challenges at the former are much higher. Most of the nurses are now struggling with German dialects and he wishes to obtain more information on dialect variation to include in the nurses' preparation.

The GiZ takes on a role of monitoring and conducting surveillance of the project candidates by asking the German teachers to file progress reports. The GiZ office is frequented by 'Triple Win' nurses who are in close contact with the coordinator. During my interview he received a call from one of the participants, who asked permission to leave Manila to see her family in the South even though she had already

completed the language training. However, outside of such moments, the project coordinator seemed to have a genuine personal interest in the nurses, which could be attributed to their shared trajectories – he is also a nurse interested in leaving the Philippines for Germany.

After the German language training and shortly before Triple Win candidates leave the Philippines, they go through a five-day work specific language and culture course organized by the GiZ. There are two courses directed at nurses deployed either to hospitals or to care homes. If candidates are prevented from taking part in their respective course, they either join the next group or are personally given abbreviated instruction by the GiZ coordinator. I spoke to several Triple Win candidates right after their orientation seminar; they shared their experiences and sketched the form and content of the training. As some examples, they discussed the differences between the German and the Philippine education systems, the accreditation of their nursing degree, the nursing process in German language and specific work situations such as coping with sicknesses and bacteria in hospitals. Furthermore, they received advice on their first steps in Germany such as opening a bank account, purchasing the right insurance, and paying taxes. Their instructor was a nurse from a hospital in Frankfurt who communicated with them in German and via skype. She wanted them to be very detailed in their explanations and to stick to German; the language expectation and digital setting made it extremely difficult for the participants. However, they were glad that they managed in the end and were proud of the bilingual notes they had taken during the course: Their written use of German showed them how proficient they had become. The course was held at a hotel and each day they were provided with nationally themed (Italian, Thai, German, etc.) buffets for lunch. In general, they appreciated the course, although they expected many more questions to arise once they started work in Germany. Overall they thought the course helped – and quickly added that the food was the most helpful part. The course might prevent a shock of first encounters in German work communication. However, the short duration and digital setting prevented a deeper form of intellectual involvement and the course seemed to be rather perfunctory. The much-appreciated prestigious location and catering could be seen as a successful token of Germany's welcoming culture.

The GiZ receives similar criticism from language schools as the one voiced about the POEA – which has been accused of being an illegally held monopoly. German language school owners and teachers point to the financial support of 3,700 Euro that the GiZ receives from the German state for each of the 500 participants. Regarding the meager success of the project so far (fewer nurses have been trained than they have been paid for), they assume that the GiZ has made an enormous amount of money. They stress the fact that the GiZ is a company and such a project should have been subject to an open call for any business interested in making an offer. The head of the Goethe Institute mentions the quasi-monopoly of the GiZ, which he deems highly problematic and undemocratic.

#### 4.2.3 *Goethe Institute and Berlitz*

Carlos had moved to Manila upon starting his German language training. Friends and family were astonished about this move because they knew his reluctance to undergo language testing. The compulsory IELTS-certificate (International English Language Testing System) was the main reason he abandoned his wish to go to Canada or Singapore. He laughed heartily at this choice himself, which took him by surprise, as well. But after he passed many important steps of selection and he was invited to start language training; it was clear to him that “I couldn’t resist. So go, okay, I took the chance for the German course.”

When he received good grades during the mock exams and passed the A1 exam at the Goethe Institute, he became all the more excited. The A1 certificate was another main moment of selection, as participants who fail are usually excluded from the project. Suddenly, he wanted to try more and push through with the language training, of which he was thoroughly frightened during the first few weeks. His positive exam results excited his parents, too, who started to fully support his migration plans to Germany. Carlos received his language training at Berlitz in the form of an intensive course with lessons for six hours per day, six days per week. Unlike some of his classmates he is not disappointed of having been assigned to Berlitz instead of the Goethe Institute but seems to fully identify with his language

school. His experience with Berlitz was completely different to when he once learnt Spanish for half a year: The class size was small and they were exclusively concentrating on the language. He is extremely happy and amazed that he can speak another language now.

At the time of our interview, Carlos is in his eighth month of German language training and it will be nine and a half by the time he will take the B1 exam. He rented a room at a boarding house in walking distance to the school with the help of a monthly allowance from his parents. Upon completion of the language course he will have to return to the province as they cannot continue paying the additional rent. He will then have to specifically return to Manila for the B1 exam.

After the GiZ's selection process is finished, project participants are invited to go through a language course – the preparatory German Language Training (GLT) – either at the Goethe Institute (GI), Germany's governmental cultural agency promoting German language and culture abroad, or at Berlitz, a globally operating private language learning institution offering a wide selection of different languages. The GiZ added Berlitz as one of their partners for the German language training because the Goethe Institute reached capacity in 2014. However, all Triple Win candidates have to go through the Goethe Institute for language testing, as it holds the power to award language certificates recognized by the German embassy.<sup>62</sup>

The Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz are located close to each other in one of the most expensive and prestigious areas of Manila. During my six months fieldwork, I spent most of my time in and in front of the Goethe Institute's attractively situated library, which revealed itself as a fundamental meeting point for their own students, Berlitz students, and even students from language schools in different cities of Metro Manila. The significance of this architectural arrangement will be shown in section 6.2. The Goethe Institute as Germany's cultural agency has a much more diverse mandate than simply teaching the German language; as a result, the Institute emerges as a link

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<sup>62</sup> Smaller language schools, who teach nurses outside the Triple Win project have since acquired licenses for language testing also recognized by the German embassy – a development which is further discussed in section 5.5.4.

between the regulatory and commercial infrastructure. For this reason, the Goethe Institute Philippines will be discussed in detail throughout the whole study.

This study's focus on the role of the Goethe Institute and Berlitz arises not only out of sociolinguistic interest but because of their prominent position in the migratory trajectory of Philippine nurses. During their language training, Triple Win candidates are under constant observation and (re-)selection through the GiZ, their teachers, the language schools' respective project coordinators, and the interspersed language exams. More than a year may lie between a participant's decision to work in Germany (and selection) and the actual deployment. Most of this time is spent either physically at these language schools or somewhere else practicing the language, doing homework, or preparing for exams – the effects of which will be discussed in section 7.2.

As the POEA and the GiZ, the Goethe Institute faced the accusation from smaller language schools of enjoying a monopoly – in this case, of German language teaching and testing. Indeed, the Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz have massively expanded in the Philippines due to the German education program for Philippine nurses. However, these two language schools are not holding a monopoly; indeed, the language education industry in the Philippines is thriving. Many new competitors are trying to enter the market and those already established are employing different growth strategies (developments in the language education market are discussed in chapter 5).

#### 4.2.4 *German embassy*

So far, Carlos had never been to the German embassy in Manila, although it is just fifteen minute's walking distance to Berlitz and ten minutes from the GiZ headquarters. The only time he will visit the embassy will be in order to hand in the visa application. He is anxious but at the same time eagerly anticipating that moment. He closely observes his friends, who are further ahead of him in the migration process and learns about the difficulties he might face gathering all the relevant documents. Carlos imagines the moment he will finally have visited the German embassy: "After the processing a new life begins. I hope, I hope before the year ends, we will be all in Deutschland."



The German embassy is one of the final steps in the selection process before prospective nurses can embark on their journeys to Germany. It is the most crucial moment, yet still one of the most elusive ones, which is consequently met with great anxiety. Visitors are only allowed on the embassy's premises if they have pre-registered for a visa application appointment, and they may not be accompanied by anyone else. During the round table at Mabuhay Germany 2015, the head of the embassy's visa section requested that interested labor migrants first consult their website and the online job portal before writing to the embassy. The promise of the embassy to look into each case individually can be read as personalized effort, but it also contains an element of insecurity; this was exemplified during the round table. The head of the visa section of the German embassy had to reply to a question about the chances of success in obtaining a visa for studying German in Germany. He assured that such an estimate would be impossible to make and struggled for the right words. He explained that although proof of prior German language education was unnecessary, the visa applicant needs to convince the embassy of the sincerity of their application. If the applicant has never visited the Goethe Institute it would be hard to convince the embassy of their sincere interest in going to Germany. After a lengthy and evasive explanation, he returned to the fact that "we are looking in each case individually, if you have a, if you can convince us that you want to go there study the language and it fits into your whole career plan, then you will get it, but I cannot give you a percentage or something". Although this explanation does not particularly address a Philippine nurse seeking a German visa, it captures the feelings expressed by many of my informants. Some of their visa applications were refused even though they had fulfilled all the listed requirements, which left them in despair. Those who had been expecting an answer from the embassy concerning the status of their visa application rarely received a reply. When they did hear from the embassy, they were notified that there is nothing they can do and that long waiting periods are normal for work visa processing.

In addition to the embassy's crucial role in issuing visas for future work migrants, it is also engaged in assessing the Philippine economy and promoting bilateral collaboration in the interest of the German government and industry. During the roundtable at Mabuhay Germany 2015, the commercial counselor of the German

embassy had to argue why skilled technicians were not yet considered for work in Germany:

Now we are, now we are at the very beginning of opening up our labor market, no? When I came here in 2011 to the Philippines, it was completely beyond question, the German labor market was closed it was not open to non-EU professionals, so within a very few years, this has changed dramatically and of course we are still in the process of adapting our integration system, of adapting our rules and regulations for this openness to make this actually happening, and happening smooth, and without a necessary barriers. As for programs, I think what we have for the nurses, this Triple Win program, this first attempt, we have to look into and analyze it, whether this is a blueprint for other programs to follow or whether it might better be left to the private sector initiative to bring supply from the Philippines and demand in Germany together. Because in the end we feel that maybe industries is the best to judge whom they need and what they do require.

Commercial counsellor of the German embassy, round table discussion at Mabuhay Germany event, Taguig City, Manila, February 21, 2015

The commercial councilor's explanation hand reveals the crucial role played by the German embassy – as a representation of the German state and its Federal Foreign Office – in actively shaping Germany's foreign relations and its close collaboration with German industry. The Triple Win project is seen as the first instance of a new collaboration between the two countries and the opening of the arrangement to the private sector is seen as the most promising path for the needs of industry. The German embassy in the Philippines reveals itself as an actor of the neoliberal state, facilitating the industry's needs as a governmental institution.

Like all the other institutions, the German embassy was criticized by private sector language schools. They accused the embassy of preferring Triple Win candidates and blocking other nurses by simply refusing to process visas. The owner of a small language school related his experience of dealing with the German embassy: In order to establish an understanding with the embassy to allow them to deploy nurses outside of Triple Win, they had to activate connections in Germany to act on their behalf. They collaborated with German employers, who raised pressure by taking legal measures and consulting German politicians. In the end, the embassy agreed to process the visas of nurses, who went through that particular language school. The head of the visa section made clear that Philippine nurses do not need work experience to find a position in Germany; this is in contradiction to the requirements desired by the POEA.

An employee of the Goethe Institute noted that the German embassy is critical to the Triple Win project—the GiZ and the POEA were not intended to become a market monopoly but simply to be a part of the pilot project. This critique corroborates the German embassy official's focus on creating an environment most favorable to the needs of industry.

#### *4.2.5 Philippine embassy, GPCCI*

Two institutions that operate in the background of the regulatory infrastructure – at least from the perspective of Philippine nurses to be deployed in the German market – are the Philippine embassy in Germany and the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI). However, both of these institutions assume a vital role in facilitating Philippine labor migration to Germany and in establishing favorable market conditions for labor in German companies in the Philippines.

As stated earlier, Philippine embassies around the world operate as scouts for possible market openings for labor migrants and actively promote their workforce abroad (Rodriguez 2010). The Philippine embassy in Germany helped negotiate the 2013 bilateral labor agreement (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2013a), whose signing was witnessed by the Philippine ambassador to Germany (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2013b). Together with Philippine honorary consuls in Germany, the Philippine embassy continues to promote the governmental pilot project and the sustainable continuation of the ethical recruitment of Philippine nurses. Rather than assuming the role of recipient of development aid, the embassy clearly positions itself as a supporting partner that “can help meet Germany’s need for qualified nurses in the long term” (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2016). Once Triple Win candidates arrive in Germany, the Philippine embassy hosts events to celebrate and welcome their labor migrants, who are encouraged to uphold the Philippine nurses’ excellent reputation and act as “ambassadors of goodwill” (Embassy of the Philippines Berlin 2016) (The discourse they hereby draw on will be discussed in section 4.5.1).

The GPCCI is a corporation promoting and expanding German business in the Philippines. It was founded in 2008 by a group of business people in Manila and its successful representation of German companies’ interests and a resulting growth of the corporation led to its admission to the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad

(Aussenhandelskammer, AHK). While the hyphenated German-Philippine in the corporation's name implies a joint organization of two states on commerce and industry, the GPCCI's position as AHK suggests otherwise: German Chambers of Commerce Abroad are co-funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, BMWi) and promote German interests in industry and trade in 92 countries. Therefore, the GPCCI is much more a German corporation acting in the interest of the (neoliberal) German state and its companies than an association of German and Philippine business people establishing and negotiating business and trade interests equally.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the previously cited GPCCI press release for Mabuhay Germany 2015 clearly shows the hierarchical relations the corporation follows, when mentioning “our strong presence in this country, represented by established companies in different industries, symbolize our unwavering commitment to support Filipinos through commerce and culture” (GPCCI 2015). The GPCCI explicitly divides themselves from the Philippine people when celebrating “OUR strong presence” and “OUR unwavering commitment” (emphasis mine) and draw on their superiority that gives them the power “to support Filipinos”. The GPCCI acts within the regulatory infrastructure of Philippine nurse migration to Germany by promoting debates on language as work skill (section 4.5.2), Germany – land of innovational and economic prowess (section 4.5.3) and development aid (section 4.5.4).

#### *4.2.6 Institutions and candidates outside Triple Win*

The path through the institutions of the regulatory infrastructure is much less structured outside the Triple Win program. Nurses need a B2 language certificate in order to obtain a visa (as opposed to the B1 certificate for Triple Win candidates, who take their B2 needed for the recognition of their diploma after starting work in Germany). Nurses outside Triple Win will not encounter the GiZ – neither receive its support nor face its surveillance – and they might not even visit the Goethe Institute for language learning or testing, as other language schools have obtained the right to

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<sup>63</sup> I do not want to imply here, that a cooperation between Philippine and German business people would be desirable – as it still entails capitalist hierarchies between owners and wage laborers. It should simply underline hierarchies existing between nation states.

examine and certify German language competency. Therefore, the only two institutions they have to pass through are the German embassy for their visa application and the POEA for registering and for their clearance as OFWs.

The different visa requirements for Triple Win candidates and nurses leaving through private brokering agencies or direct-hiring have been subject to speculation, insecurity and anxiety on the side of nurses, smaller language schools as well as brokering agencies. Wilbur already holds a B1 certificate, he is a nurse outside the Triple Win program but wants desperately to leave for Germany as soon as possible. When I interviewed him in June 2015, he was taking his B2 course but wanted to move to Germany before completing the exam, as he was running out of funds to take him through the learning period and he expected better language learning results in Germany, which is much needed for the difficult B2 exam. He has heard from a brokering agency that promises a possibility of entering Germany with a B1 certificate outside Triple Win. He was told that they are still working out how to deal with the German embassy and the POEA. The German embassy did not respond to my request for an interview, the information obtained is restricted to their employees' discussions during the Mabuhay Germany roundtable in 2015. Therefore, I cannot add their perspective on the conflicting accounts towards the visa issuances to nurses outside Triple Win: some sources have reported that their path is completely blocked, others have reported they entered a successful agreement to send nurses with a B2 certificate and yet others have heard of non-Triple Win candidates leaving only with a B1 certificate. The only accurate assessment I can give on the German embassy's role in Philippine nurse migration outside the governmental pilot project is that all of the other institutions, be it the Goethe Institute, the GiZ or private language schools, as well as the nurses themselves are highly insecure or relate conflicting accounts. The German embassy, thus, is perceived as all-powerful and inscrutable, a role which is crucial for the regimentation of workers.

#### *4.2.7 Discussion: the centrality of Germany and the centrality of language*

The different institutions involved in the selection and preparation of Philippine nurses for the German market were presented in the order of how people encounter them when choosing to follow this path of labor migration: the POEA, the GiZ, the Goethe

Institute and Berlitz and the German embassy. Furthermore, the Philippine embassy and the GPCCI were presented because of their crucial role in facilitating and supporting the labor migration. The presentation of these institutions revealed the centrality of Germany on the one hand, as more German institutions are involved in the selection process in the Philippines. On the other hand, the centrality of language surfaced as receiving a language certificate is the most incisive moment of selection next to being granted a work visa.

Germany's institutions active in the Philippines make use of their presence in order to promote "German values" in the case of the GiZ and to adhere to economic interests of the German state and industry through the German embassy and the GPCCI. Moments of friction showed that Germany, rather than fully appearing as cooperation partner of the Philippines, has little interest in the Philippine legal conditions and refuses to take any responsibility in their implementation. The presence of these German institutions in the Philippines and the extensive preparation and selection period results in an externalization of the German border to the Philippines.

The centrality of language can be seen in the gatekeeping power language learning institutions have within the institution of the regulatory infrastructure. It is predominantly the Goethe Institute with its power to certify language competency that becomes part of the border regime. By insisting on language competency as a visa requirement, the German states imposes a decisive moment in the selection of "wanted" labor migrants on language schools and, thus, on language teachers. The long language learning period not only externalizes the German border but expands its territory, as a space for the exclusive focus on Germany and the German language created at language learning institutions. It is a focus on language that reveals the role of the destination country. Furthermore, the critique raised against the different institutions involved came mostly from private language learning institutions. This critique shows, on the one hand, frictions between the regulatory and the commercial infrastructure on the basis of the brokering monopoly of governmental institutions such as the POEA and the GiZ and, on the other hand, the dominant role of language schools in the commercial infrastructure. While most language school owners assured me of no involvement in brokering (which would be illegal without a highly expensive

license from the POEA), the criticism indicates the coupling of language schools and brokering agencies.

Selecting workers (or anyone for that matter) always points to a hierarchical relationship between those with the power of choosing as opposed to those who have to be chosen. The institutional power in the selection of Philippine nurses for the German market has been deeply felt by Carlos – who, compelled to passivity, feels “lucky” every time the institutions select him for the next stage. Language learning is the only moment that adds some pride on his part, because he has some agency as to its outcome.<sup>64</sup> During my fieldwork, I have rarely heard criticism of the different institutions voiced by nurses themselves. Many shared their frustrations with the slow and obscure process, which appeared incomprehensible in the light of the acute care shortage in Germany. But rather than evoking a critical response, the institutions and their regulations were regarded with an almost indifferent immutability, acknowledging that “we still have no choice what to do,” no matter if regulations were changed.

### **4.3 The treatment of language requirements in policy decisions and documents**

The institutions of the regulatory infrastructure rely on German immigration laws and Philippine laws for overseas labor. Additionally, they have issued several documents that regulate Philippine nurses preparing for work in Germany. An analysis of their treatment of language gives insight on its positioning within labor migration as well as the processes language partakes in or enforces. Language (its implementation as requirement, its education as well as testing) is largely absent from these documents or its impact is explicitly downplayed. This (non-)treatment of language serves Germany as a tool to manage its border as well as select and prepare its ideal labor force. (1) I provide an analysis of the 2013 bilateral labor agreement and its 2016 amendments, which was published by the POEA, I will then turn (2) to different GiZ descriptions directed at future labor migrants as well as interested German employers, and (3) to visa application checklists published by the German embassy in the Philippines.

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<sup>64</sup> However, how language training and testing also becomes part of the regimentation of speakers will be discussed in chapter 7.

#### *4.3.1 The bilateral labor agreement of 2013 and its amendment from 2016*

The bilateral labor agreement between Germany and the Philippines established in 2013 opened the way for Philippine nurses to enter Germany as labor migrants. In order to obtain a visa Philippine nurses need to present a certified high level of German language competency – a B1 or B2 level, which calls for approximately eight months to more than a year of full-time language learning. Many nurses who chose to follow this route to Germany, as well as their German teachers and brokering agents, consider language to be the most difficult element of the migration process. Yet the agreement from 2013 merely touches upon the topic without giving any detail as to what the language requirement entails: under elaborations on “job placement procedures” the two signing parties are asked to provide each other with updates on “supply and demand for health professionals” including “essential aspects of professional equivalency and linguistic requirements imposed on Filipino health professionals in order to be accredited by the German government as nurses” (Bilateral Labor Agreement 2013). The labor agreements, thus, only mention linguistic requirements for the recognition of the nursing qualification. Prior requirements for obtaining a visa – the need to testify a B1 or B2 level of language competency – are completely left out.

Next to the language requirement it is the future German speakers who are absent in the document. It is replete with language of diplomacy, as “both countries’ desire to strengthen existing friendly relations between them, through the development of cooperation in the area of labor” (Bilateral Labor Agreement 2013). The Philippine nurses, who are going to learn a new language for several months; the Philippine nurses, who leave their country to start work half way around the globe are not addressed. A joint committee shall monitor that the agreement is implemented according to the guidelines and is responsible for settling disputes “amicably by consultations or negotiations, through diplomatic channels” (Bilateral Labor Agreement 2013). Such careful formulations show the delicacy of entering into a labor agreement for nation states. The workers’ welfare is occasionally mentioned, as social security, accommodation, a proper briefing and employment statuses not different to German workers are elements included in the agreement. The two parties agreed on the “preservation, promotion and development of Filipino health professionals’ welfare in accordance with existing laws” – which presumes that the existing laws are



fostering the welfare of the workers. There is an abundance of assurances that the two parties' interest are of concern, as the labor agreement "shall take into account the interests of both countries concerning their respective employment markets" and "The Parties will work to ensure that the implementation of these projects will be mutually beneficial for the Parties." The Filipino health professionals, however, are not considered as a party to this arrangement, and the mentioned parties' interest are not necessarily theirs. The bilateral labor agreement is clear on its objective that "WHEREAS, Germany requires health professionals for its labor market to address the health needs of its citizens; WHEREAS, the Philippines wishes to assist Germany in finding a solution to the skills shortage," (Bilateral Labor Agreement 2013, emphasis in original): the states arrange supply and demand to their best interest and the actual human beings subject to the agreement, performing the labor that is needed, become mere products. The far-reaching effects of language education and testing are borne by the individual labor migrants, which results in a disinterest or ignorance of the states towards this requirement, which for them constitutes a mere detail.

On February 4, 2016 the bilateral labor agreement was amended to open the market to private brokering agencies. The resolution "ensures transparent, fair and ethical recruitment" (POEA 2016) as a continuous basis for the parties' arrangement. However, the POEA and the GIZ will no longer hold a quasi-monopoly on the labor migration of Philippine nurses to Germany. The amendment is based on Germany's issuance of a "White List" that allows the recruitment of professionals of occupations facing shortage – such as nurses – through the private sector. The Philippines, "cognizant of the high demand for professional nurses in Germany which requires the immediate hiring and deployment of nurses, thereto, recruitment and deployment of Filipino nurses to Germany outside the Triple Win project has become necessary" (POEA 2016), opened the market for licensed brokering agencies. The language used in the agreement remains one of diplomacy, positioning the Philippines as benevolent to the needs of the German labor market and the agreement as mutual aid between national states. Unlike the original from 2013, the 2016 amendment mentions "Preparatory German Language Training" and the language certificate explicitly amongst the conditions private recruitment companies have to abide by in order to participate in the labor migration. While the level of language competency is not fixed in the agreement (a minimum of B1 is required), it obliges the employer to pay the

language course fees. The role of language is still marginal, even though the amendment mentions the fact that German language skills have to be gained prior to deployment to Germany. It is mentioned due to the regulation of private brokering agencies rather than being a relevant requirement for the nurses.

#### *4.3.2 GiZ project descriptions*

Unlike the bilateral labor agreements framing the project within an understanding of partnership and mutual benefit, sections 2.5.5 & 4.2.2 showed that the international promotion of the project frames it within development aid. The title “Triple Win” and its allusions to circular migration, the benevolence of Germany in refraining from unethical recruitment and the continuous absence of the German nation state as beneficiary explicitly draw on a (neo-)colonial hierarchy: a country from the global North that helps a country from the global South as a historical continuity from a “enlightened”, “civilized” country colonizes “exotic barbarians” abroad. Both these images conceal the profit these “civilized” nations earn and the power they can sustain from their “helping” acts. Any mention of language in these project descriptions is completely neglected – a fact which might be explained by the enormous effort needed of nurses to become eligible candidates (as section 7.2.1 will show in detail), an effort which would quickly unmask the project’s claim to being development aid as mere rhetoric.

However, language is mentioned by the GiZ in its project descriptions directed at those most immediately affected by the labor migration: the future labor migrants and the future employers. The importance of language qualifications as a visa requirement for the former and the language competency of future employees for the latter cannot be ignored. However, the role of language is given a marginal role in how the other steps in the preparation for Philippine nurses for the German market are presented, as will be shown with the analysis of (1) a Triple Win project information explicitly produced for its Philippine candidates (GiZ and ZAV undated), (2) an infokit designed for candidates of all Triple Win partner countries (GiZ 2013) and (3) a project presentation to interested employers in Germany (ZAV and GiZ undated).

(1) The project information for Philippine nurses lists the pre-requisites needed to apply and continues to describe the selection and preparation process. During all of

these steps German language competency is continuously set as the standard and any lack of knowledge as deviation. The project considers those nurses who “preferably have prior knowledge of the German language (technical vocabulary and everyday language – ideally Level B1 of the Europe Framework of Reference for Languages).” The 30-minute selection interview for the project shall be conducted in German which “is to determine an applicant’s personal, professional and language-related qualifications by means of personal selection in the Philippines. The selection procedure includes a language test.” The project information presents the three different elements of the preparation period by graphically setting them apart as three blocks with the headings “language course”, “nursing skills preparation” and “orientation training”. Each of these sections receives the same amount of space, specifying its objective, content and duration: while the nursing skills preparation and the orientation training last for four days and one day respectively, the duration of the language course “depends on prior knowledge”. The nurses only have to take the language course “if the applicant’s language skills do not at least meet the required B1 standard.” The project promises to cover the costs for board and lodging during the “preparatory period”: what the preparatory period entails is not further specified. As board and lodging are not paid during the language learning period (whose significance in enforcing social inequalities will be discussed in section 7.2.1), the preparatory period, therefore, includes the five days of training of the remaining two courses.

Prospective Triple Win candidates, therefore, should “preferably” already be German speakers and regardless of their knowledge are called for a 30-minute interview in German. It is unreasonable that applicants can conduct a formal 30-minute conversation in German without prior knowledge of the language or with German skills from a few months of language learning. The issuance of such a demand stays pro forma: it implies that the candidates do not meet their standards which legitimizes regimentation. The preparatory period exempts the language course and implicitly positions it as pre-preparation: German language knowledge is set as the standard requirement with any deviation being the responsibility of the applicant. The graphic presentation of the three training measures equals the effort needed for their completion and conceals many months of investment for the applicants by not specifying the duration of the course. Again it depends on “prior knowledge” and implies that knowledge of the German language should be a most natural skill for

Philippine nurses to possess. The project information draws a picture of Philippine nurses being entirely at their own fault if they lack knowledge of German, an investment they could have started a long time ago. It remains to be noted how unreasonable such a presumption is in a country geographically far removed from Germany and German language education, which has only recently been established in four local high schools. The downplaying of language helps to put the responsibility entirely onto the migrants themselves.

(2) The infokit directed at Triple Win candidates of all partner countries works in a very similar way. It is expensively produced, an extensive orientation on the project in the form of an A4-sized spiral bound booklet with a cardboard front and back page and heavy sheets of paper: This luxurious sensory experience is combined with a colorful design, which shows expensive production values as it extends to all pages. The infokit can be read as a token of prestige and distinction, showing the reliability and professionalism of the program.

The infokit gives information and advice on the process between becoming part of the project until having worked in Germany for a year and the nursing certificate has been recognized. It includes a poster of the size of four A4 pages in a row, which shows a timeline of milestones with links to the respective chapters in the infokit. The timeline marks three months before leaving for Germany as the start of the procedure and one year after arriving in Germany as the end. This arrangement clearly envisions a short preparatory period in the country of origin and a quick progression to Germany. Important steps have to be taken in the following five different areas: application and preparation for departure, integration-preparatory measures, workplace as well as recognition of their certificate and life in Germany. The language course is part of the integration-preparatory measures with the indicated milestones of the B1 certificate and the professional orientation seminar. To reach the B1 certificate, an arrow from three months to one month before departure signals that the applicants need “ggf. Besuch eines Deutschkurses” [to visit a German course, if necessary]. Again, the project description clearly sets the knowledge of German as standard – and a German course only needs to be taken for preparation “if necessary”. The lack of knowledge of the German language seems to be the failure of all those Filipin@s who against all expectations have not yet acquired such a skill, an expectation which might even rise

in the future, when Philippine nurse migration to Germany is more established.<sup>65</sup> The timeline designates two months for language training, “if” nurses have to visit a German course. Such a time allocation stands in stark contrast to the actual experience. The GiZ itself needed to adjust their expected duration of six months to nine months or more. The chapter on formalities before departure explicitly mentions the self-responsibility of the candidate for the time of preparation: “Die Dauer zwischen Auswahlgespräch und Einreise kann mehrere Monate dauern und hängt vor allen Dingen davon ab, wie schnell Sie Ihr Sprachzertifikat B1 erwerben” [The length of time between the selection interview and entry can take several months and mainly depends on how fast you obtain the language certificate B1] (GiZ 2013: 23). Such a presentation of language in the preparatory period of Triple Win candidates to Germany positions the migrants as entrepreneurs, fully self-responsible for their deficient skill set and its due customization.

The presentation of language in (3) the project description of the BA and the GiZ directed at interested employers follows along similar lines when it comes to downplaying the time needed to reach the required language certificate. The project description includes a graphic showing the four phases of “Triple Win”, again visually equalized by background boxes of the same size: “Arbeitgeberberatung” [consultation of employers], “Fachkräftevermittlung” [brokering of care workers], “Vorbereitung vor der Einreise” [preparation before entering], and “Nach der Einreise” [After entering]”. A language course up to B1 is part of the preparation before entering and is one of three items together with a 4-day professional preparatory course and a one-day orientation workshop for employers for information on integration and recognition. None of the formulations imply the high standard of German language competency that is required (such as “if necessary” or “depending on prior knowledge”): the self-responsibility of demonstrating the right skill set that is delegated

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<sup>65</sup> Nurses from the two other Triple Win countries, Bosnia and Serbia, might have had easier access to German language education. However, German newspaper articles on the project suggest otherwise: most of the participants portrayed had to go through language training and only in one case a nurse was proficient in German because he grew up in Germany as refugee from the war in Yugoslavia. He had to leave Germany when the war ended and now returns as a desirable labor migrant. These implications ask for an in-depth analysis of Germany’s role within the Yugoslavian conflict, their refugee and deportation practices and the economic benefit they can now activate.

to the future migrant workers is of no consequence to the future employer, who orders the ready-to-work employee from the brokering agency. However, the avoidance of allocating time to the language course and the graphically implied equal phases enforced by listing the language course together with a four-day and a one-day course is a crucial marketing strategy of a brokering agency that tries to attract employers. German hospitals and care homes themselves seem to be interested in a fast process when hiring overseas workers, as became evident by the German Federation of Private Social Services Providers critique of the difficult entry requirements of nurse migrants from outside the EU. As many of my informants have reported, their future employers became increasingly agitated when the language course was prolonged and requested them to join additional super-intensive courses in order to be able to enter Germany as soon as possible.

It is not to be expected that the majority of Philippine nurses who are seeking overseas deployment will have come into contact with German. The result of a B1 or B2 requirement for a work visa to be obtained without prior knowledge of the language results in language courses of several months to more than year, especially if the nurses have to keep working during the learning period. The amount of time scheduled to get to B1 or B2 is seen by most teachers as too short. There is no time for practicing and teachers complain that they rush through the course book, which leads to bad results in exams. Students are under extremely high pressure to pass the exam and pass it fast – as will be further discussed in section 7.3.2. Those teachers who own their own school might actively decide against such an approach to language teaching. Mr. Liske is proud of his students, who are called a phenomenon by the Goethe Institute because they always pass the exams. He thinks of it more modestly, because he knows that his students can achieve such a high level of German in the Philippines, “das ist eben das weshalb ich nicht in sechs Monaten so durchrutschen kann, das geht nicht, weil da sind die überfordert, hmm und ich mach’s auch nicht, das bringt nichts” [that’s why I do not go through it in six months, it doesn’t work, because they are overwhelmed, hmmm and I don’t do it, it leads to nothing]. The downplaying of the duration of the language course is an important marketing strategy to attract willing future employees as well as employers. The resulting pressure of meeting the standard

of displaying German skills is not felt by the GiZ or the German state but by the language students as well as teachers.

#### *4.3.3 Visa application checklists by the German embassy in the Philippines*

Language and professional requirements are both new for the admission of Philippine nurses after the 2013 BLA as compared to Philippine nurse migration in the 1970s. A comparison between the treatment of these two new requirements in the German embassy's visa application documents helps to interpret the choice of imposing such a high knowledge of German before entering the country. The German embassy publishes checklists for the different visa applications they are offering. The version of 2014 lists all required documents with boxes to be ticked off. Next to the usual documents such as passport, photographs and application form, nurses are requested to hand in a certificate of equivalence of their professional qualification or a partial recognition which requires additional practical experience "for the determination of the equivalence/professional qualification recognition" (German Embassy Manila 2014), an employment contract and "proof of sufficient German language proficiency (normally Level B2)" with a possibility to enter Germany with less in case a self-funded language course is to be visited. The version of September 2017 (German Embassy Manila 2017) already demonstrate a much more rigid checklist in a language replete with formulations of regimentation. Instead of asking for a language certificate of "normally B2" and the option of entering earlier and visit a self-funded course, the new version reads more restrictive: Nurses need to provide "Proof of sufficient **German language knowledge** of at least competence level **B2** of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages," (emphasis in original)". What was considered a normal language level to receive a visa has turned into the absolute minimum. The reasons for this change are not given but the effects are a heightened pressure to succeed for future migrant nurses and the stabilization of the passing costs of preparation onto the migrating individuals.

The language used for the recognition of the professional qualification receives even harsher treatment. The checklist creates four scenarios: a partial recognition (which then includes many notes on "professional deficiencies", "adjustment measures", "knowledge examination") either resulting in (1) a training measure (which is again

described with “professional deficiencies” or “reference to the deficits that were detected”) or (2) occupational training, which seems to be more extensive as 800 Euro are listed as the minimum wage during this period compared to the 1800 Euro for nurse assistants (which includes formulations such as “professional deficiencies”, “amending the deficits”), (3) to take a recognition test upon entry (for which you need a notice by the respective authority “regarding the possibility of submitting an application for the permission to use the professional title of nurse on the basis of recognized equivalency”) or (4) to enter Germany with full recognition. The vocabulary and formulations are indicative of the immense regulation that Philippine nurses have to go through to get a visa and in the end recognition of their professional status. The language of regimentation constantly points to deficiencies on the applicant’s side, who needs to go through inspection and testing. Regulation and regimentation are certainly not specific to this particular situation, neither for the labor migration of nurses nor for the two nation states involved. They are exemplary for the efforts of capitalist nation states to perpetuate existing social inequalities, a system of care extractivism that feeds on (neo-)colonial and patriarchal domination and increases profits of capitalists: While it is indisputably important that people – those who give and those who need care – have to be able to communicate and people, who give care need medical, psychological and social expertise, the processes described here are primarily based on the interest of the state and secondarily on those of the future employers. The discourse is prevalent to such a degree that other possible worlds are rarely imagined.

The head of the German embassy’s visa section referred to the difference between nursing education in the Philippines and Germany during the round table at Mabuhay Germany 2015:

I have to admit that the training of nurses in Germany is a bit different to the one in the Philippines. But that does not necessarily mean that it is a big problem. The nurses here have mostly more of a theoretical training. I mean it’s a bachelor here in the Philippines. Bachelor of science in nursing. In Germany it’s more a mixture of a practical and a theoretical training. So nurses going to Germany ehm will at first encounter a little bit of aeh yeah difficulties because the diploma is not immediately recognized in most cases because they lack a little bit of a training, a practical training and practical experiences. But that is no problem at all because we can do some additional training to acquire the necessary practical experience. And also theoretical experience if it is necessary. And we have special visas for that.”



Head of visa section of the German embassy, round table discussion at Mabuhay Germany event, Taguig City, Manila, February 21, 2015

The hesitations during his statements and evasive formulations point to the delicacy of the topic. On the one hand, he emphasizes that Germany has a great interest in employing Philippine nurses but at the same time he has to find explanations for the difficulties that might arise. Completely ignoring the fact that all of the Triple Win candidates have several years of work experience, he justifies adaptation measures because of the rather theoretical education nurses undergo in the Philippines. However, as has been shown in section 2.5.3, the professional reorientation of Philippine nurses in Germany (and often a re-allocation to a care home) is a professional downgrade:<sup>66</sup> Philippine nurses are trained for highly medical tasks that often only doctors are allowed to perform in Germany, while the nursing profession in Germany is much more about basic care such as washing the patient and bringing food (which is not performed by nurses in the Philippines). The constant reminder that Philippine nurses have to adjust their qualifications through additional training, professional as well as linguistic, upholds the image of Germany's superior position in helping the Philippines. Furthermore, Germany's prestige is vital to its promotion as desirable destination country, an acknowledgement of the medically stronger education of Philippine nurses might disrupt the image.

However, the nurses themselves are fully aware of the difference in their education and are confident in the high level and prestige of their certificate – as came quickly to light during many interviews. They were astonished about the limited medical work nurses are allowed to perform (such as giving medication injections) and the responsibility of nurses for basic care, which is assumed by the patient's family in the Philippines. They knew that positions in care homes further shift the focus away from medical to basic care work. However, they accept this lower status for several reasons. Some declared that working in a care home gives them time to adjust to the language and learn medical terminology – however, they still prefer working in a hospital and presented this outlook in case they only got offered a position as caregiver. Others

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<sup>66</sup> This downgrade has to be seen in the light of the value system of a colonial, patriarchal, capitalist society. I would like to stress the fact that I personally do not see it as downgrade. However, within contemporary German society it has to be clear that care givers earn less, have worse working conditions and get much less public respect than nurses.

have emphasized that they would take any job offer they receive out of desperation finally to leave the country – a desperation mostly felt by those who have already completed language education but are still without an employer. Those who will work in hospitals look forward to the modern, computerized and more abundant equipment. Some hope to be able to give special support to doctors and share their knowledge from the Philippines in Germany, a feeling of pride that serves as motivation and expresses a re-distribution of power to their favor.<sup>67</sup> These serious and critical reflections of Philippine nurses on their prospective migratory paths show an awareness of their own agency as well as its structural limitations.

#### *4.3.4 Discussion: the (non-)treatment of language as tool for border management*

The institution of language qualifications as visa requirement is a deliberate choice by the German government and serves as a tool for border management. Stricter requirements can be imposed on Filipin@s as “third country nationals” as well as under-valued and underpaid care workers. While an analysis of these documents and policy decisions does not allow us to fully answer the question of this tool’s function, the visa application checklists show strict regimentation and a focus on the inferiority (deficiency) of the nurse migrants’ professional and linguistic skills, which will be detected by the German state, and, it is intended, adequately adjusted by the entrepreneurial worker.

The role of language education and testing is downplayed when it comes to the acknowledgement on the requirement’s tremendous effect on the lives of the migrant workers. Language is largely omitted in the bilateral labor agreement. The agreements focus on the two parties involved and continuously mention their interest, while the actual people affected by it are rarely acknowledged. The absence of language as well as of its future speakers points to the lack of interest of the two governments in the needs of nurses willing to migrate, as well as the effects their agreement has on them.

Language is downplayed by the GiZ on the one hand as a marketing strategy to attract employees as well as employers, who might be discouraged by the duration of the migration process due to the need for language preparation. On the other hand, with

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<sup>67</sup> Please see section 7.3 for a more in-depth analysis.

the continuous emphasis on German language competency being a standard skill, interested nurses are positioned as entrepreneurial selves, self-responsible for the upgrading of their skill set. This self-responsibility raises pressure on individuals which will be more closely analyzed in chapter 7.

#### 4.4 Spatiality and architectonic arrangements

The regulatory infrastructure not only exists as a legal and institutional framework and discourses within, amongst and emanating from it, but also as a set of spatial and architectural relationships which shape the architectonics of labor migration. The institutions of the regulatory infrastructure which regulate, select and prepare have to be located: The spatiality and architectonic arrangements are decisive elements of the selection procedure, as they grant access to some, exclude others and help to promote a specific, desirable image of the future destination country. This chapter, firstly, analyzes the location of the regulatory infrastructure's institutions in a confined, elite space of the Philippines, Salcedo Village in Makati City, and, secondly, the edification of an imagined "fairytale architecture" of castles and fairytales that markets Germany. This fairytale architecture corresponds with discourses promoting and promoted by Germany, which will be discussed in following sections (4.5.3 & 4.5.4). However, unlike the discourses this architectonic arrangement creates space which, although imagined, advertises its future physical accessibility.

##### 4.4.1 Makati City – home to the regulatory infrastructure

The regulatory infrastructure that governs Philippine nurse migration to Germany is assembled on a very small and confined space in Makati City – one of the most expensive, elite places in the whole country. In order to analyze the architectural arrangements of the regulatory infrastructure, I follow an understanding of city landscapes that are formed and inscribed by (unequal) relations of power: "Wer darin sichtbar sein soll, welche Handlungen und Akteure ausgeschlossen werden, was als zulässig gilt und welche Vorstellungen von Ästhetik, Ordnung und Normalität darin repräsentiert werden, liefert Hinweise auf dominierende Denkweisen und Regierungsrationalitäten sowie reale Machtverhältnisse." [Who shall be visible in it (the city landscape), which actions and actors are excluded, what is regarded as acceptable

and which notions of aesthetics, order and normality are being represented, yields clues to dominant modes of thinking and rationalities of governance as well as real relations of power] (Michel 2010a: 11). The architectural arrangements of the regulatory infrastructure, therefore, have to be examined with respect to what is visible of its grandeur and prowess as much as to what is excluded and invisible. Philippine nurses have to access institutions of the regulatory infrastructure, they have to access their space and navigate the cityscape of which these institutions are part. An adequate analysis has to take into account what effect the prestigious architectural arrangements have on this access, on who is temporarily admitted or completely excluded.

Manila, on the one hand, is the name of the “City of Manila” and the capital of the Philippines with a population of 1.78 million inhabitants in 2015 (Philippines Statistics Authority) – often also called old Manila. On the other hand, Manila, is used to designate the whole of Metro Manila or the National Capital Region comprised of 17 cities with a population of nearly 13 million inhabitants in 2015 (Philippines Statistics Authority). Makati City is by far the richest of these 17 cities and home to commerce (The Department of Trade and Industry as well as 40% of the country’s top 1.000 corporations’ headquarters), finance (more than 4000 banks and other financial institutions including branches of the Department of Finance) and international institutions (46 embassies, 40 consulates as well as the United Nations, the European Union or the International Labor Organization).<sup>68</sup> The city’s official website advertises Makati as expat- and investor-friendly as the city meets “world-class standards,” all of which can be enjoyed with a “peace of mind” because of the highly efficient police, whose structure is inspired by the Los Angeles Police Department.<sup>69</sup>

Boris Michel, who studied neoliberal urbanization and the politics of exclusion in Metro Manila (Michel 2010a), closes an article on the elite’s imaginaries of Manila as a global city by pointing to its two realities (Michel 2010b): The rich, economically successful Manila – mostly associated with Makati or affluent neighborhoods such as Bonifacio Global City – and the poor Manila of the exploited and superfluous.

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<sup>68</sup>All of the numbers stem from Makati’s official web portal, <http://www.makati.gov.ph/portal/main/index.jsp?main=52&content=0&menu=0>, last accessed on July 4, 2018

<sup>69</sup><http://www.makati.gov.ph/portal/main/index.jsp?main=52&content=0&menu=0> last accessed on July 4, 2018

However, these two realities are “economically linked to each other by flows of labor and capital” (Michel 2010b: 399). While the standard of living in Makati is described as being closer to international elite places of capital than to the rest of the country, the city itself is marked by duality, “highly polarized both spatially and socially, with economic elites and global functions concentrated in ‘New Makati’, a privately planned enclave comprising 37% of the city’s land area and less than 8% of its population” (Garrido 2013a). What Garrido calls ‘New Makati’ is essentially a privately planned and largely privately managed part of Makati that was established after the Second World War. At a time when city planning was globally in the hands of the state, Makati was built by Ayala Inc., a corporation of one of the richest families in the Philippines since the Spanish colonial era (Michel 2010: 74-75). From its very beginnings, the outline of the city followed the needs of the international capitalist market and the property owning elite (Michel 2010: 74). Large investments in an infrastructure that could satisfy those needs were made and, as the project enjoyed success, corporations started to move from old Manila to Makati in the 1960s (Michel 2010: 76).<sup>70</sup> Much of the development of Manila and Makati follows premises of ‘neoliberal urbanism’ such as market governed development strategies and privatization: however, the early onset of such an approach in Makati asks for a need to trace city planning beyond neoliberalism and connect it to colonial ties (Garrido 2013a; Michel 2010).

The City of Makati consists of six elite gated communities and the Central Business District (which together could be called ‘New Makati’) as well as poorer neighborhoods in relatively close proximity. The Central Business District, although open to the public and well connected to the rest of Manila through roads and public transport, is largely shielded by gated communities, high-end malls and Manila South cemetery. Makati has to be accessible not only for investors, embassy officials and senior management personnel of multi-national corporations and banks, it has to allow for a steady flow of a massive number of workers, who themselves are unable to live in the high-end district have to commute: In 2010, Makati’s night-time population of 529.039 residents rose to 3.2 to 4.2 million during daytime (Profile of Makati City).

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<sup>70</sup> Please consult Garrido (2013a and 2013b) and Michel (2010) for a historical analysis of the development of Makati.

All of the German institutions in the regulatory infrastructure are located in Salcedo Village, which is part of the Central Business District of Makati: an unhurried 20-minute-walk from the German embassy at the Western end of Salcedo Village to Berlitz at the South Eastern end through the village center will first take you to the GiZ's headquarters and a few minutes and one park later to the Goethe Institute. Salcedo Village is enclosed by the main road axis of 'New Makati,' without being split by major connecting roads itself – which makes it a space relatively untouched by Makati's traffic. The cityscape of this exclusive village differs greatly from most of the other public districts of Manila. Modern, high-rise buildings are flanked by pavements, which makes the area pedestrian-friendly once arrived within the premises. A park, sheltered from the main roads, offers a rare calm, shaded and green area for lunch breaks just as much as for its famous high-end Saturday market, a popular entertainment for the rich residents and the young and up-coming Manila entrepreneurs. The whole area is void of sari-sari stores, which are small, often family-run businesses that sell small quantities of food and are vital for the poorer population all over the Philippines. Refreshment can be found in an international landscape of Starbucks, upmarket cafés and exclusive restaurants, sometimes developing into after-hour clubs to enjoy the end of one's work day. All of these establishments as well as the business towers are well-guarded by security personnel and security cameras.

Garrido (2013a: 178) describes this cityscape as exclusive area which inscribes a clear class boundary to many of Makati's residents outside the Central Business District or the gated communities – to step into 'New Makati' always means "crossing a social boundary" resulting "in feeling out of place, even ashamed". In his ethnography on Makati's segregation, Garrido found that those not belonging to the elite places "regulate their own movement, avoiding places "above" their status" (Garrido 2013b: 1360). The near inaccessibility of ('New') Makati for food, leisure time and especially living was felt not only by the German language students, but to a lesser degree also by Goethe Institute and Berlitz teachers. The teachers' wage only barely allowed for a one-room flat and the missing social connections made flat-sharing a much wished-for but rarely accessible alternative. Although the restaurants and bars in close proximity were visited for special treats, foreign teachers depended on their Manileñ@ colleagues and students for more affordable ways of diversion. None of the students (nor teachers) I interviewed were originally from Makati. For Triple Win candidates

originally from Manila or with family in the city the obvious choice was to commute to Salcedo Village for their language course. Non-Triple Win candidates often chose to visit a cheaper language school closer to their home in Manila (or anywhere else in the country). Some of them took up commuting in order to visit the Goethe Institute for its reputation as well as power to award language certificates. Commuting to such a high traffic area as Makati City results in a substantial investment in time which needs to be juggled by those students who are still working in order to support themselves. Those Triple Win candidates from across the Philippines and without family in Manila were facing difficulties in finding an adequate and affordable residence: while rents in Makati are extremely high<sup>71</sup>, families were often afraid to let their children live anywhere else, due to Manila's reputation for high crime. These students often ended up in the predicament of having to live (sleep, eat and spend leisure time) in a place they cannot afford (to sleep, eat or spend time), which leads to a kind of solitary confinement. Many of the German students shared rooms at a rent still many times higher than what they thought they could afford and were, thus, heavily restricted in their movements beyond this room and their language schools. As most of these rooms do not include a kitchen or cooking facilities, they have to purchase their food in Makati: Jolly-jeeps – small vans selling cheap food to Makati's workforce offered some relief; one was directly located hidden at the back of the business tower that is home to Berlitz. These temporary establishments receive an honorary mention on Makati's city portal. They congratulate themselves on not only providing security, high class infrastructure and the cosmopolitan atmosphere for expats and investors but to “going ‘the Extra Mile’.” “But mindful of the needs of the working class as well, the city government has gone out of its way to promote programs that would benefit employees. One such initiative was the establishment of what are now popularly known as “jolly-jeeps” in strategic areas of the Central Business District. These are mobile canteens that provide affordable, yet clean and nutritious meals to ordinary

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<sup>71</sup> I lived in a guarded condominium at the very fringe of ‘New Makati’ (probably catering to the middle and upper-middle class). The flat had its own large kitchen with a living area and two bedrooms. I shared a bedroom with one of my two flat mates (a normal concept of co-living called ‘bedspace,’ usually directed at students of poorer families, who had to move to Manila). For this shared bedroom I paid 10.000 peso which is about the same as the wage of a nurse at a private hospital and about the same as I would pay for a shared bedroom in Basel, Switzerland).

employees of Makati-based companies.”<sup>72</sup> The benevolence of the government allowed an exception to their restrictive policy regarding street food culture in order to accommodate “ordinary citizens” and the “working class” – fed in order for them to be productive but concealed as much as possible in “strategic places”.

The choice of Salcedo Village as location for the regulatory infrastructure’s institutions has to be seen with respect to this space’s exclusivity. The German embassy follows what seems like the natural decision of embassies to be situated in a representative, prestigious area: the choice of Salcedo Village over the country’s capital, the “City of Manila,” is a choice of closer association with international finance and commerce, rather than state representation. The GiZ as a developmental cooperation enterprise chooses international representativeness over easy accessibility to the people they profess to “develop”. While the embassy and the GiZ only need to be visited for a relatively short period of time (which still has been described as expensive and difficult by many of the nurses from the provinces) the choice of the Goethe Institute and Berlitz to be situated in one of the most elite places of the country is even more significant. After the Goethe Institute Philippines opened in 1961 in Pasay (a city bordering on the City of Manila and part of Metro Manila), it moved to Quezon City in 1978, the most populous area of Metro Manila and the Philippines’ capital at the time, in order to be more accessible and have bigger rooms, while no reasons are stated for its relatively recent move to Salcedo Village in 2006.<sup>73</sup> The choice of a prestigious, modern, welcoming building in the country’s center of global capitalism clearly works against the welfare of their customers as well as their employees. Some of the nurses enjoyed their newly gained familiarity with ‘New Makati’ as they earned a kind of entitlement to a space, which was formerly elusive. I have heard of the journey to the Goethe Institute and to Makati being perceived as a sort of escape of the moloch of Manila: Wilbur, a nurse who I met in Quezon City, wished to travel to Makati for the interview. He had recently changed from the Goethe Institute to a language school in Quezon City, but was appalled by the environment. The effect of this dilemma – an elite space that is at the same time desirable and oppressive in combination with the extensive period of time connected to obligatory language learning – will be further

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<sup>72</sup><http://www.makati.gov.ph/portal/main/index.jsp?main=52&content=0&menu=0> last accessed on July 5, 2018

<sup>73</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/de/ueb/auf.html>, last accessed on July 3, 2018



discussed in section 7.2.1. The particular architectural arrangement, the interior architecture, of the Goethe Institute and the resulting “Goethe-Institute-Philippines-experience” will be discussed in section 6.2 – as it has to be understood within the regulatory infrastructure just as much as the commercial one.

The only institution of the regulatory infrastructure not located in Makati is the POEA. Its headquarters in Mandaluyong are located in an impressive building arching along a junction between EDSA, the main highway cutting through Manila, and Ortigas Avenue. The immense multi-lane traffic axis, high walls as well as the over ground along EDSA cover a clear view of the building – its importance can rather be felt than seen. When I visited the building, the narrow pavement is buzzing with people entering and exiting while street vendors sell different types of food to a never-ending line of customers. The difference between this and the elite atmosphere in Salcedo Village – where Germany’s institutions are located – is striking. The class boundary becomes visible in the many people entering POEA, who are never seen in Makati’s business district. In comparison, Germany’s association with the wealth of global capitalism further gains distinction.

#### *4.4.2 Imagining Germany: Fairytale architecture*

During my fieldwork I was soon struck by a persistently resurfacing architectural arrangement of a less tangible kind, restricted to images: the choice of Germany as destination country was often connected to its association with castles – castles much more imagined as the fabric of fairy tales than historical artifacts. The burning desire and distant dream of visiting castles of so many of the nurses I interviewed, initially, seemed to me a puzzling obsession. Even a nurse, whom I consider as unsurpassably passionate about his profession, emphasized how little he was interested in the work aspect when he first heard about the work opportunity in Germany – all he could think of were the castles, he admits laughingly. They especially valued castles because they cannot be found in the United States.

This deep fascination seems to already have been anchored in the imagining of Germany and Europe before the future labor migrants followed a migratory path to Germany. However, I soon became aware in how many ways institutions of the regulatory infrastructure drew on and fueled this fascination. This promotion of castles

is strongly connected to the institutional debate of an economically and scientifically strong Germany (which will be discussed in section 4.5.3). The focus on tradition and magic provides a romantic counter-image but maintains the continuity of grandeur. I consider this fascination about and promotion of castles as part of the architectonic arrangement for three reasons: firstly, they also provide an architectonic counter-image to Germany's official buildings in the Philippines. Secondly, these castles physically exist in Germany and become an important allusion to the promised future. Thirdly, appending this imagery to the architectonic arrangements rather than the institutional debates draws attention to the blurry boundaries and the interconnectedness of all these elements of the regulatory infrastructure in a bigger discourse.

The Goethe Institute published posters with the most famous of German castles – Schloss Neuschwanstein. These posters decorate their classrooms or their stall during educational fairs, often together with a series of posters titled “Märchenwelten” [worlds of fairy tales] focusing on the brothers Grimm. Castles are discussed in the course books of the Goethe Institute and appear in the transition management material published by the Goethe Institute Philippines (the material will be closely analyzed in section 6.3). When I ask about the cultural elements taught in class, castles are most often mentioned together with German food and classical music. The students tell me about Neuschwanstein and how it became Disney's inspiration for Sleeping Beauty's castle, which in the end developed into the famous Disney logo and its replications as the heart piece of any Disneyland. Unlike the United States, which promotes a plastic, disneyfied version, a mere copy, Germany is home to the original, where the castle is real and at the same time symbolizes century old tales.<sup>74</sup> Next to Neuschwanstein a later lesson portrays Schloss Schönbrunn, the castle of empress Sisi close to Vienna. One of the teachers particularly mentions this chapter, which irritated her because of its complete irrelevance: they have to move through the coursebook at such a fast pace

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<sup>74</sup> Herford (2017) analyses the architectonic and cultural connection between Ludwig II's Neuschwanstein and Disney's castles and amusement parks. Ironically, the castle of Neuschwanstein was built in 1860 by Ludwig II of Bavaria with the intention to rebuild fantasies of the past. Thus, the castle was already a representation of a nostalgic view at the time it was built: a modern construction for amusement and entertainment rather than a medieval building granting accommodation and security for the aristocracy. The financial expenses for his castles (of which he tried to have built several) ruined Ludwig II and led to the end of his reign.

and with only minimal time for cultural knowledge. She taught the grammar aspects of the chapter with material she deemed interesting for her class full of nurses.

Pictures and drawings of castles repeatedly decorate flyers and Facebook posts of the German embassy, the Goethe Institute or the GPCCI. They are mostly used in an emblematic way or even directly linked to fairytales and never to their historical significance. The flyer of the 2017 edition of Mabuhay Germany titled “In Motion” shows a roundly shaped horizon where a city is outlined consisting exclusively of different colorful castles, a television tower (presumably the famous Fernsehturm in Berlin), a gate (which could be the Brandenburg gate in Berlin) and four shiny cars from antique to modern. Three balloons rise into the sky and together with a few white clouds add a romantic and children’s party atmosphere. The sky is made of golden rays – a sun shining from behind the castles adding a touch of glory. The red colored globe, the golden rays and the black of the theme in bold makes use of the colors of the German flag. The text on the flyer suggests that the event promotes “German creativity and engineering” which stands in contrast to the fairytale like, mythical images evoked by the flyer’s assembly of castles. The organizers could have found a venue for their event evoking an enchanted castle-atmosphere in Intramuros, Manila’s old town with Spanish colonial buildings that were not destroyed during WWII. However, the event took place in the same location as the 2015 edition – Bonifacio Global City – the highly modern, elite business and shopping area described in the introduction. The castles, therefore, rather serve as a promise for the future in Germany: a country full of castles, where everybody can be prince or princess.

The fairytale architecture with its promotion of a mythical, yet original imagery provides a complementary architectonic image to the portrayal of Germany within the Philippines: Europe’s economic powerhouse is represented by the architectural arrangements of Salcedo Village or Bonifacio Global City. The Goethe Institute aligns itself with the rest of Germany’s institutions. Through the language courses (as well as its library) it provides the space where Triple Win candidates spend the longest period of time and receive the most intensive immersion in German culture and self-imagery.

## 4.5 Prevalent institutional debates and thought patterns in the preparation of labor migration

This section presents the four main institutional debates and thought patterns of the regulatory infrastructure that either directly draw on language or that are being activated and disseminated by language schools – predominantly the Goethe Institute – language teachers, and course books. The first two discourses are more closely connected to the Philippines: (1) “Bagong bayani” – Philippine’s overseas workers as global heroes and desirable workforce – activates an image of Filipin@s affinity to language. Although this discourse has already been identified elsewhere (Lorente 2012; 2017), I add instances and ways where Germany enters, uses and contradicts it. (2) “Language as work skill” is heavily drawn on in the Philippine education system – again, I add to previous studies (please see section 2.3.2 for a discussion of the literature) by discussing Germany’s role in its activation and utilization of the discourse. The last two discourses focus on the presence of Germany in the Philippines: (3) “Germany – land of innovational and economic prowess” presents the country’s self-portrait and (4) “development aid” focuses on the surfacing discourse on Germany’s (and German teacher’s) role of helping the Philippines and its population.

### 4.5.1 *Bagong bayani (Tagalog: hero of the nation)*

During an art event in 2015 on the Philippine diaspora in Berlin I saw a film by the artist Lizza May David. It showed an event organized by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) – an award ceremony celebrating the most outstanding Overseas-Filipino-Worker-families in each region of the Philippines (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). Lizza had to smuggle herself in, signing a contract that she would show the video material only in a positive manner. She followed that promise in as far as she did not alter the data and simply set music to it. The images worked on their own. The moderator seemed highly condescending, making fun of the winning family from Mindanao – all of their children work as OFWs dispersed around the globe. As none of them works in the medical field, he asked the mother if they could not make a nurse as well. He laughs at his own tactless suggestion, “not enough money yet” he assumes laughingly, and thanks the family for keeping the money flowing into their country. He laughs again.

It was the first time I seemed to grasp the different elements of the discourse of bagong bayani<sup>75</sup> [Tagalog: hero of the nation]. It serves as a way of justifying the Philippines' aspirations as a labor brokerage state and helps bind the workers to the country beyond legal to moral ties – spatially transcending the borders of the nation state (Michel 2010a: 174). It is a well-guarded, sensitive discourse to counter the perception of the country using its population as a resource to be cheaply sold to meet the needs of the global, capitalist market. The condescension of the event's moderator shows the detachment of the ruling class from poorer families, divided by the global market in a common Philippine experience. The heroism is attributed to the overseas workers not only because of the remittances they send home to their families but also because they serve as ambassadors to the Philippines, promoting their skilled, cost-effective workforce (Guevarra 2009).

The discourse is important for the promotion as well as the selection of Philippine nurses for the German market and is used by the institutions of both countries (and it is also taken up by the nurses): it builds on an understanding of (1) Filipin@s as naturally caring and ideal nurses and (2) Filipin@s as English speakers, further developed to (3) Filipin@s as naturally language-adept and, consequently, (4) Filipin@s as adept to regional varieties of a language.

(1) The portrayal of Filipin@s as emblematic of an ideal nurse has already been discussed in section 2.5 (especially drawing on the research by Guevarra (2009)). The GiZ, private brokers as well as some of the nurses alike, suggest this Philippine ideal as reason for Germany's choice of their nurses' country of origin. The GiZ promotes their Triple Win project with a short film portrait of one of the first Philippine nurses, who has started work in Germany. In a slightly shy and extremely pleasant voice, the young Filipina explains how nursing in the Philippines is much more about love and a family relationship between patient and nurse, while she is shown accompanying and supporting an elderly German lady along a hospital corridor, holding and gently stroking her hand (GiZ 2014). This notion of caring is taken up by Lloyd, a nurse outside the Triple Win program: His colleagues who already started working in Germany told him that most of the patients ask specifically for a Philippine nurse.

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<sup>75</sup> It was the former Philippine president Corazon Aquino, who first named their overseas workers as bagong bayani in 1988 (Guevarra 2009).

However, this positioning of being exceptionally caring is also used by some of the nurses to clearly distinguish themselves from what they think will be waiting for them in Germany: Germans are known to be strict, monotonous and serious.

(2) How the knowledge of English was seen as a competitive advantage over other labor brokerage countries and how the Philippine state made use of this for promotional purposes has been intricately shown by Beatriz Lorente (2012; 2017). German governmental institutions, brokers and teachers are clearly following this argument and declare English proficiency as a reason for choosing the Philippines as source country.

However, English proficiency also helps the nurses to set up a hierarchically superior position to Germans. During their interactions, they learnt that the level of English of their German communication partners was unexpectedly low. Students tell me about their teachers of German origin, who could not explain themselves in English. One of my main informants was surprised that his future employer needed an interpreter during their job interview. He, therefore, replied in German (after only learning the language for a few months) and the translator only occasionally helped. In April 2016, I met Ralf, who was part of the class of Triple Win nurses that I visited at Berlitz in May 2015. By then he had worked in Germany for a few months and explained how the people in his village do not speak English. His team is very supportive and urges him to ask questions even should they be in English. He was a slightly puzzled at such a suggestion, which seemed to him unrealistic due to their lack of English language competency.

The round table discussion during Mabuhay Germany 2015 demonstrated how the discourse of the English proficient *Filipin@* is used until it conflicts with a discourse more immediately important to the discussants, one of German superiority (see section 4.5.3 for an extended discussion). On the one hand, the commercial councilor of the German embassy characterizes the Philippine workforce as desirable for German companies because they are “very much trainable also because of that [English] language proficiency.” He advises *Filipin@s* to opt for German for foreign language learning “since you are English speaking anyway”. On the other hand, he classifies the Philippines as non-English speaking country when he limits the possibilities of English teachers’ aspiration to migrate to Germany, as there is competition from “the UK or

other native English speaking countries”. When he is asked about the English language competency in Germany, he further diminishes the formerly mentioned exceptional English skills of the Filipin@s:

If you live in a bigger city, Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich. Everybody is, or a lot of people speak English there. If you go to a really small town, I mean it’s the same here in the Philippines, I guess, no, if you go as a foreigner to a small town not everybody speaks English, most of them Tagalog or the local language. So in Germany it’s the same.

Commercial counsellor of the German embassy, round table discussion at Mabuhay Germany event, Taguig City, Manila, February 21, 2015

What was an asset in one moment suddenly becomes normality. When Germany’s hierarchically superior position is threatened, the Philippines is no longer regarded as English speaking but equated with Germany, sharing the extent of the spread of English.

(3) Filipin@s are portrayed as having a “natural” talent for learning languages in order to meet the newest demands of the human resource sector as well as the demands of the workers themselves. The Philippine state emphasized that “the growing need for language-adept workers can be easily filled by our Pinoy<sup>76</sup> workers who take pride in having the capacity and learning ability to learn languages easily” (TESDA 2007, cited after Lorente 2012: 201)<sup>77</sup>. Ten years later, this trope, as stated by Lorente (2012: 201), is still actively used in the context of nurse migration to Germany: News reports, Goethe Institute officials and language teachers, brokers as well as nurses themselves celebrate an exceptional Philippine language-adeptness that invites international comparison.

A news report by one of the main TV channels in the Philippines covers the experiences of some of the first Philippine nurses who came to Germany after the 2012 labor agreement. The reporter stresses that “in the skills in care and in the learning of the foreign language is evidence of the greatness of the pinoy” after which a statement of one of the interviewed nurses is inserted. He re-enforces the picture by

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<sup>76</sup> Pinoy is a colloquial term for Filipino; Pinay would be the equivalent for Filipina. In this instance Pinoy is probably used as a generic form.

<sup>77</sup> The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is a Philippine governmental agency under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). They operate Language Skills Institutes across the country.

adding a comparison to other foreign nurses: “There are a lot of other foreigners who apply here in Germany as nurses but apparently how the Filipinos speak is nicer to listen to compared to others” (GMA 2017).<sup>78</sup> A similar comparison is made by a Goethe Institute official who stresses the better linguistic performance of Filipin@s compared to Vietnamese, especially concerning their phonetic competence: To achieve the same level as the Philippine students, they need the double amount of lessons in Vietnam. A German broker is aware of the intensive language learning needed in order to reach a B2 within a few months, however, thinks it is possible for Filipin@s (“Philippiner sind ja sowieso sprachbegabt” [Filipinos are language-adept anyway]). Those nurses who are already working in Germany seem to adopt a similar conception of their exceptional language learning skills. Two Triple Win candidates whom I met again after their first month of work in Germany tell me about their experiences with the German language. They tell me of joyful moments, when they realized their German skills were higher than those of their co-workers from Serbia who have already been in Germany for a few months. And they tell me of painful ones, when co-workers underestimated their language competency and they had to listen to their gossiping about them. A nurse who left for Germany as an au-pair, tells how her classmates thought that she must have been in Germany for seven years based on her language skills – when it actually had only been seven months. They themselves had been in Germany for many years and were impressed by her language competency.

How such a discourse of pride at times feels oppressive became evident during a group interview with Lloyd, Wilbur and Marlon, nurses outside the Triple Win program who are preparing for work in Germany. Lloyd rather hesitantly tells a similar story of praise. Somehow not satisfied with this version of his story he adds a twist, which was readily embraced by the others:

- Lloyd     Our teacher in Goethe Institute aehm said that it’s very easy for the Filipinos to cope up or adjust with the aehm the language itself. Because we are, I mean we can speak English compared to other aah nation. That’s why it’s, of course it’s not, there’s no easy way for you to learn German but to start it aehm in hard way but
- Wilbur    You have to suffer first

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<sup>78</sup> The original is mainly in Tagalog; the translation was provided by Gabriel Kiefer.



Lloyd     You have to suffer first  
 Marlon    Suffer first and spend money (they laugh)

Interview with Lloyd, Wilbur and Marlon, Makati City,  
 Manila, June 13, 2015

While Lloyd enjoys his teacher's words of praise, he feels betrayed by such a flat description of their journey to learn a new language. It does not do justice to the amount of time, dedication and money they have to invest in order to be able to migrate to Germany.

(4) This discourse of the language adept Filipin@ has further developed into a particular affinity with dialectal varieties of German. I was surprised by of the keen, general awareness of German dialects amongst the nurses I encountered during my fieldwork period. Many of them voiced an interest in learning dialects or have already begun to do so. This discourse has been promoted by the GiZ as well as German teachers in the Philippines. While there are big regional differences in the social stratification of dialects in Germany such as its social importance for Bavarian identity, what is of importance in the current context is the general perception (be it right or wrong) that dialects are often attributed to a lower social class and avoided in formal and educated contexts, where Standard German is widely preferred.<sup>79</sup> This social stratification of dialects in Germany, however, has never been discussed in the Philippines.

The GiZ Philippines seems particularly aware of the importance of dialect competence. The Triple Win project coordinator mentioned different dialects as one of the major difficulties the first nurses experienced when they started working: Those nurses who are deployed to care homes (which comprise the bulk of the employers of Triple Win nurses) were especially struggling to communicate with dialect speaking inhabitants. After he learnt about my prior scholarly engagement in dialectology, he asked me if I could provide them with material as they would like to incorporate it in their language course. The GiZ's focus on the importance of dialects is taken up in the formerly mentioned Triple Win promotion video portraying a Philippine nurse after her first experience in Germany. She explains how supportive her German colleagues are and how well she has adapted after initial difficulties connected to language and

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<sup>79</sup> See for example Barbour, Stevenson and Gebel (1998) and Ammon (2003), who discuss variation of German from a sociolinguistic perspective.

loneliness. Now there remain but two wishes: “als Nächstes möchte ich mich im Bereich Kardiologie spezialisieren und natürlich auch noch Hessisch lernen, weil meistens von meinen Patienten sprechen Hessisch.” [Next, I would like to specialize in cardiology and, of course, I would like to learn Hessian, because most of my patients speak Hessian.] The wish of this nurse to learn the Hessian dialect is remarkable with regard to the general perception of dialects in Germany, as it seems unlikely that a German nurse would ever voice a wish or need to learn a local dialect.

Teachers try to include dialect differences in their courses. I observed such an instance during my one-week class observation at Berlitz. Daniel, the teacher, initiated the subject by showing videos of Old Bavarian and speeches of Bavarian politicians, in what he called Standard Bavarian. The students replied with their knowledge on German dialects: German people do use dialect but also know standard German. The teacher verified this argument and reassured the students, who, although trying to copy the sound of Bavarian, were anxious about how little they understood. Daniel’s motivation to teach dialects is rooted in his wish to prepare his students as best as he can. Having worked in a care home himself, he tries to equip them with knowledge to help navigate the work place – he explained in an interview how German senior citizens can be mean, exhausting and very difficult to understand.

Many of the nurses showed great interest in the dialects of Switzerland and Germany throughout our interviews and informal conversations. Seemingly out of nowhere, Jason, one of my main informants and Daniel’s student, tired after a long day of work and study, exclaims how happy he is at the prospect of working in Germany, and how much he looks forward to the language – to the different dialects. Others are worried about work situations in care homes because of the dialects and the low English skills of elderly Germans.

The dialects’ prominent position in German education in the Philippines results in a normalization of a wish to learn a specific variety. The continuous positive connotations and the associated feeling of pride helps the positioning of nurses in those places they are most desperately needed: rural areas and care homes. The fact that this additional skill makes the nurses prone to work in care homes (which pay less and where Philippine nurses can practice even less of the medical work they are used

to) and in rural areas (where they are less likely to migrate to in groups) is never mentioned.

#### 4.5.2 *Language as work skill*

Sections 2.2 & 2.3 already established how language competence came to be mainly viewed as a work skill in the Philippines. English language teaching was established in the Philippines by the United States as their colonizer with an agenda of enlightenment and the production of a cheap, adequately skilled, yet not too overskilled workforce. Many Philippine educational facilities propagate English language education in order to fulfill their mission to educate “globally competitive professionals”. Recent years have asked for a linguistic repertoire beyond English and including other languages of countries with labor shortage or with plans of business process outsourcing to the Philippines. Short language-programs of TESDA and OWWA for household workers described by Beatriz Lorente (2012) and the institution of foreign language education (SPFL, as discussed in section 2.3.1) in the context of the Philippine education reform K-12 are part of this development. This section describes two moments, in which Germany enters this development and further promotes the discourse of language as work skill: (1) the teaching of German as part of SPFL by analyzing a Philippine private high school and (2) the event ‘Mabuhay Germany’ as promotional platform for education based on German values.

(1) German language education as part of SPFL is coordinated by the Goethe Institute under the global German PACH-school initiative. It is restricted to specific high schools in Manila and one high school in the South and shall gradually be expanded. I became intensely acquainted with the project through interviews with the Goethe Institutes’ head of PASCH-school supervision, the teacher responsible for PASCH-school teacher education as well as German teachers at high schools in Manila. Furthermore, I could visit the high school in the South, which was kindly facilitated by the Goethe Institute Philippines and where I received a very warm welcome. I could tour the school premises, observe two German classes and interview the German language coordinator, the German teachers as well as some of the high school students. During my visit I could see the historical development of the discourse of language as work skill and its close connection to the development of the world market.

From the school's well-guarded entry, I was brought to the school's director by a young man with a t-shirt that designated him as student police. The corridors and patios were full of children, lively but extremely polite and always greeting the teachers. The school rooms bore names, which seemed to be all European, white and male – Confucius being the only exception. Classes were called after these room names rather than numbers, with kids coming from the Mozart-class or the Rousseau-class. “Please observe silence, kindly speak English” is written on a sign, which remains the only suggestion of how to behave in the hallways. The sign serves as a reminder of the value of English, which is taken up by a badge that students are asked to buy and wear (see Figure 4.1).

The local high school in Mindanao is a private school delivering education to children of middle and upper-middle class families. It is integrated in an educational institution that further offers college- and university-degrees. The use of English is an important basic distinction within the local high school competition: together with the school room's names the high value attributed to English conforms to colonial hierarchies than English as native Philippine language. The school's mission to educate globally competitive professionals is connected to English language competency as a minimum skill, especially enforced by the increasing focus on German language education.



© Stefanie Meier

Figure 4.1 | Badge for students, high school in Southern Philippines, 2015

The high school – through the strong initiative of their coordinator – pushes the collaboration with the Goethe Institute and the German language teaching. German language as a subject had been established before the partnership with the Goethe

Institute, but this boosted the size of the project. The local project coordinator pursued studies in Germany in her youth after she visited a school led by German nuns. After a long academic career she works now at the local high school and when a teacher joined with a degree in teaching German as a foreign language, she immediately realized that such a resource had to be used. The school agreed to her proposal of starting German language education because they see Germany as the heart of the European Union. Such language skills could open possibilities for “world employment”. Furthermore, German investments in the Philippines increased and those companies will need employees. When the German labor market opened for Filipin@s through the Triple Win project they felt confirmed in their choice. The project coordinator sees Germany as a more interesting alternative to the common migration destination of the United States, as she concludes my visit by mentioning: “If I were young I would not go to the US, I would go to Europe, there are so many different cultures.” To offer such an alternative not only provides their students with a “competitive edge” but works as a way of distinction in the competition amongst leading educational institutions in the region. Marcus, one of the German teachers, reflects on the experience of teaching a foreign language which he puts in the context of gaining market access:

It sends a good message to the community that one school is passionate in the teaching a foreign language. Cause that's the, that's already the way to go these days, right, to produce globally competitive students, there is not only America, but Europe.

Interview with Marcus (and other high school employees), Southern  
Philippines, March 17, 2015

Their leading position in foreign language teaching already generated recognition through the commission of higher education in the Philippines, who congratulated them on their achievements. The students and especially the students' parents are taking great interest in the possibility of German language education. With currently only two teachers of German, the school is worried about a teacher shortage due to the popularity and growing demand of the German language course. Their exceptional dedication to promoting German language education was recognized by the Goethe Institute and their PASCH school initiative with a preferred treatment compared to their partner high schools in Manila. The project coordinator from the high school in the South and the Goethe Institute have plans to further develop their collaboration

by streamlining German language education with the college's nursing program (see section 5.5.4 for a closer analysis).

(2) The 'Mabuhay Germany' event (its 2015 edition has been described in the introduction) has been organized at irregular intervals by the GPCCI since 2008 (there were no events in 2013, 2016 and 2018). It serves as a platform to showcase Germany and has grown dramatically over the years. Each edition has a theme and includes a round table co-organized by the Goethe Institute and the German embassy.<sup>80</sup> The main themes of the event suggest a slight move from a more general portrayal of Germany with a high fun factor to topics more associated with business,<sup>81</sup> while the topic of the round table is always explicitly focused on work: "How German helps Career" in 2012, "Learn German and land a job" in 2014, "Learn German and work in Germany" in 2015 and "Make it in Germany: Opportunities for Philippine Nurses" in 2017.<sup>82</sup> Between 2014 and 2015 the focus of the round table changed from learning German for work in German businesses in the Philippines (part of the business process outsourcing industry) to labor migration to Germany. This change comes at a time when the brokering of Philippine nurse migration opened (or was soon to open) to the private market, which happened in 2016 with the amendment to the 2013 bilateral labor agreement. The topics from 2012, 2014 and 2015 equate German language competence with work opportunity, and clearly adopt the discourse of language seen as (or reduced to) a work skill.

The material distributed during Mabuhay Germany 2015 follows an explicit path of neoliberal education. The Goethe Institute Philippines launched a website and gave away little publications all geared towards labor migration and the German language as linguistic capital (a close analysis of this material follows in section 6.3). The GPCCI handed out an information booklet on "Education and Training – Made in Germany" (GPCCI 2014), portraying different actors involved in education: next to the GPCCI itself, the GiZ, the German European School Manila and the Goethe Institute as well

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<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately, the GPCCI did not respond when I asked for the programs of past editions – I could not obtain information on the 2008 and 2009 set-up of the event, if there was a title or a round table and if so, what the focus was laid on.

<sup>81</sup> From "Discover Germany! Explore and experience diversity" in 2010 to "Winning Moments" in 2011, "Step forward and have fun" in 2012, "German Karneval" in 2014, "Connect now" in 2015 and "In motion" in 2017.

<sup>82</sup> There is no information on a round table for the events' 2010 and 2011 editions.

as four non-profit organizations are portrayed. The most widely mentioned intervention is a dual training program introduced during the K-12 educational reform under the guidance of Germany. The self-portrayal of the GPCCI addresses German businesses in the Philippines by stressing their need for “well-qualified and skilled” employees. They mention their initiative for “custom-tailored **short term qualifications**”, and introduce the dual training program as part of their long-term perspective for educating suitable employees:

The professional organization of **Dual Training** following the German holistic approach to meet your demand for qualified skilled labour in the technical field. As the platform for the German dual technical vocational training, the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. ensures quality and standards in close cooperation with its membership. We bear the industry’s need in mind and are keen to contribute to your company’s success.

(GPCCI 2014: 6; emphasis in original)

Drawing on German efficiency and pride – they use the country’s “holistic approach” to education. The non-profit organizations involved in the dual training initiative follow along these lines, as they intend to give the students a “higher employability level”, have a “business-demand standpoint” and foster “industry-academe-training provider linkages”. These presentations of the dual training program positions education as training for work with the clear beneficiary being the industry, which is reflected by the partners of this program: German companies that have already entered the Philippine market. During the round table in 2015, the German embassy’s head of the visa section affirmed Germany’s interest in expanding education in the Philippines:

So what we are thinking about, but this is really brainstorming at this stage, at this moment, is that probably in the foreseeable future, we will have programs or schemes, where German companies do not just hire professionals from the Philippines but where they also invest into training and education. Because it also wouldn’t be probably fair to go to the Philippines and just harvest perfectly trained workers. I mean that would also mean we take them away from the Philippine economy. So I think what we will have to see in the future is something like an investment from the German side into training, education, to finally get what’s needed back home.

Head of visa section of the German embassy, round table discussion, Mabuhay Germany 2015, recorded and transcribed by author

He mentioned the bilateral nurse agreement and the Triple Win project as possible blueprints for such an engagement. To preempt accusations of brain drain, he acknowledged Germany's responsibility to invest in the country from where they source their workforce. Nonetheless all of this investment in education always focuses on the interest of Germany's labor market, as they want to "get what's needed".

#### *4.5.3 Germany – land of innovational and economic prowess*

In order to meet the competition of the global care work economy, Germany has to create and promote the image as a desirable destination country. Most of the nurses I met during my fieldwork mentioned how little they knew about Germany before they heard about the work opportunity and started to prepare for labor migration. Germany has not generated much publicity and what I hear most is knowledge about Adolf Hitler and the Second World War, often admitted laughingly. Brokers and language teachers have voiced deep concern about this limited image of Germany and felt the need to change it. Some of the nurses had prior associations with Germany about sports, cars and the country's economic strength and stability. It is this image of Germany that is taken up by the German institutions in the Philippines and actively promoted: (1) Germany presents itself as a country of innovation and technology and (2) as economic powerhouse. The dissemination of this discourse can be traced to the German embassy and the GPCCI through their online appearance, flyers and events. Following the presentation of the two traits of Germany's self-portrayal of innovational and economic prowess, I will show (3) the crucial role of the Goethe Institute and other language schools, including their teachers and course books, for the promotion of this discourse.

(1) The promotion of German innovation and technology has been alluded to in the slogan of "Germany – land of ideas," which was launched as far back as 2006 as an image campaign accompanying the FIFA world series held in Germany. The slogan was supported by the government as well as the industry and it was meant to advertise the country worldwide.<sup>83</sup> After its success, the image campaign was continued and is still running in 2018. In the Philippines the slogan is taken up in hashtags and Facebook

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<sup>83</sup><https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/imagekampagne-zur-wm-wirtschaft-verspricht-zehn-millionen-euro-1213012.html>, last accessed June 22, 2018



posts by the German embassy. The German ambassador to the Philippines, Thomas Ossowski, builds on this image in his foreword to the GPCCI booklet on German education and training initiatives in the Philippines, which was distributed during the Mabuhay Germany in 2015:

Education, research and invention play a vital role in the economic success of German companies and the German national economy. (...) Germans are among the most successful scientist in the world – we count 80 German Nobel laureates so far. With over 47,000 German patents in 2013 alone, research and innovation is a key element for Germany’s economic success.

(Ossowski 2014: 5)

The foreword frames Germany’s presence in the Philippines by stressing its leading role in innovation and research, underpinning it with detailed numbers and, thus, giving it objective weight. During the round table at Mabuhay Germany 2015, the commercial councilor to the German embassy analyzes the development and future of (Philippine) labor migration to Germany and introduces his country’s superior hierarchical rank over the Philippines:

Obviously our economy is strong. It is based on knowledge and innovation. It’s very competitive. But what we are lacking already and what we will lack even more in the future is skilled labor really to implement and put in practice what has been invented by our think tanks. Aehm so the German labor market very much is one that will need support from other economies. And I think that is what makes Germany in prospective very very interesting for Filipinos or nationals from other countries with a good education and a determination to try their luck to make it in another country.

Commercial councilor of the German embassy, round table discussion, Mabuhay Germany 2015, recorded and transcribed by author

The councilor’s words celebrate Germany’s innovational exceptionalism: Workforce from outside the country is needed to execute the actual labor of what has been innovated by Germany. He further clarifies that Philippine nationals might be eligible for the task but of course in competition with other labor brokerage countries. Furthermore, it is within the responsibility of the future migrant to fulfill the requirements needed for such an endeavor through self-skilling and entrepreneurial craftsmanship of “determination” and fearlessness. Germany continues evoking its distinction in innovation and technology during Mabuhay Germany 2017, which was promoted as “The biggest German–Philippine event in the country awaits you with its

showcases of German creativity and engineering – plus great food, music and fun!” The discourse gets casually deployed when the GPCCI writes an account of the 2017 edition of Mabuhay Germany, in which they turn to the weather situation: ‘The event got caught in heavy rain, but “Germans, innovative as they are, sought ways to keep themselves occupied through business networking, and enjoying the German cuisines around the main tent. The weather, in fact, helped friends and colleagues to catch up with each other” (GPCCI 2017a). The interpretation of the spectators’ reaction is framed within a discourse of German superiority as the successful get-together during a shower of rain is attributed to Germans’ innovative strength. Even within such a situation of banality, German innovativeness gets activated and shows the deep rootedness of the discourse.

(2) Another aspect of the discourse is the portrayal of Germany’ superior economic strength, with German innovational intelligence often taken as its basis. When German institutions in the Philippines draw on this discourse, it often incorporates a comparison to the world economy in general and the economy of the European Union in particular. The German embassy publishes posts on Facebook on international surveys where Germany ranks as having the strongest economy or holding the strongest passport, which some of the nurses repost themselves. The GPCCI stresses that they “represent Germany as the strongest economic partner form Europe” (GPCCI 2017b) in their promotion video for Mabuhay Germany 2017. During the round table of Mabuhay Germany 2015 the commercial councilor to the German embassy draws on the superior position of the German economy when answering a question on the economic slump of the Euro: “Our economy is very much geared towards innovation and export, so the European slump has not affected us. (...) But by and large we are very resilient, not depending so much on the actual developments in Europe.” His presentation of Germany’s economic prowess contrasts with the instability of the rest of the European economy and serves as a means of distinguishing Germany as a destination country.

On their website, the German embassy in the Philippines uses this image as a reason for studying the German language. The list of reasons cover research, culture, education, tourism, government and, of course, business: “Germany is an economic giant, a champion of free trade and the powerhouse of Europe. Its strength is

expressed in the size of its economy, the reach of its foreign investments and the reputation of its research community.”<sup>84</sup> This self-praise again uses the comparison to the rest of Europe and draws on Germany’s innovational strength. To convince potential language learners by elaborating on the importance of German for international trade or foreign affairs, the embassy states that: “Germany is the most powerful country in [sic] politically, financially and economically. (...) Philippine-German trade relations affect the growth of the local economy and that after all, affects you.”<sup>85</sup> The missing word of comparison (presumably “Europe”) peculiarly emphasizes the Germany’s exceptionality and at the same time unmasks the discourse made up of formulaic language. The hierarchical superiority of Germany over the Philippines is underlined when, rather like a threat, German language knowledge is recommended because the country’s powerful economy will influence the “local economy” and the Philippine population through their trade and investment.

The strength and stability of the German economy was indeed given as one of the reasons to go to Germany by many of my informants – especially for the choice of Germany over the United States. Often they would consult with family members, especially if they had connections with Germany, who supported their idea because of the country’s stable economy. At times the German economy was judged as infinitely superior to the Philippines and led to such remarks as “quality over quantity”. However, I have also heard deeper economic analyses by some of the nurses, critically assessing recent German economic policy.

(3) Language schools, sometimes inadvertently, function as a space where this discourse is amplified and spread. I found such instances in the course book and its treatment in class, the role of teachers from Germany and in the assessment of students, who respond to their experience during language class. During my time at Berlitz, the class covered the topic of German innovations, which takes up a whole chapter in their language book. The class is attentive, they appreciate the topic and especially focus on the invention of x-rays. They have already heard about German

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<sup>84</sup><https://manila.diplo.de/ph-en/topics/learngerman/why-learn-german/1894478>, last accessed on October 19, 2019

<sup>85</sup><https://manila.diplo.de/ph-en/topics/learngerman/why-learn-german/1894478>, last accessed on October 19, 2019

innovations, especially in the medical field, with one student suddenly exclaiming that all of the medical inventions are German. The importance of the language course becomes clear during an interview with Ralf, one of the students from the Berlitz class I visited: he explained how he first only had known about sports, about football and basketball (although Germany is not good at it), and later about technology, when his grandfather had owned a German car. It was during his language course that he learnt about German technology in the medical field, before which he was completely unaware that Germany was the source of these innovations: “It’s a different world here, I’m excited about it.” German innovation and technology highly fascinate Ralf and it even led him to use a locative adverb which grammatically would position his exclamation as referring to the Philippines – however, talking about Germany it suggests he anticipates being already there.

During a group interview with five high school students from one of the Goethe Institute’s PASCH-partner institutions they showed a similar excitement about Germany which developed during their German class. All this new information came unexpectedly to them and fundamentally changed their impressions. They enthuse about history, sports, classical as well as pop music and the fact that Germany’s economy rapidly recovered after the war and is now very open to foreigners for job opportunities. One of the students puts his enthusiasm in the following words:

Germany has greatly influenced the entire globe in terms of their culture and a different language, they really played a big role in terms of technology, and we all know that Germany is very productive, progressive country. And we, I, I myself idolize Germany for it and when it was introduced to our class that we would be learning German, I was both amazed and surprised of course that wow, we are learning a new language, that for many, many years I have been dreaming of. Because Germany is very, very popular in terms of sports, I idolize many German players. Germany is if I am going to say it in one word Germany is amazing, amazing, totally amazing, so, I have no more words to say.

Interview with a group of high school students, Southern Philippines,  
March 17 2015

These words of praise and amazement of a high school student mark his youthful and, compared to nurses preparing for migration, rather carefree joy in an unusual school subject. As he has heard little about Germany before his German class it also marks the importance of language schools for the dissemination of this discourse. He

acknowledges Germany's strength in innovation and technology as well as its economic strength and he emphatically illustrates what kind of affective response this imagery elicits – one of idolization and awe. Germany undergoes a process of distinction and by starting the creation of their superior self-image already at high school level it bears witness to their interest to increase education and training of a desirable workforce.

Daniel, the teacher of the class I observed at Berlitz, reflected on his role as German teacher and friend, which he finds highly challenging:

so zum einen so Repräsentant von Deutschland natürlich, wo ich auch sagen muss, klar natürlich will man sein Land ja gut darstellen und ist stolz auf sein Land, aber natürlich hat's auch nicht nur, ich will auch ehrlich zu ihnen sein, weil natürlich nicht alles rosig ist

[on the one hand as representative of Germany, of course, I have to admit, of course, you want to present your country in a good light and one is proud of one's country, but of course it doesn't only have, I also want to be honest with them as well, because of course not everything is rosy]

Interview with Daniel, Makati City, Manila, June 22, 2015

Daniel's reflection on his own role in the labor migration of Philippine nurses shows a keen awareness to the conflicting elements this role bears. He was explicitly employed to teach a class of Triple Win candidates, candidates of a governmental pilot program, which often makes him the first German person his students encounter: he feels the representative weight that comes along with this. Although he is proud of his country and likes to share all its positive aspects, the friendship and solidarity he feels with his students does not allow him to draw an all positive image of exceptional superlatives. While he does act within the imagery circulated by the regulatory infrastructure, his personal relationships grown over months of intensive work together with his students open up new, more varied approaches to the representation of Germany (section 7.2.2 revisits the complex role of teachers especially with regard to the relationship with their students).

#### *4.5.4 Development aid*

Much of Germany's self-positioning as helping first world nation with a development aid objective in the Philippines has already been established: The GPCCI's emphasis on their "unwavering commitment to support Filipinos" and their education programs

“made in Germany” clearly establish a hierarchical relationship between the two countries. The involvement in the facilitation of Philippine nurse migration to Germany of the GiZ, as “international cooperation services for sustainable development,” itself is set within the paradigm of development aid. The agency further enforces this connection by the ‘Triple Win’ framing of the labor migration and, thus, drawing on an established discourse of the progressive developmental aspect of circular migration. Furthermore, Germany highlights its benevolence to adhere to ethical recruitment, only sourcing labor force from countries whose development would be assisted rather than hindered by it. This discourse of development aid is enforced and transported by language and education in several ways: (1) the Goethe Institute and language teachers proclaim their engagement in the improvement of critical thinking. They draw on nationalism and/or an ideal of humanist education connected to the German language. (2) German language teachers often adopt a savior mentality.

(1) The Goethe Institute scrupulously distances itself from labor brokerage. It considers its role to educate their students on the procedure in Germany by clarifying that direct-hiring is a legal option next to ‘Triple Win’ and private brokering agencies. One of the ways they try to achieve this objective is the library’s subscription to German nurse magazines, where jobs are advertised. During an interview, the head of the Goethe Institute’s language section referred to the mandate of the Institute to present Germany and teach German values. On the basis of this mandate, he explains the Goethe Institute’s actions as different to other players and language learning institutions, “da kann man sich nicht so verkaufen” [you cannot sell yourself like that]. He clearly prefers the Goethe Institute’s self-positioning compared to the GiZ, which he deems too commercial. He was happy that the Goethe Institute decided not to join marketing events with the GiZ for the Triple Win project. He clearly frames the decision within the Institute’s objective and opposes the GiZ’s role as broker “das haben wir nicht gemacht, sowas tun wir nicht” [we didn’t do it, we don’t do anything like that]. In the end they felt further reassured in their decision when the project appeared rather unsuccessful.

According to the head of the language section, the Goethe Institute wants to raise critical thinking, and, therefore, funds cultural initiatives such as a documentary film

project even if they almost completely omit Germany or the German language. He values the Goethe Institute for its opportunities to cater to local needs, and critically mentioned the Instituto Cervantes and the Alliance Francaise, which are much more used as a direct channel from Madrid and Paris. On the one hand, the Goethe Institute Philippines' objective to foster critical and independent thinking has to be acknowledged as a counter-narrative to the increasing commodification of education and a stance against the capitalization on labor migration through brokering agencies. On the other hand, the Institute's choice of location (see section 6.2.1 for a discussion) and its marketing strategies and growth interest (see chapter 5 for a discussion) as well as their interior architectural arrangement and their wide range of publications addressing labor migrants and positioning them as entrepreneurs (see chapter 7.3 for a discussion) contradict the emancipatory quality of the discourse: critical thinking seems appropriated as a German value giving Germany the ability to teach Filipin@s, who are positioned as needing to be taught.

German teachers in the Philippines consider German educational values in general and German language knowledge in particular as conducive to emancipatory personal development. This deeper ideology of the ideal of humanist education surfaced most explicitly in the words of Mr. Liske, a German teacher in Cebu. Mr. Liske laid open his motivation for his work in the Philippines: being already retired he has no financial interest but takes great joy in teaching German. During the interview, Mr. Liske spends considerable time worrying about the Philippine education system:

Der philippinische Student ist Student vom Kindergarten bis zum College, das heisst er erlebt dieselbe Form des Lehrens rezeptiv, er kann recall, er kann's wiederholen, aber darüber hinaus nicht, der philippinische Student kommt nicht über die Stufe des Recalls, des Wiederholens, kann er nicht, weil sie nur lernen, sie sie sie können nicht studieren. Das heisst, das lernen sie jetzt bei mir. Ich mach das wirklich, ich unterrichte hier drin nur der Unterschied zwischen lernen und studieren, damit die begreifen ah, sie studieren, heisst recherchieren, nachfragen, Allgemeinbildung vertiefen, die haben hier auf den Philippinen null Allgemeinbildung, null, ich sage sogar zero, mehr, minus zero, es ist nichts vorhanden und denen ein bisschen ins Plus zu kommen, ein bisschen Allgemeinbildung zu bekommen. Im Deutschen kann man nicht leben zum Beispiel ohne einige wichtige Deutsche kennenzulernen, Philosophen, ganz egal."

[The Philippine student is a student (pupil) from kindergarten to college, meaning that he encounters the same form of receptive teaching: he can recall, he can repeat, but nothing apart from that; the Philippine student

cannot transcend the recall stage, of repeating, he cannot do it, because they only learn by rote, they they they cannot study. Which means that they learn this with me. I really do it, I only teach in here the difference between learning and studying, in order for them to understand, aah, they are studying, means doing research, inquiring, expanding their general knowledge. They have no general education in the Philippines, no general education, none, I would even say zero, more, less than zero, it is not there, and to give them a bit of a plus, a bit of general knowledge. In the German context, you cannot live for example without knowing some, most important Germans, philosophers, you name it.]

Interview with Mr. Liske, Cebu, May, 25, 2015

Mr. Liske's assesses the inferiority of Philippine education and implicitly opposes a superior and ideal German education. His critique of the Philippine education system draws on an understanding of humanism that introduces the dignity of the human being as the superior element of creation. This dignity is at once a human beings natural distinctiveness but also a mission or contract (*Auftrag*) (Zichy 2010: 36): although gifted with dignity, the human being has to develop herself towards the ideal creation it is capable of being. Education, therefore, becomes essential to the humanist program and what has been termed classical humanism, this education has to be oriented towards the wisdom and achievements of the antiquity as well as towards the call of enlightenment to use one's reason (*Vernunft*) and autonomous thinking. Mr. Liske draws on such a humanist ideal of education, firstly, when he makes the distinction between learning and studying and, secondly, when he emphasizes the importance of general knowledge and the familiarity with German philosophers. He deems himself capable of lifting the non-existent general knowledge of his students because of his German educational background, which is based on investigation, research and critical thinking. Another important aspect of humanism is its focus on language. Zichy (2010: 38) underlines the perspective of language as constituting thinking, which regards that "Der Mensch denkt in seiner und durch seine Sprache. Die Kultivierung der Sprache ist daher gleichbedeutend mit der Bildung des Denkvermögens." [The human being thinks in her and through his language. The cultivation of language is, thus, synonymous to the development of intellectual power.] This results in the importance of language education and a focus on grammar. Both these aspects arise in Mr. Liske's explanations on the main challenges for Philippine nurses to learn German:



Deutsch ist ne ganz andere Sprache, eine Sprache, die Struktur besitzt, sie müssen Strukturen lernen, Regeln lernen (...) Deutsch hat halt so ne Struktur, aber halt auf der anderen Seite für mich einzige Sprache der Welt, eine absolut exakte Ausdrucksform, es wird immer genau so wie es gewünscht wird in einer grammatikalischen Form ausgedrückt, das hat nur die deutsche Sprache, ja, es ist ein Phänomen (...) die deutsche Sprache ist sehr kreativ, das heisst also nicht umsonst ist die Sprache der Dichter und Denker, ja der Philosophen, es ist so, weil mit dieser Sprache eben etwas sehr genau definiert werden kann, mit keener anderen Sprache kann ich so genau definieren wie mit der deutschen Sprache, das ist schon ein Phänomen.

[German is a completely different language, a language that has structure, they have to learn the structure, the rules (...) German just has such a kind of structure, but on the other hand for me it is the only language in the world, with such an absolute and exact form of expression, it is always expressed in a grammatical construction in just exactly the way it is intended, only the German language has this quality, yes, it is a phenomenon (...) the German language is creative, it is not for nothing that it is called the language of poets and thinkers, yes of philosophers, it is that way because you can define something very precisely with this language, with no other language I am able to define as precisely as with the German language, it really is a phenomenon.]

Interview with Mr. Liske, Cebu, May, 25, 2015

Again, Mr. Liske's analysis of German positions it as an intrinsically superior language which results in its speakers' exceptionalism as thinkers and philosophers. Once his students master the complexity of German, they will be able to find the right forms of expression, of which they would have been incapable without knowing German. Through the right forms of expression, they will then find the right way of living.

Mr. Liske's elaborations differ from classical humanism in his omission of the antiquity and his focus on German philosophers and thinkers as well as the German language as the ideal to be aspired to. This rhetoric can be seen as a historical continuity of imperial discourse of the West bringing civilization to their colonies which was discussed in section 2.2 & 2.4.2. The US positioned itself as accepting the responsibility of enlightening Filipin@s when they usurped the Philippines. They also regarded the need to teach the English language as a vehicle for enlightenment. However, it would be too simple to only point out the nationalist and orientalist/imperialist overtones in his exclamations. Mr. Liske himself was a military man, who received his Abitur (the German general qualification for university entrance) as a grown-up. He explains how

desperate he was at the beginning of his history studies and how much effort – and a supporting professor – it took to persist. In between the orientalizing and highly oppressive discourse he activates, he seems to have a genuine interest in providing his students with the means to follow their migration plans to Germany and wishes to be the professor to others that he needed himself.

(3) The savior mentality of teachers is consistent with the development aid aspirations of the German state. Many of the teachers who are employed by one of the bigger international language schools like Berlitz and the Goethe Institute come to the Philippines with prospects of adventure, travelling in the tropics and “doing something helpful”.<sup>86</sup> A Filipina teacher from the Goethe Institute describes her German fellow teachers as modest and talking to Filipin@s, with a wish to experience the culture and being friends with street vendors: an image largely corresponding with a global traveler who does not (want to) consider herself a tourist. Most of the teachers I met were profoundly impressed by the motivation and dedication of their students; they are moved by the salience of overseas work and the need to support an extended family and they want to help their students to achieve their dream.

The following short description of a Goethe Institute teacher shall expose the conflicting aspects inherent in such a wish to help. Christiane, who is in her fifties, looked back on a career as craftsperson when her children started to take care of themselves. She decided to fulfill her wish to try something new and see the world. She started teacher training with the Goethe Institute in Germany and became a teacher of German as a foreign language. She loves being on the move and dreams about seeing yet many more different countries and continents. She considers the Goethe Institute as a means to an end, a good way of travelling around the world because their wage is higher than with other language schools. She could imagine

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<sup>86</sup> I consider it extremely delicate to expose the savior mentality of teachers. Many of them became friends; they certainly do not consider themselves racist and many will not have reflected on the ways the hierarchical distribution of power gets enforced through them framing their actions as “help”. I probably feel particularly sympathetic to those young adventurers because had my life trajectory just been slightly different, I could be one of them – a fear I would like to not cloud my analysis. Furthermore, even with the critical “objectivity” and radicality that guide my approach, this study might be categorized as an object of savior mentality itself – although, I sincerely hope I have detected such flagrant blind spots.

staying in a country for a longer period of time, should she come across an interesting project: when she taught in India, she supported a housing struggle project in a poor community dealing with land grabbing. She used her network in Germany to raise money and helped “first hand”. In her work as German teacher she wants to keep moving. In the Philippines she sees her role as support for her students to fulfill their dreams and hopes but cautions them that she can only do one part of it and the rest depends on them, on how much they want to invest.

On the one hand, Christiane makes use of her powerful passport and the economic capital attributed to German language knowledge in order to become a global traveler and fulfill her wish to explore. The attribution of supportiveness and helpfulness to her work even further legitimize her travels. When Christiane describes her role as German teacher in the Philippines she appeals to her students’ entrepreneurialism and shows little sensitivity to the regimentation they are subjected to, when she frames their possible investment into the language course depending on their willingness. On the other hand, she does not feel morally bound to the Goethe Institute and, thus, the German government’s foreign policy but detaches herself from their objectives and simply wants to prepare her students for the exam they need. Her engagement with an anti-land-grabbing project in India and her willingness to draw on her German resources in order to support it, indicates more serious and long-term involvement than simply an adventure spiced up with a good feeling. Furthermore, her ability to travel is the result of an emancipatory struggle in her personal life, when she decided to enter further education after a long period of productive as well as reproductive labor connected to the upbringing of her children with little support from their father. As a teacher of German as a foreign language her wage would be approximately equal to nurses in Germany and she was facing precarious working conditions at the Goethe Institute Philippines.

What remains to be noted regarding Germany’s discourse of development aid is the non-participation of the nurses in this discourse. While I heard many voices supporting Germany as a country of economic and innovational strength, I have never heard any accounts of them framing their migratory path as the result of development aid. They more simply regard their prospective journey as a possibility to leave their country and

its difficult living conditions without alluding to any kind of ‘benevolence’ from Germany to take them in.

#### *4.5.5 Discussion: struggling for a desirable position in the global capitalist economy*

To sum up, the discourses discussed in this section show struggles emanating from the global, capitalist economy: On the one hand, the Philippines is interested in preparing and advertising a desirable workforce for overseas employment. Germany is supporting this endeavor where Filipin@s are seen as meeting the state’s as well as the industry’s needs. On the other hand, Germany presents itself as desirable destination country to the needed workforce – Philippine nurses in this case – and non-exploitative to other countries or international organizations.

“Bagong bayani” and “Germany – country of innovational and economic prowess” both draw on national pride as a marketing strategy. The former proclaims an “innate” ability to language acquisition, the latter an “innate” innovational strength resulting in Germany being an economic powerhouse. Both of these marketing strategies serve as a way of distinction in comparison to other nation states: Filipin@s are more desirable than workers from other labor brokerage states (in the case of Philippine nurses for Germany mostly in comparison to Vietnamese). Germany becomes more desirable than the rest of the European Union or the United States as the most acclaimed Philippine overseas work destination. Both discourses are successful: Germany supports the Philippine’s aspiration in the preparation and promotion of their workforce and Philippine nurses choose Germany partly because of its (presentation of) economic stability. At moments, these discourses come into conflict, when the Philippines’ pride in English proficiency questions Germany’s superior rank. This leads to a reassessment in which Germany attributes exceptionality to Philippine workers but relativizes these exceptional English skills when compared to the English skills of the German population.

“Language as skill set” serves as a marketing strategy within school competition but mainly works as a means to prepare the ideal worker. The discourse shows a neoliberal understanding of language education: it provides the right skills needed by the industry and positions the workers as personally responsible for becoming “globally competitive”. Because language is seen and promoted as a skill to be acquired, the

discourse conflicts with the “innate” ability proclaimed by “bagong bayani,” which, however, is never negotiated.

“Development aid” remains unsuccessful as a marketing strategy to convince Filipin@s to prepare for work in Germany, which asks for a different interpretation: “Language as work skill” has already portrayed Germany’s aim to further its education initiatives in the Philippines, which should “get what’s needed back home” and, at the same time, not do what might be considered “unfair”. Within the global economy, companies are increasingly judged with regard to their ecological and social investments – a fact which leads to their marketization. The framing of Germany’s involvement as development aid helps to defer possible accusations of brain drain and the resulting scrutiny of international organizations. The elements of benevolence, humanist education and the wish to help create hierarchies that are maintaining a clear continuity of a colonialism. The Triple Win project – and its framing as development aid – gained a certificate of best practice by the IOM: The colonially suffused discourse becomes successful.

The role of language and language education is most important in its provision of time and space firstly, to disseminate these discourses and, secondly, for the intended processes to succeed: during language education the desired workforce might become increasingly convinced that it had chosen the right destination country. They are skilling themselves to fulfill the requirements for ready-to-work employees in Germany.

#### **4.6 Discussion: selection and the creation of space through language**

The signing of the bilateral labor agreement by the Philippines and Germany in 2013 opened the German market for the deployment of Philippine nurses. It marks a first moment of selection within the global competition for care workers. The Philippines rely on the marketing of their workforce by drawing on a trope of national pride (Duchêne and Heller 2012), showing the “natural”, innate quality of Philippine workers as caring and language-adept, qualities that safely put them ahead in the competition with other labor brokerage countries. Germany participates in this

discourse and further develops it to serve their particular purpose: The affinity of Filipin@s not only to languages but increasingly to different varieties of a language.

The main intervention of the German state within this labor migration is the imposition of a language certificate as a visa requirement. However, the centrality of language within the regulatory infrastructure is rarely acknowledged in official discourses and documents. The bilateral labor agreements almost completely ignore the treatment of such a crucial requirement in the same way the “subjects” of the agreement and their interests are ignored. What prevails are the interests of the two parties – the two nation states – who regulate nurses in a manner of regulating flows of goods. However, Philippine nurses, with all the restrictions of having to survive in an unequal society, have a choice as to where they go for overseas labor and German language education is instrumental in guiding them towards choosing Germany. Language serves as a tool for border control in the case of marriage migration (Gutekunst 2015). However, in the case of nurse migration, which is not blocked but facilitated, it becomes a tool for migration management. An analysis of the regulatory infrastructure revealed two main effects thereof: (1) An opportunity for fine-grained, further selection of suitable candidates and (2) the creation of a space to attract and prepare the best of all possible workers.

(1) Language testing, as well as language education, offer the longest and most intricate selection before the final hurdle of obtaining a work visa. Nurses who prepare for labor migration to Germany move through various institutions where they are continuously tested and selected. Documents issued by these institutions regiment willing labor migrants by profusely pointing to their self-inflicted professional and linguistic “deficiencies”. Language education selects candidates on the basis of limited accessibility through space and time: The Goethe Institute and Berlitz are situated in Salcedo Village, an exclusive space in Makati’s central business district. Their students and to a lesser degree their employees face difficulty in accessing this space, which either results in time-intensive commuting or in enormous financial investments to live in proximity. The exclusivity of the space heavily restricts temporary residents in their everyday life: They might share a single room with several other people while the surrounding space targets high-end consumerism. It is difficult, even impossible, to find food, or places for rest and tranquility or to enjoy leisure time (such effects of the

language learning period will be discussed in detail in chapter 7). Although employers have to pay for the language course, which is ensured at least within the Triple Win program, nurses still have to support themselves during this period and often have to stop working in order to achieve the required results. The language requirement, thus, helps the German state and its employers to transfer educational costs specifically needed for the German market to the Philippine migrant worker.

The language certificate needed for obtaining a German work visa is either a B1 level for Triple Win candidates or a B2 level for nurses outside the governmental program. However, language testing is a continuous process as an A1 and A2 exam have to be passed at intervals of two to three months of fulltime language learning. The constant need to prove one's language skills elicits great anxiety but, in case of success, also pride and happiness often connected to a feeling of "being lucky". The particular regulatory guidelines set by the governments appear as natural pre-conditions and are rarely questioned. With each step of selection that nurses pass, the investment of time and money and the feeling of pride rise. A change of possible work destination becomes less likely, ensuring loyalty to the future employer in Germany. The language certificate is imminently the most important document to be achieved within this particular labor migration, as candidates will have already passed their professional education and gained work experience. As awarding a language certificate becomes a major gatekeeping practice, language examiners and examining institutions like the Goethe Institute become a part of Germany's migration management.

(2) The time intensive aspect of German language education for nurses in the Philippines creates a space. It is a unique situation in which, for many months, a whole group of labor migrants center their lives around their future destination country. This space created through language education is an extensive expansion of German territory. The main processes at work within this space (and time) are the marketing of Germany as a desirable future workplace and the preparation of the ideal citizen; both of these processes go beyond the acquisition of linguistic competency for ready-to-work employees. Within the global competition for care workers and the Philippines' long standing "empire of care" (Ceniza Choy 2003), Germany has to be selected by individual Philippine nurses. Through the geographical location of their institutions, events, social media appearances, language teachers and coursebooks, Germany

presents itself as superior: The economic powerhouse of Europe and the European Union, cultured and home to real fairytales unlike the United States, a land of innovation, thinkers and philosophers (that needs workers to execute their ideas, and Filipin@s are deemed “trainable” for the task). Documents of the regulatory infrastructure delegate the responsibility of German language knowledge to future labor migrants who should acquire the appropriate skills. This indicates the widely observed phenomenon of workers becoming a “bundle of skills” (Urciuoli 2008).

Furthermore, the space created through language education shows connections between the regulatory and the commercial infrastructure: The migration apparatus interacts with the logic of the neoliberal economy. When the GiZ, as governmental enterprise, downplays the language learning period in order to attract employers as well as employees, their role as brokering agency is exposed. Similarly, the German state acts as a brokering enterprise when they use the space to advertise their “company” amidst the international and especially inner-European competition. It is this involvement that results in continuous criticism by language learning institutions, which accuse all regulatory institutions of “illegally” participating in the brokering of this labor migration and exercising a monopoly. The fact that this critique comes from language schools shows the blurred line between them as schools and as brokering agencies, serving as a further indication of the connecting role of language between the two infrastructures. The space created through language education establishes the ground on which the language education industry evolves, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

For the Philippines, the regulatory infrastructure of nurse migration to Germany can be seen as a continuation of their infrastructure as labor brokerage state – advertising their population as a cost-effective, English speaking, desirable workforce and supporting the teaching of additional foreign languages of possible overseas work destinations. For Germany, the regulatory infrastructure initiated by the bilateral labor agreement presents a new space – it marked the opening of the labor market beyond the European Union and the implementation of language education as visa requirement. However, they activate and profit from colonial, patriarchal, capitalist hierarchies: Ideal workers are needed to sustain the conditions of under-valued and under-paid care work. Germany selects these ideal workers by choosing a country,



whose labor brokering and care migration build on colonial exploitation. They silence a continuation of this new initiative with earlier *gastarbeiter* agreements (which have been widely criticized for their exploitative character) by promoting the international discourse of labor migration as development aid (which itself builds on colonial hierarchies). The nation states satisfy their interests and Philippine nurses shoulder the investment of time, money and dedication that these interests yield.

This new space co-created by the German state and its employers in the care sector that profits from the structural domination and exploitation of Philippine nurses creates yet another new space for the German language: A market developed in order to capitalize on the need for language certificates and the resulting need for German language education. It is this development that will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.



## Chapter 5

# The evolving language education market

### 5.1 Introduction

In 2013, the Philippines and Germany signed a bilateral labor agreement that allows Philippine nurses with the appropriate level of German language competence to enter work positions in Germany. The immediate consequence of this overseas work opportunity was an increased need for German language teaching in the Philippines. In 2015, when I spent half a year in the Philippines to conduct research, I learned about twelve language schools throughout the country plus an additional three projects that developed and started teaching over the course of these six months – this number is certainly not exhaustive and is a rough estimate. By 2018, the newly founded Institute of Cultural Collaboration listed 50 German language schools in the Philippines<sup>87</sup>. This exponential increase in the number of German language schools in the Philippines is reflected in the survey “Deutsch als Fremdsprache weltweit. Datenerhebung 2015” (German as a foreign language across the globe, evaluation of 2015) conducted by the

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<sup>87</sup> The Institute uses the slogan «from nurses for nurses» and claims to help Philippine nurses before going to and when in Germany. Part of their service is a map showing all the German language schools in the Philippines (<https://eagle-project.org>). While the institute already lists more than fifty language schools, it does not include some institutions, and especially individual teachers, that I know are operating as well. The numbers are, therefore, tentative.

Federal Foreign Office of Germany together with the Goethe Institute and the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD) (Auswärtiges Amt 2015). The survey traces how the German language spreads and develops following German teaching: It lists the kinds of institutions that offer German and the number of enrolled students with limited interpretations and tendencies. Interest in the spread of the German language stems from an understanding of the usefulness of language education as a tool for foreign policy. The last evaluation of the same survey available shows detailed numbers on the Philippines from 2005.

<i>Types of schools</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
Primary education institutions	0 schools, 0 students	From a total number of 100 institutions that teach foreign languages, 11 teach German to 1066 students
Universities	12 universities, 307 students	4 universities, 450 students
Goethe Institute	Not specified	1 school, 4005 students
Schools for adults that teach German as a foreign language	5 schools, number of students not specified	8 fschools, 208 students
Total numbers of German language learners	307 (tendency falling)	5729 (tendency rising)

**Table 5.1** | German language education in the Philippines

The table shows an increase in primary education and adult language teaching institutions as well as in total numbers of German language learners in the Philippines. The implementation of German language teaching in primary education is reflective of Germany's political focus on using language education as a tool for foreign policy. Although the numbers of learners at the Goethe Institute for 2005 are missing, the survey uncovers the growing importance of German language education in the Philippines: While the tendency of learners was predicted to fall in 2005, the significant increase in the number of students counted in 2015 prompted a prognosis of growth. The 2015 survey attributes the increase in German language students in the Philippines to nurses aspiring to work in Germany, to marriage migrants, and to students interested in pursuing their studies in Germany (Auswärtiges Amt 2015: 33). This interpretation

of the data largely corresponds with my research. However, I would not attribute the increase in learners to an increase in marriage migrants: From interviews with teachers and students alike, marriage migrants were the main clientele at language schools before the opening of the German labor market to Philippine nurses. While the numbers of marriage migrants remained steady and unchanged, it was Philippine nurses who account for the massive growth of German students.

The 2013 opening of the German labor market to the deployment of Philippine nurses has produced more language schools because extensive language education is needed in order to teach nurses up to B1 and B2 level. This "fast" and massive increase in the number of providers of German language education in the Philippines has quickly met the limits of the infrastructure. Mr. Liske, a well-established German language teacher at a small private institution in Cebu, told me about the beginning of the change in German language education in the Philippines:

„Win-win kam mal zu mir, ich sollte zweihundert Leute so aufn Spot also so unterrichten, ja habt ihr noch alle Tassen im Schrank? Ja ein grossen Raum mieten, sowieso, Saal oder ne Turnhalle, ich, habt ihr ne Ahnung wie man Sprache unterrichtet, ihr habt gar keine Ahnung, ja ihr macht nur Geld.“

[Win-win once came to me, I should teach two hundred people, on the spot, have you lost your marbles? Yes, rent a big room, a hall or a whole gym, I ... do you have any idea how to teach language, you have no idea at all, right, you only make money.]

Interview with Mr. Liske, Cebu, May, 25, 2015

Mr. Liske refers to the Triple Win project coordinators from the GiZ (Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit) in the Philippines, who were scouting for language schools across the country that were capable of teaching a large number of students up to a high level of German. What they were looking for was physical as well as language pedagogical infrastructures that could meet these demands. Mr. Liske angrily jokes about their limited perspective on what language education entails. He explicitly points to the difficulty of providing the physical space needed for so many students by wondering whether he should use a hall or a whole gym in order to hold his lessons. Implicitly, he also points to the futility of such an endeavor as that type of physical space would not be conducive to the pedagogical infrastructure needed for teaching a language. The supply of any kind of infrastructure lagged behind demand in 2015, when the Goethe Institute had to use class rooms in the nearby Alliance Francaise to

accommodate their students and the GiZ had to start their cooperation with Berlitz because the Goethe Institute was already teaching at its full capacity. Instead of teaching German in a whole gym in order to meet the demand, the language education industry developed in size as well as in elaborateness with many new players entering the market. One of the results are more than 50 German language schools in the Philippines and another result are varied strategies for market entry and market growth which will be discussed in this chapter.

I turn to tools from strategic management and strategic marketing in order to understand and organize the elements of language education within the commercial infrastructure of Philippine nurse migration to Germany.<sup>88</sup> The language education industry is a growing market where new and old players are trying to position themselves and grow their business and profits. Strategy is a concept that has been adopted in business studies from military terminology, where the businessperson operates much like a military leader who has to plan actions and allocate the available resources (Shaw 2012: 31) – an etymological link strategy shares with the concept of infrastructure. One of the most widely discussed tools in marketing and management strategy is the product-market matrix developed by Ansoff in 1957 (also called the Ansoff-Matrix), which is particularly useful to develop strategies in a growing market. Ansoff's (1957) objective was to develop a set of strategies, which allowed businesses to prosper in the American economy of his time, marked by fast and continuous change: In order “Just to retain its relative position, a business firm must go through continuous growth and change. To improve its position, it must grow and change at least ‘twice as fast as that’” (Ansoff 1957: 113). A market analysis evaluates the most promising strategy, which is mostly a combination of different strategies, prior to its implementation. While Ansoff's matrix has attracted some criticism as to its accuracy for developing successful business strategies, it keeps being used in almost all introductory text books on the subject (Shaw 2012: 33). It is valued for its simplicity,

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<sup>88</sup> In contrast to Xiang and Lindquist's (2014) concept, this study exclusively looks at a specific aspect of the commercial infrastructure (language education). However, this chapter will show how language schools and language teachers increasingly diversify their offers which gives glimpses into other elements of the commercial infrastructure of Philippine nurse migration to Germany.

which offers a starting point for developing strategies (Wilson and Gilligan 2005: 303) as rough and very general guidelines (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 219).

The study of a political economy of language understands language as a resource. Attention has to be paid to the resource's "production, circulation, and consumption within a given place and at a specific moment in time" (Del Percio, Flubacher and Duchêne 2016: 55) with a special focus on who owns the means of production. It is such an analysis that reveals the making and workings of social inequality and the role of language within it. This chapter provides such an analysis of the production, circulation and consumption of language education (as well as its testing), which is achieved by using Ansoff's model for growth strategies. Businesses develop their strategies on the basis of a market analysis, which clearly defines the product or service's target group, evaluates the business's strengths amongst the existing or possible competitors and reviews opportunities to improve and enlarge production and circulation of the resource. According to these logics my analysis of the German language education market in the Philippines addresses questions about the connection between language and social inequality, how it is produced and sustained. It reveals which consumers are valued by the market, how they are attracted and who regulates the market.

Ansoff juxtaposes the market with the product or service that is being sold, by differentiating their newness. The different combinations of new and existing markets with new and existing products ask for different growth strategies (see Figure 5.1). Should a company choose to grow through market penetration, they have to sell more of the existing product or services to the existing market. Product development involves new products to be sold on the existing markets. Market development entails selling the existing product to new markets, and diversification – the riskiest of these growth strategies – involves new products being sold to new markets. Each of these growth strategies will be more closely discussed in the respective section. Although service marketing changes the vocabulary to suit their economic field of activity (e.g. Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 219), I retain Ansoff's original terminology as it connotes the commodification of language.

		<i>Products/Services</i>	
		Existing	New
<i>Markets</i>	Existing	Market Penetration	Product Development
	New	Market Development	Diversification

**Table 5.2** | Ansoff-Matrix (Source: adaption of Meffert and Bruhn's (2003: 219) adapted version of Ansoff (1957: 114, Exhibit 1, 1965: 109, Table 6.1))

This chapter follows Ansoff's four growth strategies by showing how different types of language teaching institutions operate in the language education market. The language schools offering German in the Philippines can be divided into three groups:

- The Goethe Institute, the governmental cultural agency of Germany responsible for the promotion of German culture and the German language, together with Berlitz, a big international language school, are schools operating on a global scale, enjoying international reputation and looking back on a long-standing history of language teaching.<sup>89</sup>
- Small private language schools constitute the largest number of German language teaching suppliers that operate in the Philippines. These businesses are often involved in brokering workers to Germany, directly collaborate with brokering agencies or are brokering agencies that have started their own language school.

<sup>89</sup> The Goethe Institute was founded in 1951 as the successor of the German Academy (Deutsche Akademie) established in 1923 (Michels 2005: 1). It is currently present in 98 countries with 159 institutes (<https://www.goethe.de/de/wwt.html>). Berlitz was founded in the United States in 1878 initially catering to travelers and private persons but by mid 1950s increasingly focusing on language for international workers ([http://www.berlitz.de/de/berlitz\\_company/tradition/geschichte/](http://www.berlitz.de/de/berlitz_company/tradition/geschichte/)). It currently operates over 500 schools in more than 70 countries (<https://www.berlitz.com/About-Berlitz/Berlitz-Global-Management/61/>).



- Teacher-entrepreneurs often do not have their own facilities. Most of them are Germans who have been living in the Philippines in somewhat precarious positions, dependent on a small pension from Germany and who are interested in earning additional money. They see a niche market and want to draw on the cultural capital that comes from being native speakers. However, teacher-entrepreneurs also include German speaking Filipinos, who studied in Germany and now try to penetrate the market and capitalize on their German language proficiency.

This chapter shows how these three types of language schools employ techniques for (1) market penetration, (2) market development, (3) product development, and (4) horizontal, vertical and lateral diversification for the production, circulation and consumption of language education. Furthermore, it shows how a different perspective on (5) vertical diversification, one which includes language testing, reveals not only the commodification of language but also the commodification of German speaking Philippine nurses. I will elaborate on the tactics employed by these four market growth strategies and provide examples with a special focus on the different choices corresponding with the three types of language schools operating in the Philippines: I will start with the globally operating schools (the Goethe Institute and Berlitz) before contrasting the findings with small institutions and teacher-entrepreneurs. The following presentation does not focus on the success of the different marketing tools. Rather than being an analysis intended to optimize commercial opportunities, it pays attention to power relations in the industry – between the competitors as well as between the producers and consumers.

## **5.2 Market penetration**

Market penetration seeks an intensification of market share. Thus, this strategy is only an option as long as the market has not been saturated. Because market penetration neither entails a development of the market nor the product, it is considered to be the growth strategy least risky in terms of investment. It can be achieved through the increase of sales to the same customers, the acquisition of new customers and customers of the product or service from competing providers (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 220-221). Selling more of the same product to the same customer is not an

appropriate strategy in order to intensify the market share in the German language education industry in the Philippines. The main target audience of the market are Philippine nurses who intend to work in Germany. They need to purchase the service of language education in order to pass the language test required for obtaining the work visa. Therefore, increasing the volume of sales of the same product to the same customers (language courses) would severely challenge the quality of the product on offer: Students might soon stop enrolling in language schools where the business model is built on their failure to pass the exam, which was the original reason why they took the course.

However, market penetration strategies are widely used by various players in order to reach new potential customers or to gain customers from competing language schools. Market penetration is promising as the German language market has only recently opened up for Philippine nurses and language schools still see market potential. The focus lies on attracting new customers – Philippine nurses considering overseas work – although competition between the language schools can be seen. An online advertising campaign of a small language school is explicit as to whom they consider to be new potential customers: they advertise in capital letters “STUDY AND WORK IN GERMANY. CALLING ALL NURSES”. The full market potential is therefore any licensed Philippine nurse who considers overseas work – the advertisement’s proclamation of “all nurses,” although certainly exaggerated, has to be seen in the context of the salience of overseas work in the Philippines in general and care labor in particular.

Tactics for market penetration strategies usually include intensive marketing, promotion events and price reductions. An intensification of communication, special sales or different channels of distribution shall help to reach those consumers that could not be reached before. The different language schools offering German education in the Philippines take different routes by marketing their company with (1) the organization of events, (2) the distribution of materials (e.g. flyers and presents), (3) price reductions and free trial lessons, (4) online marketing, or by (5) a merger with a competitor.

Different types of events (1) are organized for the promotion of German in the Philippines and they often interconnect with the promotion or strengthening of nurse

migration. The events organized by the Goethe Institute are numerous and regularly organized, mostly through the institute's cultural section of the Goethe Institute. There is a clear separation and hierarchisation between the cultural and the language section, even though these two interests overlap. The language section at the Goethe Institute is much larger than the culture section, in terms of staff. However, the cultural section has more prestige in the internal Goethe Institute hierarchy, as both two recent directors were also the head of the culture section, while having a vice-director that headed the language section. Even though language teaching is the main focus of the Goethe Institute Philippines, its public program focuses on German film, music or traditional festivities such as Christmas and Easter. This gives the Goethe Institute greater prestige than smaller language teaching institutions. The events where the Goethe Institute promotes German language and work opportunities for nurses in the Philippines are limited to bigger events organized by or with other governmental institutions: during the European language week at the University of the Philippines, the Goethe Institute represented the German language with its own booth – where numerous flyers and little presents such as pencils, balloons, pins and bracelets were distributed. Furthermore, a German embassy official visited local high schools that are teaching German as a foreign language (in cooperation with the Goethe Institute). Mabuhay Germany, the event discussed in the introduction, has laid its emphasis on language and migration with the Goethe Institute assuming an important role in the topical round tables. The Goethe Institute never acknowledges competition with other language schools. Their competitive edge lies in an explicit and distinctive demonstration of their status as the first address for learning German in the Philippines.

Berlitz as well as smaller language teaching institutions organize parties and small festivals to celebrate their current students of German as their most important marketing events. I was invited to such a party organized by Berlitz during my fieldwork period in 2015. The celebration was held for their latest B1 class and their teacher, who was soon to return to Germany. An international fusion feeling was invoked at a local karaoke bar, where German and Filipino songs were sung, cards were decorated with national flags and English, Tagalog and German were used in a wild mix. The Triple Win project coordinator from Berlitz prepared capes and crowns for all the students and their teachers – a time consuming idea that she engaged with

after work together with other teachers and myself, when I dropped by a few days ahead of the party for an interview with her.<sup>90</sup> The atmosphere at the party was joyful and especially amongst the students and their teacher deeply caring. The head of Berlitz Philippines joined the celebration and congratulated them on their exceptional performance. During the speech she often turned to the competition with the Goethe Institute, however, emphasizing that they do not want to challenge their main competitor, they just want to be the best German school in Manila. This part of the speech was taken up in a Facebook post by one of the students: it showed a picture of the class with their teacher and the project coordinator, capturing his emotions with “proud Berlitz student” and “celebrating success with his friends” while repeating the head of Berlitz’s words “we didn’t train you to compete with another German school. We train you to be the best.” The event demonstrated the collective identity encouraged by Berlitz, and the success connected to this. The language school distinguishes itself by apparently not-competing but by producing results – the best students of German. One small language school explicitly positioned such a party as a way of showing appreciation to the students, emphasizing that they are aware of the considerable financial and motivational investment on the side of the nurses. A collaborating brokering agency financed the party and contributed little presents to the students. Such parties for current students correspond with a market penetration strategy that tries to bind the current customers to stay with their product line. At the same time, as pictures of such parties are posted online and as students tell their friends about the collective experience to be found at the school, it also functions as a way of either gaining customers from a competing language school or to attract new customers interested in learning German: satisfied and successful customers act as the best marketing for a product.

Next to parties, smaller language teaching institutions regularly offer orientation seminars on learning German and working in Germany – nurses are either directly

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<sup>90</sup> To sow all the capes turned out to be too much work even though the teachers and the project coordinator showed a lot of effort and dedication. In the end, it was the project coordinator’s domestic helpers, who finished the work. The project coordinator at Berlitz is herself a nurse who contemplated going to Germany for work. For a decolonial feminist view, it is important to stay aware of the fact that to be a nurse and to be able to learn German already implies an economically advantageous situation over a great part of the Philippine population.

addressed in the text or through the background images of the announcements posted on their Facebook page. Competition and the popularity of this migration opportunity for Philippine nurses is invoked by pointing to the limited seats available or by requiring a pre-registration: the open advertising of the scarcity of a company's product is a typical promotion tool in marketing strategies. These events are promoted by and hosted at the language schools, while they are often co-organized with a particular brokering agency. German employers are sometimes present at such events, where they inform about employment opportunities and the work situation in Germany. Former students who are about to depart to Germany give testimony to the school's success. Such events have to be seen as a market penetration strategy to gain new customers of the envisaged target market of "all nurses".

Physical materials (2) for marketing purposes are distributed in the form of flyers, booklets and giveaways. The Goethe Institute presents itself and its courses in various flyers that are distributed at events or displayed at the Institute's library. The flyers demonstrate their prestige and set the institute apart from other providers of German language education. The 2011 globally issued corporate design of the Goethe Institute seems to be the basis of almost all of the material I collected. They demonstrate the Institute's professionalism by mentioning the number of branches in many countries around the world, emphasizing their leading position and the internationally recognized diplomas that they issue. They use it to support their promise for high quality teaching based on the latest standards of research in language learning and the continuous training their teachers undergo. Between 2013 and 2015 the Goethe Institute Philippines published different material directed to Filipini@s intending to leave for Germany. A close analysis of this material and its role for the marketing of Germany as a destination country and a neoliberal education forming the migrant entrepreneur follows in section 6.3. The distribution of giveaways seems to be limited to the marketing tool box of the Goethe Institute. They are distributed during events or advertised as presents to promote their courses. They include mousepads with the logo of Goethe, T-Shirts, bracelets, USB-sticks, pins, pens and pencils or a verb wheel. All of these items are either in the Goethe Institute's corporate green or in bright colors, and expensively produced.

I did not collect many printed flyers by small language schools and by teacher-entrepreneurs, simply because they either did not have or distribute any, or because I was not in the right place to collect them. Without exception, the ones that I did obtain were printed on normal weight paper, not glossy and mostly in black and white with colored paper that added some spark. The fonts do not establish a corporate design and they appear to be self-produced rather than being the product of a graphic designer. The flyers list the prizes of courses as well as the addresses and phone numbers of the schools or the individuals behind them. The lack of designed flyers, or flyers at all, might also be due to the lack of places to distribute them and a big scattering loss. This unattractiveness of flyers as marketing tool leads to a focus on online advertising, which allows a more targeted distribution as will be shown later. The only time I met a teacher-entrepreneur distributing flyers was Günther, a teacher entrepreneur, during Mabuhay Germany in 2015. He positioned himself next to the Goethe Institute booth and promoted his language school with flyers, wearing a t-shirt with his school's name on the back and waving flags he got from the German embassy booth. It can be seen as a freelance intervention as he used the prestigious space established by official governmental institutions of Germany.

Prize reductions and free trial lessons (3) are never used by the Goethe Institute, which seems to rely on its reputation of being the first address to study the German language and further enforces this title by not offering reductions on their valuable product. This corresponds to strategies of premium/luxurious products for companies that distinguish themselves by not doing any promotion. However, free trial lessons seem to be an important tool for Berlitz. Smaller language teaching institutions additionally advertise reductions, which is a prize focused promotion in business terminology: Students who come to a free trial class may often profit from a reduced rate should they immediately enroll. Some advertise a free “suitability test”, in order to find out whether learning German is at all an option for the individual. This invokes a prestigious product where competition is high – and serves as a form of attracting new customers.

Online marketing (4) is widely used by all types of language schools. It is adopted as a complementary tool, as it creates an opportunity to distribute marketing materials. The most important online marketing platform seems to be Facebook – especially for the

smaller language teaching institutions and some teacher-entrepreneurs. Berlitz and the Goethe Institute rely on well-established webpages, even though the head of the language section at the Goethe Institute told me about the importance of a Facebook page in the Philippines: as most of the prospective students only access the internet through applications on their smartphones, Facebook has a much wider reach than a webpage. The Goethe Institute does promote language courses on Facebook and publishes links of the German embassy that promotes labor migration of Philippine nurses to Germany. However, the specifically launched Facebook page *Tara-na-sa-Germany* is increasingly unmaintained by its administrators. Since its launch, the page has been widely used by marriage migrants for questions on visa requirements amongst their peers.

Smaller language schools use their Facebook page intensely with some not even hosting an own webpage. It is through Facebook that announcements of the info sessions or the start of new language courses are advertised. The page sets them apart from other language schools by either mentioning their lowest price or their fastest courses. Furthermore, the Facebook page is an important tool for the promotion of successful students' testimonials. The students talk about "my [enter: NAME OF SCHOOL]-family" and thank for the school's support. Often the testimonials do not even include a whole statement but are reduced to pictures of students holding their certificates, often embroidered with simple tools such as a golden Snapchat frame or crown. The students' pictures appear on a huge banner with tens of other "B2 passers" or "B2 achievers" or assembled in albums titled "hall of fame" or "gallery of winners". While the Goethe Institute declines to post any testimonials, Berlitz publishes lists of names with those who have passed the exam. However, Berlitz sets itself apart from the smaller language teaching institutions by not showing any pictures and using an elegant script. For teacher-entrepreneurs it seems to be difficult to find digital space to advertise their services – and they might do so on the Goethe Institute's website *Tara-na-sa-Germany*. During the page's beginnings in 2015 such posts were cancelled by the administration but since it became a platform for marriage migrants in the months after, it became increasingly less monitored.

A merger of two language schools (5) happened in late 2016 between an established teacher-entrepreneur and a small language teaching institution. Through this merger

they developed into what appears to be a center of German language learning in Cebu. During the time of my fieldwork in 2015, Peter was employed by a small language school, where he was not satisfied because of bad working conditions which meant a low salary and insecure working hours. As a teacher-entrepreneur, he successfully built up a private body of students, who came to him especially for exam training because of his students' high success rate. He later joined Mr. Liske and his small language school with an explicit focus on the German language education of Philippine nurses. They engage in collaborations with several brokering agencies as well as with language schools in Manila.

To sum up, the Goethe Institute is largely invested in promoting nurse migration to Germany and the German nation state in general as well as in keeping their superior position. Berlitz appears to be less involved in promotional activities in general and even less in nurse focused promotional activities. It was during interviews with students and employees as well as class observations that showed Berlitz' position in the German language education industry: They heavily promote a collective identity, which is taken up by the students, who call themselves Berlitzian – a coinage similar to those identifying designations from the prestigious Ateneo or De La Salle University (Atenean or Lasallian). Berlitz only orients itself towards the Goethe Institute as a competitor. The competition between the Goethe Institute and Berlitz seems to stem from the shared mandate for the education of Triple Win nurses. Smaller language institutions use various strategies in order to increase their market share, while teacher-entrepreneurs seem to lack physical and digital space to access potential customers. They mostly rely on word-of-mouth recommendation – which was labelled as the most successful marketing strategy by a teacher-entrepreneur during an interview, after describing the unsuccessful promotion of his courses on radio and in newspapers.

### **5.3 Market development**

The main strategy for market development is a regional, national or international geographical expansion, or the acquisition of new market segments, where an existing product is slightly adapted and maybe differently marketed for another group of consumers. As opposed to products, geographical expansion of services is generally only possible by setting up new branches. Therefore, a geographical expansion cannot



be adopted tentatively, which is an advantage with traditional products. The opening of a new branch already asks for a full investment in facilities and staff (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 221).

For the German language schools in the Philippines (1) regional and national geographical expansion is adopted or contemplated as one of the main growth strategies after market penetration. Slight modifications of the product are also incorporated in two ways – either through (2) the digitalization of the services – and thus potentially an international expansion or through (3) the packaging of the A1 course not only as a pre-requisite for the continuing course for nurses up to B2, or as a requirement for the fiancée visa, but also for nurses, who can enter Germany as au pairs.

Geographical expansion (1) of German language teaching institutions corresponds with the geopolitical map of the Philippines. The Philippines is geographically divided into three groups of islands – Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. Manila, the national capital, is located in Luzon. The Visayas are a conglomerate of islands in the central Philippines with Cebu as the second largest Philippine city after Manila. It has a rich history of power struggles with Manila and Luzon, in which the establishing of a national language has been a major part. Mindanao is the southernmost, second largest island of the Philippines, which carries the reputation of the “Wild South”<sup>91</sup> and is rarely visited by Filipin@s coming from and living in the North. At the same time the island is very populous and a lot of the workforce in Manila and overseas comes from Mindanao.

Manila as the center of commerce in the Philippines harbors most of the German language schools teaching the language to a higher level. Furthermore, by being the capital it attracts foreign governmental institutions such as embassies, governmental trade co-operations and national cultural institutions such as the Goethe Institute: it is a pivotal space for international organizations and foreign governmental offices. In order to visit the language schools in Manila, many nurses coming from the province have to dislocate and migrate to the capital. The rise of what might come close to the

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<sup>91</sup> The reputation stems from rebel activities and fights for autonomy as well as from actions by the terrorist organization „Abu Sayyaf“.

15 language teaching institutions counted in 2015 and the more than 50 counted in 2018, although tentative numbers, have to be seen in the light of geographical expansion. In 2015, five language schools operated in Manila and two new projects developed at that time, the number grew to 13 language schools in Metro Manila and 11 language schools in close proximity in 2018. While Manila is still the center for German language learning, the bulk of the new language schools that opened within these two years are in smaller provincial cities: while I counted four language schools in Cebu, one in provincial Luzon and two language schools in Mindanao, the numbers of 2018 suggest language schools in nine different cities in Luzon, five in the Visayas and four in Mindanao. Most strikingly, Baguio is a new hub for German language teaching. It is a city in central Luzon, with at least five language schools in 2018. Research by Beatriz Lorente (presented for example in Tupas and Lorente (2017)) shows the pivotal role of the city for English language education for foreign students, mostly from Korea. A study that connects these two developments would shed further light on the language education industry and the importance of infrastructure for market growth.

In 2015, the Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz already had plans to expand to Mindanao and Cebu according to interviews with employees of the institutions. In 2018 neither the Goethe Institute nor Berlitz have established branches outside Manila. However, Berlitz is looking for German language teachers who are willing to teach in their Makati branch or in Cebu and Baguio, which points to an imminent expansion.<sup>92</sup>

Smaller language schools that started off in Manila quickly realized that they could reach more students if they themselves open branches in other regions of the country. Some teacher-entrepreneurs became part of this market development by associating themselves with smaller language teaching institutions, opening up branches for them in their respective home towns. Whether these branches will succeed, especially also in higher level language education, remains to be seen. Already back in 2015, brokers and teachers observed language schools that had to close down or give up the idea before starting, mostly due to a lack of teachers. Mindanao seems to be a last frontier for language schools to conquer and many either have a distant wish, an idea or

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<sup>92</sup>[http://www.berlitzph.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=5](http://www.berlitzph.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=5), last accessed on May 12, 2018.

concrete plans to set up a branch on the island. A language school which started to open many different branches at a very fast pace opened a school in Mindanao. They organized an information session tour from their new branch to reach more remote cities on the island, calling the whole marketing event “the Mindanao invasion”.

The much slower geographical expansion of internationally acclaimed institutions has to be seen in the light of the infrastructure needed to establish branches. The Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz are both located in Salcedo Village, Makati, which is one of the sixteen cities that comprise Metro Manila. Makati is the commercial center of Manila and home to company headquarters and international governmental institutions alike (including the German embassy as well as the GiZ). Salcedo Village in turn is the most expensive and prestigious neighborhood of Makati. The Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz are located in modern high-rise buildings in close proximity to each other with an entry area managed and guarded by security personnel. The prestigious facilities of the Goethe Institute include a light-flooded, welcoming library, a big reception area with sofas and well-equipped classrooms. Although far less expensively equipped, Berlitz is the only other language school located in Salcedo Village. Unlike the make-shift classrooms I saw at smaller language schools, the establishment of new branches involves much greater financial investment in the location and the staff for prestigious language schools that need to correspond to their general appearance (see section 6.2 for a closer analysis of the symbolic capital of the schools’ facilities). Furthermore, the decision to set up a new branch of the Goethe Institute involves a protracted political strategy and bureaucratic process (Schneider and Schiller 2000).

To explore new geographical space, the Goethe Institute tries to establish partnerships with local universities and high schools. They tried to collaborate with a university in Cebu, where they wanted to train teachers and open a special room for language learning. The university, however, was not interested. The Goethe Institute has a successful collaboration with a high school in Mindanao, which is one of the locations where I conducted fieldwork. The high school belongs to the PASCH-partner school, a global program initiated by the German government to promote German as a foreign language and is administered by the Goethe Institute. A Goethe Institute official saw this collaboration as a way to set foot in Mindanao. Many of the nurses who are

enrolled at Berlitz or at the Goethe Institute come from Mindanao and the island seems to be a lucrative source because of the large labor force aiming at either working in Manila or abroad.

The importance of geographical expansion in order to reach much more potential customers is not only recognized by the language schools. The GiZ followed this trend by advertising their changed modus operandi in their second project newsletter “Triple Win Aktuell” (GiZ and ZAV 2017). They started to conduct selection rounds not only in Manila but also on the island of Cebu. The newsletter stresses their benevolence towards the potential candidates who would have had to travel to Manila. Furthermore, the GiZ plans to offer the project’s German language training in Cebu and Baguio. They wish to decentralize their area of operation in order for nurses to have the chance to stay with their families and continue their work until their departure for Germany (GiZ and ZAV 2017: 3). The motivation for the geographical expansion is reaching a new potential target audience, which includes willing nurses who lack the financial means or time to relocate to Manila. The presentation of their new tactic as a form of benevolence hides a different reading: the emotional and social price labor migrants pay when they are not able to stay with their families and the financial investment that is borne by them, even if the German language training is paid by the future employer (see section 7.2 for a closer analysis of the nature and effect of such an investment).

The original product is slightly modified through digitalization (2), the launching of online language learning courses, which serves as a tool for market development. Offering online courses corresponds with the idea of geographical expansion: it widens the market because the product now reaches nurses who could have been prevented by financial and familial obligations from attending the face-to-face courses. Furthermore, digitalization holds the potential not only to reach nurses nationally but globally. Online courses have been launched by the Goethe Institute and a language school that was set up by a brokering agency and specifically focuses on nurses. The Goethe Institute started its new product line in April 2018. They advertise their online course on Facebook, emphasizing the temporal and spatial liberty it gives to students. Although Berlitz in general and Berlitz Philippines offer online courses and tutoring amongst their products, it does not seem to be widely used for German. The responses and questions about these online courses on Facebook show that online German

courses attract the interest of Philippine nurses already working overseas. Several nurses from Saudi Arabia inquired after possibilities to prepare for their desired next overseas destination, Germany. During interviews, I learnt about this pattern from two nurses formerly employed in Libya and Saudi Arabia. However, they returned to the Philippines in order to fully concentrate on German language training. In June 2017, a Facebook page that is directed to Philippine nurses in Germany showed their awareness of this growing need of Philippine nurses outside the Philippines who wish to learn the language in order to find employment in Germany. They started to collect information on high-quality, free online courses. One of the recommendations they received points to a side effect of German language training needed for work in Germany and the Philippines as country that globally brokers nurses: a Philippine nurse related her experience of learning German in a language school in Singapore. One of the nurses I met in Berlin had a similar trajectory: learning German was too expensive in Germany and she did not have access to accommodation close to a language school in the Philippines. She decided to visit the Goethe Institute in Qatar to learn German because her sister, an overseas worker, could host her for a few months. This development points to an evolving German language education market in other typical overseas destinations of Philippine nurses.

(3) Teacher-entrepreneurs and small language institutions offer a new packaging of the A1 course for Philippine nurses who can enter Germany as au pairs. In 2015, I visited one of these projects in a town in central Luzon. The two initiators are Gerald, a Philippine educator and businessman with financial capital, a house in central Luzon and connections to a medical school, and Miguel, a Filipino, who grew up in Germany and now works as a German teacher. Miguel's biographical trajectory demonstrates the historical roots of the migration of Philippine nurses: His mother belonged to the second batch of nurses leaving for Germany in the mid-60s. Miguel and Gerald are entrepreneurs and see their chance to profit with the infrastructure they can provide. The restrictions they faced gave them the idea of how they could establish themselves in a niche market. During an interview I conducted with the two entrepreneurs, they contemplate the market situation and their way of entry:

- Miguel I mean I have a feeling that they [the Goethe Institute] want to cover, they want to cover all German, those who would like to learn German, they want to have them all.
- Gerald Monopolize
- Miguel Monopolize
- Gerald That's the key. This is really sad. (laughs)
- Miguel You cannot do that. You cannot do that. Because the market [German for market] is so big and there are plenty of students who would like to learn the German in the North and the South.
- Gerald Like what we're doing. Why are we doing, why are we doing it in the provinces.
- Stef That was one of my questions.
- Gerald Right, that's one of your questions. Again, it's really, it's really, number one
- Miguel Geographical question
- Gerald First, from a business aspect, there is a market, cause there are a lot of hospitals there, there are a lot of nursing schools. (...) There are hundreds if not thousands of nurses that are in the province, and (PLACE NAME) is in central Luzon, it is right there in the middle of the Luzon island. (.). We have, you know, the nurses there, the young professionals, they won't take the German language here in Manila, simply because it's not practical for them to do it. It's too far, it's very expensive and, and again, from an economic perspective, they just won't do it. So, so our objective is: why not bring it there, instead of just limiting it here. Let's give those young professionals an opportunity, the same opportunity that young professionals here in Metro Manila have. No, just because they are near Goethe or Berlitz, and other institutions here, and they can afford it, that doesn't mean, you know, they should have the same opportunity, so and besides, why don't we do it. So we put it up there.

Interview with Gerald and Miguel, Quezon City, Manila, May 10, 2015

The excerpt shows Miguel and Gerald's assessment of the market that is concentrated on Manila. They consider that the Goethe Institute and implicitly Berlitz have a monopoly on language teaching, which they consider unfair, claiming to see the situation from the perspective of nurses in the provinces. They advertise their project as an opportunity for those nurses who do not have the money to finance extensive German language training and a dislocation to Manila. Their own perspective as entrepreneurs trying to set up a business becomes clear when they not only consider the geographical setting of the school but also their repackaging of the language course for au pairs. Miguel can only guarantee teaching German up to A2 level and au pairs only need an A1 certificate for their visa. Miguel and Gerald are not only targeting

nurses in the province, but specifically young, female nurses right after their board exam. As paid work positions are scarce for nurses in general and often involve either volunteering or even paying for being allowed to work – those who cannot afford this additional investment cannot comply with the POEA’s requirement for the Triple Win project of two years’ work experience. They are praising their project because it allows nurses to leave soon for Germany where they can continue their language study in order to work in their profession at a later time. Furthermore, they value that the brokerage of au pairs does not have to be registered with the POEA, which in turn would ask for a considerable financial investment on their part.

This niche market of brokering Philippine nurses to Germany as au pairs is viewed highly critically by other players in the field. Miguel and Gerald are desperately looking for students and they are astonished that the nurses do not join their project “in the hundreds”. So far they have three “pioneers,” who had already left for Germany and when I visited them in 2015, they tried to set up a new class. They intend to collaborate with a local medical school in order to access potential students. During an interview with the dean of this school, it became clear that they are extremely reluctant to engage in any kind of collaboration. They fear that the project is not established well enough and that it could result in bad publicity. Indeed, Miguel and Gerald have not mapped out the stepping stones of their project once the nurses have left as au pairs: they still have to figure out how they can reach a B1 or B2 level within their one-year visa as au pairs and they do not yet know how they can change their residence status to work visas.

I visited the families of Miguel and Gerald’s “pioneers” at their homes in the countryside around the provincial town in the North and conducted interviews with them. The education of those families’ daughters and the uncertainty of their well-being and future in Germany asks for an enormous financial and emotional commitment from them. I talked to the Goethe Institute’s head of the language section about such au pair projects for nurses, of which he had already heard and called it “human trafficking”. He said that the German embassy is furious about this development and is trying to prevent it. While the au pair project is not strictly illegal, it points to a probable increase in domination and exploitation which caused his strong response. The visa regulations do not allow au pairs to stay in the country once their

contract expires after one year; they are obliged to return to their home country. In the case described, Miguel and Gerald are trying to find loopholes, but without having found any so far. Young nurses are attracted to the program under false expectations, as their future in Germany is much more unclear and their position, thus, extremely vulnerable.

To sum up, all of the different language teaching institutions are interested in market development. While the infrastructural investment is much higher for renowned institutions such as the Goethe Institute and Berlitz, smaller language schools and teacher entrepreneurs are building networks and setting up new branches at a fast pace. Digitalization of language learning allows the schools to reach a wider audience with less risky investments than a personal representation in different localities entails – it is therefore a means for the Goethe Institute to expand. The au pair project demonstrates the rather difficult position of individual entrepreneurs to access the market. They, thus, develop business models that further enforce already existing social inequalities: The route to Germany as au pairs attracts nurses in particularly precarious situations and keeps them without financial support and in positions of uncertainty in the years to come.

## **5.4 Product development**

The two courses of action for product development are the introduction of a completely new product, or of additional variants of the existing product (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 224). Meffert and Bruhn draw attention to the blurred line between developing a new product and diversification, as a new product often entails a new market as well. The German language education market in the Philippines is still mostly directed at nurses who as we have seen need a language certificate to obtain a visa. Therefore, the development of new products is a difficult path to follow. Product development happened at an earlier stage, when the opportunity for nurses going to Germany was introduced: German language schools that only taught the language up to A1 for marriage migrants introduced the new product of B1 and B2 courses in order to cater to this new group of customers. This strategy appears to be risky. A broker from Germany, who travelled to the Philippines to scout for a suitable language school analyzed the development, revealing a mindset continuously invested with business



strategic thinking: During an interview in Berlin in late 2015, he told me about a few language schools he encountered that tried to attract nurses by offering courses up to B2 upon the opening of the German labor market, but shortly after stopped because of a lack of resources, few successful passers of the Goethe-exams, and, consequently, few new students.

From a more general perspective on the language education market since 2015, schools that had not had German among their subjects have started to offer the new product of German language education. One such smaller language education institution now even flags up German as their main product, which becomes evident in their school's logo in the German national colors. However, in the specific, existing market of German language education up to B2, product development has stayed moderate and included (1) the development or advertising of special and effective language teaching (2) offering different class schedules, such as intensive or weekend courses and (3) offering language courses without having to pass an exam after each level up to B2.

The product development in the form of (1) improved language teaching is widely discussed amongst the language schools themselves. It involves the advertising of specific teaching methods or especially suitable teachers. The Goethe Institute as well as Berlitz have their own specific teaching and learning methods that they praise – and also mention when in competition with each other. Such a hierarchisation through brand loyalty is picked up by the students. The Goethe Institute has their own extensive training for teachers of German as a foreign language, where they promote their method, which focuses on language for communicative purposes. A very experienced teacher, who underwent training in Germany, characterizes the teaching method as involving a lot of self-discovery learning and role play that always has a “communicative” focus. An important aspect involves German as the sole medium of instruction. How this approach results in anxiety on the part of the students but also pride in mastering such a challenge will be discussed in section 7.3. Berlitz even trademark their language teaching approach as “the Berlitz method<sup>TM</sup>”, often also called “the Berlitz way” by teachers and students. The students from Berlitz that I interviewed were all aware of the school having their own set-up of language courses. “The Berlitz way is everyday, no focus on grammar. But you just have to learn it. But it's practical use, everyday use. So it was useful,” as one of them told me about his

experience during an interview. Another student also deemed his experience with Berlitz as special and fruitful because “it was not like boring school thing”. He praised “the Berlitz method” that involves a lot of role play and watching movies. Daniel – the teacher of the class I observed at Berlitz – was also convinced of the value of their teaching method. Being himself an IT specialist, he was only introduced to teaching when taking on the position in the Philippines, where he underwent a short but intensive teacher training course of one week with subsequent monitoring and feedback sessions. He valued that class sizes in Berlitz are smaller than in other language schools and most of the learning should be playful and less like “pauken, pauken, pauken” (drill, drill, drill). He feels that the Berlitz method has an impact on the students, which he saw when some were transferred from the Goethe Institute who were much more afraid to talk than the ones educated at Berlitz from the beginning.

The competition small institutions face because of the prestige of Goethe or Berlitz becomes evident when they try to discredit the high reputation of these methods: Students of small language school were told by their teacher that the Goethe Institute and its materials are not very effective for learning the language, as there is no focus on communication. They accused the Goethe Institute of having wrongly established themselves as number one language school for German. Smaller language education institutions take up the Goethe Institute’s and Berlitz’ trope of having developed their own highly efficient teaching method and use it to advertise their courses. Often they do not elaborate on what this method entails, but refer to the testimonials of their students, who constantly pass the tests and sport their certificate. One of the language schools, however, elaborates extensively on their teaching method for intensive German specifically designed for nurses. The new school heavily relies on online teaching and half of the scheduled course hours incorporate individual learning (although promised to be monitored and controlled). The comparatively elaborate discussion of their method as well as their self-declaration of being an “academy” conjures up an image of professionalism.

Furthermore, the development of an enhanced product is often achieved through the marketing of the teachers by drawing on the language myth of native speakers’ superior ability to teach their mother tongue. While the Goethe Institute and Berlitz do not

engage in this discourse, it is predominantly the small language teaching institutions and the German teacher-entrepreneurs that engage in the perpetuation of this myth. The importance of having native speakers of German as teachers is almost always addressed, mostly emphasized and sometimes partially contradicted. One language school differentiates between different kinds of native speakerness needed for different levels: they emphasize that Filipin@s are better teachers for A1 to A2 levels as they can help in the students' first language and share their experience of having had to learn the German language. For higher levels the school employs German native speakers because more profound grammatical and cultural knowledge is needed. Native speakerness is used to give legitimacy to the teachers and, thus, to the schools themselves. One language school published a short video where their teachers were portrayed: The video simply flashed pictures of young people read as white, – the sole mark of identification of their superior teaching abilities. Some emphasize that “our teachers are German nationals” or that their teachers are “professionally educated German native speakers”. That teachers are advertised as being “German nationals” draws on the premise of “one nation, one language,” which presumes that German nationality necessarily qualifies the person as a German native speaker and, thus, a good teacher of German. It remains open to question what “professionally educated German native speakers” could be: they are either German native speakers, who have enjoyed any kind of professional education, or they professionally learnt to be native speakers (which in turn would call into question what such a professional education would look like). Such advertising reveals the socially constructed perception of, firstly, one's nationality as an indicator of (the superiority) of one's language competence, and, secondly, native speakers as particularly suitable language teachers. These characterizations of teachers are used for displaying professionalism, but, on closer inspection, are void of any real information on the teacher's language and teaching skills: This particular use of the native speaker language myth is soaked in racism and nationalism.

(2) All types of language schools offer different class schedules by introducing intensive or, sometimes, weekend courses. The language learning up until the required B1 or B2 takes a long period of full-time study and is a significant financial and social investment, as will be more closely discussed in section 7.2.1. Thus, it is paramount for many of the students that the program be as dense as possible. A long-time teacher at

the Goethe Institute remembers that intensive everyday language courses were only introduced with the language training for the first batch of Triple Win nurses. Later, intensive courses were extended in order to be booked by nurses outside the governmental pilot program. Some smaller language schools advertise super-intensive courses that are considerably cheaper and promise much faster results than other providers. A teacher from one of the most aggressively expanding language schools explained their schedule: students have to go through three to four lessons per week as opposed to two and a half at the Goethe Institute. As a result, their students have only five weeks to achieve one level, for which the Goethe Institute schedules eight weeks. A small language school I visited in Cebu was teaching a batch of nurses that were all brokered to the same care home in Germany. They introduced a weekend program in order to include those nurses that live in the province where they have work and family. This product development was supported by the students themselves: the ones living in Cebu agreed to the special schedule out of solidarity with their classmates from the province.

(3) Smaller language teaching institutions offer different levels of language courses in a sequence without in between testing. At the Goethe Institute or at Berlitz, students have to pass an official exam after each level – A1, A2, B1 (and B2 outside the Triple Win project). The language course is therefore segmented and gives the students the chance easily to change language school after each level they have passed. Some of the nurses I interviewed had strategies of either starting with a cheap language school and later transferring to the Goethe Institute before facing the difficult B1 or B2 exam, others started with the Goethe Institute but had to change to smaller language schools because they were closer or cheaper. Exam fees are high and students from schools in the province often have to travel to examination centers. The strategy to spare the students from continuous language testing, therefore, helps as a way of securing customers. Mr. Liske, an established teacher entrepreneur and owner of a small language school, has negotiated a deal with the Goethe Institute by which his students will only have to take the B2 exam. The Goethe Institute agreed to his proposal because of his students' high success rate. However, an examination center in Cebu increasingly faces the problem that students have not passed any prior exam and test results are devastatingly low, as they reported on Facebook in April 2018. It becomes clear that such a strategy does not lead to a business's long term success, but by binding

its customers to the school for a few months, entrepreneurs can make easy money for a short period of time: Such schemes mainly attract less privileged students, who follow the lower prizes and the shorter course schedule, and, thus, further increase social inequality and cement hierarchies.

## 5.5 Diversification

### *5.5.1 Horizontal diversification*

A horizontal diversification is the development of a new product that is still connected to the old product but addresses a new market (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 224). Techniques employed by German language schools in the Philippines are (1) the offering of incentives in the form of bursaries, loans, (2) tutorials or homework support and (3) additional course elements directed towards the nursing profession.

Attracting students by (1) offering financial support in the form of loans or bursaries has been mostly used by small language teaching institutions or teacher entrepreneurs trying to get market access. While I have not heard of any bursaries offered by Berlitz, the Goethe Institute occasionally raffles off German language courses in the Philippines and short language study travels to Germany. These awards are only directed towards loyal students who have completed several levels of language learning at the institute. Implicitly, such prizes either reach nurses or other students who are interested in studying German to a high level, for example for work in business process outsourcing or in academic studies in Germany. The prizes exclude marriage migrants who only complete the first level certificate and, thus, do not fulfill the prerequisite of being a “loyal” student. The occasional and celebratory nature of such bursaries seem to be a demonstration of prestige rather than a large-scale measure to attract students. Several reasons might lead to the two internationally renowned language teaching institutions’ limited investment in offering loans or bursaries: The Goethe Institute and Berlitz have the mandate to educate the Triple Win candidates whose fees are already sponsored by the GiZ – with money from the German state as well as the future employers. This results in a steady flow of students and might make bursaries unnecessary. During my fieldwork in 2015, Berlitz did not teach German classes outside the Triple Win project and they seemed only gradually to have extended their

courses in cooperation with another brokering agency. The head of the language section of the Goethe Institute emphasized that they do not collaborate with any brokering agency, as such marketing measures would interfere with the institute's objectives. He explicitly included the GiZ and the Triple Win project and mentioned that the Goethe Institute deliberately refused to join promotional measures in the context of the project. He emphasized the Goethe Institute's role of providing language education, cultural events and space for critical thinking, trying to educate nurses to become independent of brokering agencies and go to Germany through direct-hiring. However, if the Goethe Institute is seen in its role as governmental cultural agency of Germany, their educational work on direct-hiring can be seen as brokering strategy for the German state.

My data can only reveal a tendency in the development of offering loans and bursaries through smaller language teaching institutions and teacher entrepreneurs, as 2018 on-site information would be needed to contextualize the data obtained digitally. During 2015, all of the nurses I interviewed outside the Triple Win program paid for their language education themselves with a few of them relating stories of acquaintances who supposedly received bursaries. In 2018, smaller language schools often advertise bursaries and loans as either a "study now, pay later" option, an option to pay a reduced prize and get the money back once they passed the required certificate, a combination of the two or a full or partial bursary. Such financial support is explicitly only directed towards students who learn German in order to work in Germany as nurses and it is often tied to collaborations with brokering agencies. It remains unclear how far these offers mainly serve marketing purposes and remain largely unpaid, are only temporarily used in order to secure their position in the market, or if bursaries are becoming part of the migration process outside Triple Win, as was intended in the 2016 amendment of the bilateral labor agreement. The offers of loans and bursaries remain vague and dubious: One language school calls their course fees "tailor-fitted" and "as flexible as possible," another one promises partial bursary through their partner brokering agency, which could even be extended to a full scholarship, if the nurse has work experience. When an interested nurse asks on Facebook about the conditions of their advertisement "get the chance to study German language for free", the school answers that assessment and information sessions to test the students' eligibility for a bursary are for free and evades giving details on their bursaries. The same language school

emphasizes in a different post that “we are open for the German language scholarship” – using a definite article which implies a (non-existent) official or general language scholarship offered to Philippine nurses. In 2015, one of my main informants related his experience with this language school: After a desperate waiting period and stasis with the GiZ, he tried to get in touch with different language schools – although he was already taking his B2 course. During a simple inquiry they already had him interviewed by a brokering agency and urged him to pay a 5,000 Peso assessment fee and sign a contract, which he refused. While it remains unclear whether this particular brokering agency/language school offered bogus work opportunities, they did not act within the legal boundaries set by the POEA, which forbids asking for brokering fees from the employees.

The two entrepreneurs Miguel and Gerald toyed with the idea of giving tuition assistance in order to establish their market presence as they were in dire need of new students for their au pair program for Philippine nurses. They wanted to support the students who could not afford the language course and have them pay back once they migrated to Germany. Such a measure would have meant a heavy debt as au pairs only earn 260 Euro with their professional future yet unclear. Miguel and Gerald clearly see their own financial investment as a form of altruism as Gerald related in an e-mail after the interview: “the difference we can make in the life of another person (more so, the youth of this generation) is equally if not more important than the economic benefit it will generate for Miguel and me.” The statement demonstrates the intricate connection between Miguel and Gerald’s business mentality and their ‘savior mentality’ (Flaherty 2016) – the connection between the commercial and the humanitarian infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). A German brokering agency that works with several small schools in the Philippines is highly invested in offering a combination of a stipend and a loan while heavily drawing on the discourse of development aid. The agency seems to have studied living and working conditions in the Philippines: in a call for financial support of German language education in the Philippines, the expensive language course as well as the financial investment needed for the language learning period are revealed and numbers are shown. They stress that it is because of lack of money that many nurses cannot fulfill their dream of working in Germany and similarly to ethnographic vignettes, they portray different life trajectories. It was the desperate faces that made them think of a fund, that is partly financed by successful candidates

who started work in Germany (as a compulsory part of their contract) and partly through a crowd-funding initiative, addressing Germans who want to support a development aid program.

(2) Homework assistance and tutorials are only advertised by the Goethe Institute. Teachers at the Goethe Institute told me about instances where they unofficially offered their students further assistance outside class and for free in order to prepare them for the exam. This private initiative was subsequently prohibited by the officials of the language section. Teachers were asked to refer their students to the official homework and tutorial programs, which are only directed towards the Institute's students and are free of charge, but which were seen as not effective enough by those teachers. These courses were valued highly by the nurses I talked to, mostly because these programs gave them a possible work opportunity: the tutors were mostly sourced from the institute's advanced students, who have completed their language course and were waiting to be deployed to Germany. While Berlitz does not advertise homework assistance and tutorials, in practice, their teachers assume this role and tutor weaker students outside the official class schedule. Unlike the Goethe Institute, Berlitz does not pay teachers per unit but give them a monthly salary which, thus, includes after-class work with students. Berlitz regards this as part of the package they offer the GiZ as one of their language education partners. None of the students of smaller language schools and teacher-entrepreneurs reported such additional assistance, which, however, could have taken place much more informally. The more elaborate infrastructure of additional rooms and staff gives Berlitz and the Goethe Institute the opportunity for more inclusive support of students. The Goethe Institute's treatment seems more formal and bureaucratic as it conforms to the international reputation of a professional organization.

(3) Additional course elements directed towards the nursing profession are an important marketing strategy used by most of the players in the language education market, mostly not only directed at future students but also at interested employers or brokering agencies. The salience of this marketing strategy reveals yet again that nurses are the most important target group for German language education in the Philippines. The Goethe Institute and Berlitz do not officially include medical terminology and language practice for the care profession during their language courses. Such initiatives



are taken up by their teachers individually, who try to make the German course as practical and interesting to their students as they can. However, the Goethe Institute developed a language course for Southeast Asian nurses and doctors who intend to work in Germany: “Deutsch für Pflege- und Heilberufe – Sprachliche Expertise zum Kennenlernen” in 2015. The course can be bought and taken online, a shorter version is for free and serves as an incentive. It is designed to be particularly attractive in order to create interest in what the premium version could look like. A booklet for teachers helps to integrate the exercises into the German course at the Goethe Institute – as it corresponds to their teaching method. The course is supposed to be authentic and uses material from nurse magazines and websites. During an interview with the main project coordinator – a teacher from the Goethe Institute Manila, who has already published a course book on German for geriatric care –, he elaborated on the general aim of the project: Their main interest was in recruiting nurses for their German language courses, as shall be analyzed together with a set of material produced by the Goethe Institute Philippines between 2013 and 2015 in section 6.3.

A few of the smaller language schools and one of the teacher entrepreneurs advertise their German course as designed for care workers, teaching only practical information and useful content. It serves as a way of distinguishing their product from the Goethe Institute or Berlitz with a more holistic approach to their language teaching. Most of the language schools do not give further details on what the focus on German for care workers entails. They often mention that their teachers are either from the medical field or that their material was produced by care workers and doctors. One of the language schools even advertises their own methodology that does not only teach German for care workers but specifically to nurses from the Philippines.

This product enhancement of adding medical terminology to the curriculum has also been taken up by Günther, a teacher-entrepreneur, who saw his human capital as a former doctor and a German national enabling him to fill what he identified as a niche market. During Mabuhay Germany in February 2015, he enthusiastically told me about his project for the first time. He suffered a severe heart attack back in Germany and now tries to set up his life anew in the Philippines. He described a contact of his, who accompanied the project as an employee at one of the first hospitals employing Philippine nurses through the Triple Win project:

Ja so war das, so hat sie mir das alles erzählt, hab sie reden lassen, hab sie gar nicht unterbrochen, das war wirklich eine Stunde, hat sie echt, wie ein Wasserfall hat sie abgelaufen, da hab ich zu ihr gesagt, was ich hier vorhabe, die Deutschschule mit Medical Terms, da da entsprechend einzufuchsen auf deutsches Sprachniveau der medizinischen Ausdrücke und da ging sie gleich hoch, sagt sie, boah, das wär ja super, dat wär richtig klasse, denn dat war das aller aller Schlimmste, was fehlte, und das ist auch hier in auf den Philippinen in allen deutschen Sprachschulen absolut nicht vorhanden, da ist kein Mediziner, der das kann, und das kann ich ja nun mal. Na gut, das jetzt dazu, ne?

[That's how it went, that's how she told me all of this, I let her speak, did not interrupt, it really was more than an hour, she really, she was talking her head off, then I told her about my plan, the German language school with medical terms, to drill them adequately in German language skills of medical terms and she immediately caught up on it, boah, that would be great, that would be really fantastic, because that's what was by far the worst bit that was missing, and this is the case here in the Philippines in all the German language schools, completely missing, there is no medic, who can do this, and, you know, that's what I can do. Well, that's that, alright?]

Interview with Günther, Taguig City, Manila, June 6, 2015

According to Günther, his contact must have been desperate because the hospital's time investment into the Philippine nurses until they were ready to work was considerable, with one of the reasons being the (missing) professional language skills. He took her enthusiasm about his project as reassurance that he possessed the skills to establish himself in the language education market in the Philippines. He assumed that none of the other language schools were addressing the need for German for medical work. At the time of my interview with him in June 2015, Günther is facing a difficult period in his life and has already partially abandoned the plan for a language school. He did not find enough students and the only one left had to quit the course because of financial reasons. While he still follows up on the idea occasionally, he decided to establish a holiday resort in the Visayan islands. The failure of his business idea meant that he would have to return to Germany not simply to get his retirement papers, but to find a job in order to provide for his wife, Melody, and to be able to keep their flat in Manila.

### 5.5.2 *Vertical diversification*

Vertical diversification refers to an additional product or service in the respective production chain: a company “branch[es] out into production of components, parts, and materials” (Ansoff 1957: 118). It can either be a reverse integration, which involves the production of components needed for the current product, or a forward integration, which introduces the production of components the current product needs before it is ready for consumption (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 224). Vertical diversification reduces the dependency of a company on suppliers and customers and, thus, strengthens the company’s position in the market. The company enjoys an added value because they become responsible for the production of some of the means of production. In case of German language schools in the Philippines vertical diversification is achieved through back integration by (1) issuing teaching material and (2) offering teacher education.

(1) Berlitz is the most consistent producer of their own teaching material. Their classes primarily work with their own publication series “Berlitz Deutsch” and additionally work through the books used by the Goethe Institute in order to prepare their students for the Goethe certificate. As Berlitz Philippines does not have examination rights for internationally recognized certificates, their own teaching material keeps them dependent on the Goethe Institute. Although Berlitz might not gain much power from the backward integration, the consistent use of their own publications as main source for teaching adds to their professionalism and prestige. The Goethe Institute Philippines publishes material that explicitly includes cultural training material. During 2015, they used the Hueber publication series “Schritte” for their regular class. While the Goethe Institute does publish its own teaching material, sometimes in collaboration with big educational publishing houses such as Cornelsen, such publications are limited to smaller interventions in language teaching for special purposes. The Goethe Institute’s precursor the German Academy (Deutsche Akademie) did publish their own language learning material in 1939, which focused on communicative competence long before it became popular in language teaching in the 70s (Michels 2005: 88-89).<sup>93</sup> The reasons why the Goethe Institute seemed to refrain

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<sup>93</sup> The publication date of 1939 suggests a propaganda publication of the Nazi regime. However, the government did not approve of the book when the Nazi regime took

from a further focus on the development of their own material for teaching German as a foreign language needs further investigation.

Smaller language teaching institutions and teacher entrepreneurs either orient themselves to the language material currently used by the Goethe Institute or they assemble their own material from different sources. They often distribute single copies during class or sell a self-produced folder to their students so as to reduce costs. While the technique of copying teaching material and assembling it keeps the smaller institutions and the entrepreneurs relatively independent from the expensive teaching material industry, it could face legal sanction. Students told me that they were warned to import their language material as photocopies once they transfer to Germany, as they could be fined on the grounds of copyright infringement.

Teacher training (2) is paramount for market growth in the Philippines: Already during my fieldwork in 2015, I heard about the problem of teacher shortage from teachers, school owners, Goethe Institute officials, brokers and students alike. Berlitz as well as the Goethe Institute both provide teacher training, although with a different approach and on a different scale. New staff employed at Berlitz as teachers undergo a one-week full-time training course, where they are introduced to the Berlitz method, and are subsequently monitored and given feedback. Daniel, the young German IT specialist, joined Berlitz Philippines for a gap year before starting his master's degree in order to immerse himself in a more social profession and to take advantage of the opportunity to travel. Without any prior knowledge of language teaching, he started teaching German after completing the training. Adequate language skills are a prerequisite to the course and are not further trained. Therefore, teachers at Berlitz Philippines are usually German native speakers, mostly young and adventurous travelers, or Filipin@s with a biography that led them to German speaking countries for several years.

The Goethe Institute's teachers often share similar biographical backgrounds to the Berlitz teachers, although the average of age seems higher: I met several people in their

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over the power at the Deutsche Akademie. Michels (2005: 89) problematizes the fact that this disapproval was used to cover the close connections between the German Academy and the Nazi regime: he points to the fact that the limited use of the publication was mainly due to the bombing of Leipzig and the scarcity of paper rather than because of the academy's political opposition.

late forties and fifties who went through training in teaching German as a foreign language at the Goethe Institute in Germany as a second career, often in order to be able to travel the world. The Goethe Institute can rely on a worldwide pool of teachers as a resource, which is the result of a century of investment in teacher training: A focus on educating German teachers goes back to the very beginning of the German Academy. The Goethe Institute Philippines started their first program in 2008, where students could start teaching after half a year of training. However, the exact duration depended on the individual progress of the participants as well as the head of the language section, who changes every few years. In 2015, the head of the language section at the Goethe Institute told me about their recruiting strategy: they were approaching students on B1 or B2 level and showing them that they would be financially on equal terms in comparison to being a nurse in Germany. Between 2015 and 2017, the program was restructured and professionalized, aware of the growing demand of German teachers in the Philippines. Applicants need a B2 level as a prerequisite, which makes the nurses a particularly suitable target market from which to recruit teachers. They will study up to level C1 while they undergo training and practice in teaching for six months, followed by two years of further training courses that lead to a teacher's diploma (Grünes Diplom [green diploma]). The program is free and participants receive 16,000 Pesos for the whole training period. Upon completion of the training period participants are obliged to work at the Goethe Institute Philippines for at least two years. The course fees for A1 until B2, the amount of time needed from A1 until C1 and the expenses for living in Manila suggest a considerable financial investment on the future teachers' part. However, the prospect of earning a better wage without having to leave the country seems to be attractive to many, even if it means a change of profession. The financial investment on the side of the Goethe Institute is considerably lower and they gain a much needed, and out of necessity, loyal workforce. Furthermore, the Goethe Institute is involved in teacher training programs for their PASCH-partner high schools. The training is supposed to take three years; however, it depends heavily on the individual progress of the participants. The need for German teachers at high schools leads to teachers starting the German language course at just one level beyond the one they have already mastered themselves.

Smaller language teaching institutions seem to suffer most from the teacher shortage. Most of the teachers I encountered had a different personal background: they were men in their fifties or older and did not move to the Philippines following a job offer that promised them the opportunity to travel. They were in relationships with much younger Filipinas, had often lived in the country before considering teaching German as a potential source of income and were trying to make a living. Those teachers who already had a background in education were very vocal about their fear of deteriorating quality and the danger of the resulting cessation of this labor migration. One of the teachers told me that some of his co-workers' only qualification to the job was owning a German shepherd. Another teacher and school owner explained how he had to turn down applicants, who came back after studying business in Germany and thought they could now teach the language without having any understanding of grammar.

Other small language schools are less strict about the employment of teachers. One of the geographically fastest growing language schools in the Philippines was in dire need of teachers: they asked Rob, a Triple Win nurse who had completed his B2 course and was waiting for deployment to Germany, to join their team. When Rob accepted, the owners were extremely grateful and urged him to teach their B2 course. Rob told the school that his qualifications are not high enough to teach at that level. He immediately identified the language school as dubious when this proposition was made to him. He heard that the school employed a teacher for their B2 course, who did not yet have a B2 certificate. Rob did not want to discredit this teacher, who very well could have had a talent for teaching, but he himself was extremely uncomfortable with this situation. The pass rate of their B1 students was correspondingly low. Unlike future nurse migrants who start to work as German teachers at the Goethe Institute, smaller language teaching institutions cannot rely on long term loyalty: Not only do many follow their deployment to Germany once their visa is approved and the flight is settled, call centers offer double the wage that even the Goethe Institute could offer.

Teacher training is a widely needed resource as a shortage of teaching personnel poses a big threat to the market: having not enough teachers limits most kinds of growing strategies. Therefore, teacher training gives the Goethe Institute an enormous advantage over other players in the German language education industry. They offer a prestigious position to their prospective teachers, for example through training periods

in Germany and highly modern facilities. The Goethe Institute, thus, attracts participants who might otherwise follow different trajectories like revisiting their initial plan to migrate to Germany as a nurse or starting work at a call center. The two-year binding of their teachers ensures a consistency in their teaching staff. Smaller language schools on the other hand might choose strategies which jeopardize the teaching quality and the feeling of integrity of prospective teachers in order to stay in competition.

### *5.5.3 Lateral diversification*

Lateral diversification is the riskiest strategy of all, as it involves a company launching a business or product onto a new market that is completely independent of what came before (Meffert and Bruhn 2003: 225). In the German language education market in the Philippines, such attempts at lateral diversification seem to be (1) individual cases or (2) the involvement of brokering agencies that open up their own language schools or language schools that start to broker workers.

Lateral diversification in individual cases (1) seems to be rather limited; however, I came upon such an attempt by chance. The example simply illustrates how complex the market can be, especially in the case of small entrepreneurs, who are ever active in trying to find a niche market. A German brokering agent as well as a teacher told me about a German immigrant who owns a resort on one of the most famous holiday islands of the Philippines. He was struggling to attract customers and as a way of filling the beach resort, he started to offer a package to nurses: he would teach them German at the resort and broker them to care homes in Germany. Both of my informants were extremely skeptical of his teaching skills as well as his primary goal of making money. Two of the nurses I interviewed in Manila intended to find work in Germany through this individual. They declined his offer to study German at his resort and stayed in their home town in Manila, as travelling to the island and sustaining themselves there would have been more expensive than studying at the Goethe Institute. Neither of the two nurses I interviewed have left for Germany and other informants reported that the resort owner had to abandon the idea of entering the language education business. The fact that (2) brokering agencies and language schools start to develop out of each other seems to be a strong trend in the language education market. However, if we

change the focus and do not regard language education as the product of the market but instead understand the preparation of the German speaking Philippine nurse as an industry in itself, this development becomes a type of vertical diversification. The next section discusses this different perspective, which is supported by other developments in the language education industry.

#### *5.5.4 Vertical diversification in the production of German speaking Philippine nurses*

If the German speaking Philippine nurse is taken as the product of the market to be analyzed, the players of the language education market are involved in different strategies of vertical diversification. That German language schools are not only selling language courses but also producing and brokering German speaking nurses becomes painfully obvious when one language school presents itself on Facebook as “one of the Philippines’ largest producer of B2 level German language exam passers”, and later when they portray Philippine nurses who are about to leave for Germany at the airport “our (*insert school name*) products (*insert name of the nurses*) flew to Germany.” Such formulations as well as the market growth strategies of language schools discussed below show the interconnectedness of the commodification of language and the commodification of the people who speak the language: this perspective departs from an understanding of wage labor as a commodity the encompassing commodity of the wage laborer.

Next to (1) the reverse integration of brokering agencies that open language schools or the forward integration of language schools that become brokering agencies as well, language schools start (2) to gain the right to award language certificates, (3) the production of material for the transition management that train the ideal citizen, or (4) to teach German at high school or college level.

Forward or backward integration by language schools and brokering agencies (1) is widely used as a strategy by smaller language schools and teacher entrepreneurs. Neither the Goethe Institute nor Berlitz are involved in a transformation into a brokering agency: while Berlitz seems to expand their co-operation with brokering agencies, the Goethe Institute, as stated earlier, explicitly opposes such a development as it diverges with their political brief. They even try to show paths to nurses to leave for Germany via direct-hiring. However, the Goethe Institute’s involvement has the



same effect of attracting Philippine nurses for work in Germany except without immediately making money. The Goethe Institute as agency funded by and representing the German state, thus, indirectly profits as well.

During my fieldwork period in 2015, I heard about two famous brokering agencies in the Philippines and one small brokering agency based in Switzerland that recently started to focus on the deployment of Philippine nurses to Germany. Both of the established agencies have previously solely acted as brokers with a focus on maritime personnel in one case and agricultural workers in the other, with no special focus on Germany. When they embarked on the brokering of Philippine nurses to Germany, they also instituted their own language training in order to be able to offer a full package for interested nurses. The small agency from Switzerland started their business with the brokering of Philippine nurses to Switzerland in 2012, with their clients going through German language training at the Goethe Institute. The nurses can enter Switzerland with a B2 language certificate as *stagiaires* – a form of internship – and are obliged to return to their home country after 18 months of work. The brokering agency had to develop new products because the extensive training of the nurses proved to be an investment too big for such a short period of work. They subsequently started to broker the nurses to Germany upon their return to the Philippines. When they widened their services to also directly broker to Germany, they not only started collaborations with several small language schools in the Philippines but also set up their own “academy”.

The required registration of a brokering agency with the POEA is highly cost intensive. This is the reason why it is more difficult for language schools to engage in vertical diversification and also become a brokering agency. This leads to the trend of marketing themselves solely as language school and including the brokering informally – an option which is even more often taken up by teacher entrepreneurs who can more easily circumvent legal restrictions and are, therefore, less afraid of being prosecuted and fined. The offer of language training combined with the promise to a work position is vital for them to attract new students. However, success is extremely diverging and many of the interested nurses were sharing their insecurity with me: they were always in an understanding of the danger of scam brokering agencies, which holds a long history in a country so intensely involved in labor brokerage. Therefore, to

demonstrate professionalism is paramount for smaller schools – which leads to offspring such as “German Immigration Services”, which sounds official but is organized by a teacher of the same language school/brokering agency.

The trend towards receiving (2) the right to issue language certificates started when I was visiting the Philippines in 2015 and sharply increased thereafter. Next to the Goethe Institute’s certificate the German embassy recognizes certificates of telc (The European Language Certificates), ÖSD (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom, Austrian language diploma) and TestDaF (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache, test for German as a foreign language). All of these certificates are in turn certified by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe), an organization invested in the development of common international standards of language examination and language proficiency. Inaugurated in 1990, ALTE sees itself as a response to increased intra-European mobility and the resulting demand for a multilingual society<sup>94</sup>. TestDaF has not been used for the German language testing of Philippine nurses: The certificate is directed at students, who want to study or work at German universities, and is issued by the TestDaF Institute. The Institute closely collaborates with the Goethe Institute, which adopted the certificate in their product line in 2007 (TestDaF 2008: 11). However, telc and ÖSD examination rights have been widely approached by language schools in the Philippines. Both organizations sell examination licenses to language education providers. Their most important product, the B1 certificate “Zertifikat Deutsch” was developed by the ÖSD, the Goethe Institute, telc and the language center of the University of Fribourg in Switzerland in 1970.<sup>95</sup> Telc is a non-profit company which developed from an institute solely focusing on language testing into providing teacher education and teaching material.<sup>96</sup> Telc offers language certificates for ten different languages. In 2014, telc is proud to have developed the first German language certificate specifically for physicians and nursing staff<sup>97</sup> – a development which has to be seen in the context of the opening of the German labor market for care workers in

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<sup>94</sup><https://www.alte.org/Our-history>, last accessed on May 29, 2018.

<sup>95</sup><http://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/deutsch-sprachzertifikate.php>, <https://www.telc.net/en/about-telc/who-we-are/our-history.html>, both last accessed on May 29, 2018.

<sup>96</sup><https://www.telc.net/ueber-telc/wer-wir-sind.html>, last accessed on May 29, 2018.

<sup>97</sup><https://www.telc.net/en/about-telc/who-we-are/our-history.html>, last accessed on May 29, 2018.

2013. Unlike telc, ÖSD is not a company but an association and only focuses on offering German language certificates; language schools and language teachers can apply for an examination license, which will be granted after a successful inspection.

Berlitz Philippines sends their students to the Goethe Institute Philippines for German language testing. During my fieldwork period in 2015, Berlitz employees told me about their plan to receive their own right to examine from telc. Having the power to issue language certificates would mean a big step towards independence as they were having trouble with collaboration on language testing with the Goethe Institute. The B1-class of Triple Win nurses that I visited for a week could not take the exam as scheduled: the head of the language section of the Goethe Institute mentioned the GiZ's failure to renew their contract to administer the exam for Berlitz students. Many of the smaller language schools had plans to obtain a telc examination license as well, with some of them succeeding and others entering collaborations with licensed examiners, who flew to the Philippines in order to conduct the telc exam for their students. The most successful story stems from a small language school in Cebu which received the right to conduct ÖSD examinations and developed into the main examination center for German in the Southern Philippines: they not only provide exams for their own students but for students of other schools as well. The right to hand out certificates was crucial for the language school to establish themselves independently of Manila and the Goethe Institute and it serves as an additional source of income.

An analysis of the different visa application forms (German Embassy Manila 2017a; 2017b; 2017c) for nurses, marriage migrants and au pairs reveals the struggle between language certificate providers apart from the Goethe Institute, who are targeting nurses. Marriage migrants and au pairs are asked to provide an A1 certificate from an ALTE certified institution and the description only lists the Goethe-Certificate by name, although telc and ÖSD are ALTE-certified, too. On the other hand, the visa form for nurses explicitly mentions all other providers, which is an update from the version of February 2014, where this information was still missing.

Some of the nurses followed the development closely – especially those who received their certificate from the Goethe Institute. They heard that the other exams were easier to pass and started to worry about the quality of German language skills of Philippine nurses. During a group interview, two former Goethe Institute students started to

argue about the gravity of the situation. While one of them was confident in the value of their certificate – because with this development to have a certificate from the Goethe Institute “means something” – the other one dreaded that employers and patients might not be aware of the difference and develop a negative feeling towards Philippine nurses and start to perceive them as “dumb”. Chapter 7 (especially section 7.3) provides a closer analysis of why this story is not only relevant to the status of the Goethe Institute but also the anxiety beneath it: The anxiety of having to be compared to others, of gaining a certificate that might be less valuable than another one – and the fear of being judged on the basis of language skills.

The provision of transition management material (3) is not only designed to produce the German speaking Philippine nurse but uncovers the implicit production of the ideal entrepreneurial, docile migrant worker. Transition management is part of the integration program by the German state, which is comprised of three parts: the language courses in the country of origin as part of the pre-integration; cultural competence training/work specific communication skills as part of the transition management right before being deployed to Germany; and then there is the actual integration program after arriving in Germany. The time between taking a language course and migrating is the responsibility of the Goethe Institute. In the Philippines, the Goethe Institute issued several expensively produced transition management materials, which help specifically to prepare Filipin@s and often specifically Philippine nurses for life and the right code of conduct in Germany. A close analysis of how this material educates the ideal immigrant is part of chapter 6.

(4) The incorporation of German language education in the school curriculum at high school or college level has been envisioned by the Goethe Institute, as well as by the two entrepreneurs Miguel and Gerald. This vertical diversification establishes a powerful position in the market which engages in the production – and, thus, commodification – of the German speaking Philippine nurse. The Goethe Institute administers the German state’s project for teaching German at high school level across the globe (the PASCH-project). The Goethe Institute Philippines partners with several high schools in Manila and a private high school and college in Mindanao. While this foreign language teaching is not yet specialized, the coordinators of the high school in Mindanao as well as the head of the Goethe Institute’s language section share a vision:

they look for opportunities to connect German language education with their nursing college, in order for the nurses in training to be able to move faster to Germany. The high school is suffering from a teacher shortage, which inhibits a new project from starting: The next teacher they train in German should ideally be a nurse and later cater to the nursing students. Such a development would entail a streamlining of Filipin@s into care labor in Germany, when they are in their early teens.

As stated earlier, Miguel and Gerald, the two entrepreneurs in a provincial town had a very similar idea of a collaboration with a medical school. However, the heads of the medical school seem to be familiar with entrepreneurial projects of brokers and refrained from entering collaboration because of fear of legal troubles.

With this “new” resource of German speaking Philippine nurses, other markets develop as a side effect. A German entrepreneur in the Philippines has been heavily advertising the new niche market “nursing care tourism”: the establishment of nursing homes directed at affluent foreigners. The government founded the Philippine Retirement Authority that coordinates projects and informs interested retirees. Although Thailand is seen as the market leader in this development, nursing homes that direct themselves to German retirees are opened in the Philippines and the numbers are growing. The Goethe Institute’s head of the language section reported an idea voiced by the Philippine Retirement and Healthcare Coalition to bring back Philippine nurses who worked in Germany in order to nurse the German retirees in such establishments. This initiative poses an opportunity for the Philippine state and its investors to bring back added value to the country. However, it is important to note that these transactions of capital remain amongst those owning the means of production; the Philippine nurses still perform (under-paid) wage labor and their German skills are still capitalized on.

## **5.6 Discussion: Power play in the language education market**

This last section provides a summary and discussion of the evolving German language education market in the Philippines by comparing the differences and similarities between the three main groups of players: the internationally established institutions, small language schools and teacher entrepreneurs. It pays particular attention to the

distribution of power among providers and consumers in the market and how social inequalities are enforced by unequal power relations. All of the providers of German language education are pursuing market growth strategies. They particularly cater to the target group of Philippine nurses seeking employment in Germany; this becomes evident through the only measure all of the competitors share: the launch of intensive language courses needed to reach the language certificate that is required to get a work visa.

German language education has increased exponentially since the labor agreement between Germany and the Philippines in 2013. Although the market is relatively new, language providers try to present an image of experience. The Goethe Institute demonstrates market leadership when it advises students to “Lernen Sie Deutsch beim internationalen Marktführer für Deutschunterricht. Ob auf den Philippinen, in Deutschland oder online - das Goethe-Institut ist Ihr qualifizierter Partner” [Learn German with the international market leader for German language education. No matter whether in the Philippines, in Germany or online – the Goethe Institute is your qualified partner].<sup>98</sup> The Goethe Institute Philippines emphasizes their leading position by drawing on the international experience of the Institute. A smaller language learning center presents similar professionalism and tries to display prestige when it advertises itself as the successful driving force of the market: “Proven through the years in the industry and the numbers of passers, we are one of the Philippines largest producer of B2 level German language exam passers.” They target interested nurses by mentioning B2 level German as the main group that needs to qualify for such a certificate, and they claim to have years of experience in the industry. Within this struggle to establish themselves in the market, different players use different strategies: The fault line runs between the two internationally renowned institutions the Goethe Institute and Berlitz as opposed to between small language schools and teacher entrepreneurs.

The Goethe Institute and Berlitz share growth strategies that provide evidence of their powerful position in the market. They provide language related support outside regular class hours, employ their own teaching methods fused by the latest research findings in teaching methods and teacher training programs. Both institutions wish to expand

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<sup>98</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/de/spr/kur.html>, last accessed on May 29, 2018, translated by author.

geographically but are slowed by the need for staff and considerable financial investment in suitable locations (the Goethe Institute Philippines additionally needs to comply with the geopolitical growth strategies of a governmental cultural agency operating worldwide). Neither of them offers bursaries to their students, which might be connected with their refusal to act as brokering agencies. Berlitz appears to have entered a collaboration with such an agency in 2018 (and it might be no coincidence that this recently established company is run by members of the regulatory infrastructure) but it does not actively promote itself through this collaboration. The Goethe Institute has explicitly refrained from promoting any brokering agency, including the GiZ, and, in contrast, has tried to promote direct-hiring. This focus on direct-hiring can be seen as a brokering strategy from the larger perspective of the German state as employer. Furthermore, neither of the two institutions have taken part in promoting courses for nurses leaving for Germany as au pairs and neither have allowed students to change course levels without taking intermediate exams.

The Goethe Institute employs a range of further measures that can be attributed to growth strategies and that also need to be seen in light of the Institute's function as a German governmental institution: In addition to distributing expensively produced objects such as flyers and small promotional presents, they are also (co-)organizing prestigious events. Although Berlitz sends their future teachers through their own training program, the Goethe Institute Philippines has instituted a teacher training program that actively advertises itself and recruits possible candidates. In light of the growing teacher shortage, this vertical diversification gives the institute unrivalled power in the market.

While the Goethe Institute is the most established provider of language certifications, Berlitz has considered the option of applying for an examination license in 2015. Their main motivation for such a move was difficulties with testing by the Goethe Institute at scheduled times. An examination license would change this relation of dependency and clearly shows the power gained through vertical diversification. Furthermore, Berlitz Philippines has been promoting a collective identity among their students that is clearly oriented towards solidarity; it is also oriented towards the students' self-identification with the school. An interpretation of whether this measure follows a larger strategy of the international company or whether it is simply the outcome of

individual, supportive employees would require further data from different Berlitz schools.

The Goethe Institute has established itself as the first address for the study of German and is regarded by Berlitz as their only true competitor in educating the best speakers of German. Small language teaching institutions and teacher entrepreneurs operate very differently in the market; they see themselves in competition with each other and with the two internationally renowned institutions. They hold no power in the form of teacher training programs or in their own teaching materials, and are instead establishing their businesses in niche markets. Their main target audience is nurses who do not have the financial means or the time needed to study at the Goethe Institute or Berlitz. This results in fast geographical expansion, the offering of loans and bursaries, programs for nurses who leave to Germany as au pairs, and the packaging of the language course without the obligation to pass intermediate exams. Without an official mandate for German language teaching on the governmental program ‘Triple Win,’ the smaller language schools either closely collaborate with brokering agencies, start brokering themselves, or start as brokering agencies before establishing their own German language training. This finding corresponds with Shin’s (2016) study on the English language education industry in South Korea:

Second, even though jogi yuhak students tend to be children of the urban (upper) middle-class families, the emergence of alternative markets and tailored services in the jogi yuhak industry attracted a wider range of students (e.g. younger students, less-privileged middle class families, students whose parents are not able to accompany them) to jogi yuhak. Nevertheless, who enters which niche market is reflective of the social position of the corresponding individuals, thereby further reproducing social inequality.

(Shin 2016: 512)

The more precarious small language teaching institutions and teacher entrepreneurs are, the more they develop strategies that attract even more precarious participants. As a result, those who are already less privileged are facing options that yield further insecurities, such as the au pair program or the completion of the language course without any intermediate exams, often leaving them underprepared for the final B2 exam.



While small language schools are aggressively marketing their products on Facebook, teacher entrepreneurs face additional difficulties in accessing the market: Often they are struggling to find physical or digital space to advertise their products and are consequently fighting to find enough students to keep their project running. As a result, most of these entrepreneurs enter into collaborations with small language schools. The merger of two collaborators produces a small language school that is able to gain a license that allows certifying German language competency, giving them considerable independence from the dominant players in the market.

The market evolving around German language education was opened by the bilateral labor agreement between Germany and the Philippines. German language providers depend on the existence of this agreement. Should Germany close its borders to Philippine nurses or should the Philippines enter into other bilateral labor agreements, the language education market might suddenly open for a different language. As stated earlier, it would be important to investigate how the language education infrastructure might generate a market that transgresses particular languages—the establishment of the ‘language education hub’ Baguio suggests. However, dependency on the labor agreement diminishes even within the German language education market as it further evolves. New markets are emerging as side effects of the growing market for German language education in the Philippines: The infrastructure of German language schools and the pool of German speaking Filipin@s lead to increased interest from call centers, cruise ship companies, and multi-national companies involved in the outsourcing of administrative tasks. Informants of mine have been approached by call centers with lucrative job offers. Since German speakers are still rare in the Philippines, wages reportedly start at 50,000 Peso per month (compared to 10,000 Peso for a nurse at a private hospital and 25,000 at a public one). The Goethe Institute has already been contacted by a German car manufacturer that has recently out-sourced part of their company to Cebu. They were interested in introducing German to the local high school curriculum in order to later source their employees locally. German cruise ships employ Filipin@s through a development aid project by a German priest. One of their teachers related his students’ experience of earning higher tips as a result of their German language skills.

Dependency on the bilateral labor agreement differs greatly among the different players in the language education market. The existence of the Goethe Institute Philippines would not be immediately in danger if student numbers suddenly decreased to their pre-2013 levels. Berlitz Philippines is also well-established and offers a wide range of languages, so the company would not lose its branch if demand for German language education dropped. In contrast, small language schools and teacher entrepreneurs face the situation of fearing for their very existence. The migration infrastructure – understood as lying beneath and enabling the supra-structure of flows of capital and power as well as ownership – reveals those whose immediate economic survival is at stake: employed teachers and teacher entrepreneurs.

Strangely and largely left out in such a market analysis are the consumers of the products and services. In the case of German language education for nurses in the Philippines, it is the nurses themselves who shoulder either all or most of the financial investment. Chapter 7 will closely analyze what this investment entails and show that even those nurses whose language course is paid for by their future employers face enormous costs. The German language certificate is a visa requirement for nurses, giving them little power to negotiate in the market. Those strategies that offer a way out or at least a way around this requirement, such as the au pair program, result in even more precarious life trajectories.

Philippine nurses are not simply consumers in the German language education industry: Strategies of vertical stratification show that German speaking Philippine nurses are also the product at the end of the production chain. This, in turn, makes the Philippine state the producer of young people willing to educate themselves into the nursing profession who are then willing to learn a foreign language; Germany becomes the consumer of ready-to-work German speaking Philippine nurses. From a neoliberal perspective, the producer and consumer can congratulate themselves on a perfect business deal: The product pays for its own production in a business deal that exemplifies the brutal exploitation and de-humanization of capitalist society.

## Chapter 6

# Marketing Germany, positioning speakers – the Goethe Institute as a node of state and industry

### 6.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters analyzed the regulatory and commercial infrastructure that facilitate the labor migration of Philippine nurses to Germany. The analysis has shown moments where these two infrastructures conflict as well as overlap. The interests of the different players diverge, for example, when representatives of the private care industry voice frustration over the language requirement instituted by the regulatory infrastructure, or when private language schools criticize regulatory institutions for maintaining monopolies regarding language teaching and brokering. However, players of both infrastructures share an interest in the language requirement: Along with the space established by the requirement, they use it for the selection, regulation and preparation of labor migrants, and for increasing their own financial benefit. The two infrastructures are conducive to and dependent on the processes of distinction, regimentation, and entrepreneurialism: The states advertise their desirable workforce or their country as a desirable work destination and the language schools establish themselves in the language education market with various marketing strategies. The different moments of selection, with the language certificate and learning period in prominent positions, offer possibilities of control and observation. Furthermore, entrepreneurialism is fostered through documents that position migrant workers as fully self-responsible workers and through a growing market that obliges them to

continuously scan for possible routes and to adapt and enhance their skill sets. However, the regulation, selection and preparation of labor migrants also opens moments of solidarity among themselves or among language teachers and students. This chapter focuses on the way the Goethe Institute mobilizes these processes as the nodal point of the regulatory as well as the commercial infrastructure.

The Goethe Institute Philippines adopts a central role in the regulatory as well as the commercial infrastructure that facilitate the recruitment of Philippine nurses for labor in Germany. As Germany's cultural agency, the Goethe Institute acts within a mandate to spread German culture language abroad – the location of the Institutes and their programs are connected to the socio-economic and political interests of the German state. As an officially recognized language examination center, the Goethe Institute exercises gatekeeping functions and holds the power to select Philippine nurses before the German embassy's final decision. But the Goethe Institute Philippines is only one language school offering German language education to Philippine nurses and, thus, becomes part of the competition for German language students; as such, it follows strategies to strengthen its leading position within the market. With the opening of the market beyond the Triple Win project, various language schools have emerged as competitors for language education and some institutions have even gained an examination license for language testing. Furthermore, the Goethe Institute faces bigger hurdles regarding geographical expansion because of an infrastructure that has to meet its prestigious standards. Yet, the Goethe Institute retains its leading position not least because of its nodal position within the migration infrastructure: While the need for high prestige is a result of the Goethe Institute's role as a representative and outpost of Germany, this prestige not only serves Germany's desire to distinguish itself but simultaneously markets the Goethe Institute – the marketing of Germany becomes the marketing of the Goethe Institute and vice versa. Rather than functioning as a bridge between the two infrastructures, the Goethe Institute simultaneously operates in the 'migration apparatus' as well as the 'migration industry'. An analysis that explicitly focuses on the Goethe Institute allows for a more nuanced understanding of the inclusive concept of 'migration infrastructure'. Furthermore, the centrality of language within this particular labor migration is exposed by the Goethe Institute's position as a node— it is the central organizer of and competitor within the space that was created as a result of the language visa requirement.

This chapter investigates ways in which the Goethe Institute organizes this space and reveals the making of a Goethe-Institute-Philippines-experience. It is responsive to the implementation and spread of the institutional debates discussed in section 4.5. Firstly, it analyzes the spatial arrangement of the Goethe Institute Philippines. Its location in Makati City and resulting association with the rest of the German institutions that are part of the regulatory infrastructure has already been shown with respect to prestige, global capitalism, and restricted accessibility in section 4.2. Furthermore, its particular set-up has been contextualized as a marketing strategy within the language education industry in chapter 5. This first sub-section revisits the spatial framework of the Goethe Institute Philippines in order to provide an in-depth analysis of its effect for Philippine students of German without either focusing on its role for the regulatory or commercial infrastructure in isolation. Secondly, the chapter provides an analysis of the material that has been published by the Goethe Institute Philippines. On the one hand, these documents have to be seen in their regulatory capacity, as they are documents for Germany to present itself to potential, desired workers as a destination country as well as to prepare these desired workers for their intended function in Germany. On the other hand, this material becomes a part of a set of important marketing tools within the commercial infrastructure.

## **6.2 The internal architectural arrangement of the Goethe Institute Philippines**

### *6.2.1 The Goethe Institute Philippines in Makati City*

The Goethe Institute Philippines is located in Salcedo Village in the Central Business District of Makati City, Metro Manila. As earlier established, Salcedo Village is one of the most elite spaces in the Philippines and certainly amongst the elite spaces of global capitalism – the very core of exclusivity, if one were to zoom in on the map of the Philippines to Makati City, to Makati City’s Central Business District, to Salcedo Village. I am going to describe the routine walk from my home at the outskirts of the elite ‘New Makati’ to the Goethe Institute in order to uncover the location’s centrality to “the Goethe-Institute-Philippines-experience”. The 30-minute walk can be structured into three different stages. The first stage leads along a major parallel street

to the Metro Manila skyway, an expressway for Southern Manila, and the Philippine National Railways commuter express, which roars by, releasing a deafening warning signal to people, who live close to the tracks. The road is used by heavy traffic, which is almost brought to a complete halt during rush hour. The pollution and the sun take a heavy toll on one's breathing and, especially during the extreme summer heat, the simple crossing of big streets becomes a heroic endeavor. The streets are bustling with formally and less formally dressed people, street vendors sell fresh coconuts and taho<sup>99</sup>, school kids are running to their classes and the narrow, uneven and sometimes interrupted pavements are used as spaces of repose and income by the least privileged residents of Makati. In order to enter the second stage of the route a canal must be crossed, which, again especially over the summer months, issues a pungent, sometimes nauseating reminder of a failing sewage system. Two options bring you to the last stage of the journey: either you find your way through an air-conditioned maze of malls with polished floors, over elevators and elevated pathways until you find yourself gazing at Ayala Triangle, a large patch of green in the midst of the Central Business district and embraced by its main connecting roads. Alternatively, you keep following a street with no pavement, meandering through chaotic traffic. The change of atmosphere might rather escape your notice, when you suddenly find yourself in canyon-like streets, gazing up at towering office buildings. Your fellow pedestrians are now exclusively office workers of impeccable appearance as they defy the heat with makeup and warm, formal clothing. In both variants of the journey you end up at one of the major traffic axes of Makati (Makati Avenue and Paseo de Roxas in the first version, Ayala Avenue in the second) and join the rapidly growing cluster of people assembling at a crosswalk to be allowed to cross the street and enter Salcedo Village. The difference is striking – the streets are much smaller, uninviting to transit traffic and lined by pavements on both sides. While the buildings are similar to the rest of Makati's business district, the oppressive narrowness of the street canyons is broken by a public park, a private park/sports club (about three times the size of the public park) and the presence of trees. It is one of the few places in Makati which almost makes you want to go for a stroll. It is also the first time during the walk where I do not stand out as a white

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<sup>99</sup> Taho is a warm morning snack made of soft tofu, syrup and sago palm starch.

person, but mingle with white business people in perfectly tailored suits. Passing the park, the Goethe Institute Philippines comes into sight.

Flanked by a hotel and an office complex, the Goethe Institute is located in a small, eight-floor office tower. The building has a sheltered, elevated entrance area slightly stepped back from the street and framed by two massive, concrete pillars opening up a small but welcoming space with a touch of grandeur. This space is taken up by a restaurant and bar on the left side and a little café on the right side, both making use of the outside space with tables that are waited on. In between these two establishments the Goethe Institute marks its presence with three tables and chairs, assembled in front of a large glass front revealing the Goethe Institute library. The outside seating arrangement and the library in plain view through the windows blurs the limen of inside and outside, and thus, invites you to enter the building. During the six months of my fieldwork I spent many hours sitting at these tables, observing and meeting students. The chairs are rarely empty and it serves as a space to prepare last minute homework, chat, wait for one's class or have a snack. At first astonished by the many students arriving well ahead of time for their classes, I soon learnt that Manila traffic and Manila public transportation make it impossible to plan a journey so as to be just on time. Students have to invest additional travel time in order not to miss their class. Most of the students are semi-formally dressed, which includes long pants (mostly jeans), t-shirts with sleeves and ballerinas or closed shoes. The Goethe Institute employees, however, dress more casually,<sup>100</sup> wearing flip-flops, sleeveless t-shirts or light summer dresses, which bears witness to the hierarchical distribution of power amongst them. While Goethe Institute staff can sometimes be seen frequenting the adjacent establishments for lunch or after work drinks (the waiters even greet you in German), I have not once witnessed students to do so. The students often arrive with bags from 7-eleven, having a quick snack at the Goethe Institute tables. As banal as these tables might seem, they mark a unique space in Makati that offers an opportunity to sit and chat outside in a comfortable, relatively traffic isolated space without being obliged to consume.

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<sup>100</sup> So did I.

When entering the building the smoothed division is briefly interrupted by security cameras (although one might already have become oblivious of them in their ubiquitous appearance in the Central Business District) and security guards asking for the purpose of your visit and sometimes for your identity card. The library opens up to the right and is connected with the entrance area through a big glass door. The space spans over two levels which share the same glass front facing the street and they are connected by a circular staircase. During opening hours the librarian is present at a small desk on the ground level. There are books, magazines, films and CDs to be borrowed or directly read, listened to or watched and worked with at one of the four computers openly accessible to visitors. Additional workspaces for approximately four people face the front window. The second level contains more books as well as tables to be used for homework tutoring or self-study. The library serves as a meeting point for students of the Goethe Institute and nearby Berlitz but it is also frequented by students from language schools all over Manila and even from across the Philippines, who are in Manila for exams or visits to the embassy or a brokering agency. It frequently helps the students – who in most of these cases are nurses – to connect and share the newest developments concerning the different outcomes of visa applications by the German embassy or promising new brokering agencies trying to access the market (or warnings of bogus ones). First and foremost the library, however, provides the students with space to practice German either in solitude or in groups. The computers are almost incessantly in use, and rather than aimlessly surfing in the internet, they mostly work through audio courses, either online or with CDs borrowed from the library. The Berlitz students would come over after their classes finished to continue studying until the library closed, by which time they would be mostly overcome by fatigue.

The class rooms are on the fourth and fifth level of the business tower, which are accessed via elevators next to the security guards' post. The fourth floor has a modern, well-lit, big reception area with sofas and an enormous welcome desk, on the fifth floor there are additional offices, the staff room and a small kitchen for the employees. The class rooms are rather small but give enough space for tables and chairs for the average number of students per class (around 10-12). The most striking feature of these classrooms are the interactive whiteboards. The students reported how stunned they were to see such a “magical” device – having been used to green board and chalk.



Teachers and students alike linked the interactive white board much more to the prestige of the Goethe Institute than to it being particularly conducive to teaching or learning.

In comparison with Berlitz, which is set in the same prestigious, elite space of Salcedo Village the Goethe Institute Philippine's architectural arrangement stands out. Berlitz lacks an inviting entry area as it is just one of many units in a big office building on the second floor of the Peninsula Court building at the intersection of Paseo de Roxas and Makati Avenue, two of the main traffic routes through 'New Makati.' The reception area is well-lit but without windows. Next to a reception desk, there are two small tables, information brochures on their different language courses and a corner with a few work stations for their students. The atmosphere is friendly, light and professional, it is airconditioned and there is free coffee for everyone. The advertisements of different languages and small, decorative national flags add an air of cosmopolitanism. The school rooms are much smaller than those of the Goethe Institute, as originally most of the classes were extremely small or even one-on-one. The German courses for Triple Win candidates result in crowded rooms, often lacking enough tables, and students occupying chairs with small, integrated tables that tilt up. None of the rooms has either an interactive whiteboard or even a projector, which, however, can be borrowed and temporarily installed by the teachers. The roaring of the outside traffic sometimes drowns any kind of classroom interaction. Some of the Berlitz students were disappointed to not have been assigned to the Goethe Institute, which they now visit for the library and the cultural evenings.

The difference in prestige became even more apparent when I visited a small private language school in Cebu. Situated at the back of a building used by offices, shops and restaurants, facing a main road and removed from the city center, the language school occupies what originally must have been one room. The tiny entrance area gives enough space for a small desk, from where a small corridor leads to two small class rooms. They are equipped with a white board and plastic chairs, of which only a few have integrated little tables. However, the teacher as well as the students are grateful for the room's air conditioning. The office space at the back is divided into a first and second level which is reached by climbing a small ladder. The makeshift construction

leads to such a narrow ceiling that, in a comical fashion, the teacher has to bend his back in order to fit into the space and prepare photo copies for his class.

The prestige of the Goethe Institute is felt right out into the provinces. Students tell me about their amazement of this exquisite space, when they have to visit it for exams. One student mentions the wealth of material in the library and how “everything you need to know about German language, it’s all there”. The head of the Goethe Institute’s language section alludes to the Institute’s prestige as he assesses students’ motivation to go through language training. The German class for the full-time working high school teachers in Manila, who teach German under the PASCH initiative, come to class on Saturdays and during their free time. He has learnt how much they enjoy the course and he attributes it to the Goethe Institute serving as a kind of escape for them to Makati and the chance to spend a carefree time in an air-conditioned room.

His interpretation of the students’ motivation echoes Boris Michel’s analysis of the role of Manila’s malls:

Als einerseits ausschliessende, gleichwohl aber weiten Teilen der Bevölkerung formal offen stehende innerstädtische Räume, schaffen diese dem tropischen Klima, den ökologischen Zerstörungen, dem städtischen Chaos und den Sichtbarkeiten von Armut enthobene Orte.

[As inner city spaces, on the one hand excluding but at the same time formally open to the wider public, they produce spaces removed from the tropic climate, the ecological destruction, the urban chaos and the visibility of poverty.]

(Michel 2010a: 208, translation by author)

In the same way as shopping malls, the Goethe Institute Philippines is formally open, yet restricted because of its location in Salcedo Village. On the one hand it is a demonstration of power and prestige as well as Germany’s association with the elite of global capitalism. Students are ready to accept many hours of commuting through heavy traffic or investing a considerable amount of money to find accommodation nearby. Others have to accept that they cannot access it for language education and visit smaller language schools, which are closer or much cheaper, but they long for the resources they have seen at the Institute. On the other hand, the library as well as the provision of a mere three tables with chairs outside the Institute open a space, which

is widely used for making connections and building up friendships that might ease the migratory experience. With all its good effects, the spatiality of Salcedo Village caters to and enhances the privileges of an international capitalist elite, of which students and, to a lesser extent, teachers of the Goethe Institute are excluded. This ‘formal’ opening of the space to others might be judged as yet another act of colonially inspired ‘benevolence.’

### *6.2.2 The Deutschraum at a Philippine partner high school*

The local partner high school of the Goethe Institute Philippines in the country’s South has already been portrayed in section 4.5.2. The school is part of the PASCH-network, the initiative of the Federal Foreign office of Germany, and teaches German under the foreign language training program of the Philippine state. Being a private school, its main clientele are children of middle and upper-middle class families. Under the tutelage of a highly impressive project coordinator with a long-standing career in education, the school pushes German education. Their main motivation lies in the opportunity to educate “globally competitive” professionals. Furthermore, the school gains a competitive edge through foreign language teaching over other local high schools. They are interested in connecting nursing and German language education at an early stage, which is motivated by the school’s reputation for an excellent nursing education program. Due to the fact that a local elite university had recently opened nursing education, their German classes make them distinctive.

During my visit, one of the frequently mentioned positive attributes of their German language course was the special architectural arrangement that accompanied the collaboration with the Goethe Institute: the construction of a class room exclusively designed for German language education, the so-called Deutschraum. The teachers, the program coordinator as well as the dean of the high school emphasized the special meaning this room carries for their students, who enjoy being taught in such a beautiful class environment (Figure 6.1). The Deutschraum was newly renovated and supplied with extensive technical equipment such as an interactive whiteboard, a computer and a sound system. The temperature is regulated by a new air conditioner that worked and was in use. The importance of an air conditioner might not be easily appreciated if you

are unfamiliar with the climate as well as the formal, warm clothing worn in educational settings.



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**Figure 6.1** | The school room for German classes “Deutschraum”, high school in Southern Philippines, 2015

When I interviewed one of the school’s former students who now continues her German language studies in order to work in Germany as a nurse, she explicitly mentioned how the air-conditioned room allowed her to concentrate in class. The furniture consisted of new wooden chairs and trapeze-shaped tables which can be put together to hexagon-shaped group tables, encouraging peer- rather than teacher-centered teaching. The teachers appreciated the design of the tables for its possibilities of rearrangement as well as the fact that such tables were also used at the Goethe Institute itself and “even in Germany”. The shelves lining the walls carry a wide array of learning material, including books, board games and small gadgets used as prizes. The walls are decorated with the Goethe Institute posters on German fairytales, the German national flag and an immense map of Europe with Germany at its center. The room stores a lot of colorful craft material for projects, of which some were displayed: collages of family trees and self-portraits as well as posters of famous personalities. All of this architectural rearrangement was provided by the Goethe Institute Philippines. In order to understand their amazement at the quality of the facilities, I asked them to

show me a regular class room (Figure 6.2). The atmosphere in this class room was bright and inviting, however, it lacked the new walls and floor, the technical equipment, any kind of tables, air conditioning and craft material. There were no posters on the walls, no board games, no colorful papers and no prizes to win.



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**Figure 6.2** | Regular school room, high school in Southern Philippines, 2015

It became clear that the Deutschraum was a place of distinction for those students at the local high school, who were chosen to go through German education, for the high school to be in possession of such a prestigious room and for the Goethe Institute and Germany for providing such exclusivity. As a limited resource of teachers forbid teaching German to all high school students, the Deutschraum offers limited access for “the chosen few”. Students of classes that were not selected for the program as well as their parents ask for German education. Those students who are part of the program appear to be enthusiastic: the teachers shared their surprise at how students wait well ahead of class to be admitted to the room or might even go and fetch their teacher from the staff room, should they be delayed. The Deutschraum is a particularly valuable room to the high school in order to hold important board meetings. Furthermore, the Deutschraum demonstrates Germany’s grandeur, which might be

seen in the light of the international competition amongst the language partners of the SPFL program (see section 2.3.1 for background information).

Even though such an exclusive room for teaching German is part of the program for all of the PASCH partner schools in the Philippines, not all of them have received as much attention as the high school portrayed in this chapter. German teachers of partner schools in Manila have only heard about the plans of a special room for their German classes but nothing happened so far as to their implementation. They are teaching German in their regular room to classes of fifty to sixty students: in contrast to the high school in the South, the Manila high schools are public (with the exception of the German European School Manila). The teachers regard German education simply as an “extra” and none of their students consider language training as a means to go to Germany or to get better working positions in the future. Most of their students are too poor to keep studying German after the two-year course at their high school. The different treatment that those high schools receive through the Goethe Institute might partly be attributed to the absence of someone like the ambitious project coordinator I met in the South. Her high school educates middle and upper-middle class children, for whom nursing is a viable career option. The plan to integrate German language and nursing education makes the decision to become a nurse more likely. It is this situation that encourages the Goethe Institute to build up an image of Germany as desirable destination country.

### **6.3 Transition management**

Transition management is part of Germany’s integration measures, as the head of Goethe Institute’s language section explained in an interview. It comes in between pre-integration, which is the actual language course in the country of origin, and integration, which are measures taken once the migrants have entered Germany. The German government has assigned the responsibility for the transition management period to the Goethe Institute. Between 2013 and 2015, the Goethe Institute Philippines published different material directed to Filipin@s intending to leave to Germany which can be attributed to the transition management period. Since the

production of this material the head of the Goethe Institute as well as the head of the language section have changed and further publications have ceased.<sup>101</sup>

All of the materials published by the Goethe Institute Philippines were financed by the Federal Department of the Interior of Germany and the European Integration Fund. Furthermore, the material shares the consecutive time of publication and a largely overlapping authorship consisting of Goethe Institute employees. It not only follows the corporate design of the Goethe Institute but specifically establishes a visual connection between the material produced from the Goethe Institute Philippines for Philippine labor migrants. All of the material is expensively produced and the print publications are of high-quality design, paper, and processing. The rest of this chapter presents and analyzes the different documents individually but they must always be seen as part of this set of material<sup>102</sup>:

- (1) An orientation for Filipin@s during their start in Germany: “Juan01 Guide to Germany. Eine Orientierung für Filipinos” (2013)
- (2) A booklet for Philippine nurses during their start at their new workplace in Germany: “Eine kleine Starthilfe für den Krankenhausalltag in Deutschland. Eine Orientierung für Pflegekräfte” (2013)
- (3) A website directed at Filipin@s who are interested in working in Germany “Tara na sa Germany! An online guide for Filipinos migrating to Germany” (2015); the website mainly serves as a platform for a film series produced in 2013 for Filipin@s interested in working and living in Germany: “Erzähl mir was von Deutschland. Tell me something about Germany” (2013).
- (4) A language course for Southeast Asian nurses and doctors who intend to work in Germany: “Deutsch für Pflege- und Heilberufe – Sprachliche Expertise zum Kennenlernen” [German for care and medical professions – linguistic expertise for a first discovery] (2015)

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<sup>101</sup> In January 2018, the Institute published a short promotion film showing a different approach to the transition management material. It only briefly mentions nurses and addresses culture just as much as language. The importance of language teaching at the GI Philippines becomes only implicitly evident when their involvement in teacher education is stressed.

<sup>102</sup> I would like to stress the fact that I do not believe that much of what I am describing and analyzing was intentionally done by the authors of these materials. On the contrary, I believe that many of them were well-intentioned, trying to make life in Germany easier and also safer.

The analysis of the material focuses on its officially and unofficially stated aims and what it achieves through its contents. The recurring themes of these documents are the promotion of Germany and the positioning and training of migrant nurses as entrepreneurial selves, cosmopolitan travelers and ideal citizens. There are two reasons why I decided to present the analysis for each document individually, rather than assembling the findings in salient topics: Firstly, it allows a detailed examination as to how these themes emerge and how the material helps to promote Germany as well as train and position Philippine nurses. Secondly, the repetitiveness across the different publications mirrors the repetitiveness within each publication individually and enacts the continuous preparation and training Philippine nurses undergo when consulting this material. I decided against the inclusion of sample pages or screen shots in order to not disrupt the text flow, to forgo complications of copyright and to not provide further space for the marketing material.<sup>103</sup> I will first analyze the Juan-Guide followed by the Tara-na-sa-Germany website, which address Philippine migrant workers without explicitly addressing nurses. I then turn to the hospital booklet followed by the online language course, which both deal with German for medical work.

### *6.3.1 An orientation guide on immigration to Germany*

The orientation guide “Juan01 Guide to Germany. Eine Orientierung für Filipinos” claims to help Philippine immigrants over their first days in Germany and facilitate their integration. The publication is structured around a character – Juan dela Cruz – who prepares and then leaves for Germany. It shows the relevant institutions and procedures that Philippine migrants encounter when starting life in Germany. Juan dela Cruz is depicted as a cartoon, a man dressed in traditional Philippine clothing, wearing a traditional farmer’s hat: he is an emblematic figure of the Philippines – identified by his name and wearing that hat. Juan dela Cruz is an image of the

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<sup>103</sup> All of the material is accessible on the internet: (a) is a link to the Tara-na-sa-Germany website, where digital versions of the Juan-Guide and the hospital booklet can be downloaded and (b) provides a link and a password to the moodle course (last accessed on August 20, 2018).

(a) [http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/prj/tng/enindex.htm?wt\\_sc=taranasagermany](http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/prj/tng/enindex.htm?wt_sc=taranasagermany)

(b) <https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/de/spr/kur/gia/spe.html>



Philippine everyman, who is sometimes characterized as simple and suffering the plight of the poor Filipino who tries to make a living.<sup>104</sup>

The guide is the only piece of material that does not either explicitly address Philippine nurses or use a Philippine nurse as persona; however, several aspects of its contents as well as its production reveal them as its main target audience. The main alternative group of Filipin@s visiting the Goethe Institute are female marriage migrants. The choice of a male character neglects marriage migrants as addressees (a choice which is mirrored in the Goethe Institute's leaflet for the different levels of language courses: while the cover B1 leaflet shows the portray of a female nurse, the A1 leaflet portrays a man, who appears as future nurse migrant in other material). Furthermore, the orientation does not include important information for marriage migrants. It visually resembles the rest of the transition management material and is written by the same team – including Triple Win candidates. The guide was distributed during Mabuhay Germany 2015 (an event directed at German industry in the Philippines and Philippine labor migration to Germany) as well as presented as gift to Triple Win nurses during their send-off event. Therefore, the guide has to be analyzed with respect to the Goethe Institute's role in the preparation of Philippine nurses for the German market.

The A5 sized document has ring binding and a semi-hard cover. Its handy format as well as its robust design suggest that the guide can be carried along in a hand bag on the bureaucratic journey through the city. The guide is structured into three main parts:

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<sup>104</sup> Juan dela Cruz has existed since early US colonization, when he was depicted in images together with the US's Uncle Sam (mostly in order to picture the subservient, naïve Filipino needing the protection of Uncle Sam). However, the figure has been taken up in forms of resistance as well – as an underground radio station called “the voice of Juan dela Cruz” during the Japanese occupation or as a character at demonstrations for equal access to welfare. Furthermore, Juan dela Cruz has been used in popular culture, as in a famous television series, and for commercial purposes in ads, as in Cebu Pacific airlines or for a job portal “jobs for every Juan”. An analysis of the figure of Juan exceeds the purpose of this study as well as my capacity – as a body of material as well as a much more in-depth cultural and linguistic knowledge of the Philippines is needed. The impression of condescension in the Goethe Institute's use of the figure of Juan – a skilled but definitely not highly skilled potential labor immigrant, drawn in a childish cartoon style and walking through Germany with his farmer's hat – could be further explored in such a study.

Part I “Self-Introduction”<sup>105</sup> contains empty sheets of paper to fill in the manner of friendship books to the following topics:

- “about me” (includes name, age, address, language, religion and job),
- “my husband/wife/partner” (includes their name, job and address)
- “my family” (includes names and address, space for pictures)
- “my friends” (provides space to write about friends and stick in pictures)
- “my homeland” (includes a map of and information on the Philippines, such as name, capital, mode of government etc.)
- “my new home in Germany” (includes a map of and the same information on Germany)
- “my language courses at the Goethe Institute” (includes a table from A1 to C2 to enter dates of courses, exams and names of teachers)
- “my class” (provides space to write about the class and stick in pictures)
- “my hobbies” (empty space)
- “what I want to do in the future” (including space for the one-year, three-year and five-year plan as well as plans for afterwards)

With the exception of the two pages including the maps of Germany and the Philippines, which give information on the two countries, all the rest of these topics are introduced with designated, empty areas where the reader is invited to present herself, her family and friends, and stick in pictures.

Part II “My first steps in Germany” presents important institutions and authorities that have to be visited upon arrival. Assembled in the chronological order of encounter, it guides the new immigrant through German bureaucracy:

- the “Foreigners’ Registration Office”
- “Beratungsdienste in Deutschland” [advisory services in Germany],
- “Bürgerbüro” [citizens advice bureau]
- “My bank account and finances”,
- “My Integration course”,
- “My insurances”,
- “My language school in Germany”,
- “Adult Education Center”,
- “Job Center”,
- “Translation Office”

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<sup>105</sup> All titles are in German but most have an English and Filipino translation. I cite the English translation except in those cases where none is provided: in those cases, I cite the German original and add my own English translation.

Each of these places are first introduced with pictures, drawings and information boxes while the following page provides empty space to fill in the details of these institutions: addresses, opening hours, directions, contact person as well as to make lists of documents that are required during these appointments. The empty space suggests finding the respective institutions closest to the reader's future place of residence (and work). The only exception from this pattern is the information about language schools in Germany, which simply lists the different Goethe Institutes and provides information on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. As there is a limited number of Goethe Institutes in Germany, the closest option might be a different language school. However, as these schools are in competition with the Goethe Institute, no space is provided to fill in details on them.

Part III "Life in Germany" gives an overview of everyday aspects of life deemed relevant for the addressees. It is structured in a similar, although less strict way as Part II with some pages giving information while others leave empty spaces to fill in addresses:

- "My Health" (includes information on chronology of a visit at a doctors, a depiction of the electronic health card and empty space to fill in the details of one's doctor)
- "My apartment" (includes information on apartment search and rental contract and provides tips on how to behave as tenant and neighbor)
- "Shopping/Grocery" (includes shopping tips such as opening hours and provides empty space to fill in details)
- "Unterwegs in der Stadt" [Moving around the city] (lists different modes of transportation and leaves empty space for one's transportation plan as well as a designated space to stick in one's travel ticket)
- "My Budget" (provides empty space to fill in one's expenses for tickets, food, clothing, furniture, mobile phone, internet, apartment, insurances, taxes, courses - for example for integration or language – savings and hobbies)

The rest of the booklet lists important contacts, numbers and websites as well as a monthly calendar enriched by colorful photographs presenting Germany. The main language used is German with occasional translations or tips in English. Tagalog is rarely used and appears for purposes of identification with Philippine culture such as

possibilities of sending home remittances or balikbayan boxes<sup>106</sup>. In total there are 15 pages with pictures, drawings and titles, 29 pages of empty, outlined forms to be filled in and only 22 pages containing information, which are richly illustrated and only carry few lines of text. Therefore, its function as guide to facilitate the integration of Philippine migrants into German society follows a method of education: rather than primarily giving relevant information, the interested migrant is asked to contribute to a process and become acquainted with life in Germany. The structure and contents of the guide help (1) to outline the personality of an ideal citizen living in Germany, (2) to train Philippine migrants to become such an ideal and (3) to promote Germany as an organized and desirable destination country.

(1) All of the three main parts draw the outline of an ideal citizen's personality through the empty space it provides and the institutions and topics it presents. The empty space to be filled suggests a focus on the reader's individuality, however, by offering particular suggestions the guide simultaneously limits the opportunity to express one's personality. The first part focuses on the presentation of the self; if filled in properly the reader conforms to the ideal characteristics of a member of capitalist society. She is settled and centers her life around work: she has a job and divides her time between work and hobbies; a division which positions activities outside wage labor as recreation of one's labor power. She continues to improve her skill set through visiting a language course and has a future goal. While visions of one's future could open infinite possibilities, the topic is clearly structured into a plan for the next year, the next three years and the next five years before opening it up to more distant wishes: the future, therefore, is seen as path to self-enhancement reached by rationalizing the coming years in order to achieve one's goals. Such an attitude to personality hides other concepts of life, and silences personal traits outside a settled existence: a self-presentation could, for example, just as well include one's passions, memories and conflicts.

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<sup>106</sup> Balikbayan is Tagalog and literally means 'return home' and is used for overseas Filipin@ workers (OFWs). Balikbayan boxes are postal boxes regularly sent by OFWs to their families in the Philippines with presents and general supply of consumer goods from abroad.

The second part lists the authorities and institutions that are visited by immigrants, either out of necessity for an existence sanctioned as legal by the state, or because such a visit furthers a worker-citizen's self-enhancement. The immigrant who follows the laid-out path is registered, has money, is insured, integrated, German speaking, employed and is interested in further education and training. The listing of institutions that have to be visited for a legal existence is fundamental advice in an orientation guides for immigrants. However, it also points to the power of the state to control the freedom of movement with institutions such as an immigration office, a (compulsory) integration course or the obligation to register one's home address: this power of the state is so deeply ingrained that it often remains unquestioned. Those institutions visited (semi)-voluntarily such as the bank, different insurances as well as language and further education courses position the worker-immigrant as mindful and self-responsible of the continuous training and adjustment of her skills.

Part three confirms this outline of an ideal citizen and adds desired behavioral elements within German society: The immigrant (and added labor force) is healthy and commits herself to stay so. She is organized, insured and budgets her income for consumption as well as saving. She follows rules such as paying for public transport and observing silence in order not to disturb her neighbors.<sup>107</sup> The advice on life in Germany reveals another important element of the ideal citizen, who should be unobtrusive and preferably invisible (or at least inaudible).

(2) The orientation guide not only outlines the ideal citizen but serves as training towards this ideal. The discrepancy between 22 richly illustrated information pages and 29 pages of empty, outlined forms to be filled in reveals the role of the guide's owner: if used in its suggested manner the reader of the guide evolves into a co-author by the end. This co-authorship superficially exhibits the migrant's agency on their journey to Germany. However, the fact that the guide outlines a particular, desirable immigrant,

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<sup>107</sup> This observation might yet appear over-subtle; however, it is corroborated by the analysis of the Tara-na-sa-Germany website: The material explicitly mentions that Filipin@s might exhibit such unruly behavior (of not buying a ticket or be loud at one's flat) which is immediately problematized or punished and the right code of conduct explained.

the joint writing of the guide fosters the self-responsibility and entrepreneurship of the individual to conform to state regulations and ideal codes of conduct.

Furthermore, the guide trains the skills needed for filling in forms, an act which is visually omnipresent: The first page of Part II, shows Juan at the Foreigners' Registration Office. He is holding onto his trolley bag and speaks to himself: "Finally, I am here in Germany. First thing I have to do is to register at the foreigners' registration office." Conscientiously, he arrives at the authorities directly from the airport, without a thought of rest. The drawing is accompanied by a photograph of a hand filling in the registration form. It marks the beginning of the bureaucratic maze. Later, at the citizens' advice bureau a drawing shows a smiling Juan, who stands in front of a counter and holds pen and paper in his hands. What has to be done at the authorities is already bodily practiced when using the guide: you do research on all your obligations, so as not to bother institutions with unnecessary questions, you fill in templates and you smile while you do it.

(3) In compliance with the rest of the transition management material, the orientation guide serves as a promotion of Germany. As a give-away it functions as a token of a welcoming culture and conveys prestige. Within the guide Germany presents itself during the second and third part by listing relevant institutions and portraying life in Germany. A drawing in between the first part of self-introduction and the second part shows a waving and blissfully smiling Juan on an airplane over an outlined map of the world. Juan's happy anticipation is rewarded with a well-organized destination country. Germany's authorities and institutions, if followed in the right order, provide all the means for a legal existence and possibilities for future training: A fear of the bureaucratic process is not justified, Juan and all civil servants remain cheerful throughout the process. The pictures of Germany in the third part as well as the calendar show a sunny and clean country, full of exciting activities such as football, snowboarding and visiting castles, as well as being rich in traditions such as carnival, Easter, Oktoberfest and Christmas markets. The outline and training of the ideal citizen becomes rationalized through the reward she receives: a corresponding image of a clean, efficient, healthy, stable and secure state.

### 6.3.2 *A website and film series on migration to Germany*

The title of the website “Tara na sa Germany - An online guide for Filipinos migrating to Germany” addresses Filipin@s who are in the process of migrating to Germany, to whom it is meant to serve as a guide. The website is professionally designed and colorful. The two main topics are “Living in Germany” and “Filipinos in Germany.” The latter introduces three portraits of Filipin@s in Germany, two of which work in the care sector, and a list of favorite German words of Filipin@s. The portraits remain extremely short and superficial. Most information is presented under “Living in Germany” which includes the website’s main feature: a five-episode film series “Erzähl mir was von Deutschland. Tell me something about Germany,” which was already produced in 2013 and initially published on YouTube. The film series evolves around Jennifer, a nurse who prepares for her departure to Germany, who seeks advice from her friend Nikki, a young Filipina who has been living and working in Germany for a few years:

- Trailer – Tell me something about Germany 00:01:57  
The trailer provides an introduction to Germany by showing shots of nature, city life, traditional events and famous sights. Nikki and Jennifer are shown in front of their laptops, laughing and talking to each other. The background information on Nikki studying and working in Germany and Jennifer being a nurse who prepares for Germany is given through overlaying text. Their conversation cannot be heard and the only audio line plays a simple tune reminiscent of advertisements or travel films.
- Episode 1 – Keine Angst/Don’t be afraid 00:04:20  
The first episode starts with a long introduction of the two characters through paralleling shots of them moving through their cities: Nikki through Berlin and Jennifer through Manila. Jennifer has many concerns about leaving her family but they mainly focus on her German skills: Jennifer is worried about still making mistakes and Nikki gives her reassuring advice.
- Episode 2 – Freunde und Bekannte/Friends 00:05:42  
The second episode starts with Jennifer receiving and watching a film that Nikki and her friends made from her life in Berlin. Similarly to the trailer, it shows a lively, multi-cultural, modern yet green city with Nikki roaming the streets with her friends. They subsequently talk about the importance of having friendships. Nikki mentions the reserved nature of Germans but reassures Jennifer that she will make friends “in no time.”

- Episode 3 – Adobo und Ausländer/Adobo and Foreigners 00:05:43  
The third episode shows Nikki strolling through Berlin streets and shopping in an Asian supermarket. During their skype conversation, she tells Jennifer about the accessibility of ingredients for Filipino cuisine and how her German friends love her cooking. She soothes Jennifer’s worries about racism in Germany.
- Episode 4 – Kalte Füße / Cold Feet 00:05:03  
The last episode exclusively shows a skype conversation and no further images of Germany are shown. The conversation takes place just a few days before Jennifer is leaving for Germany and the atmosphere is more serious. She has just finished the bureaucratic preparations and seems exhausted. Nikki reminds her that she has to brace herself for the continuation of visits to authorities and filling in forms once she arrives in Germany.

Each episode is enriched with quizzes including conversations between Jennifer and one of her classmates and fellow-nurses at the Goethe Institute. Text exchanges between Nikki and Jennifer provide information on topics that were not discussed in the film series and they include: Arriving and getting around Germany, getting yourself settled, culture, shopping, study and work, communication as well as other important topics. Additionally, the website provides links to governmental websites and other Goethe Institute projects for labor migrants as well as downloads of the Juan-Guide and the hospital orientation booklet.

As mentioned earlier the aim of the website is to prepare Philippine migrants for Germany. During an interview, the head of the Goethe Institute’s language section and project supervisor stated more varied intentions of the project. I talked to him before the website was officially launched at Mabuhay Germany 2015. He was extremely proud of his team for having finished such a big project, which turned out to be clearly structured, playful and approachable. First and foremost, the website and especially the film series is intended to generate and increase the motivation amongst Filipin@s to learn German. Additionally, the success stories of emigrants or the language games are meant as a resource for Filipin@s who are about to leave for Germany. He considers the website an important element of a collection of material because of which the Goethe Institute Philippines could assume a pioneering role in the development of German education for care work. Previously, the materials focused on doctors, but they discovered and developed the niche market for nurses.



Several elements of the contents and the presentation corroborate this presentation. The website is primarily directed at Filipin@s, who have not yet intensely engaged in the possibility to migrate to Germany: Tara-na-sa-Germany is available in Cebuano, English, German, Tagalog. The language quizzes can be mastered without prior knowledge of German and especially after having watched the films. In the film series language appears as superimposed texts either showing titles, credits or background information to the story, as text messages when filming one of the characters' computer and orally in the conversations between the two women. While the superimposed text always first appears in German and is later followed by an English translation, the text messages are in English and the spoken language is predominantly English with a few words of German. German words are used in iconic phrases or as catchy sentences that serve as topic introductions, which are then elaborated on by Nikki, when she translates those words to Jennifer. German is therefore highly stylized and restricted to emblematic use, helping to put emphasis on certain elements of the conversation and at the same time not hindering viewers, who do not yet speak the language. English serves as a lingua franca as the local is downplayed: a Filipino language only appears when mentioning the national dish of "adobo".

Although the title of the website and the main topics do not particularly address labor migrants, all of the characters portrayed – fictional and real – are working in Germany and talk about their work life. The air of professionalism around the elaborately produced website and films mirrors the professionalism and prestige of Germany. Again it can be read as an example of a welcoming culture to a very specific audience: Filipin@s who want to work in Germany – and mostly in its care sector. This exclusion of marriage migrants as potential addressees is substantiated by the treatment of an accompanying Facebook page "Tara na sa Deutschland" [Let's go to (from Tagalog) Germany (from German)]<sup>108</sup> which was established in 2014. It initially served as platform to promote the website. However, the moderation of the page through the

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<sup>108</sup> Beatriz Lorente drew my attention to two different meanings of "tara na" as either "let's go" serving as an invitation to leave on some journey together, which always includes the speaker as well as the addressee, or as "hurry up". Both of these translations point to important connotations of the chosen title: an invitation to a collective journey of the viewer together with the film series' "speakers" Jennifer and Nikki, as well as a sense of urgency about taking advantage of this promising opportunity.

Goethe Institute Philippines was gradually abandoned as it had mostly been used by marriage migrants for questions about visa procedures. They since have successfully appropriated the platform provided by this Facebook page, which is still regularly used for networking and questions are answered by peers within minutes after posting.

The website exemplifies the important role of the Goethe Institute in the promotion of labor migration from the Philippines to Germany particularly well. The rest of this chapter provides an in-depth analysis in order to uncover the ways in which the material achieves the official as well as unofficial objectives and what other processes it entails. The first part of the analysis focuses mainly on the aesthetics and the set-up of the film series and its characters, in order to uncover its potential for marketing and distinction through: (1) the promotion of Germany as innovative, multicultural, modern, clean, organized and secure, and (2) the promise to access cosmopolitanism by learning German and migrate to Germany. The second part of the analysis is mainly based on the contents of the protagonists' conversations in the films as well as the quizzes and the chats, which accompany the different episodes. These elements give insight into the ways the material positions its viewers as desirable immigrants by teaching and training (3) entrepreneurialism and (4) the rules of conduct of an ideal immigrant.

#### (1) The promotion of Germany

The trailer starts with a long shot of a highway unfolding, lined with luscious green trees and grass. The blue sky takes up more than a third of the frame and is interspersed with small white clouds. Germany will stay sunny and the sky will stay deep blue with a few drifting clouds throughout the whole series. The background music is overlaid by motor sounds of a car racing by. The shaky hand-held camera and the angle immediately put the viewer inside a car on the road setting out on a journey as the letters "Erzähl mir was/Tell me something" fade in and out. The images of Germany focus on the one hand on such wide shots of nature; the wind gently moving the sea or the grass of a flowery meadow; how German ecological innovation makes use of the wind, by repeatedly showing wind turbines on a wide grassland. On the other hand, it presents city architecture, a diverse population and rich cultural traditions: modern and shiny architecture in Berlin, historical buildings and a castle; a fashionably dressed woman wearing a hijab strolling around a street market with her child; an Asian

supermarket with all desirable ingredients just around the corner; street musicians playing cello and accordion; moments at a fun fair. When Nikki shows Jennifer a video of her Berlin, Jennifer is delighted and exclaims how clean and beautiful it is. Nikki jokingly warns her that she will have to get used to this as “Ordnung und Sauberkeit are very German qualities” [order and sobriety/cleanliness]. The accompanying chats between Nikki and Jennifer further strengthen such images of Germany, when they discuss the lack of air pollution, the rights of pedestrians exceeding those of drivers and being able to walk in the streets without danger. In the fourth episode, Nikki draws on this image of Germany’s valuing of orderliness and order to comfort Jennifer after her exhausting visits to the authorities in the Philippines: Although the bureaucratic journey will continue once in Germany, “at least they are well-organized and efficient as in Deutsch [German].”

The frequent use of parallel shots between Germany and the Philippines further increases the prestige of the former. This is achieved with cuts between Nikki moving through Berlin and Jennifer through Manila, always showing them in similar situations: walking through the streets, using public transport, visiting a market and buying snacks. The images of Manila show a busy and bustling city; the streets are unpaved and bumpy; the black, intertwined electricity cables loom overhead; the weather is cloudy and rainy; Jennifer hails a tricycle and buys a snack from a street vendor selling fruit at the side of the road; she walks through a covered and narrow, busy street market, the floor is wet from the fish and meat being sold. The images of Berlin in this sequence shows a modern, glass-front office building as Jennifer walks along a pedestrian zone with no cars in sight; it is sunny and judging from Nikki’s clothes it is warm; she buys her snack at a stall inside a mall; later she is sitting comfortably in a bus studying notes; it is sunny when she strolls along a spacious outside street market.

The only time when a modern, prestigious place is shown in the Philippines is when Jennifer visits the Goethe Institute: she enters the building, passes the huge glass front and we see inside the bright library; interior shots show her studying in a spacious class room, sitting at the earlier mentioned hexagon-shaped group table. The narrative of the film does not further focus on the Goethe Institute, however, its role as author of the film series is emphasized during the opening and closing credits: all the episodes start with a lengthy 18-second animation of the Institute’s logo, which appears in green,

spinning on a black background to an associated tune that recalls advertising. This visual and audio sequence is also used for other productions of different Goethe Institutes. It thus indicates a corporate identity, professionalism and security, which is supported by the closing credits: they acknowledge the acting, editing, directing, the Goethe Institute's project coordination and the funding (which includes an EU flag for the European Integration Fund and the official logo of the Federal Department of the Interior of Germany).

The potential addressees of these films are Philippine workers. They will first have to take the decision to leave the country for work abroad. Such a decision is common in the Philippine labor brokerage state and workers are used to assessing risks when choosing a destination country, be it because of the danger of rogue agencies or exploitative working conditions. The film eases such a decision as the promotion of Germany creates the image of a desirable destination country. It uses elements of prevalent discourses such as stability, security and innovational strength, it presents attractive architecture from modern office buildings to castles and historical sights and it shows a lively and open-minded society. The promotional quality of these images is intensified by images of the Philippines, which clearly lacks Germany's status. The decision to show a desolate image of Manila and set it apart from the images chosen to portray Berlin is deliberate: Jennifer could have been shown walking through the streets of Salcedo Village (the exclusive setting and the stark contrast to its surrounding was described in 6.2.1). She could have strolled over the exclusive Saturday farmer's market which happens 150 meters away from the Goethe Institute: the images of the two countries would have been very similar. The Goethe Institute appears as an outpost of a bright, modern and clean Germany. The elaborate production and the clear declaration of trustworthy authorship and funding establish professionalism and security – both of which are important incentives to start studying German and/or contemplate migrating to Germany.

## (2) Promise to access cosmopolitanism

The website and especially its film series promise its viewers access to the previously described desirable Germany: should they choose to learn German and their labor power be selected by Germany, they become part of a cosmopolitan class. This promise is established through the introduction and contrasting of the two characters,

Nikki and Jennifer, and by using camera techniques that encourage identification with them.

The two characters of the film series are fully introduced during the first episode. The first sequence portrays Nikki, the Philippine advice-giver about life in Germany. She is a highly self-confident, fashionable, young woman. She is read as light-skinned which suggests a mestiza background and draws on popular ideals of beauty that serve as class distinctions in the Philippines. She walks upright through the clean streets of Berlin, gazing and smiling at her reflection in the shiny glass front of an office building. She works in a spacious and bright office with shelves of colorful files and plants as background. When Nikki is not working, she is shown chatting with Jennifer, studying, wandering through markets and spending time with a great number of German friends. Nikki lives in a shared flat, the rooms plastered with pictures of friends and postcards in the midst of a bohemian chaos. Her room is spacious and brightened by sun light flowing in from the window which reveals trees and bushes outside the house. Her walls and windows are decorated with a wombat sticker, a map of the world from a European perspective and a poster of faces of Buddha. The paraphernalia suggest that Nikki has not only explored Berlin and Germany, she is perceived as global traveler. Her few sentences of German reveal neither a foreign accent nor the trace of a German dialect and her English carries German intonation. Nikki's language use indexes German native-speakerness as well as an educated background.

Jennifer, who receives advice from Nikki, wears plain clothes and no jewelry; she is read as darker skinned and does not have mestiza features, which immediately sets her apart within dominant racialized class hierarchies in the Philippines. She is walking through the streets of Manila either focusing on the traffic or in deep contemplation, missing the self-confidence exhibited by Nikki. Jennifer only interacts with street vendors for reasons of consumption and classmates at the Goethe Institute for serious studying. She is never shown with friends and sits on her own gazing into a far-off distance. The room in her apartment has a barred window at the back, which seems to open towards a hallway rather than towards the outside; consequently, the light is dark. The walls are not decorated and the room is furnished with a sofa and a small bookshelf with a lamp. What we see of her living situation is bare and barred and stands in contrast to the bright, lively home environment of Nikki. This distinction

draws on a contemporary, hegemonic ideal of a room flooded with light. Jennifer's English carries Philippine English features and intonation. The one element that conflicts with this clear opposition of the characters is Jennifer's German, which is marked by high phonetic accuracy, Standard German intonation and perfect grammar revealing an extremely high language proficiency. The film series' conversations rely on a pattern of Nikki introducing German expressions which Jennifer does not understand, giving Nikki the chance to elaborate on these words. Jennifer's lack of vocabulary seems implausible considering her advanced German skills: rather than being an index of her character, this conflicting element serves as an index of the series' fictionality.<sup>109</sup>

The camera work produces these differing characterizations of Jennifer and Nikki in an interplay with sound, colors, editing and the narrative. When Jennifer moves through Manila, she is shown in medium and close shots: the viewer observes her from a distance. The images of Germany and Nikki in Germany make use of point-of-view shots: The shaky hand camera that films from within a car puts the viewer in the driver's seat on a road to adventures; Nikki's film of Berlin shows a gaze moving up a modern building or a statue into the sky, which reminds of the view of a curious tourist exploring the city: the viewer becomes part of an activity. From the passive observing to the active exploring the juxtaposition serves as a promise that life will start in the future, once you made it to Germany. Point-of-view shots from Jennifer's perspective are exclusively used when she is looking into her computer, talking to Nikki and observing life in Germany.

The parallel shots of Nikki and Jennifer moving through their cities, engaged in the same activities but of very different status, serves as a promise that Jennifer can have a life like Nikki's once she comes to Germany. The point-of-view shots promise a life of adventure, no longer condemned to watching from a distance. While the different shots only show two spaces, the distance is produced by the imaginary that the images

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<sup>109</sup> Research on the woman portraying Jennifer reveals that she is a German teacher at the Goethe Institute and lived in Germany as a teenager. During an interview, she told me how the director reprimanded her for not sounding like a Filipina that has recently started to learn German. The woman acting as Nikki seems to have grown up in Germany and is the daughter of the series' German director.

evoked. This imaginary constructs an invitation that is not only directed at Jennifer but through Jennifer at the viewer herself. Jennifer becomes the figure of identification for the intended, potential viewer but Nikki is the ideal to be observed. Nikki, the young woman in Germany, is introduced first and occupies a much bigger amount of screen time. However, the title “Tell me something about Germany” adopts the perspective of the advice seeker and blurs the distinction between Jennifer and the viewer through the use of the first-person singular pronoun. A fast editing of point-of-view shots of Jennifer and Nikki not only dissolves the boundary between them but includes the viewer: During the skype conversations the camera angle switches between medium shots or close ups of the two characters or shows them both by focusing on Jennifer’s desktop. Viewers who watch the video on their laptop adopt Jennifer’s perspective, as one’s own desktop is covered by hers. The set-up of skype shows one’s communication partner on a big screen and oneself on a small screen. The small screen showing Jennifer results in a complete identification with her on part of the viewer. This blurring of perspective culminates during the second episode when Jennifer receives and opens a self-made video of Berlin from Nikki: Together with Jennifer the viewer sees Berlin through Nikki’s eyes and Nikki in Berlin through Nikki’s friends’ eyes. As Jennifer watches the video during a skype call, her gaze and her reaction is presumably observed by Nikki. The video series, thus, grants the viewer access to the story and the promised life in Germany seems to come closer to reality.

Nikki is presented as possible alter-ego of Jennifer and the film series’ viewers. However, her cosmopolitan lifestyle becomes unattainable when confronted with real life experiences. The juxtaposition of poor Manila and desirable Berlin has already been revealed as a deliberate choice of hierarchization. However, from the perspective of future immigrant workers a reassessment would not entail Philippine images of exclusive Salcedo Village and its market. It is certainly closer to reality that a nurse learning German to migrate to Germany would not have the financial means to live close to the Goethe Institute or to go shopping at the expensive weekend market. Should the images come closer to real life experiences, the portrayal of Germany and Nikki would need reassessment: it is extremely doubtful that nurses in Germany and especially nurses who intend to send home remittances will have the financial means to go to a farmer’s market. They will much rather end up buying their groceries in one of the cheap supermarket chains, as I learnt from those nurses who had started work

in Germany. The presentation of Germany suggests that it is normal to own a car, to go sightseeing and travel to the sea on a regular basis or to explore the world.<sup>110</sup> However, the wage they will earn simply does not grant access to the cosmopolitanism portrayed.

### (3) Teaching entrepreneurialism

The website positions and trains the future migrant Jennifer as self-starting and self-improving cosmopolitan migrant-entrepreneur: Nikki's advice shows the route to her success. This is achieved by the conjunction of the main characters, by their skype conversations and the additional text exchanges and quizzes. Furthermore, the website extends the entrepreneurial training from Jennifer to its users.

The plot device of having a Philippine nurse who is informed and instructed by a Filipina working in Germany is an entrepreneurial setting: Firstly, it is a role play of someone who is insecure and ignorant (the website describes Jennifer as “a bit anxious” and having “a lot of questions”) being taught self-responsibility by someone who is self-confident and acquainted. If the purpose of the film series were solely informing Filipin@s about life in Germany, the orientation guide could come in the form of a book, as was chosen by the Philippine community in Germany: they published a not very playful but highly informative, 91-pages strong *Orientation Booklet for Filipinos in Germany* (Lozano-Kühne and Juan-Wolff 2014). Secondly, the teacher of these rules is an idealized immigrant who helps the newcomers embody the rules, acting as intermediary of Germany. She gained her teaching skills by being a migrant-entrepreneur herself. This ability allows her, the successful immigrant, to tell her compatriot “something” about Germany: Rather than “telling about Germany” the migrant-entrepreneur teacher – although very familiar with her destination country – is in an outsider position who can only partially understand German culture and has to continue improving herself.

The skype conversations between Nikki and Jennifer are structured around the introduction of moments of anxiety and insecurity on Jennifer's behalf. Nikki then

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<sup>110</sup> The advertisement of future travels as well as a promise of cosmopolitanism was also used in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to attract Philippine nurses to the US and even earlier, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to attract US nurses for work and teach in their colony, the Philippines (Ceniza Choy 2003).



elaborates on these concerns, often acknowledging the difficulties Jennifer will have to face before she lightly dismisses them: she implies that Jennifer can overcome anything with the right attitude. The first episode introduces Jennifer's worry about her German skills. Nikki considers German to be an extremely difficult language but she reminds Jennifer that she has passed the exam. Once in Germany, language acquisition will be easier:

- Nikki Wait until you're here, and you speak, read and hear it twenty four-seven. It will improve so fast.
- Jennifer Okey
- Nikki Du musst dich nur trauen.
- Jennifer Mmmh?
- Nikki Sich trauen. It means not to be afraid. Don't be shy and you'll see that you'll improve very fast.
- Jennifer Yeah well. It's definitely going to be strange though.
- Nikki Ts oh yeah. It's very different. There are a lot of big people. But seriously, I'd try not to be afraid.
- Jennifer Keine Angst.
- Nikki Exactly. Keine Angst haben. Just look around, get a feeling for the place, be open-minded and confident.

(Episode 1, Keine Angst – Don't be afraid, 00:02:36-00:03:13,  
transcript by author)

In order to give advice, Nikki introduces "sich trauen" [to have the courage to do something], a German word which epitomizes the solution to Jennifer's worries. When Jennifer does not understand its meaning, it creates space for Nikki to elaborate on the concept and appeal to a fearless attitude. Jennifer then signals comprehension and internalizes the concept by introducing a German phrase herself (Keine Angst. [no fear, don't be afraid]), which is repeated and enforced by Nikki, who adds positive attributes: Jennifer should not only negate fear but "be open-minded and confident".

The second episode mainly focuses on Jennifer's worry about finding friends in Germany. Nikki takes her time to explain the reserved nature of Germans and the difficulty of being perceived as friend rather than merely an acquaintance. However, she claims that Jennifer will easily make friends and asserts that "it does depend a lot on you: how open you are and kontaktfreudig" [outgoing, sociable]. Again, Jennifer does not understand the German expression and Nikki explains its meaning. Jennifer repeats the word slowly and emphatically, trying to practice and remember the newly learnt expression. The third episode treats Jennifer's anxiety about racism. Nikki can

relate to this fear and talks about her own feeling of “sticking out” in the beginning, but “then I noticed that it was mostly me and my *Unsicherheit*” [insecurity]. The pattern of Jennifer not understanding and Nikki explaining is repeated. The fourth episode shows Jennifer exhausted from the preparation for her departure, having visited various authorities and filled in piles of different forms. Nikki warns Jennifer that her bureaucratic journey will continue once she arrives in Germany. Nikki mentions the most important authorities Jennifer needs to visit but immediately concedes that she has to double-check all of the regulations herself. The conversations draw the image of an ideal new addition to German society: as migrant-entrepreneur Jennifer has to accept the responsibility to learn more or better German, find friends, disregard racism<sup>111</sup> and find her way through German bureaucracy. By introducing entrepreneurial catch-phrases in German, the German language functions as guide to an ideal attitude which promises access to the prestigious life portrayed. Jennifer already starts to practice self-improvement by internalizing the concepts and repeating the German words and formulations offered by Nikki.

The quizzes accompanying each episode continue to train and internalize these German expressions that are important vocabulary for a self-starting and self-responsible individual. It is not only Jennifer who is addressed but also one of her classmates and the user of the website. The quizzes includes different types of exercises such as a concentration game, filling in blanks, matching exercises, a crossword puzzle or verifying statements as right or wrong. One such exercise for example calls for matching German with English phrases (“Keine Angst.” gets assembled with “This gives courage! Be open and do not be intimidated” or “Du musst dich nur trauen.” with “You can do it! Try it and overcome your fears.”). The user of the website is encouraged to practice what she has learnt from the film series as the German catchphrases are continuously repeated.

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<sup>111</sup> Episode 3 starts with Jennifer sharing her worries about racism in Germany about which she had heard rumors. Nikki soothes her by acknowledging the fact that there are idiots (“Trottels”) in Germany as anywhere else in the world. She concludes that Filipin@s are not perceived as Asians but mostly as South Americans. The racial hierarchization that Nikki builds up with this statement stays implicit. An analysis of the semiotics of race would be highly interesting, however, needs a different, more extensive set of data.

One type of exercise is repeated for all four episodes. It comprises a conversation between Jennifer and John, who is a classmate at the Goethe Institute and also a nurse preparing for work in Germany. The dialogue between the two seems to take place after Jennifer skyped with Nikki. It incorporates blanks that need to be filled in as exercise for the user of the website and they call for the same catchphrases. The following excerpt of this exercise stems from the third episode (Freunde und Bekannte/Friends) right after Jennifer explains the difference between friends and acquaintances to John. It shall illustrate what mechanisms these quizzes draw on:

- John      Auch gut. Hauptsache, ich treffe viele nette Leute, mit denen ich  
zusammen etwas unternehmen kann.
- Jen        Das hoffe ich auch. Ich habe nämlich auch schon ein bisschen  
Angst davor, in Deutschland allein zu sein. Aber Nikki sagt, dass  
es gar nicht so schwer ist, neue Freunde zu finden. Man muss nur  
kontaktfreudig sein.
- John      Kontakt... was?
- Jen        \_\_\_\_\_!<sup>112</sup> Das heißt, schnell mit anderen Leuten in  
Kontakt zu kommen.

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/prj/tng/lig/qud/fqv/enindex.htm>,  
last accessed July 25, 2018

Jennifer reverses her role and suddenly appears as advice-giver and teacher to John, who adopts Jennifer's former role of advice-seeker, beset by worries and full of questions. The pattern of repetition is resumed, when John struggles to understand "kontaktfreudig" and asks for an explanation in the same way Jennifer did in the film series, but she instead explains now the meaning in the manner of Nikki. The user is invited to join this exercise and enlighten John. Nikki has trained Jennifer and the film series as well as the website have trained the viewer/user, who have not only improved their skills and learnt the right attitude but already engage as intermediary to pass the knowledge on to others.

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<sup>112</sup> The following options are provided: Konzerte, kontaktfreudig, Freunde, Kunstaustellungen, Bekannten, Theater, Freundschaft [concerts, sociable, friends, art exhibitions, acquaintances, theater, friendship]. The correct answer is "kontaktfreudig" and the other options fill in the rest of the blanks of this exercise.

#### (4) Teaching the rules of conduct of an ideal immigrant

While the video series mostly serves to promote Germany as a desirable destination country and to teach the future immigrants self-responsibility and self-initiative, the text exchanges between Nikki and Jennifer as well as the quizzes additionally teach rules for a successful life as citizen of Germany. This teaching of rules, on the one hand, focuses on laws, permits and licenses that need to be respected in order to stay within legal boundaries. On the other hand, it presents informal and unspoken rules of conduct that grant an unobtrusive (and, thus, successful) life in German society.

The material assembles different moments of everyday life, in which the potential immigrant is portrayed as unaccustomed and negligent and, thus, prone to illegal activity. They are warned of these moments and often threatened with the readiness of Germans, German authorities and German police to enforce these laws, should the advice be ignored. During the text exchanges Nikki informs Jennifer on restrictions at customs, which she must double-check before bringing products from the Philippines into Germany; she urges her not to use public transport without a validated ticket; she emphasizes that she should abide by the deadline of her rent contract; she reminds her of having to pay the TV-license even if she does not own a TV; she emphatically advises her against consuming pirated films. The quizzes often refer to images of the film series and add the corresponding rules: The street musicians are referred to as a widely liked symbol of German culture: the reader, however, is warned that they need a permit should they consider making street music themselves; the famous (East)Berlin traffic lights (Ampelmännchen) are presented as another feature of German identification. However, the reader immediately receives a lengthy warning to not cross the street when traffic lights are red, that German children learn this as early as kindergarten, and that the police enforces this law and fines will be high. It is a significant detail that in the third episode, Nikki calmly crosses the street while the traffic light is red. Certainly the film makers were not aware of this “mistake” as this rule is not nearly as strongly followed in Germany as presented on the website and crossing the street when the lights are still red is a widespread phenomenon. This moment reveals the regimentation of these suggestions: Rules have to be followed rigidly and being unobtrusive is of utmost importance for immigrants.

Further advice is given on unspoken rules of conduct within German society. These rules are presented as respectful behavior of an agreeable member of society. During the text exchanges Nikki tries to prepare Jennifer for the peculiarities of living amongst Germans: She mentions that if someone issues an invitation, it does not mean that they will pay for everything unless it was prearranged; she recommends informing the neighbors should Jennifer plan to invite friends; or she explains the importance of punctuality. The quizzes present German customs often as statement, which the reader has to mark as right or wrong – an explanation of the customs follows regardless of the correctness of her answer: the reader learns about punctuality and the need for apologizing if you are a few minutes late, polite forms of address, preferred eating habits or the importance of texting Germans in advance to make sure that a phone call would not disturb them. If the immigrant follows these rules, she will not only be inoffensive to the law but inoffensive to her fellow citizens as well.

The repetition of the pattern advice-giver and advice-seeker is not only conducive to teaching entrepreneurialism as has been shown in the previous sub-section but it additionally serves as a corrective. During the text exchange on culture, Nikki and Jennifer discuss how to celebrate Jennifer's upcoming birthday in Germany. Nikki is pleased that Jennifer wants to try a German way of celebrating rather than going to a karaoke bar. They decide to go to the cinema, which will be conducive to Jennifer's German language acquisition:

- Jennifer    Awesome, I'm hyped! Then we can always continue celebrating at home. If you want, you can invite a few friends over, so I can get to know them too.
- Nikki        That sounds like a real party. ☺ In that case I should probably notify my neighbors.
- Jennifer     Notify them?
- Nikki        It is customary here that one informs the neighbors of the upcoming party and apologizes for any inconveniences or disturbances, if it gets loud.
- Jennifer     And for that I must knock on their doors one by one and inform them all?
- Nikki        No, of course not. You simply hang a poster or note on your corridor with the date of the party and your apologies. If you don't do that, Police may come to your apartment and charge you with disturbance of peace.
- Jennifer     Don't the Germans celebrate their birthdays?

Nikki     Yeah... they do. They just find it fair to notify neighbors. It is actually not as strict as it sounds. Most people are really tolerant and will be glad for you to celebrate your birthday, and maybe you could also invite them and make new friends, too ☺

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/prj/tng/lig/chc/enindex.htm>,  
last accessed on July 29, 2018

Jennifer's excitement at celebrating her birthday and maybe making a few friends is immediately sanctioned by Nikki, who foresees a potential danger of obtrusiveness. She frames inviting a few friends over to one's home as a party, which needs considerable preparation in order not to face the police and be charged with a legal offense. Jennifer is bewildered by such a cumbersome and bleak preparation, which Nikki subsequently credits to fairness and respectful behavior. Nikki serves as a corrective not only to Jennifer's seemingly inappropriate suggestion of inviting over some friends but also as a corrective to her unfavorable conclusions of a German code of conduct: Nikki exposes Jennifer's non-understanding of this cultural trait as unfair and disrespectful. Again the material presents rules of conduct as much more rigid for immigrants, who have to stay inaudible and unobtrusive. It is highly questionable that inviting a few friends over to a flat in Berlin is perceived as a party, that the police would actually be called and come, and, even more so, that they would charge Jennifer with disturbance of the peace.

The film series and its embedding on the website is a sign for Germany's investment in the promotion of the labor migration of Philippine nurses: within the global care work economy it is vital to position itself as an attractive destination country. Germany is presented as an entry point into a cosmopolitan life of culture, free time with friends and travelling and does not touch upon the fact that nurses in Germany provide basic care (a professional devaluation of medical training in the Philippines), their wages are low and work hours long and that most of the open positions are not located in big cities but rural areas. Next to this promotional quality of the film it further trains the future immigrants as unobtrusive additions to society. The website and film series are thus working for both main objectives of German language policy: the spread of the language abroad in order to attract a suitable workforce and the use of language as tool of selection for only very specific immigrants.

### 6.3.3 Linguistic support for care work in hospitals

The hospital orientation booklet “Eine kleine Starthilfe für den Krankenhausalltag in Deutschland. Eine Orientierung für Pflegekräfte” is explicitly directed at Philippine nurses. In its role as author, the Goethe Institute defines it as linguistic introduction to care work in German hospitals, providing answers to frequently asked questions of care workers without intending to be exhaustive (hospital orientation booklet: 1). The first page shows empty lines to fill in the owner’s name and her ward – ready to be returned in case it should be misplaced. The size of the booklet makes it fit into a nurse tunic’s pocket and the pages are heavy and of high quality, which further suggests that it is meant to be actively used during work. This perception of usefulness for everyday work, however, does not correspond with the content of the booklet.

The booklet covers the topics of orientation in the clinic, elements of care work, competencies and the anatomy of the body on a total of 36 contents pages. It uses different modes of presentation, such as lists of icons and images with corresponding German words, diagrams and explanations about different work procedures, drawings of hospital areas with designated items in German, word lists in German, drawings of a nurse in contact with co-workers and patients as well as pages exclusively of text. The drawings follow the same cartoonish style of the Juan-guide, but with female protagonists. The presentation of vocabulary around work in hospitals constitutes the great majority – 22 pages - of the booklet, which includes:

- different areas in a hospital (such as different wards or the operating theater),
- elements in a patient’s room (such as an infusion stand or a remote control),
- different items needed for basic care (such as different terminology concerning bedding, laundry trolleys and personal hygiene),
- medical aids (such as a hearing aid, a wheelchair or a urine bottle),
- different forms of medication (such as pills, ointments or suppositories),
- material for wound care (such as bandages, patches or disinfectants), and
- the anatomy of the heart and the respiratory system.

The remaining 14 pages contain more complex information in the form of diagrams (five pages), text (six pages) and a combination of cartoons and text (three pages) on:

- hierarchies in the hospital and communication within hierarchies (which includes a recommendation first to speak directly to the person concerned in cases of conflict before approaching superiors),

- the control of vital signs and the treatment of pain,
- sample documents of a table of medicine, a care record and a nursing report with subsequent explanations translated into English
- the concept of basic care and areas of competence of nurses and doctors regarding drug administration, and,
- the use of Latin as well as German expressions (explaining the position of the nurse, who usually translates the doctor's Latin into German for the patients).

Considering that the stated aim of the booklet is to support Philippine nurses during their first days at work in a German hospital, the focus on word lists – especially in the form of labelled icons and pictures – seems puzzling. Picture dictionaries either address users of different first languages or, in the case of professional language, laypersons without knowledge of the specialized terminology. Neither of these instances correspond to the present case: the addressees have all undergone professional medical training in English and, upon starting their work in Germany, have a certified B1 or B2 level of German language competency. The fact that icons and drawings are used extensively rather than English translations might be a result of the Goethe Institute's policy of only using German.<sup>113</sup> However, this mode of presentation wastes precious space in such a little publication, designed to accompany the nurses during work. Furthermore, the word lists and icons only give isolated knowledge of vocabulary, which does not correspond with an increasing focus in second and foreign language acquisition on learning words in collocations. Example sentences that are helpful to initiate dialogues with patients are only occasionally provided, mostly accompanying cartoons (such as “Ich würde gerne den Blutdruck messen” [I would like to measure your blood pressure]). These instances give an idea of nurses' communicational practices with their patients by always asking for consent before performing care work on them.

Similarly, the pages containing more detailed information raise doubts as to the stated aim of the booklet and its actual purpose: The information provided on hierarchies, the concept of basic care, areas of competence and the tradition of using Latin along

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<sup>113</sup> Another reason for the visuals might be the intended use of the booklet as intermediary between nurse and patient. However, the fact that most of the phrases (and the majority of icons being medical tools) indicates that this is not the main intention: the booklet would probably focus more on actions or items that patients might wish for (for example being washed, having a cup of tea, receiving help in order to use the telephone).



with German expressions, on the one hand, are highly important for Philippine nurses. The knowledge gained from this information does not only prepare them for a very different professional life to what they were used to in the Philippines, it also helps to stay within legal boundaries (and prevent potential prosecution of severe crimes). On the other hand, this general knowledge, firstly, seems important at an earlier stage in the migration process and, secondly, needs to be read just once instead of providing support during on-the-job situations. It is the information pages on the work documents, pain treatment and control of vital signs that seem the most helpful for problems occurring in actual hospital work – Philippine nurses could fetch their booklet in order to decode abbreviations and color codes when reading or filling in reports.

I witnessed an inspection of this booklet by several nurses, whom I met for a group interview. They were mostly interested in the diagrams and depictions of nursing records or tables of medicine – exactly those parts which used English in order to explain the highly medical material. They commented on the practices different to their routines in the Philippines and were noticeably excited about their discoveries. They were disappointed when they flipped through the rest of the booklet containing information they judged as basic and superficial.

Considered together, the mentioned target audience, the choice of design and the contents suggest that the booklet serves its main purpose rather in the Philippines than during work in Germany. It is specifically designed for the Philippines authored by employees of the Goethe Institute Philippines, which can be read as a gesture of welcoming culture towards the prospective labor migrants. In contrast to the Juan-Guide and the Tara-na-sa-Germany website the booklet does not include exercises which foster the positioning of the reader/viewer as an entrepreneurial self or ideal citizen. The booklet focuses on the nurses professional lives and the divergent areas of competence that accompany the earlier discussed lowering of professional status. The design as well as being able to mark the booklet with one's name and workplace becomes a covenant for the future. The basic German and the limited professional information is more suitable for beginners than for Philippine nurses with a B1/B2-level of German and a high level of English competency. Thus, the booklet can be read as part of a series of marketing devices to spark the interest in Philippine nurses

to learn German and migrate to Germany. The emblematic German professional language preparation of Philippine nurses recalls Lorente's (2018) analysis of the OWWA country specific language and culture training for domestic helpers – a comparative analysis of such material might provide further insight into how this particular document operates as a script within transnational care extractivism.

#### *6.3.4 An online course on German for medical and care personnel*

The course for German for care and medical professions “Deutsch für Pflege- und Heilberufe – Sprachliche Expertise zum Kennenlernen” was published online on moodle for German students at B1 level. Potential users have to enter a code, which is publicly available on the Goethe Institute Philippine's website.<sup>114</sup> The initial idea of the project was to offer a free trial as incentive and a paid for, extended version, which seems to have never been released. The language course directly addresses nurses from the Philippines, care givers/geriatric nurses from Vietnam and prospective doctors from Indonesia. An accompanying information pack helps Goethe Institute teachers to integrate the material in their language course. Initially, the project was only based in the Philippines but developed into a collaboration between the Goethe Institutes in Manila and Hanoi. The choice of target countries is closely connected to projects of the GiZ, which recruits care givers/geriatric nurses from Vietnam and prospective doctors from Indonesia. The authors of the project are Goethe Institute teachers who have all previously published in foreign language teaching. A German doctor reviewed and supervised the medical part of the project. The course wishes to be authentic and uses material from nurse magazines and websites. However, the project coordinator stressed the fact that the course is strictly meant for the improvement of linguistic skills and cannot be considered as work training. During an interview he claimed the course's aim to be an adequate preparation of nurses for work in Germany but later declares their main interest to be the recruitment of nurses for German language courses at the Goethe Institute.

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<sup>114</sup><https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/de/spr/kur/gia/spe.html> (last accessed on August 14, 2018)

The trial version includes five modules: nursing as a profession, occupational profile and care model, communication with colleagues, workers' protection and occupational illnesses, as well as further education and training. The course includes a total of 26 exercises of which 13 address nurses and doctors together, nine are specifically directed to nurses and four to doctors. Each module states its learning objectives in the beginning, which mostly focus on medical work (such as knowing about different hospital tasks, naming infectious diseases or attributing patient's activities to categories of a specific care model) or career trajectories (such as giving reasons for the career choice, naming character traits of the ideal nurse or describing career developments). Occasionally, the stated aims are more clearly linguistic (such as understanding important elements in a conversation, using reflexive verbs in conversation or giving health tips).

The course makes use of different types of exercises such as gap texts, matching words or text with images, choosing the right elements in a list, and, occasionally, writing tasks. While many work situations are showcased (such as a shift handover or making phone calls between hospital wards), the exercises themselves mostly target specific features of language learning such as how to present an argument, to give advice or to practice hearing and reading skills. The linguistic focus is laid on language in use: Vocabulary is practiced not in isolation but mostly appears in collocations, allowing a perspective on activities relevant to care work rather than simply listing medical terminology. Furthermore, the many hearing and reading exercises try to simulate real work situations and train receptive language skills.

The moodle course and the little booklet presented in the previous section share the stated focus on German for care work. Furthermore, both publications discuss similar topics, which points to the main differences perceived between care work in the Philippines and Germany: they introduce the concept of basic care and explain what it entails, they highlight the difference in the areas of competence and mention tasks which are only performed by doctors in Germany, and they focus on communication amongst colleagues, where the booklet emphasizes hierarchies and the need to discuss problems amongst peers and the moodle course introduces an adequate way of responding to direct critique. The two publications diverge in the linguistic presentation of their contents – contrary to the booklet, the moodle course presents

(and trains) language in use. While the training of language skills is intrinsic to a course in comparison to a tool to support nurses during work, the focus on ways of embedding vocabulary and, thus, make it easier to use in communication points to a different understanding of language. While the booklet was written and assembled by non-teaching staff of the Goethe Institute, the moodle course was developed by German teachers with previous experience in publishing teaching material, which might be a reason why it is based on newer developments in language acquisition. Therefore, the choice of authors by the Goethe Institute has to be seen indicative of the diverging interests pursued: while the moodle course seems to mainly serve language acquisition, the booklet's value lies in its potential as a marketing device.

Similarly to the Juan guide and the Tara-na-sa-Germany website, the moodle course provides exercises. However, these exercises clearly follow different purposes: while the latter predominantly trains linguistic skills the two former publications train the future immigrants as entrepreneurial selves and ideal citizens. However, the positioning (rather than training) of the reader/user of the material as ideal worker and the normalization of this ideal is achieved by all three publications. The moodle course introduces three characters with trajectories imagined as ideal by Germany and explains important character traits of a nurse. The portrayal of these characters focuses on their extensive previous work experience including overseas periods, they have all undergone further education, and all of them have now settled in Germany with the intention to stay.

The first nurse, Aian, is introduced during a hearing exercise, where students have to listen to his story and fill in a gap text testing comprehension skills. We learn that Aian has worked in Germany for two years and previously worked in Japan as a paramedic. While he did not like his position in Japan because his small height hindered his work and the schedule was extremely stressful, he now loves working in Germany. While work is still sometimes stressful, he can now help people. He loves further education and has already enrolled for a course. The second nurse's biography is introduced as gap text, where the right verb collocates have to be inserted: Edmund studied for four years in Manila, where he continued working as a volunteer for one year before starting a position at a Manila hospital, while taking care of senior citizens during the weekend. He then changed to domestic geriatric care before working in geriatrics in Taipei for

three years. He is active in care education and underwent further education in geriatric care and professional language for geriatric nurses. He then started work in a German care home, where he has stayed ever since. The third nurse, Ms. Nguyen, presents herself in a written text, that is followed by a list of statements amongst which the students have to choose corresponding to what she said. She has been working as geriatric nurse in Germany for two years. She likes her work but sometimes considers it physically and mentally exhausting. When she was under stress and struggling with back pain in the beginning, she managed to overcome these difficulties by attending a course of further education.<sup>115</sup> She can now imagine performing this job for the rest of her life.

The biographical trajectories of these three nurses correspond with the professional image drawn by another nurse in a hearing exercise, where she mentions the most important character traits needed for her profession. The readers then have to tick the correct attributes in a list. From the speaker's point of view a nurse should not consider her profession as a job but as vocation because of the necessary high level of social skills. She has to be ready to help and show empathy. Furthermore, a nurse needs professional knowledge and feel the urge to continuously further her education. She needs to be resilient and flexible, especially regarding team and shift work. What could be considered an ideal (within the dominant society), in her words, becomes the bare minimum, the most important, indispensable attributes of a nurse.

The users of this moodle course need advanced German skills – it is directed at B1 level students – and by starting the course they engage in the enhancement of their skills through learning specialized German. Therefore, the users already correspond to an ideal image regarding their linguistic preparation by being an eligible addressee of the course and by choosing to improve their German. Furthermore, the presented characters normalize the ideal professional/medical preparation: Edmund's career path shows an exemplary focus on geriatric care. Next to working in different positions in this area of specialization he already visited several additional courses. His work in a German care home is presented as the climax. Considering the work conditions of geriatric nurses in Germany, it remains a doubtful climax. The further education in his

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<sup>115</sup> Ms. Nguyen calls it a “Rückenkurs” [back course], presumably a course on techniques how to relieve the back during care work.

chosen area of specialization, although the most sought after in the German care labor market, results in lower wages, fewer opportunities for advancement and a lower professional status. That Ms. Nguyen could improve her back problems because of further education, implies that the bodily toll of hard labor has personal rather than structural reasons: it is her own responsibility to upgrade her skills in order to be able to perform the job for the rest of her life. The important character traits of a nurse presented in a different exercise support such a trajectory: nurse migrants (to Germany) need extensive professional education, work experience and the willingness, even the urge, to further educate themselves. Germany is implicitly portrayed as an attractive destination country: Aian is now happy after a disappointing experience in Japan, Edmund now stays in a care home in Germany after an international career in geriatric care and Ms. Nguyen can now, after her experience in Germany, imagine staying in this profession forever.

To sum up, the moodle course diverges from the rest of the transition management material: rather than using German emblematically, it focuses on German language acquisition. As shown in section 5.5.2 such an additional service can be seen as a growth strategy of a competitor within the commercial infrastructure and, thus, fulfilling a similar purpose to the other publications. Such an interpretation is supported by the conflicting aims of the project as portrayed by its coordinator, with one of their intentions being the recruitment of new students. However, the moodle course cannot be easily distributed as a token of welcoming culture and its graphics are less attractive and marketable than the rest of the material. Indeed, the moodle course seems to be rarely used as the empty discussion forum suggests.

The analysis of the moodle course might gain from its inclusion in other possible, sociolinguistic corpuses: together with other language training material for specialized German (or other languages) for various professions it might shed further light on the role of language education in the migration infrastructure. A comparison with other (German) language courses for medical work might further uncover marketing strategies of Germany as attractive destination country and the culturally and gendered ideal image of the care worker within global care work economy. An analysis of the moodle course as part of the corpus presented here uncovered its purpose, which is to advertise and normalize the image of the best of type of migrant workers: extensive

language and professional skills together with a flexible and resilient personality searching for continuous self-enhancement. Furthermore, Germany is presented as the last and best step on an international career path for migrant nurses – a long term investment, which will pay off.

#### **6.4 Discussion: The Goethe Institute Philippine's prerogative position within the space created by compulsory language learning**

The extensive time that Philippine nurses have to spend learning the German language provides the space where the Goethe Institute Philippine exercises its function as the cultural agency of Germany and as an internationally renowned German language school. This time/space gives the opportunity, as well as the legitimacy, for this institution to present itself and Germany to a closely defined group of people; this is achieved through the Goethe Institute's architectonic and spatial arrangements as well as its publications. The Goethe Institute's library and tables outside the building provide a rare space for nurses to form connections of solidarity. However, the architectural arrangement and transition management material mainly serve (1) Germany's and the Goethe Institute's distinction and the closely connected development of a Goethe-Institute-Philippines-experience and (2) the positioning and training of the desired workforce.

(1) The architectural arrangement as well as the collection of transition management materials serve as a way of distinction on different levels. Firstly, it distinguishes Germany as an attractive destination. In line with the prevalent discourses about Germany in the Philippines, the Goethe Institute presents Germany as stable, organized, prestigious, and multi-cultural: The effect of such messaging is to enhance the chances of Germany being selected by the desired workforce. Secondly, it distinguishes the Goethe Institute as a particularly attractive language school among the competitors in the language education industry. Thirdly, the transition management material distinguishes the Goethe Institute Philippines from other Goethe Institutes worldwide: Their pioneering role in the development of German language learning materials for care workers led to other Goethe Institutes' request for their publications. The head of the language section was proud to send thousands of

hospital guides to Abu Dhabi, Oman (where they use them for doctors), Sri Lanka, Cairo, Tunisia, and Spain.

The Goethe-Institute-Philippines-experience is one of high status based on limited accessibility, and it is conducive to the regimentation of future labor migrants. The Institute functions as an outpost of a modern, clean and well-organized Germany – its school rooms are expensively designed, promising the students an escape from the heat, poverty and limited future prospects of their lives. Learning German, visiting the Goethe Institute and preparing for work in Germany is presented as a means of finally starting to live; that is, once Germany is reached and the immigrant supposedly becomes part of a cosmopolitan class of global travelers.

(2) The Goethe Institute uses the space to select and prepare the desired workforce. Their publications actively exclude the other main group of German students, who are learning the language to be eligible for a fiancé visa. The publications are ostensibly written as support for (labor) migrants to access Germany and only unofficially declared as marketing tools for attracting students. A closer analysis confirms both of these aims but suggests that the choice of presentation is even more conducive to positioning, training, and normalizing the future immigrants as migrant-entrepreneurs, responsible for their migratory trajectories and ever self-improving to meet the needs of the German market. They are further advised to act and live within German laws and codes of conduct, punishing any deviant behavior; this obliges newcomers to be much more vigilant than already accepted German citizens.

The actual migratory experience shaped by structural inequalities is completely silenced, including the exclusion of ‘undesired’ immigrants, exclusion of those unable to afford language education at the Goethe Institute in Salcedo Village, and limited access to the purported richness of life in Germany due to under-paid labor. Instead, the migrant is portrayed as an agent, an entrepreneur who can decide on their own success; as is reflected in Jennifer’s words, “anything is indeed possible with dedication and motivation.”



## Chapter 7

# Lived experiences of language preparation

### 7.1 Introduction

The systematic analysis of language education and labor reveals the conditions that make the movement of human beings possible on the basis of capitalist principles and state policies. The previous chapters showed how players of state and industry enable, facilitate, manage, and capitalize on the decision of individuals to become nurses, to gain work experience, and to find work in a different country with a focus on the effects on language education. Reversely, they showed how language education shapes the management of labor migration and market development. These chapters can be read as a map that is attentive to the permeability of state and industry as well as to processes rather than a rigid understanding of institutions. This analysis relied on the experiences of individual Philippine nurses who decided to learn German for labor migration: It was their lived experiences that revealed the map of the migration infrastructure. Yet, the students' experiences remained beneath the surface: A more exclusive focus on the material reality, experiences, and affective responses of Philippine nurses who learn German in order to work in Germany is paramount for a nuanced understanding of the ways language interplays with social inequality. This chapter takes on a perspective that is attentive to the students' experience of language education and that traces dominant processes and the managerial capacity of affective responses and material living conditions of students. Therefore, the data analyzed here entirely stems from participant observation at the Goethe Institute library, during language classes, and in interviews with nurses.

The structure of this chapter follows two spaces and moments of affective density that accompany language preparation for labor migration: (1) the language course and (2) the final language exam. While there are similarities in the effects of the language course and the final exam on the students' material living conditions and affective responses, there were also fundamental differences based on the different temporality of the two events: The language course spans a time/space from several months to a few years, giving the opportunity to analyze the long term effects of continuous investment and of collective language learning. Contrarily, the final language exam is a time compressed moment that lasts for a few hours, a much-anticipated event that determines the immediate future of the students' lives. This chapter focuses on the continuities within the experience of linguistically preparing for work in Germany but is attentive to including the ruptures and differences. Both of the subsections – on the language course and the final language exam – start with the account of a nurse's experience, whose story is graphically set apart in the same way as Carlos' journey through the institutions described in section 4.2. These introductions, firstly, help explain the structure of the subsections. Secondly, they allow us to obtain a drifting perspective by making visible the inclinations of movement through the migration infrastructure. These initial paragraphs follow Melody, a nurse and German student whom I met several times over the six months of fieldwork. At the beginning of our acquaintance in March 2015 she had just finished her A2 course and was preparing to take the exam a few days later. She started her B1 course at the beginning of June 2015 and by the end of that month, which marked the end of my fieldwork in the Philippines, she was considering the possibilities of when and how to prepare for the B1 exam.

## 7.2 The language course

Melody enrolled at the Goethe Institute Philippines for a German language course after seeing an online advertisement directed at Philippine nurses for work opportunities in Germany. She likes studying at her language school with its playful language classes that she sees as moments that bring back the atmosphere of primary school or kindergarten. She particularly praised the interactive whiteboard in the class room, where unlike the familiar simple green board and chalk “with the

smart board everything is magic.” We laughed and, in an effort to level the prestige it attributes to Germany, I genuinely mentioned that I had just heard about the existence of such a device.

I was introduced to her in April 2015 by her German teacher whom I met during my first days of research. Melody and I saw each other several times over the subsequent months for interviews, just having a chat over a cup of coffee and sightseeing in Manila’s old town. She seemed to enjoy her own boldness when she told me that “I just try my luck. Hopefully I can work in Germany.” Melody is in her mid-twenties and lives together with her parents and siblings in the province outside Manila. She started to learn German before researching specific job openings or contacting brokering agencies and continued working as a nurse during her language course. She is highly passionate about her profession and her position at a hospital’s newborn section. However, it was the financial strain of the course and examination fees that made her accept the double pressure of full-time studying and full-time working.

The Goethe Institute is situated in a highly privileged neighborhood where Melody does not and could not afford to live. When I asked her about her daily routine, she casually revealed a dense schedule: It takes Melody two hours from her family’s house in the province to the Goethe Institute. She has to get up at 4.30 am and reach the bus to Makati at 6 am in order to beat rush hour traffic and be on time for her morning intensive class by 8 o’clock. She hurries to Buendia Taft bus station in Pasay, a neighboring city of Makati when her class finishes at 12 pm in order to catch the bus to her hospital which leaves at 12.30 pm. Her afternoon shift at the hospital starts at 2 pm. By the time Melody finishes work at 10 pm it takes her another 45 minutes up to one hour – depending on traffic – to reach home. Melody’s class at the Goethe Institute runs from Monday to Friday and in order to fulfill her workload at the hospital she has to work morning shifts during the weekend. She describes Saturdays as particularly tiring because she has to get up after only four or five hours of sleep to be back at the hospital by 6 am.

Melody responded with gentle pride and self-confidence at the indignation and awe that showed on my face during her account. While she explained to even appreciate the commute as a form of travelling, I can only think of her daily life as allowing her little time to take a break. I know the way from the Goethe Institute

to the bus station in Buendia Taft: The traffic situation in Manila transforms the 3.3 km distance into a grueling journey of 20 to 40 minutes. High traffic, roads only designed for cars, heavy smog and lacking parking facilities deny her to use a bicycle. Instead, Melody has to run through the busy and hot noon to catch a jeepney. She has to do her homework during the travel times but the highly frequented buses do not provide the right atmosphere to study and concentrate. Melody has to rely on her supervisor's benevolence in order to uphold such a tight schedule: The double pressure of working and studying highly increased when her former, supportive head nurse left the hospital for work in Qatar. The new supervisor had not shown consideration for Melody's German course and she increasingly missed classes because of additional morning shifts. It was after her work situation changed that the daily routine proved to be too exhausting for Melody.

Melody related her excitement about enrolling at a gym close to her home when she finally had a few weeks of involuntary spare time in between the A2 and the B1 course. She worked night shifts which gave her the opportunity to do sports in the afternoon. It was a happy moment to move her body after the stressful period of juggling work and language course. Melody intends to stay in Germany after all the effort she devoted to the preparation for this work opportunity. She imagines a future where she stops working at 28 and starts a family. Melody cannot bear the idea of having a German husband who does not like rice – a situation one of her friends found herself in – which makes her want to marry a Filipino.

Melody started this journey completely on her own without being part of a program or a brokering agency. She met other nurses with the same objective of working in Germany during her time at the Goethe Institute. The language class provided a space for the students to connect, exchange information and become friends. When I met Melody for a group interview with three of her classmates, it quickly became clear that they formed a close-knit community. Two of Melody's friends were already in contact with a broker who offered them a position in a city in Hesse, central western Germany. Melody decided to find work in the same region in order not to be separated from her friends. I was struck by her friends' supportive inclusion of Melody into their migration plan: The two of them were in a romantic relationship and wanted to start a family in Germany. I feared that this

might be an organization of their future life that would exclude Melody as an intimate part of a deep friendship. However, neither Melody nor her friends ever questioned their common journey, they shared their knowledge and appeared as trusting group. I was touched by the community they had built and the solidarity they expressed after a few months of learning German together.

Furthermore, Melody chose this particular city because her German teacher, Magdalena, has family in the region. Magdalena is in her mid-twenties as well and had worked as a German teacher with the Goethe Institute in Poland. She spent a few years in Germany but had mainly lived in her country of origin, Poland. Her teaching period in the Philippines was her first time abroad and marked an important moment of emancipation from her beloved but (to my eyes) over-protective family. Magdalena often felt closer to her students than her fellow teachers: she herself felt insecure about not really complying to the native speaker ideal that held a high status amongst the teachers of the Goethe Institute. Melody and Magdalena seemed to enjoy a special and caring relationship. Magdalena knew about Melody's dense schedule and decided to be more loyal to her students than to her employer: she provided extra learning support and carefully judged Melody's German skills before advising her to take the A2 exam (as failing poses an additional financial investment). Melody, on the other hand, knew about Magdalena's strong homesickness: she supported her teacher, tried to make her feel more at ease and maybe even a bit at home.

Melody's selection of Germany as her destination country is tied to her ability and willingness to carry the costs of learning a new language. The location of the Goethe Institute in an elite and traffic invested space of Manila as well as the long duration of the language course led to further deprivations: The double pressure of working and studying requires Melody to undermine her physical health. She has to accept that her mind cannot rest and that she cannot spend time with friends and family. The logic of investment thus extends to her willingness to abandon physical and intellectual well-being as well as taking care of her social relationships: Melody's investment is no longer restricted to money but becomes physical, intellectual, and social. On the one hand, she enjoys travelling through the greater Manila area and being provided with intellectual input. She relishes the access to a high-status institution, which becomes a

source of pride. On the other hand, her life is regimented by this extensive and intensive investment, which causes anxiety and dependency: Melody's vulnerable position becomes evident when one element in the organization of her life changes. When her direct superior at the hospital leaves (also due to the need of Filipin@s to enter overseas work positions) she cannot continue as planned and budgeted. She is constantly obliged to juggle work, her language course, health, and social relationships while scanning for different brokering agencies and work opportunities in Germany. The entrepreneurial activities of self-improvement and self-responsibility add to her anxiety.

The intensive time of learning German provides Melody with the opportunity to form bonds. She finds friends in some of her classmates who support each other intellectually and emotionally to bear the pressure that accompany the language course. Furthermore, they share information and discuss different routes to their shared goal of working in Germany. These bonds of friendship are built and lived in the present but also hold implications for the future during their life in a distant country. They cannot be reduced to the logic of investment but become a form of solidarity and mutual aid that exceeds individual benefit. Melody's friendship with her teacher Magdalena similarly helps to subvert dominant loyalties within power relations: The reciprocity of their actions and shared insecurity about German language make them allies in an unequal society.

This chapter follows these main moments that characterize the experience of Philippine nurses during their German language course by elaborating on (1) a time of intense investment that includes the financial and intellectual investment as well as the physical and emotional toll it takes during these many months of preparation, (2) forming bonds among language students (and their teachers) and how these hold the potential of a friendship that defies the logic of investment.

### *7.2.1 A time of intense investment*

Future Philippine migrant nurses pass through several stages of selection before they can choose and prepare for Germany (see section 2.5.3 for a discussion of this preparation period). Suitable candidates and their families have spent years of their lives and an immense amount of money. In the case of Germany as destination

country, the investment continues: It entails (1) financial investment for the language course and examination fees as well as the sustenance of their lives during the months-long learning period. The need for a B2 certificate in German brings Philippine nurses back to school who upskill themselves through (2) intellectual investment. The intensive and extensive learning period deprives many of the students of their health and impedes the maintenance of social relationships. This physical and emotional investment will be discussed in connection with the financial as well as the intellectual investment.

(1) The financial investment of Philippine nurses for acquiring the appropriate German skills varies; the intensity and the insecurity regarding the amount of expenditure depends on the nurses' inclusion in the governmental pilot program "Triple Win," their geographical location in the Philippines, and the economic background of their families. It is these factors that decide on where and how fast they can learn German. On the one hand, the GiZ covers the expenses for the language course and exam of the Triple Win candidates. These fees are paid with money from the nurses' future employers as well as by subsidies from the German state. This poses a substantial financial relief for their preparation for Germany. On the other hand, the nurses are, thus, tied to the location of the GiZ's partner schools and the starting times of their language courses. Triple Win candidates from outside Manila have to quit their work and relocate to an area close to the Makati's business district. Leaving their job is a major, mostly irreversible decision because of the scarcity of paid work positions in nursing. The candidates then enter a potentially long waiting time for placement in a German course after their program application and selection through the GiZ. Chris, a Triple Win candidate and Berlitz student, told me his story during a group interview with three of his classmates. He quit his job upon his successful Triple Win application and was desperately waiting for his selection for German Language Training (GLT):

Yeah I know it was like, it was, they told me to call after a month, then I wait, the followed, oh wait for another month, okey, wait for another month, okey, okey after one year, oh finally. But so far it's promising so it's worth it.

Interview with Chris (and two of his classmates, Selma and Mai),  
Makati city, Manila, June 17, 2015

Chris' classmates laugh during his story, revealing their familiarity with waiting, insecurity, and intermittent glimpses of hope. They all agreed on the emotional and

financial strain that comes with having been selected for the program but not knowing when it starts. They knew of many candidates who had to renege on the program during these months of waiting, especially if they were responsible for the economic sustenance of a whole family.

Relocation to Manila not only meant the loss of wages but also an increase in daily living expenses because it is one of the most expensive areas of the country. Tim, a Triple Win candidate and student at Berlitz, comes from Cebu – around 570 kilometers air travel to the South. The cost of living in Makati came as a shock when he arrived for his language training. The first apartment he heard about cost 15'000 Peso per month – one and a half months' wage of a nurse and the whole amount of money he brought to Manila. It was a desperate moment when he asked himself: "Und wie kann ich essen? Alles Geld zu bezahlen für das Wohnung?" [And how can I eat? To pay all the money for the apartment?]. He found another housing option with the help of Rob, a Triple Win candidate who is originally from Manila. The apartment, which consists of one room without kitchen or air conditioning, cost 8000 peso and Tim found two other nurses as roommates. The high expenses for food or leisure time activities in Makati restricted them to either stay at home, all three of them sharing one room, or constantly look for places with low prizes – often in vain. Non-Triple Win candidates, who decided to study at the Goethe Institute in Makati City, often came from other cities in Metro Manila or from the surrounding provinces. They commuted from their home base, where they could mostly stay with their parents and extended family. The reasons for their choice of school was often the lack of a facility in their vicinity or the prestige attributed to the Goethe Institute with their power to examine. Wilbur, a nurse who started to learn German without having found a brokering agency, had to change his school in a suburban area of Manila because they did not offer courses for advanced levels of German. Although he would have loved to go to Makati, the Goethe Institute itself as well as its location was too expensive and their intense schedule would have forbidden him to keep his work position. Instead he decided on a small, privately owned language school in Quezon City with a shifting schedule depending on the teacher's availability – a flexibility that met his needs.

Furthermore, it is the economic background of the nurses' families which decides on their options to learn German and become eligible for a work visa. Many of my



informants used their savings from previous work positions overseas (in the Middle East or in Libya) or additional positions in call center agencies. Almost all of them relied partially or in full on the support of their extended family, who could sponsor their relatives mostly because they are overseas workers themselves. This quest for money accompanies everyday life, some speak about it light-heartedly and full of confidence that they will pay it back. Others – and especially those who get the money from their parents – face more difficult moral dilemmas: they need to ask for further financial aid from those people whom they eventually want to support through their labor migration. For the least privileged nurses, who are themselves responsible for the economic sustenance of a whole family, the preparation time for Germany asked most severe budgeting and imagination. Rob is the oldest son of a family without overseas workers and unemployed parents. The family's daily living expenses and the siblings' education fees wholly depend on Rob's income. For many years, Rob secretly saved half of his wage while supporting his family with the other half. He was able to do so because he had a better wage at a governmental hospital. Without any connection, he had previously already creatively fought for such a rare work position. Rob decided to keep quiet about his preparation for Germany because he feared his parents' objection to the immense financial investment. He paid for the course with his secret savings and accumulated leaves from work before starting the more difficult B1 and B2 course. This gave him the opportunity to quit work but still be paid for another three months in which he did not have to share the decision with his family. Rob felt bad about not telling the truth but he saw it as his only option to fulfill his dream of working in Europe. His situation in life always meant being imaginative how to deal with economic sustenance and made him develop entrepreneurial skills and strategies.

The life of future Philippine nurse migrants (and often their family and distant relatives) is to a great degree structured by the generation of the financial resources needed for the preparation. This regimentation showed in bodily reactions, which became particularly explicit in those cases where nurses had to continue their paid labor positions during their language course. I heard of people who had to cry themselves to sleep in a deadlock situation of being completely drained but seeing Germany as their only dream and escape of their difficult life in the Philippines. Others were saddened by their limited progress during their language course and their

increasing difficulty to keep up with the others who could fully concentrate on learning German: next to the limited time available to them, their motivation was further crushed by (probably unconsciously deployed) disciplining measures at school. Teachers ignored late comers during class and worked with those who arrived on time. My informants complained about being drained, tired, feeling physically unhealthy or not being able to perform their preferred standard of personal hygiene. During a group interview Selma, a Manilaña Triple Win candidate studying German at Berlitz, recounted her dense schedule, which closely resembled Melody's. Chris, one of her classmates who had to relocate to Manila from the province, called her "superwoman" with a sort of desperate pride. Selma corrected him and explained how sleepy she felt during class and the impossibility of being able to focus: "I feel like I am zombie".

The double pressure limited the student-worker's agency because they needed to rely on their superior to support their plans. Some of them had happy stories, where they were astonished to have such an important back up. Others had been treated unfavorably since they started with their preparations, some superiors did not support their preferred shifts which resulted in either missing the language course completely or having no time to sleep in between. In any case, they were either worried or grateful – always knowing that they are dependent on the good will of their superiors. At some point most of the nurses had to choose between continuing to learn German and working at the hospital.

(2) Additionally, a substantial intellectual investment is needed in order to learn a completely new language to a high level within a respectively short period of time. My classroom observations as well as the stories and reactions from the students I met revealed two rather opposite affective responses. On the one hand, the return back to school after a work period of several years posed an immense challenge: suddenly, the trained nurses had to (re-)adapt to the role of the student. The pace of the language course as well as the intensity of the additional homework and studying produced a dramatic effect on their time management: they increasingly had to reduce hours reserved for social relations or practical daily sustenance such as cooking, washing or sleeping. These changes in their life elicited feelings of anxiety and despair. On the other hand, learning a new language gave them much happiness and excitement as it was an escape from the drudgery of full-time work, they received intellectual

stimulation in an often playful environment and they saw their investment as a means for gaining a competitive edge amongst other Philippine nurses.

Being back at school and learning German turned out to be much harder than what many of my informants expected. They had been unable to remember their time as a student, professed that the German course was much harder than studying for their nursing degrees and were overwhelmed by having to sit and concentrate day in day out. The language course felt short and long at the same time. The financial and physical investment made the months of language learning difficult to go through and they longed for them to pass more quickly. Yet, learning a new language within the same period of time was intense. Compared to the learning conditions in grade school, they now only had a short period of time to reach the set goal. Many students had creative language learning methods in order to keep up with their homework, some taught their relatives or their workmates a few words in German who then had to quiz them on vocabulary. They often resorted to audio-teaching material or language-learning apps in order to keep up with their busy schedules of German classes and work. Others tried to practice German by watching German films or series. These strategies were important especially for those who continued their wage labor while studying. However, the budgeting of time for school, work, homework and studying, household as well as personal activities profoundly marked the lives of all of the nurses I met. Berlitz students often went to the Goethe Institute after their class finished at 5pm: they continued to study and did their homework at the library. They told me about their day and practiced their German oral skills with me. When I talked with Tim, a Triple Win candidate and former Berlitz student, I asked him how he had spent his Sundays. He seemed to be startled about what must have been an extremely silly question. He waited with his answer and it felt that I should have realized it after all he had told me already “Alles war auf deutsch, die ganzen sechs Monate, man kann übergeben” [Everything was in German, for all these six months, you could vomit] he explains laughingly. On Sundays, he either lay in bed or did his homework. Tim’s words reveal the physical investment and the anxious paralysis that accompanied the intellectual engagement.

The intensity of the German course for Philippine nurses became particularly evident when I observed a class at Berlitz. I arranged the visit through the Triple Win project

coordinator at Berlitz, Ms. Garcia, who was simply addressed as Mam<sup>116</sup> Ays by the students and Ays by the teachers and her administrative colleagues. When I told her about my failed attempt to visit classes at the Goethe Institute, she was all the happier to provide me with this opportunity. It was clear to her that I needed to experience the language training first-hand in order to understand the immense effort “her” students as well as the language school and its teachers had to expend. Mam Ays was right. The intensive course at Berlitz lasted from 9 am to 5 pm with one hour of lunch break for six days per week. Already the first day of my one-week visit showed me how much dedication is needed to cope with such a dense schedule. I was fighting with fatigue at around 2 pm while the students were still extremely lively and engaged. By 3.30 pm they were still concentrated but showed first signs of exhaustion: Their answers suddenly came slower, they started to increasingly rely on each other and produced answers collectively. After 4 pm they almost lay on the table, they yawned and slouched. The next morning, however, they seemed to be fresh for a new lesson much unlike me who was still tired from the day before. The German language training seemed to be a delicate balance between enthusiasm and exhaustion. One afternoon, when the air was stale, any participation missing and the whole atmosphere heavy, their teacher, Daniel, exclaimed the exact words that were on my mind: “bei mir ist die Luft raus” [I am totally knackered], the students immediately agreed with him and burst out how they are “total am Arsch” [fucked up beyond all repair], “fix und fertig” [completely shattered]. Their emotional response of relief clearly showed how the course physically drained them. However, it also indicated a playfulness that had prevailed: the two idioms they used are highly informal (and in this case they had previously learnt them in informal moments with their teacher). The students demonstrated their ability to use German beyond formal classroom interactions which points to a self- confident appropriation of the language.

During class I observed one of the weaker students who used the break to consult online dictionaries in order to work through the passages he did not understand during class. Another student searched for further exercises and yet another student showed his new discovery to a classmate: a book full of additional mock exams. Completely

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<sup>116</sup> a contracted form for “madam”

drained himself he asked him: “Lies das mal durch [could you go through it]. I cannot read anymore; I am so tired.” How much this drill of fast-paced language learning is a form of regulation of their life and mind can be seen in small instances during class: When Daniel, the teacher, asked about a particular topic, unsure whether they had covered it already or not, one of the students immediately replied: “das war im Buch 3 Kapitel 2 Seite 35 gleich vor “Tanz in den Mai”” [it was in book 3, chapter 2, on page 35 right before “Dance in May”]. The rest of the class laughed as they immediately saw the absurdity of such exact and not particularly useful knowledge. It revealed an effect of highly concentrated learning under pressure and it seemed that they recognized themselves in their classmate’s words.

However, apart from these physically and emotionally draining aspects of learning a new language, the students were exhilarated by the input: After having worked for years they were happy to focus on something completely new. The students of Berlitz were explicit about how much fun learning German and learning about German culture was, an excitement which I could observe during class. More than once the teacher of the adjoining class room had to knock on the door and ask to keep the noise down: their joy to perform in role plays repeatedly resulted in a rising acoustic level. Many of the students from the Goethe Institute and Berlitz liked the luxurious class room setting, the playful learning atmosphere, the Mabuhay Germany event and the additional material they received from the Goethe Institute. The prestige attributed to these institutions (and the business district in Makati City, where they are located) animated many of them to spend additional time at the events of the Goethe Institute learning about German culture. More than once my informants explicitly wished to travel to our interviews to Makati (which took them between one and a half to two hours one way) even though I proposed to meet them at their place. While this was certainly also due to hospitality and a concern for my safety, they explicitly told me that they simply enjoyed the atmosphere in the clean Salcedo Village.

### *7.2.2 Forming bonds*

The long duration of the language learning period opened a time/space for the future labor migrants to get to know each other and form bonds of friendship and trust. Furthermore, it raised the possibility of supportive connections between language

students and their teachers. The previous subchapter discussed the site of struggle resulting from the different kinds of investment needed to complete the German language course. It demonstrated how temporal and financial restraints asked for strategies of entrepreneurialism and fostered the rigid regimentation of the students' everyday lives. However, the time/space of the language learning period not only makes visible how students struggle individually but also how the struggle is perceived collectively and confronted with mutual aid rather than competition. Unlike most of the labor migrants leaving for English speaking countries, Philippine nurses who leave for Germany enter their destination country with the security of a community that practices solidarity.

The localities where such bonds of friendship are formed can be observed at the Goethe Institute library, through Facebook groups and for Triple Win candidates additionally through the common association with the governmental pilot project. Amongst these platforms or associations, it is the language course that provides the main space where lasting emotional bonds are formed: it is the shared time/space of the language students that quickly reveals whom they can trust and whom they can relate to as friends. The mutual aid amongst language students included (1) learning assistance, (2) emotional support during the course with a promise of their future connection in Germany as well as (3) logistic advice on the future in Germany and life in Manila. The delicate relationship between teachers and students develops on the ground of unequal power relations. However, (4) the friendship and mutual aid that frequently developed transformed the role of teachers as figures of authority and representatives of Germany into that of an ally or even accomplice. However, these communities of solidarity were also (5) exploited to serve institutional (and commercial) interests.

(1) Language students provided each other with learning assistance in numerous ways. The most close-knit communities were formed amongst classmates of a particular language course. However, the support sometimes even extended to other classes or to individuals that became acquainted at the Goethe Institute library. The students shared their knowledge of German and provided each other with additional learning material or collectively tried to overcome the fear of practicing their German oral skills. I have seen students handing each other mock exams with solutions, study together

during breaks or inviting me into conversations and encourage shy classmates to speak with me in German. It was Justin, one of the most outgoing personalities and strongest students of the Berlitz class I visited, who used the opportunity of me sitting in their room during breaks to make his classmates ask me questions in German. Although this resulted in silences at first, many of them started a conversation in German at some point. Justin explained to me how he had the approaching exam in mind and worried that some of his classmates might not pass. They told me about homework and exam preparation learning groups, where they would meet at Starbucks after their class ended and study until the café closed: the stronger students would act as tutors and they even invited students of other classes. It is of such moments of mutual aid that my informants speak fondly. During class the out-going students encouraged the more timid ones to participate and gave them the floor when they tried to talk without being condescending or indifferent. When I visited a language class in Cebu, they collectively decided to adapt the course schedule to the needs of just one of their classmates whose life organization had changed: The student had his own family with a wife and two children for whom he was economically responsible. He lived in the province and had to commute for more than three hours to take the language course in the city. When he recently found a wage labor position at the local city council, he faced a job with a rigid schedule which would have made this commute impossible. The class did not want him to drop out and they arranged weekend classes with their teacher – even though this change in schedule would prolong the language learning period for all of them.

It is probably due to my form of data collection that I have made little encounters with non-cooperative and competitive moments of language learning. The only instance I came across such a rupture in community-based language learning support was when one of the students at the Berlitz class that I visited told about his past experience: He paused his German language training because of the bad learning atmosphere with the previous batch of Triple Win nurses at Berlitz. Some students were bullied and there was no culture of sharing. The student chose to postpone his preparation for Germany in order to escape such an environment. He seemed to have made the right choice as he now was very happy and an integral part of their community: his classmates mentioned his important role of cheering them up during the exhausting afternoon hours by joking around and making them laugh. The fact that I met many of my

informants according to a snowball system would almost necessarily make me meet students with a similar outlook on social interaction and relationships. However, the three class communities I met independently – one at Berlitz, one at the Goethe Institute and one in Cebu – were all invested in supporting rather than competing with each other.

(2) The hours of observing the German language course at Berlitz showed how much emotional support can be (and was) given during language learning. The students were extremely comfortable with each other which showed during times of desperation or exhaustion. They kept calming each other when they did not understand a hearing exercise or soothed each other when they were fighting against sleep in the afternoon through bodily contact or joking. They held hands, patted each other's backs, sunk into each other's arms or simply rested their head on the shoulders of their neighbors: The classroom set-up made such encounters possible because the students and their teacher decided to arrange the tables as one big group table in the middle of the room. They incessantly used the gained knowledge immediately to make fun of each other, be subversive and build collective rapport: When they had to practice conjunctions one of the students complimented a classmate: "Du bist hübsch" [You are handsome]. All of them were delighted, especially because the person giving the compliment was playing with his own as well as the complimented person's homosexuality. He immediately used everybody's delight to make adequate use of the newly learnt conjunction and continued: "ich jedoch bin hübscher" [I, however, am more handsome]. The second punchline surprised all of us who listened and the emerging laughter was connected to the joy of his cunny use of the conjunction as well as playful maintenance of their friendship. The queerness of the class, which consisted of many male openly and proud homosexuals, was important for their collective identity. One of the male students, Chris, explicitly mentioned to me that he himself is not gay but most of the other Berlitz students and teachers believed their whole class was. In such moments, he did not feel the need to correct the wrong perception but enjoys the comfortable atmosphere amongst his classmates and also uses their shared term of



endearment “Schmetterling” [butterfly<sup>117</sup>]. Furthermore, the students often used German in order to play with their identities as language learners. They enacted transfer mistakes from English: The question of a student what a flashlight is in German is quickly and jokingly answered with “Blitzlicht” [flash, flashlight (in photography)]. “Blitzlicht” is a literal translation of flashlight which has a different meaning than the term sought after, “Taschenlampe” [lit. pocket lamp]. Another typical, playful handling of German was the use of formulaic expressions:

- Student A:           Zigaretten? [cigarettes?]  
 Student B:           Nein, das ist nicht jedermanns Sache. [No, that’s not  
                                   everyone’s cup of tea.]  
 Student C:           Ich bin ganz Ihrer<sup>118</sup> Meinung! [My sentiments exactly.]

Classroom observation at Berlitz, Makati City, Manila, May 5, 2015

Student A started the small interaction with an informal form of asking questions – he completely relied on his intonation instead of using question particles. His two classmates answered both with formulaic expressions that simultaneously signaled their advanced German skills as well as a self-confidence in making fun of German: the excessive use of formulaic language gave them the opportunity to create a comical interaction that was met with laughter and thus furthered the class’ collective experience.

The emotional support practiced amongst language students not only helped them in their present lives. The time they spent together and the common past that came with the months of language learning extended their relationship into the future: an emotional support for their life in Germany. This collectively imagined future was built through planned visits in Germany, the use of their friendships to relieve their families’ fear of having to let their child move to a very distant and unknown place and a very clear language that signals lasting group identity. While a few of the students in one class would be employed at the same institution in Germany, many of the future labor

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<sup>117</sup> Butterfly is a term used for (effeminate) male homosexuals in English. Its German equivalent «Schmetterling» does not share this denotation but indicates yet another playful use of their newly acquired language competencies.

<sup>118</sup> “Ihnen” is the polite form for “you.” This might be an aspect that contributes to the theatrical, self-confident tone of the dialogue. However, I would need much more interactional data to substantiate the argument as my impression was that the use of the polite form (and when it was appropriate) was an area of insecurity.

migrants were assigned in different cities throughout the country. On the one hand, this was seen as a source of insecurity if they had to travel and settle down on their own. On the other hand, they were excited about already having many different places that they will be able visit. They knew about the distances between their locations and planned on whom they could meet for short visits or with whom they could travel around Europe during their holidays.

During a group interview with Selma, Mai and Chris – three Triple Win candidates and classmates at Berlitz – they told me about their families’ reactions to their common plan of working and living in Germany. Selma has an aunt in Germany: she will be the first of her siblings to work overseas and the security of having connections in this far off place poses a great relief to her family. Mai will be the first one in the family to leave the Philippines for work as well. However, she has no family in Europe. She explained how her parents were proud, excited and supportive about her preparation for Germany, yet at the same time they were deeply worried to know that their child will be on her own. Mai could reassure them that there are not only many Filipin@s in Germany but much more that her trusted friends from her language course will be there, too, even working at the same hospital. Mai explicitly mentions that friends are the most important element in her life and that she will be happy to meet some of her classmates in Munich as soon as she has a day off work. It is this present and future community that makes many of my informants relaxed about going away. They frequently call each other family; brother and sister.<sup>119</sup> Rather than imagining themselves homesick in a foreign place, they rely on each other for comfort and support: “Zusammen gegen die Welt” [together against the world] in Tim’s words.

(3) Next to assistance in language learning and emotional support, the language students gave each other logistic advice on and help with life in Manila as well as different possibilities of how to work in Germany. While such advice was shared in classrooms, it was also the Goethe Institute library and Facebook groups that provided an important space for exchanging this type of information and help.

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<sup>119</sup> This use was not only limited to Tagalog or Bisaya where friends or friendly acquaintances of a different age are frequently addressed with terms for family members. The students also used familial expressions in English and German, which marked an additional degree of intimacy.

The previous sub-chapter already discussed in detail the immense investment and the entrepreneurial strategies that accompany the sustenance of the students' life in Manila. The fact that the knowledge of the best practices of how to get by was shared should not only be seen in the context of investment but also in the context of mutual aid and solidarity. The sharing of information on how to find apartments, where to buy food or go for a drink and on cheap ways to enjoy cultural life is not accompanied by financial gain or a faster migratory path on the side of the advisors. The sharing of this information is simply based on an understanding of the future labor migrants' shared material living conditions and anxieties and the wish to face this struggle collectively. Some of the nurses who prepared for Germany went through great length to accommodate classmates or even random acquaintances from conversations at the Goethe Institute library. Rob, a Triple Win candidate without employer, had invested a lot of his time in the research of different routes to Germany and the various brokering agencies operating in the Philippines. He continuously updated his knowledge on new players entering the market. Rob did not keep this information for himself but shared it not only with his friends but also whenever he heard of or from someone who had little overview of the different options. He supported many of his colleagues even if he sometimes felt desperate and left behind – desperate because he had already made all the preparations he could (including a B2 certificate) yet was still waiting to find an employer; left behind because some of the nurses who started their preparation later than him and whom he supported in their journey had already found an employer or even left for Germany. Rob clearly voiced his grief but was never stopped by what he identified as envy to continue and share his knowledge (including the ways of how to acquire such knowledge) with whomever needed it.

Next to the Goethe Institute it was also different Facebook pages that helped to connect and share information on care work in Germany, some explicitly directed at Filipin@s such as an open group of Filipin@ nurses working in Germany, the Tara-na-sa-Deutschland page initiated by the Goethe Institute and most notably a closed Facebook group for Triple Win candidates. This group was founded by the first batch of Triple Win nurses who left for Germany and they intended to share information also with those candidates still undergoing preparation in the Philippines. They wanted to build a social network that could also financially support those Triple Win nurses facing an emergency in Germany. They discussed on a fee to be paid by the nurses

who already received a German salary and the collected sum could be used for example if a person needed funding to go back home to the Philippines. This form of support is directed at Triple Win candidates – a closed group which can already be regarded as the more privileged amongst the Philippine nurses leaving for work in Germany. It was particularly prone for co-optation to serve institutional needs as will be discussed later in this chapter.

(4) It was not only amongst students that important connections of support and mutual aid were formed but also between the students and their teachers. The conditions of this relationship differ greatly from the formerly described community of nurses who learn German because teachers act in positions that hold structural power over the students.<sup>120</sup> My own relationship with the students (who were my informants) was in some cases comparable to the connection between teachers and students. Although I did not hold structural power over my informants as students, my systemically based privilege as researcher similarly conditioned asymmetrical positionings especially at the start of our relationships. The focus of this section lies on the students' teachers, who were most prominent in this role that was increasingly shaped by friendship.<sup>121</sup>

The role of teachers in their relationship with students was manifold. On the one hand, some of them act as gatekeepers with the right and power to examine, correct the exams and, eventually, pass or fail students, which in turn decides on whether they can get a visa and leave for work in Germany. Furthermore, they found themselves in the role of a representative of Germany. This feeling did not only match the perception of the students but in case of the Goethe Institute also its official mission. On the other hand, it was the teachers who spent months of intensive language learning with the

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<sup>120</sup> I have observed a similar relationship between the students and Mam Ays, the Triple Win coordinator at Berlitz. Their interactions seemed to go beyond the support included in their professional relations. Mam Ays is herself a nurse and toyed with the idea of applying for the Triple Win program and learning German. It is this shared background that might be a reason for her emotional involvement. However, my data of their interactions is too limited for a full analysis.

<sup>121</sup> Of course, I also heard stories of difficult student-teacher relationships: In one instance students suffered from several teacher changes within a few weeks, in another instance the poor teaching skills of a teacher at the Goethe Institute brought a student to desperation because of the waste of money on the expensive B2 language course. However, my data only occasionally has traces of such problematic cases – which again might be partly due to the fact that it is the more enthusiastic teachers that would take their time to meet and be interviewed by me.

students. They met their students as individuals with biographies, they learnt about their immense investment and observed their caring support of each other. This circumstance opened the possibility of understanding and friendship, a connection that asks for a relationship of equality. Most of the teachers I met were deeply moved by their students' dedication and the investment carried not only by them but by their whole family as well as their sometimes over-enthusiastic expectation of their life in Germany. This understanding came into conflict with their role as examiners and representatives as the reflections of Daniel, a teacher at Berlitz. During our interview he reflected on his answer to a student who asked about racism in Germany and on moments where he feels they have no knowledge about the harsh working climate in Germany in general and the care sector in particular:

Aehm, sie auf solche Dinge vorzubereiten, find ich auch wichtig, so damit die nicht aus allen Wolken fallen, wenn sie dort sind. Deswegen ist schon so n bisschen so Hilfestellung, wo's, wo es halt geht, also das ist, sehr viele Bereiche. (...) Ja, aber Verantwortung, ich fand's teilweise echt schwer da drin, die Balance zu finden zwischen „das Land gut vertreten“ und dann eben „diese Ehrlichkeit wahren“ (...) solche Sachen hab ich schon erzählt, weil ich's wichtig find, dass sie's, dass sie nicht nur, dass sie nicht nur denken, sie kommen da jetzt in das rosarote Schlaraffenland oder so, dass sie wirtschaftlich Kohle verdienen oder so. Weil manchen war's glaub ich nicht so bewusst, dass ihr Gehalt dort nicht ultra hoch ist. Manche haben schon gedacht so sie kommen hin und das ist ja Deutschland, das ist ein reiches Land. Und manchmal hatt ich dann Angst, oh mein Gott, wenn ich dann zu ehrlich bin oder so. Ich hoffe, dass nicht, dass da jetzt jemand abspringt oder so, aber im Laufe der Zeit: so zum Einen ist das natürlich nie passiert, dass deswegen, oder dass dann irgend jemand so abgesprungen wäre, sondern aus anderen Gründen und zum Anderen hab ich mir dann gedacht ... .. wenn's so wäre, dann besser so.

[Aehm, to prepare them for such things, I think it's important, too, in a sense that they are not taken by complete surprise when they are there. That's why a bit of support, where it, where I can, well this is ... a lot of different areas. (...) Yes, but responsibility, it was hard for me to find a balance between representing the country in a good way and, well, stay honest (...) I did tell them such things, because I thought it's important that they, that they not only, that they not only think, they are coming to a land of milk and honey or something like that, that they are going to earn big money or something like that. Because, I think, some of them were not aware of the fact that their wage won't be very high. Some had thought that they will come and well it is Germany, it is a rich country. And sometimes I was afraid, my gosh, what if I am too honest, right. I hope that, that no one backs out, right, but over time: on the one hand, of course this never happened, that because of that or that someone dropped out because of this, but because of other reasons, and

on the other hand, I thought to myself ... .. if it happened that way, then all the better.]

Interview with Daniel, Makati City, Manila, June 22, 2015

Daniel's narrative seemed to circle around his conflicting emotions, around his role as German teacher of Philippine nurses preparing for work in Germany. He sees himself as representative of Germany which went in line with glossing over social inequalities – be it based on racism or working class exploitation. He not only feels the structural pressure to represent his country but also considers himself proud of his country and voices the wish and joy to talk about the positive aspects of life in Germany. However, he relates to his students and cannot withhold important information on struggles they might encounter based on their skin color or their low-paid working positions. Towards the end of the excerpt the importance of the duration of the language course becomes explicit. It was the factor of time – crucial for the establishment of friendship and solidarity – that made him feel more at ease with his role: he positioned himself against the socio-economic interest of the German government and preferred to tell his true story about Germany – promising as well as difficult – even if this could lead to the dropping out of candidates.

Teachers supported their students in similar ways they helped each other: they provided additional language training as well as emotional support and they prepared them for life in Germany with a low wage. These elements of friendship between students and teachers have to be analyzed with regard to the conflicting role of the teacher that stems from the asymmetrical power relations between the people involved. This perspective is fundamental in order to uncover the potential subversion of social inequalities. There were two main instances when students and teachers met on equal terms: firstly, moments in which emotional or linguistic support was reciprocal between the two parties and, secondly, moments in which teachers practiced disloyalty to oppressive institutional and/or market interests.

Mutual aid was practiced in case of sickness, desperation/loneliness and linguistic insecurities. Daniel advised his students to skip homework or even a day of class when he saw his students sleep deprived and sick from exhaustion. He tried to soothe their pressure simply by listening or by explaining different learning strategies. On the other hand, it was Daniel's students who immediately realized when he became more

seriously ill with a tropical disease, they kept track of his well-being and let him know when it was time to visit a doctor or a hospital. Times of loneliness were frequent for students as well as teachers who were new to Manila: they (and often we) would meet for chats, museum visits or drinks. In case of Magdalena, the Goethe Institute teacher mentioned in the introductory vignette, the students were an important base for her not becoming overwhelmed by homesickness. The Manileño@s amongst the students cared about the teacher's and mine moving safely through the city: at the end of one of our evenings out – a celebration of the Berlitz class having passed the mock exams – I observed them circle around each other before saying goodbye. They decided who will accompany me home, and even though I initially objected I had to accept their hospitality and have one of them take me all the way to the other side of Makati by taxi (which I was absolutely not allowed to pay for) only for him to walk back home for two hours (a journey that I would only hear about a few days later). Linguistic support was given by the students in cases when their German teachers struggled with English: they helped them during interactions in the city but also during language courses when explaining grammatical rules to beginners became almost impossible for them.

Disloyalty to oppressive institutional and/or commercial interests was practiced by teachers towards the German state, their direct employers (the language schools) or to collaborating brokering agencies. Teachers sometimes decided to give information that could prevent nurses to leave for or settle in Germany. As previously mentioned, Daniel preferred to give an honest account of working conditions in Germany – a practice which was used by a few teachers, who might even explicitly advise their students to avoid Eastern Germany (because of even lower wage) or try to leave Germany as soon as possible and migrate to Switzerland. Furthermore, Daniel used his language course to educate on workers' rights in Germany. He treated the topic of German inventions that was suggested by the text book but later prepared the next topic of work contracts himself. He posted links to their shared Facebook group and carefully notates the questions he cannot answer on topics such as the payment of overtime or pregnancy leave. Daniel then continued to talk about unions and labor agreements. They discuss the potential of a strike. When his students are not convinced about the usefulness of unions, Daniel explains how important the union is in Germany in order for them to receive a pay rise.

Teachers often acted deliberately against their employer's interest if it did not meet their students' well-being: they provided additional tutorials or tried to lower their financial investment. Christiane, a teacher at the Goethe Institute, was acutely aware of the immense additional investment that came with enrolling for the language exams. As described with Magdalena in the introductory vignette, Christiane also advised weaker students against enrolling. She went even a step further when she (unsuccessfully) tried to negotiate exemptions with the language sector of the Goethe Institute when some of her students enrolled (against her advice) and realized too late that they were not adequately prepared. Magdalena additionally used her beginner's courses to lay a solid basis for her students from which they could improve their German themselves.

Teachers of non-Triple Win candidates often faced their employer's collaboration with a particular brokering agency. While this collaboration serves as a marketing strategy for the school, there were teachers who worked against this connection when they deemed it unfruitful for their students. Peter, a teacher-entrepreneur and employee at a small language learning institution, used the language course to teach the preparation of job applications: he searched for open job positions in Germany and provided each of his students with a fitting advertisement to which they had to write a cover letter and a CV. They subsequently sent in these applications and although they have never been successful so far, it is important to Peter to teach about direct-hiring as a route around brokering agencies. This type of intervention was used by the Goethe Institute itself (as described in section 5.5.1) and only threatens the business interest of the brokering agencies while complying with the interest of Germany to attract a badly paid labor force. However, in this case it is Peter who operates as an individual with a very limited reach of action – his intervention can be regarded as solidarity in respect to the students' immediate circumstances in life.

(5) The commercial and/or institutional interests of state and industry made visible and maybe even strengthened the solidarity amongst students and teachers. However, these interests subsequently also led to commercial and state co-optation of the emerging friendship and trust. This development can be seen as a way of how social infrastructure develops into a commercial infrastructure, as described by Xiang and Lindquist (2014: 127-128). The GiZ – Germany's coordinator of the Triple Win



project – used the supportive practices of individual candidates to ease the difficulties that arose from the representative need of the state: The GiZ passed the phone number of those candidates, of whose solidary nature they were informed, to new candidates in order to help accommodate them in Manila. As previously discussed, the Goethe Institute's and Berlitz' location in the highly expensive space of Salcedo Village in Makati City asked for high additional financial investments by candidates from outside Manila. Their participation depended on affordable living arrangements, which are based on room sharing and scouting for cheap accommodation. The accommodation of participants is a precondition for the success of the project and, therefore, the satisfaction of Germany's need for care workers. The responsibility of the creation of this precondition was handed over to the future labor migrants themselves: a logic which corresponds to strategic marketing practices of players in the language education market and results in the desired product that bears the costs of its own production (see section 5.5.4).

The aforementioned Facebook group which is dedicated to the networking of Triple Win candidates from the Philippines is a closed group of people. This network turned into an officially recognized association with a hierarchical structure and representative functions. This development can be observed in the association's official recognition by the Philippine embassy in Germany or its honorably mention as a feature of best practice in a presentation given by the POEA. The hierarchization became evident in the representational function at official events that concentrated on a few presiding individuals. I had an extensive discussion on the developments of the Facebook group and the association with a few of my closest informants. They struggled with the decrease in reliable information and honest accounts of experiences provided by the nurses who had already left the Philippines and with whom they had not had time to establish a friendship. When they found themselves desperate with the obscurity of the Triple Win process, they put off my suggestion of asking this network for help. They felt that it became a "taboo" to question the project: the process had worked for those who controlled the group and they seemed to distance themselves from critique voiced by their colleagues in the Philippines. My informants' worries even extended to the assumption that their criticism might be leaked to Triple Win project managers. Whether this fear of their colleagues' disloyalty is accurate is of no consequence for an analysis of a waning solidarity (although I do not believe my informants' worries to be

completely unfounded). Their insecurity demonstrates how difficult it is to establish connections of deep friendship or even solidarity: the time not spent together cannot be replaced and connections are valued merely with regard to their utility. Once the immediate goal of working in Germany is achieved, the search for individually useful connections might lead to shifting loyalties. I have heard a few complaints of the way the leading figures of the association used their representational role extensively, and mostly in order to distinguish themselves. They acted as figureheads of the Triple Win project, professing its success and good practice in front of media or at events by the government. It is the hierarchical structure and the representational function of the association that weakens the solidarity within the network: the close ties of its leading figures to the Philippine governmental institutions, the GiZ and the Goethe Institute makes the nurses in the Philippines insecure about their loyalties. The network's transformation shows how solidarity has to develop out of a common struggle and collective organizing with a presupposition of equality amidst the community.

A last instance of commercial use of solidarity and trust lay in the establishment of a non-governmental institution that professed to support Philippine nurses who faced problems in or on their way to Germany. They spread the information that some of the biggest and most acclaimed brokering agencies as well as the Triple Win project give wrong or limited information on the process while painting a rosy picture of life in Germany. The NGO promises to provide the necessary information, profiles of employers, coaching sessions, networking possibilities and assistance with the paperwork. A closer research on the NGO's background reveals that it consists of one individual person in the Philippines and a small brokering agency in Germany. They explain how Philippine nurses are exploited in Germany, how they work below minimum wage, get further deductions from overpriced housing and face an immense workload. They consider the nurses' main weakness to be alone in a country far away from the Philippines, which makes them accept these terrible life conditions. It is this gap that the NGO professes to fill and advertises to help desperate Philippine nurses make "the right decision". Their main focus of revealing bogus brokering agencies immediately raises the suspicion of their own commercial interest in the endeavor. Unlike the aforementioned examples of the GiZ and the association of Philippine Triple Win nurses, this NGO did not co-opt existing supportive structures but the discourse of mutual aid as such.

### 7.2.3 *Discussing investment and friendship*

The previous sections showed how the language preparation needed for the access to the German labor market affects Philippine nurses emotionally and materially. The language course is financially as well as intellectually intensive for the students: they need to procure money to pay for the course fees and/or for their daily sustenance while often dealing with a wage gap due to the intensive language learning. The amount of financial investment and the strain it poses for students depends on their economic background, their own as well as the school's geographical location and their inclusion in the governmental pilot program. Some of the students with the fewest economic support from and sometimes even economic responsibility for their families are either forced to drop out of their preparation for Germany, others might manage through a severe regimentation of their everyday life and a constant scanning for the cheapest options to eat, sleep and learn. Students who pay for their language preparation either with their own savings or with loans and donations from family often heavily rely on overseas work: it reveals the self-sustaining quality of the Philippine labor brokerage state. This financial investment is emotionally, socially and physically carried by the students as well as their families. The intellectual intensity of learning a new language in a short period of time on the one hand adds to these draining aspects of investment: learning permeates everyday life as friends, family and colleagues either have to support them or deal with the students' months-long absence. Students learn under high pressure and have to stay concentrated while simultaneously dealing with the financial investment. On the other hand, the learning period offers a break in the years of wage labor that lie before (and behind) workers in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. Many of my informants enjoyed the input, especially when the courses were playful and the teachers motivated. They were fascinated by analyzing linguistic patterns, excited at being able to distinguish different German accents and thrilled to hear about Germany, their future destination country.

As a consequence of this fundamental financial and intellectual investment, many of the nurses stay with their plan to go to Germany once they have started the language course. This geographical restriction that accompanies the nurses' newly acquired linguistic capital is crucial for Germany with its dire need of care workers but being

just one competitor within the global care economy. Carlos, one of the students from the Berlitz class, initially did not want to go to Germany but to Singapore or Canada:

- Carlos I am not actually very fan of Germany before. It's just now that I am like very very, oh my gosh, I'm going to Germany (we laugh)
- Stef Now you are a fan?
- Carlos Yeah
- Stef What made you a fan?
- Carlos Because of my language training. Some of my teachers, Sir Georg, were telling me telling us about the culture, the Germans. It's very very nice. Like actually the Philippines also.
- Stef Like what?
- Carlos Aehm, like the family. Germans are family-oriented, also the Philippines, yeah. Mmmh, because of also the beautiful places in Germany, they showed us some of the beautiful places and I was like oh my gosh I want to go there, I want to go there.

Interview with Carlos, Makati City, Manila, June 24, 2015

What becomes visible in Carlos' words is that Germany undergoes a process of distinction. Carlos' journey to become a Triple Win candidate and study German has already been discussed in section 4.2: he objected to his family's wish to find work in Saudi Arabia and reviewed options for work in Singapore or Canada. It did not only come as surprise to himself that he started to learn German (after he felt discouraged to pursue work in English speaking countries because of a necessary IELTS exam). He also did not know much about Germany and its culture, which was completely uninteresting to him. It was the language course and especially his engaged teacher that changed this indifference or maybe even slight aversion: he recognized his talent and progress in learning the language and was delighted about passing the intermittent exams. He learnt a lot about the country, its culture and its people. This engagement with and investment in the language made him fond of Germany – made him a “fan”. He even draws a picture of a society similar to the Philippines and is happy that the Germans also seem to be family-oriented. He then mentions the beautiful places he has seen, a class contents I could witness during my observation time with his class, where we saw pictures of Munich's tourist sights, flowers, castles and the Oktoberfest. These pictures and the acquired knowledge make him want to go to Germany passionately: he repeats that now he wants to go “there,” to Germany, which became a place of longing. It is during the months of language learning and waiting for the visa that Germany can promote itself. The analysis of the Goethe Institute's publications

in section 6.3 showed how this is actively done. The reactions of the students I met demonstrate that the promotion is not only actively but effectively done.

Next to the intellectual investment and the promotion of Germany that accompanies it, it was the financial investment that made students stick to their chosen destination country. Towards the end of the interview with Wilbur, a nurse who had started learning German before finding a brokering agency, he talked about his investment into German language when concluding his thoughts:

- Wilbur I hope this year I will go there. Really, yeah, just waiting for Eva's [his broker] advice, but if, if really, I, if they advise me, you know, to take B2, then okey, I have no choice, but you know to
- Stef but to follow it up
- Wilbur yeah, because it's really aahm, what you call this, ahm, it's a waste of money if I don't push through with my German thing, so I started it, so I will finish it. (laughs). So yeah. Because, I know, when I go there, opportunities will open, a lot of opportunities. And I get, it's nice to learn a second language because, ah, because of this, I will meet you, I will know about German culture, so it's nice to know another culture that at the same time you love, you will soon love, just like you're experiencing now in the Philippines, I will experience the feeling.
- Stef I hope
- Wilbur Yeah, but, surely. I am open-minded also, so let's see but I'm positive. I will enjoy the travel. Cause I'm still young. There will be you know obstacles through the journey, but that's okey. We learn from it. I, so that's it.

Interview with Wilbur, Makati City, Manila, June 2015

At the time of the interview Wilbur is close to taking the B1 exam. As discussed previously in this chapter, he has used all his savings from overseas work in Libya and relies on financial support from his father who works in Saudi Arabia. The further financial investment for the B2 course and exam exceeds his possibilities, yet he still contemplates to find a way to pursue this path: Wilbur labels German his second language – which, considering our language use during the interview, makes English his first language and disregards any Filipin@ language he speaks (Tagalog in his case). This attribution of value to languages seems to be based on their potential capital on the job market. Wilbur anticipates a future financial reward that he currently is investing in. He mentions the pleasure and excitement of learning about a new culture and language but immediately connects it to the future in Germany: his use of the future tense and his self-correction make his imagining of the future sound like a

mantra that carries him through the insecure and expensive times he finds himself in: “you love, you will soon love [German culture]”, “I will experience the feeling”, “I will enjoy the travel”. Wilbur characterizes himself as entrepreneur, a self-made man who learns from obstacles and invests his youth (his life) into becoming the desired worker needed in Germany. He explicitly connects his continuing pursuit of working in Germany to the financial investment he has made so far – an investment that makes him stand by his decision. The language course, thus, fosters a dependency of the students to their future destination country through Germany’s opportunity of self-promotion and the students’ continuous financial and intellectual investment.

The previous sections also showed how the language course was conducive to the forming of friendships: Establishing trust and building long term commitment needs time. Yet, time is rare in an environment marked by continuous self-optimization for possible wage labor positions. The language course offered such a time/space. Students assisted each other in learning, gave each other emotional comfort and logistic advice of how to deal with the preparation for Germany. They made plans of how to continue their friendship once in Germany and most of the students I met found the backup they needed for coping with the isolating effects of labor migration in their classmates. The establishing of friendships similarly to the fundamental intellectual and financial investment creates (or relies on) loyalty. Unlike the loyalty based on investment, loyalty as characteristic of friendship between future labor migrants is more multi-faceted. The three previously mentioned instances of a co-optation of friendship demonstrate how delicate the building of solidarity is. The assumption (or experience) that friendship not only eases departure but also raises the chance that migrant workers stay with their employers can be seen in the GiZ’s actions: they restrict their collaboration with employers to those who are employing at least two nurses from the same country. The possibility of co-optation de-romanticizes the image of people struggling together in harmony and uncovers that forms of mutual aid might simply ease the functioning of an oppressive system.

However, the close analysis of friendship and mutual aid amongst students as well as their teachers also showed the conflicting effects of the language course: The time/space not only entails the need for students to invest, adopt entrepreneurial strategies and resign themselves to the harsh regimentation of their everyday life. It

not only uncovers how solidary relationships can sustain or strengthen commercial and statist interests. The time/space of the language course simultaneously showed the importance of a relationship based on equality and they pointed to the need for communally shared time: The months of learning German open the possibility of a type of friendship which holds the potential of a revolutionary solidarity that threatens the hierarchical distribution of power and the existing social inequalities.

### 7.3 The language exam and the language certificate

Melody started her B1 course at the beginning of June 2015. By the end of June and many months before she would take the B1 exam she was already reviewing her best options of when and how to pass it. She agrees with the widely voiced claim that the B1 and the B2 exams are much more difficult than A1 or A2. Melody contemplates that unlike before she cannot schedule the exam just two days after the language course finishes. She will need additional preparation time. Following the advice of her German teacher, Magdalena, Melody decided to quit her job in order to fully focus on the intensive B1 exam preparation. Although she loved her work position she is happy about her decision because of the deteriorating work climate under her new supervisor. Furthermore, she will finally have time to do sports again.

Melody messaged me on Facebook in November 2015 when I was back in Switzerland. It was a few days before her B1 exam and she asked me some grammatical questions. I advised her on collocation exercises but she soon turned to share her deep anxiety about the upcoming exam. She was “super-nervous” and it was a time of “great worries” for her. She did not go back to work and explained how she now always stays home, studies German and thinks about the exam every single day while longing for a night of good sleep. It will have taken another two years of preparation and waiting until she would take the B2 exam and leave to Germany in December 2017.

Over the course of our acquaintance, I had to revise my first impression of her being insecure, shy and following the path of an overseas worker solely as sacrifice to support her family. It became clear how mistaken I was when learning about her determined nature, the extensive knowledge she collected and weighed when

thinking about different opportunities to work abroad and the bubbly excitement of travelling within Manila or hiking and canyoning throughout Luzon. She was excited about her distant wish to work in a “first-world” country where she can visit castles that served as inspiration for famous fairytales, touch snow and experience winter for the first time. She reckoned that it is her position as a middle child – not responsible like her elder brother, not as protected as her younger one – that makes her long for adventures and travels, a wish she could fulfill by passing the language exam and obtaining a work visa for Germany.

Furthermore, the B2 exam allowed her to achieve her dream independently.

During a daytrip to Intramuros, Manila’s Spanish old town, she told me about a friend of hers: She proposed to Melody the option of meeting a German, male friend of her German boyfriend, who was looking for a Philippine partner. Melody was decidedly against such a possible path to Germany for herself. She wants to find her own way and is proud of how far she had come already. Melody did not seem to judge her friend unfavorably because of her decision to become a marriage migrant but she lamented the differing language barriers: she considers it extremely unfair that a work visa for a nurse requires her to have a B2 certificate while the fiancé visa can be obtained with an A1.

Melody had already looked at several possibilities for working abroad and compared wages, entry requirements, placement fees and living conditions. Soon discarding the option of working in the Middle East, she applied to positions in Singapore and the United Kingdom. She decided against a position as a nursing assistant which was offered to her in Singapore. She mentions that going to Singapore is easy, that this option would always be viable and she did not like the fact that she was supposed to pay a placement fee to an agency. After not having heard back from the UK, she started learning German. During her advanced German course, she got an offer by an agency from the UK. Even though the pay would be better than in Germany – she had just recently learnt about the tax reduction to the promised wage of two thousand Euro – the high placement fee, her investment in the German language course, and the requested IELTS (International English Language Testing System) certificate made her decline the offer.



Melody organizes her life around the language exams, which dominate her schedule already many months before their exact dates: she has to take decisions on how she can support herself financially and how she can pay the exam fees while scheduling enough time to prepare. Melody decides to quit her job, which holds far reaching consequences. She probably cannot return to a paid work position as long as she stays in the Philippines, as jobs with wages are scarce and her flexibility restricted by her preparation and potential work contracts in Germany. Melody rationalizes her decision with the deteriorating work climate and the positive effect of being able to improve her health. The decision on when to take the exams has to be reviewed carefully: Melody draws on common knowledge amongst German language students and teachers when she judges the B1 (and B2) exam to be of much greater difficulty. The regimentation of her life which is marked by anxiety and entrepreneurial practices greatly increases once the exam approaches. The pressure to pass, the fear of not having enough skills structure her life and occupy her mind. The additional preparation time after the course ends makes solidarity amongst the classmates more difficult: they have no shared space anymore, as travelling to Makati is expensive and far. Once the language exam is successfully completed it gives the opportunity to obtain a visa for the EU which gives Melody moments of distinction. Firstly, she can exhibit independence as she does not have to get married to access the desired space. Secondly, it poses a chance to be different in the extremely predefined life trajectories of lower middle-class and middle-class Filipin@s, who become nurses in order to migrate to English speaking countries or the Middle East. Thirdly, the German language exam allows Melody to uphold her pride which is threatened when choosing the US, Canada or the UK: she demonstrates indignation towards the need to have her English skills examined. She draws confidence from her English skills and by choosing Germany she can evade the humility of being subjected to the different value attributed to varieties of English.

The interspersed language exams of A1 and A2 are crucial moments for Philippine nurses who prepare for Germany: these exams help to pre-select students and, in case of successful completion, have the effect of raising the motivation to continue with the immense investment of the language course (as was briefly discussed in section 4.2.3). However, this chapter focuses entirely on the final language exam, a B1 for Triple Win candidates and a B2 for nurses outside the program: it is this specific

moment where students might access the document (the language certificate) needed for obtaining a visa. The language course served as a preparation for and culminates in the final exam. This chapter centers around the material living conditions and affective responses towards the language exam as (1) holding an imagined promising future in case of successful completion and (2) the pressure and anxiety that accompany the immediate preparation of this decisive moment.

### *7.3.1 A language certificate that promises a future*

The final language exam – and upon successful completion the language certificate – is one of the last elements needed for a work visa application. Philippine nurses who are looking for overseas work opportunities have already gone through an extensive preparation period, most notably studying for a college degree in nursing, passing the board exam and gaining at least two years of work experience. However, upon the choice of Germany as future destination country it is the language certificate that functions as the gate keeping element and, therefore, is the award that grants the fulfillment of the nurses' immediate life goals. The language exam is widely perceived as the entry ticket to Germany rather than an examination of their language skills. Thus, longing and distinction entwine this award as it promises (1) emancipation and (2) distinction.

(1) The successful completion of the language exam and the starting of a (work) life in Europe meant for many of the nurses different forms of emancipation: it holds the opportunity to become independent from their families, to be relieved of the restrictions that came with their Philippine passport as well as to evade the examination of their English skills. The bulk of the nurses I encountered were in their mid- to late twenties and were still (at least partially) sponsored by relatives. Wilbur, who prepared for his B1 exam outside the Triple Win program, dreamt about the life and doors that will open in Germany and was convinced that “it is just the language that is holding us back.” Passing the exam and moving to Europe would mean for him – as well as for many of my other informants – that they will be financially independent from their families. For those nurses who were already responsible for their own and/or their family's economic sustenance, the relocation to Germany would ease this financial obligation. Furthermore, the language certificate was an important step for gaining not

only economic but social independence especially in the case of young women. Katrina, a Triple Win candidate and former Berlitz student who already passed her B1 exam, explained to me how she had to fight for her choice to go to Germany. Katrina comes from a very close-knit and dearly beloved family in the very South of the Philippines. Her parents had been very strict with her: they often did not allow her to leave the house except for work in a nearby hospital and they forbade her to use social media to present herself to the wider public. She had to convince them to let her pursue her dream of working in Germany, which included moving to Manila in order to complete her German language training. Her relocation to Manila was financially and socially eased by her brother's presence in the city: he was preparing for work in Qatar and they could share a room. Her parents' support and excitement for her migration plan increased over the months of language learning as they could not only see her dedication but also heard about the solidarity amongst her and her fellow students. The relief showed on Katrina's face and she was thrilled to experience such a different place like Germany in the near future.

The language certificate was often used synonymously with the visa for the Schengen area. Rob – a Triple Win candidate who already passed his B2 exam – chose the path to Germany after having done extensive research on how “to penetrate Europe.” He had already started to learn some French and Russian when the German labor market opened for Philippine nurses. Immediately he saw his chance of finally receiving a Schengen visa – a visa that would allow him to follow his passion for high speed trains, that would allow him to cross Europe and visit all the different places he has seen in his favorite European films (which he had binge-watched during film festivals in Manila). Rob was explicit about his wish to access this “privilege” attached to a Schengen visa; he was reflecting on the simple luck of those who were born with these privileges as he motioned towards me. He valued the freedom of movement within Europe higher than the money he might earn in Germany. Only few interviews or longer conversations passed without someone being overjoyed of not only visiting different German cities (to which they would have access through each other) but finally seeing Paris – the city of love – or eating pasta in Italy and paying tribute to Catholicism by visiting the Vatican. Often they added destinations without mentioning further associations than their names such as Greece, Denmark or Prague: once in Germany they could go “anywhere”. My informants' enthusiasm about this type of

visa has to be seen in the wider context of the difficulties that accompany Philippine passport holders. During my fieldwork in the Philippines I learnt about the difficulty of obtaining a European visa for young Filipin@s even when I was not strictly doing research: Several friends – whom I met through private connections and who were economically considerably well off – had their tourist visas for Germany denied. From my informants I learnt that there is a whole industry that makes money with unofficial support to obtain visas: companies provide visa seekers with “show money” that is temporarily moved to their bank account in order to meet the visa requirement. Others explained the strategy to travel to nearby countries where no visa is required in order to have their passport stamped – which is said to increase the chance to get a visa for the actually desired destination country (mostly either in North America or in Europe). These harsh restrictions that last on the Philippine passport and the various strategies to circumvent them make the Schengen visa for nurses moving to Germany particularly valuable: it becomes an object of pride as much as a simple option to freely move across borders that were closed before.

Most of my informants at some point told me about their need to justify their choice of overseas work destination to their family and friends. Philippine nurses traditionally leave to countries where the work language is English and learning an additional language seemed a folly. A frequent justification they voiced to me was the fact that the prestigious English speaking destination countries such as the USA, Canada or the UK asked for high scores in an IELTS (International English Language Testing system) exam. The unwillingness to undergo such an examination was then motivation enough to rather study a completely new language and pass a Goethe or TELC exam. My query into the reasons for this preference often remained unanswered or were evaded. Carlos – a Triple Win candidate who regarded language acquisition skills as one of his weaknesses – pinned his decision to financial reasons:

- Carlos     Actually Germany is not one of my priority to work.  
Stef        No? What would be?  
Carlos     That would be in Singapore or in Canada. We have actually relatives in Sing, in Canada that wants me to apply for nurse also in Canada. At first I don't like because it also has IELTS, the English proficiency. So I don't want to take the IELTS.  
Stef        Why?  
Carlos     I don't waaant (laughs). But now, I'm having my language course (laughs). My gosh (we both laugh)! I don't know.

- Stef        How did that happen?  
 Carlos     I don't like to take the IELTS but, yet, I'm having my language course, and it's very difficult. And IELTS is very expensive, it's like ten thousand for an exam. That's only the exam – you also have to have the review for the IELTS.

Interview with Carlos, Makati City, Manila, June 24, 2015

The preferred destination countries of Carlos' family were Canada and Saudi Arabia where they already had relatives. Carlos opposed to working in Saudi Arabia because he was afraid of a culture that illegalized his homosexuality. The hesitation of Carlos to work in Canada is immediately connected to the examination of his English proficiency. When I asked him to be more specific, he laughingly evades but acknowledges the reasons for my question by referring to the contradiction in his choice of still undergoing language training. I continue to investigate into this seemingly contradictory preference, which he simply rephrases again before he resolves in mentioning the financial investment needed for passing IELTS. This answer seemed to me a way of stopping my intense questioning rather than to really try to find (or share) his feelings around choosing German over English. I ceased to further question his motivation although the explanation was still not satisfactory to me: Carlos comes from a small provincial town in Luzon and had to move to Manila for his one year language training. Although language course and exam fees are paid by the German state and his future employer through the Triple Win project, the financial investment for his economic sustenance and the one year wage gap far exceeds the costs to prepare for and pass IELTS. The pressure that comes with performing in English, being examined and presumably also sharing the results with others seems to develop into a fear or shame that is motivation enough to elaborately and expensively evade it. Pefianco Martin's (2008) analysis of "fearing English in the Philippines" discusses and demystifies prevailing beliefs around English by connecting this fear to larger statist policies and economic conditions. I received a further hint towards the reason behind the frequently mentioned aversion to taking IELTS from Rob. Under a brittle laugh, he told me about the IELTS examination which they need to take in order to work in the US "although English is being taught already here". Rob's words point to an indignation that comes with the contradictory treatment of Filipin@s by their former colonial oppressor, the United States: the Philippines look back on a long history of English language teaching that was initiated upon the

usurpation of the country by the US at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has continued until today (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.3.1 for a detailed account). Yet, when Filipin@s want to access the US they are treated as non-proficient English speakers.

During my fieldwork I learnt about a self-understanding of my informants as English speakers that not only results in fear but also in confidence: students frequently judged the English competency of their German teachers or German officials as inferior to their own English, which was considered as a first language. Reasons for evading English language examination, thus, can be connected to fear as well as self-confidence. On the one hand, the extensive German language training and the examination of advanced German language skills – with the financial, social and intellectual hardships it entails – enforces social inequality and has to be seen as continuity of colonial and capitalist oppression. On the other hand, learning German poses a possibility of emancipation for Philippine nurses from their former direct colonizer: they reject a situation that might evoke fear and/or indignation upon them; they evade the requirements inflicted by the US (and other English speaking settler colonies such as Canada, New Zealand or Australia) as well as the need to ask for permission to work in a country to whom many consider already belonging to.

(2) Obtaining the language certificate and being able to move to Germany was a form of distinction for many of my informants. As discussed earlier, overseas work has become a traditional element of a Philippine working class biography. An individual and/or their family often choose training in care work with the intention of accessing work opportunities abroad. Working in countries which have English as the language of communication in hospitals is a widely established choice for employment. Learning a new language and working in Germany is an exotic choice within this strictly precast perspective of what a Philippine nurse's life will look like.

Firstly, learning German was a way of gaining a competitive edge over other Philippine nurses seeking overseas work positions. Ben, a student at the Goethe Institute, started to learn German after he heard about the Triple Win project and the opening of the German market for Philippine nurses. During a group interview with him and Sebastian, whom he knows from working with the same brokering agency, Ben explained how he became intrigued by the idea of preparing for Germany: most of the Philippine nurses leave for English speaking countries and their choice is unexpected

and special. Sebastian and Ben later elaborate on a further competitive edge amongst those Philippine nurses who learn German: after the Goethe Institute lost its monopoly in examining the language, they worry about the quality of their colleagues' German skills. They assume that those nurses who undergo less prestigious examinations could damage the reputation of Philippine nurses in Germany. This worry was soon rephrased into a form of distinction voiced by many of my informants who studied at the Goethe Institute: their examination has a different value and sets them apart amongst the group of Philippine nurses with German language skills.

Secondly, distinction was achieved by framing the language course and especially the final language exam as a challenge that they were willing to accept. Germany is only gradually starting to be known as a work destination to the wider public in the Philippines. The nurses who choose to learn German, thus, consider it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and enjoy a feeling of adventurousness in comparison to those taking "the easier route" of leaving for an English speaking country. Some of the nurses expect the newest technology available in German hospitals, which is one of their motivations to go there. However, most of them consider medical work to be the easy part as they feel self-confident with their extensive training and the years of work experience. The main challenge they recognize is working in German and while a few of my informants were worried about this prospect many of them considered it to be one of the exciting elements of their future position. When I asked Ralf, a student from the Berlitz class I visited, about his feelings towards learning German he elaborated on the challenges he had faced:

- Ralf        It was a great opportunity, like, being part of it. It's like new, new things to do, to discover and push yourself, like
- Me            Hm?
- Ralf        You push yourself, like, it's like you're starting all over again. Something like you've never encountered before. Most people here are English and it's like really a foreign language. It's interesting. No, it's hard. Yeah. (break) even till now, it's like, I find it hard.
- Me            What
- Ralf        I find it hard, the language it's like it's never enough, like, eighth months it's not enough to learn the language
- Me            Mhm, but how do you feel with German?

Ralf        German language? (Long break) It's great, it's way different than other languages, it's complex. They say that it's the most complicated (laughs)

Interview with Ralf, Makati City, Manila, June 27, 2015

Ralf's word choice of "discover and push oneself" point to a joy of embarking on an adventure as well as to entrepreneurialism: Ralf is willing to struggle and put himself into uncomfortable situations in order to skill himself adequately. At the same time he is aware of the fact that there might be easier ways to find employment. Later during the interview Ralf continued to explain that "I like the challenges, that's why I chose the program" and talked about his friends' excitement about this exotic choice. It is these words of pride that show Ralf's agency to be special within the limited options he has.

At the same time, the pride he gains is connected to a hierarchical valuation of the "intellectual" worth of languages: Ralf introduced the idea of German being exceptionally complex, an idea which I immediately characterized as popular language myth (not restricted to German). I tried to make a case for how difficult Tagalog is for me in order to deconstruct his statement. My analysis did not convince him and he simply considered Tagalog an easy language that "even people in the street can speak". Ralf accepted the rumor ("they say") around German's complexity and clearly establishes a stark hierarchy to Tagalog as a "street language": the hierarchy runs along the lines of being highly educated and uneducated, which clearly raises his own status. Ralf's response to his feelings towards German shows the excitement and pride that result from the demanding experience of learning this "complex" language at such a fast pace. Simultaneously, this distinction extends to the German language and thus to Germany. Ralf's valuation of German corresponds with the discourse of the innovational prowess of Germany discussed in section 4.5.3: Germany is seen as a country of poets and thinkers, who poetize and think in a language that matches their excellence – an attribution of value to German which necessarily devalues other (in this case Philippine) languages.

Thirdly, the language certificate gives access to Europe rather than the United States and thus to the distinction they make between the two continents. While public opinion might not have shifted from an admiration of the United States over Europe, within smaller circles of especially young and adventurous people the former colonizer



is increasingly seen as uninteresting. Different European countries offer film festivals, the cultural institutes promote themselves during events and exhibits: these are possibilities of accessing a cultural life for many of my informants.<sup>122</sup> It is within this environment that I often heard the US labelled as uncultured. During a group interview with Triple Win candidates from Berlitz, they started dreaming about Europe. I asked if people in the Philippines are not usually more interested in the US. Chris quickly and passionately replied:

- Chris    Aaah, I guess yeah, most, cause they only know about US, they don't know much about Europe. But for those who knows Europe they will always choose Europe over US (*they laugh*)
- Stef     Why would you think so?
- Chris    Aehm, they say once you set foot in Europe, you'll never choose a different country other than Europe. I guess because a variety of places? So each place has a different culture, architecture and compared to US where everything is just the same, you see buildings here, buildings there, farm here, farm there, and in Europe different country, different culture, different everything. it's more diverse, more fun I guess, mehr Spass [more fun].

Interview with Chris (and two of his classmates, Selma and Mai),  
Makati city, Manila, June 17, 2015

While Chris seems to agree with my observation, he quickly distinguishes amongst those people who know about Europe from those who do not know. His words imply an objective cultural and architectural superiority of Europe over the United States which once realized cannot be unlearned. He continues to elaborate on this evaluation by introducing an unknown authority (“they say”) that spreads this knowledge. All of the interview participants belong to the circle of the educated, producing a clear in-group feeling amongst them. This conception of Europe, thus, fosters a self-image of an adventurous youth, who look for a type of fun that comes with an acquired taste of diversity. Chris’ framing of Europe as a country is interesting in two ways: firstly, it is Europe that is directly compared to the United States and not Germany. Secondly, rather than equalizing different cultural identities, economies or histories as is often

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<sup>122</sup> A comparative study of the cultural institutes of European countries and their work in the Philippines in connection to public opinion would help substantiate (or challenge) this observation. Such a study could uncover strategies of foreign cultural policy and its connection with state and economic interests of (European) nation states.

the motivation of the European or American misconception of “the country of Africa” (Magee 2012), Chris considers the unity of Europe as special because of all the diverse cultures it encompasses. His description of the advantages of Europe not only reveals the feeling of distinction on the side of those who decide to work in Germany, it also refers back to the previously mentioned emancipation from the restricting Philippine passport, as access to Germany is access to Europe.

### *7.3.2 Pressure and anxiety during preparation for the language exam*

The emancipation and distinction that is connected to a successfully completed language exam and the hope to achieve it is connected to an immense pressure and anxiety that increases as the final exam moves closer. Failure not only shatters their own hope but has to be shared with the family and/or their sponsors. This burden is further intensified by specific conditions surrounding the B1 or the B2 exam such as (1) the payment of the exam fees, (2) the contents of the exams, and (3) the formal set-up of the exams.

(1) The B1 and B2 exams are major financial investments for the students and their families as the exam fees considerably rise after the A1 or A2.<sup>123</sup> Triple Win candidates do not have to pay for the fee themselves as it is included in the program. They will have to pay for the exam in case they fail their first try. Nurses outside the Triple Win program generally have to pay every exam fee until successful completion unless they have a different arrangement with their brokering agencies. This case is highly unlikely: A few language schools and brokering agencies have advertised such programs but all of the nurses outside Triple Win that I have met had to fully fund their German language preparation themselves. While the investment needed for the first try is already a great financial strain, it is mostly the fear of having to repeat it that worries and preoccupies the students: they have to ask their family for more support and feel the need to justify themselves for having spent a huge amount of money in vain.

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<sup>123</sup> In 2015 the Goethe Institute Philippines charged 4650 Peso for an A1 or A2 exam, whereas the fees for the B1 rose to 6300 Peso and for the B2 to 7400 Peso (as a reference: a nurse in a private institution earns around 10'000 Peso per month and someone employed at one of the governmental hospitals around 20'000 Peso).

The pressure even rises for those students outside Triple Win who have to pass a B2 exam (instead of being able to move to Germany with a B1) but do not have the financial means to pay for the fees. Their preparation time often includes the need to constantly scan for other, cheaper examination possibilities, which back in 2015 were yet rare and highly obscure. Such was the case for Wilbur, who was preparing for the B1 exam when I met him. He had already exhausted all his savings from his overseas work in Libya and had to rely on his father's financial support, who works in Saudi Arabia, as well as on sponsorship from more distant relatives, who work in Canada and the United States. Wilbur knew about the need of passing the B2 for enrolling with several brokering agencies but another few months preparation time were financially not feasible for him. He received the reassurance of a brokering agency from Germany that a B1 exam will suffice for obtaining a visa. Wilbur wished to believe this reassurance but was not completely convinced: he maintained his collaboration with the German brokering agency who informed him about negotiations with the foreign ministry in Germany to be able to bring in Philippine nurses with B1 certificates. At the same time he is searching for possibilities to enter Austria with a B1 upon hearing rumors about this market opening (a rumor I could not verify). Wilbur is still "hoping, hoping" that he can go to Germany with a B1 and stresses to "thank god that I have my father, who's helping me also." His anxiety becomes visible in this constant, entrepreneurial self-management and the regimentation that comes with high exam fees which extends from him to his closer family and distant relatives and heavily relies on remittances and savings from overseas work.

(2) The B1 and B2 exams have the reputation of being exponentially more difficult than A1 or A2. Students and teachers alike told me about a scandal that happened at the Goethe Institute a few months earlier, at the end of 2014: none of the examinees passed the B2 exam, not even the students from the Goethe Institute itself. The grammatical knowledge between the A2 and the B1 is said to sharply increase. I witnessed this sharp increase of and focus on grammar during my visit of the Triple Win class at Berlitz: I could see the exhaustion not only in their words but when I meet them unexpectedly in the area. Once, when I was sitting in the Goethe Institute library, Justin arrived: "bin am Arsch" [I'm completely shattered/fucked up]. I had to laugh

because of the bluntness and he continued: “Herr Daniel ist am Arsch, wir sind am Arsch” [Sir Daniel is completely shattered/fucked up, we are completely shattered/fucked up]. They had a tough day at school with a lot of grammar and yet still he came to the Goethe Institute to study. Daniel, their teacher, mentioned that because of the time pressure he had to quit making role play exercises and exclusively focus on grammar and vocabulary.

During the exam it is especially the hearing and the speaking part where most students struggle and it is these modules that are most often failed.<sup>124</sup> On the one hand, the fast pace of the hearing exercises of the B1 and B2 exam are identified as particularly challenging and difficult to prepare during the language course. The speaking part, on the other hand, poses a different difficulty which I could witness during a B1 mock exam at Berlitz as well as during interviews: the need to perform in German elicited a deep anxiety which either showed or was voiced in bodily reactions such as headache and nosebleed. They feared the requirement of speaking spontaneously when they usually took their time and first composed German sentences in their mind. They were deeply worried about the possible, imagined reactions of German speakers: a worry of being harshly corrected, being thought of as stupid or having people secretly laugh at their incompetency. They told about their experience with “the grammar police,” a term used for acquaintances, family or even friends who critically judge their English competency and later gossip about the mistakes. I have unwittingly raised such anxiety myself with informants who wanted to be interviewed by me. When they voiced their intention of practicing with a “native speaker” (often as a form of exam preparation) but kept talking in English I would switch to German at some point. These moments were always met with uncomfortable laughter, silences and resuming our conversation in English and only happened with interviewees I have not engaged with outside this setting. The immense pressure I raised was only revealed to me during the transcription of the interviews: I had felt completely self-confident with my good intentions and was

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<sup>124</sup> My knowledge on the exam’s difficulty and the numbers of students failing the speaking and listening part is based on their own emotional reactions and observations as well as the knowledge of teachers and the Triple Win coordinator at the GiZ. An analysis of the exam material and participant observation during and immediately after the exams could give further insight into the gatekeeping functions of exams and their effect on the lives of students.

sure of a solidary encounter without realizing that we had not yet had enough time to establish trust. It was such interactions marked by a highly unequal distribution of power amongst the participants – be it a mock exam or an interview serving as exam preparation – that revealed the emotional pressure of (potentially) having one’s language competency examined and judged.<sup>125</sup>

An additional pressure arising from having to pass the exam is mostly voiced by the teachers – who increasingly realize how Eurocentric the whole learning and testing material is. These teachers only noticed this problematic element of the exam after having spent some time abroad, in this case learning about life in the Philippines: Christiane, a teacher at the Goethe Institute with many years of experience in teaching German as a foreign language, suddenly realized how difficult questions were that involved knowledge on the topography of Germany. Examinees had to answer a question on which region is suitable for holidays for a particular person. Christiane was pointing to the difficulty for Philippine language students to know that the North of Germany is rather flat and therefore not suitable for someone who loves hiking in the mountains. Teachers observed such imposition of “general knowledge” also in questions on art, culture or the German education system – a knowledge which, rather than general, is highly specific. These attentive teachers were clear on the fact that is impossible to adequately judge an essay or opinion questions without knowing Germany very well, the exam, thus, going much further than examining language skills.

(3) Different elements of the formal set-up of the language exams held implications for the students’ material living conditions. Triple Win candidates from Berlitz had to prepare for two curricula: the Berlitz method and – in order to prepare for the Goethe exam – the exam preparation of the Goethe Institute. This led to an increase in course

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<sup>125</sup> The fearful response to the speaking part of the language exam points to another moment of affective density: language use. This area of research has been discussed as foreign language learning anxiety (e.g. Ohata 2005). It is Joseph Park’s (2015) seminal article on structures of feeling towards English in Korea that analyses foreign language learning anxiety from a decolonial perspective. The bodily feeling of “junuk” felt by Korean speakers of English closely resembles “nosebleed” in the Philippines: a (verbal) response used by Filipin@s mostly in connection to speaking or hearing English (see Osborne (2018) for an intricate analysis of “nosebleed” that also points to the liberating potential in a joking use of the word). Park’s findings ask for a revisiting of my material (and for further research) concerning affective responses towards language use, an aspect of language education that goes beyond the scope of this analysis.

hours as well as homework, which I frequently witnessed when Berlitz students came to the Goethe Institute library in the early evening for further studying. On the other hand, Non-Triple Win candidates had to additionally deal with the different examination practice for B2. The B1 exam consists of different modules. Each of these modules has to be passed. In case of failure, the student only has to re-take the specific modules – and the second examination fee is reduced. Unlike the B1, the B2 exam is cumulative: should students fail one module they have to retake and pay the full exam a second time. This element is exhausting for students because of the tactical decision they have to take in order to find the most successful but least expensive option to pass the exam: some might not be able to finance a second try, others particularly fear that they have to review the whole course material for a second try. This increases the pressure from re-taking the B1, when they at least could completely focus their preparation on the module they still had to pass<sup>126</sup>.

The main aspects of the formal set-up of the exams that greatly influenced the students' experiences were the geographical location of the examination centers and the temporal aspect of the language exam and the potential choice of the exam date. The Goethe Institute – the main examination center is located in Salcedo Village. As has been explained in detail in section 6.2.1, this is an elite space in Makati City which poses a great challenge for students to access the language school: I could observe the devastation of a student who failed to sit the exam on time. This student lived in a poor area of Quezon City – the most populous and widest city in metro Manila and former home to the Goethe Institute. On the day of his exam traffic was congested to such a degree that he could not reach the examination center. The Goethe Institute did not reconsider the case of his exam application and he faced the payment of the whole exam fee for a second try. As explained in section 5.5.4, a few language schools tried to gain the right for examination of German language skills that is recognized by

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<sup>126</sup> This pressure seemed to have been noticed and addressed by the Goethe Institute Philippines in the meantime: since June 2016, they have a special examination regulation to conduct the B2 exam not cumulative but modular. Should students fail, they once have the chance to retake either only the oral or the written part and pay part of the exam fees (2500 Peso for the oral, 4500 Peso for the written part, as opposed to 9'600 for Goethe Institute students and 11'000 for external students (Goethe-Institut Philippinen 2016). While a cumulative B2 exam is the Goethe Institute standard worldwide, they want to globally change their procedure to modular as of August 2019 (Goethe-Institut 2018).

the German embassy. The geographically selective accessibility of the Goethe Institute is one of the motivations to open examination centers in other parts of the country (a strategy which is also taken up by the Goethe Institute itself when it provided examinations in Cebu City, in central Philippines). This market penetration strategy is designed to increase profit through geographical expansion and – in cases such as the one described above – might mildly level inequalities that are inscribed in the prestigious location of the Goethe Institute.

The temporal aspect of the exam structured the life of all students: non-Triple Win candidates had to choose the best possible date to take the exam and Triple Win candidates had to arrange their life around the exam date specified by the GiZ in collaboration with the Goethe Institute. The choice of when to take the exam was determined by the dates of the language courses as well as the set dates by the examination centers. Students therefore had to calculate how to best combine these two dates: either they chose to have as little time as possible between ending the course and sitting the exam or they opted for a longer period between the two events which would give them additional preparation time. The students' contemplations were marked by weighing financial drawbacks and optimal linguistic preparation. Between the different exam dates often lie several months. This is especially the case for the B2 exams, which has fewer enrollments. The dates are often tied to a specific course taught at the Goethe Institute. The immediate completion of the exam after the language course is (in case of success) the least expensive option and the teachers' preparation is still fresh and specifically designed towards the exam. However, many students considered a few additional months as the time they needed to repeat the fast-paced grammar and vocabulary training they received during the course. This was sometimes based on an advice they had received by their teacher who had realized that they were not ready yet. A drawback to postponing the exam was the individual learning without a class or teacher and the danger of forgetting. Additionally, the financial investment in the everyday sustenance of their lives increased. Both of these paths were considered difficult, which lead to an increase in anxiety surrounding the choice of the exam date. Those already most precarious were in greater danger of failure and facing additional costs with both of the options: the double pressure of working and studying or visiting a cheap language schools with dubious arrangements

rose the need for an additional preparation period, which in turn prolonged the waiting period before departing to Germany.

Triple Win candidates have to comply to an exam date scheduled for them and they have no choice in what procedure might suit them best. These exam dates often correspond with the future employers' needs, which results in a condensed preparation period because of their wish to have the additional work support as soon as possible. Employers who collaborate with Triple Win usually have to hire at least two nurses from the same country of origin, which means that taking the exam turns into a collective experience. While this poses a great relief for many it can also add to the pressure to perform: Katrina and Tim both had a contract with a home for elderly people in Southern Germany, which informed the GiZ that they wanted them at the earliest opportunity. They were both taken out of their class at Berlitz and provided with additional private tutoring. Katrina passed the early exam; Tim failed the listening module of B1. Tim was under immense pressure officially brought forward to him by the GiZ and his future employer but additionally, he felt to wrong Katrina who now had to wait for her deployment until he successfully completed the exam. It was lucky for both of them that they already heavily trusted each other and had developed a friendship which made this tense situation more bearable and supportive than the dire competition it could entice.

The regimenting quality of being subjected to such outside regulations and the accompanying pressure and anxiety became particularly visible with the experience of the Triple Win class I visited at Berlitz. The class was also subject to a condensed preparation period upon the pressure of some of the students' future employers. The intense focus on the grammar and the omission of any relaxing exercises such as role plays already had an immense impact on the student's performance: Daniel, their teacher, explained how his formerly motivated students started to get worse, they were completely overworked. They heard the devastating news that the exam was cancelled around one week before it was scheduled to take place. The reason seemed to be contract problems between the GiZ and the Goethe Institute. The class reacted to the news with desperation and fatigue: they had been energized and had painstakingly prepared themselves for the exam. To wait for a new date meant that their teacher, Daniel, whom they deeply trusted, would already have left for Germany. Many of them



had planned to visit their families in the province after the eight-months learning period in Manila: They had to cancel their plans and flights. At the same time, the money for staying in Manila started running out for many, as were the contracts of their rooms at the boarding house or their shared flats, where they had already searched for new nurses to take over their contract or bed space. The class continued the language course for a few days but then had to take a one-week break. Attendance was not as regular as before when they resumed class. The time surrounding the language preparation reached a critical height. The classmates talked with each other about their experience and tried to come to terms with the fact that they were sick of waiting, that while they could not wait any longer, they were still forced to wait: after one year of language course and one year of waiting for it before that, they now have to wait again for the exam.<sup>127</sup>

### *7.3.3 Discussing a promising future and increasing pressure*

The previous sections showed how the B1 or B2 language certificate in German provides Philippine nurses with opportunities of distinction and emancipation. The promise of a better life that entwines the successful completion of the exam is emanated into the preparation period: the students therefore do not primarily feel to have their language competency examined but rather consider the exam as an opportunity to enter Germany. Learning German and especially preparing for the exam thus becomes a space of longing for and imagining a promising future. A German language certificate grants the students with a competitive edge over other Philippine nurses seeking overseas employment just as much as it poses an exotic choice that promises further adventures to come. The students value a future where they can become independent from financial support of their relatives or even contribute to the family's economic sustenance. The Schengen visa they obtain through the exhibiting of a language certificate allows them to access space that previously lay beyond reach. German language examination further helps evade the

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<sup>127</sup> By the time of transcribing the interview and writing about this desperation of the intermittent waiting periods, I have learnt that waiting will continue after they finish the exam – it can take up to six months until they will have a visa and a flight to Germany even if they have already found an employer. This is a crucial period during their preparation for Germany, which was often the most draining moment – a period that I can only quickly touch upon in the subsequent discussion (section 7.4).

indignation or shame that accompany the examination of the students' English skills in case of working in the UK and its settler colonies.

The language preparation before the language exam, however, is also marked by material effects on the students' lives: they have to procure additional financial resources for paying the immediate preparation as well as the exam fees that sharply increase for the final exams. Many of those students who had not stopped working by that moment decided to quit their positions as nurses and completely focus on the preparation of the exam – while this decision on the one hand was due to the much needed time for preparation it was also due to the expensive exam fees and the need to pass it on their first try. The ending of the students' work contract, however, also meant that their wages stop which in turn further increases the pressure to pass the exam – and weighs heavy on the sustenance during the waiting periods before and after the exam. The students deal with an increasing emotional pressure of having to perform in areas of great insecurity such as listening and especially speaking in German – this pressure has direct consequences to their bodily well-being. Furthermore, the formal set-up of the exams and the restricted rights to examine was accompanied temporal and geographical limitations: the need to comply to specific exam dates and the need to travel to examination centers resulted in additional waiting periods and financial investment that regimented the students' everyday life. It was mostly the students of the most precarious socio-economic background who had to be exceptionally restrictive with themselves while innovatively scan for different options to pass the exam and provide for their own and their families' sustenance.

This pressure led to a severe deterioration of the mental and physical health of students as the final language exam approached: they explained how stressful it was, how they became sick before and during the exam. They posted pictures of the fast food they ate, they dealt with deep worries and sleeping disorders, the smokers heavily increased their consumption of cigarettes. The previously described bonds of friendship that were established during the language course remained crucial for many students especially during this emotionally and intellectually difficult time: they formed learning groups where they practiced their language skills and shared preparation material. Some of them were lucky to have teachers who continued to support them even after the course ended. Those teachers were answering grammatical questions on Facebook

or via e-mail, others continued correcting writing exercises or provided their former students with additional material on German language training. However, solidarity amongst each other became increasingly difficult: Students who had finished their language course had to leave the city. Makati – and especially the library of the Goethe Institute – was the physical space needed for the students' interaction. With the end of their language course it was not feasible to travel to Makati, either because it is too expensive and/or too far and traffic-invested. Those students who were economically better off hired private tutors, others were trying to find spaces to practice German for free, such as online forums or asking me to be interviewed.

This increasing isolation added to the pressure resulting from the need to pass these difficult exams that determine the immediate future. Many students turned to hope and/or god as a coping strategy: on the one hand this served as a relief from the demanding entrepreneurial self-management. On the other hand it helped escape regimentation by not feeling subjected to structural oppression. Hope and/or god can be seen as a remedy to any kind of individual or structural responsibility. The longing for a promising future that is attached to the language certificate can already be considered as a form of hope. Furthermore, hope might even have stood at the beginning of the journey to overseas work – when finishing high school, when choosing a nursing career and when starting with German language education. During almost all of my conversations and interviews, the students at some point mentioned hope with regard to the passing of the language exam and the subsequent obtaining of the work visa and departure to Germany. While in many moments these evocations of hope or thanking god seemed merely formulaic expressions, they were at times also connected to a more spiritual quality of the Christian theological virtue of (supernatural) hope.

Hope in a Christian understanding is the virtue of the “not yet” that accompanies the Christian life of being on the way (*status viatoris*), a way that rather than spatially should be understood in regard to its temporality (Pieper 2006: 2). Prayers are an expression and proclamation of hope (Pieper 2006: 10): I overheard students talking about their hope and faith or their evocations of seemingly mundane prayers when they did feel the “not yet” most strongly. These were the moments of the approaching language exam or release of the results as well as the time of waiting for a visa or the

date of the flight to Germany. Hope in a Christian understanding and the enactment of rituals of hope are then not only carrying students through the “not yet” of the waiting periods but also holds relief in the case of failing the exam: on the basis of god’s mercy and omni-potency super-natural hope leads to fulfillment even if it does not necessarily follow the believer’s natural hope (Pieper 2006: 12-13). A student from the Berlitz class that I visited shared her feelings and their interconnectedness with her faith on social media, where she documented her path towards the final B1 exam. The waiting period before finally receiving an exam date which lasted for a few weeks was marked by intermittent notes on her devastation, depression and impatience. It was the reassurance of believing in a plan of god behind the waiting as well as the positive feelings of hope in god’s presence that sustained her emotional well-being during this period. She announced the day of the exam as “now or never.” During the following four weeks of waiting for the results, her alternate and conflicting emotions became particularly evident: while professing feelings of hope based on the fact that her god has brought her that far and will bring her farther, she also shared her restlessness which she redeemed with handing her life over to the will of god and citing the bible: “not my will but yours be done.” She shared her failing the exam by turning to the lord’s control over her life on the day the results were communicated. She will pass the exam on her second try a few months later – which she attributes to god’s glory. Her narrative of this decisive time of her life gives an idea of the pressure and anxiety she had to endure. Her faith was a coping strategy that allowed her to deal with the waiting, the failing and the need to go through this emotional turmoil a second time. It is my own atheist and anti-capitalist perspective that makes me struggle with fully understanding the potential of hope and its virtuous, fulfilling and relieving quality: While I appreciate the power of hope to turn away from the entrepreneurial self-responsibility for a successful working career, I consider religious hope a useful means for the state and capitalist industry to be spared from outrage and criticism. Nevertheless, I came to observe that hope helped some individuals to deal with the regimentation of Germany’s immigration policies.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> This observation points to the fact that I might have needed to collect further data that would allow a more substantial analysis of hope – a direction of research that has already been pointed to most notably by Narotzky and Besnier (2014); Del Percio (2018b) as well as Heller and McElhinny (2017)

Furthermore, it became clear that hope as a coping strategy was not only accessed individually but also collectively: I witnessed an intense form of praying and hope when I visited Tim in his home town in the Visayas. Tim was one of my main informants and he was happy to show me around the sites of the city that had been important to him. Tim is a Triple Win candidate and former Berlitz student who had already passed the B1 exam at the time of my visit. He had moved back to the Visayas in order to save money during the waiting period for the approval of his visa and the departure to Germany. He showed me one of the oldest churches of the Philippines, which was home to one of the most important Catholic artefacts in the country and was a place of pilgrimage. We stood in a long line of people in order to pass the statue, in front of which the people prayed and crossed themselves. Tim observed that I was unable to follow his example and we discussed my struggle with faith with mutual respect for our different perspectives. He told me how he came to pray in this church before he got the notification of acceptance for the Triple Win program. Now he was praying for himself and his imminent departure to Germany as well as for his classmates and friends who were still struggling. We followed his custom and lighted candles in the church: a candle for Jason and the Berlitz class, for whom we wished to pass the upcoming exam and for Rob that he would soon find an employer. Tim lighted the final candle for all Triple Win nurses “that they can all fly to Germany”. Like Tim, many of my informants turned to the first personal plural pronoun when imagining leaving to and being in Germany – the longing for and the struggle to reach the destination country thus becomes a collective experience rather than individual success (or failure). Tim’s evocations of hope can be considered as a moment of practicing solidarity, of standing together in support rather than competition.

#### **7.4 Discussion: speakers moving through the space of language preparation**

The previous analysis chapters already discussed the language certificate and language education with regard to their roles in the management of labor migration and the evolution of a market. From the perspectives of the involved states, it is Germany’s decision to ask for a language certificate that initiated a major selection criterium and gave the language education industry the opportunity to develop. It selects those future

labor migrants who are willing and able to invest in their preparation as ready-to-work employees. Germany does not appear solely as a country in dire need of care workers and a mere competitor in the global care work economy but becomes a first world country engaged in sustainable development. Thus, the language certificate helped Germany to establish itself as an attractive and superior destination country that can ask for such preparation and investment: The pressure that an exam puts on workers and how it is felt by them implements a natural superiority of the (German) state. This results in a hierarchization of needs of the “three winners” of this labor migration: Filipin@s are positioned to win just a little more than Germany – and therefore are “rightly” subject to regimentation and control.

Ultimately, it is the requirement of undergoing a language examination in order to obtain a visa that establishes the need for language education. The period of language preparation spanning multiple months creates a space for distinction: On the one hand, it is Germany that can promote itself through the Goethe Institute’s language courses as well as in their provision of additional advertisement materials and their architectonic arrangement. The future labor migrants are celebrated as entrepreneurs which not only financially but also morally shifts the responsibility of preparation onto the migrants themselves. The evolving market feeds off these regulations and entrepreneurial strategies of individuals, as profit maximizing market strategies increase the pressure on interested nurses from the socio-economically lowest positions.

From a perspective of those Philippine nurses who decide to prepare for Germany, it is language education that stands at the beginning of their journey, and the language certificate is an object of longing and the examination an event in the future. The language course opened an immense time/space, which uncovered the regimenting quality of the entrepreneurial practices needed for everyday sustenance as well as for financial and intellectual investment. This process elicits a growing loyalty of future labor migrants for their chosen destination country. However, the language course also provided the opportunity to form friendships that subverted (and sometimes supported) the underlying exploitative logics of the preparation period. In contrast, the final language exam is a time compressed moment that lasts for a few hours, a much-anticipated event that determines the immediate future of the students’ lives. On the

one hand, the language certificate holds implications of a better future connected to its successful completion and the need to grab this opportunity. Obtaining a language certificate not only poses a chance to gain a competitive edge within the search for overseas work positions but also promises a chance to be adventurous and special. Furthermore, it secures access to Europe – a space difficult to explore with a Philippine passport – and relieves the looming indignation or shame that might come with having one's English competency examined. On the other hand, an analysis of the fundamental material and emotional effects of the approaching language exam revealed the rising pressure. Religious rather than mundane hope is a way of dealing with this anxiety that comes with imminently preparing and taking an exam, which in case of successful completion, grants the opening of the envisioned migratory path.

An analysis of the lived experiences of the language course and the language certificate revealed how effects on the material living conditions of students and their affective responses can be shaped and used by state and industry. The anxiety and hope elicited by regimentation, the need to constantly deploy entrepreneurial strategies, and the aspired access serve an economic and statist agenda. Germany thus gains and binds an ill-paid, yet loyal and grateful workforce from which the language education industry can profit. However, this chapter can also end with a note derived from the intricate analysis of the lived experiences of nurses. Such an analysis was attentive to the ways the time/space of the language course gave future labor migrants (and their teachers) the opportunity to develop friendships and form bonds. While even this solidarity and collective hope can, and was, co-opted for the preservation and exacerbation of social inequalities, they also showed their disrupting potential: Against all odds, students defied competition among each other and even found accomplices in some teachers who chose to be loyal to their students rather than their employers.





## Chapter 8

### Conclusion & Discussion

Since the implementation of the bilateral labor agreement in 2013, labor migration of Philippine nurses to Germany has developed into a profitable business for the two states and players in the industry, including brokers and language education and testing providers. In 2019, during a visit to the Philippines, a state secretary to the German Federal Ministry of Health promised that “the procedures will be streamlined and simplified, and the working conditions will even become more attractive” (cited by GPCCI 2019). Future developments will show what this so-called simplified and streamlined procedure means for German language education and testing in the Philippines. There are historical continuities of imperialism and patriarchy shaping this agreement for state and industry interests – the centrality of language, however, is a change. The main intervention of the German state in this labor migration is the imposition of a language certificate as a visa requirement. It is important to note that asking for a high level of German competency prior to entering Germany or starting to work is a choice. Although language skills are important for care work, nurse migration to Germany in the 1970s was not based on such a requirement and today, nurses of EU nationality can start work without having German skills. In both these cases, it remained and remains within the power of the employers to ask for specific language requirements and to organize language education. Certain members of an association of employers criticize the new language requirement, considering it a hindrance to the much-needed foreign workforce and a detriment compared to other

European competitors. Indeed, nurses, language teachers and brokers in the Philippines judge language to be the biggest challenge and in the words of the GiZ's Triple Win project coordinator, "it's just the language that is holding them back."

This conclusion and discussion begins with (1) a short summary of each of the four analysis chapters and (2) a summary connecting the four chapters through a discussion of the main processes that make this labor migration work. It continues by (3) presenting the future directions that research could take and (4) discussing ways of making critical sociolinguistics applicable to the area it studies.

(1) This study analyzed German language education and testing in the Philippines in connection with care work migration in a competitive global economy. The first analysis chapter focused on the 'migration apparatus,' that is, the impact of state involvement in language education at institutions, in documents, its architectonic arrangement, and place within salient debates. It showed how Philippine nurses undergo a long, highly regulated and multi-layered selection process. Selection criteria are mainly based on economic means and willingness to invest a lot of time and energy. Germany is able to relinquish responsibility for costs that would arise for a welfare state that has to (or should) ensure healthcare to its population. Language education and the need to go through language testing before obtaining a visa helps Germany to persist within international competition for care workers: The investment creates loyalty. This loyalty is further strengthened by Germany's use of the platform created by the long language education period (and the fact that they can ask for a language certificate): Germany presents itself as an attractive destination country and a European powerhouse leading in economic and technological innovation. Additionally, it positions itself as a morally clean superior entity engaged in helping a Third World country. The second analysis chapter focuses on the evolving German language education market in the Philippines. This market is closely connected with the opening of the German market for Philippine nurses and the lines between brokering and language teaching and testing are blurred. Dependency on the bilateral labor agreement that includes language competency as entry requirement, however, differs greatly among the different providers of language education: A sudden decrease in students threatens the position of employed teachers as well as teacher-entrepreneurs who try to capitalize on their German language competencies. Stronger

players in the market can not only resist such a negative market development but also build new markets that make them less dependent. The sudden availability of German language education infrastructure and (the potential) German speaking Filipin@s results in increasing involvement of German companies in business process outsourcing to the Philippines. The third analysis chapter focuses on the Goethe Institute, Germany's governmental cultural agency, which is a crucial institution for the selection of migrant workers in the regulatory infrastructure. It is also the strongest competitor in the German language education market in the Philippines. This makes the Goethe Institute a key space in the migration infrastructure. The fourth and last analysis chapter exclusively analyzes the impact of language education and testing on the material living conditions and affective responses of Philippine nurses as they prepare for work in Germany. Different temporalities, including the long duration of language education and the time-compressed moment of the language exam, have effects that are conducive to the states' selection and the industry's profit; nevertheless, the analysis reveals moments that oppose the underlying capitalist and state authoritative logic: the lived experiences of Philippine nurses show subversive openings in moments that seem as oppressive as investment or caution for co-optation in moments that seem as liberatory as solidarity.

(2) The four analysis chapters discussed individually mainly focus on specific aspects of the 'migration infrastructure.' The analysis forms a derive: a critical drift maps the infrastructure in the first three chapters and links its different layers. These chapters provide a cartography in written form. The last analysis chapter, on the other hand, changes perspective from a more bird's eye view to one of physically walking and experiencing the migration infrastructure. However, a map, as nuanced it may be, is always a reduction and a consolidation of boundaries. Trouillot (2003:83-84) theorizes the state and points to its material relevance that lies in processes rather than institutions. This observation helps Feldman (2012: 16) introduce the "migration apparatus" and answer his question as to what exactly "the ghost in the machine" is. The analysis chapters tried to expose the ghost by making the universal visible in the particular, by connecting structure and lived experiences. The following summary attempts to shed light on "the ghost in the machine" (that is the migration infrastructure) by focusing on processes that run through the infrastructure: processes that hold it together, make it run but sometimes hold the potential to sabotage the

machine. These four main processes are distinction, regimentation, entrepreneurialization, and solidarity.

The process of *distinction* is prevalent in the discourse of the Philippines, Germany, and the language schools that try to access the language education market. The Philippine state actively promotes nurses from the Philippines by emphasizing their “natural” caring and language-adept qualities that serve to rank them above the competition in other labor brokerage countries. Germany, on the other hand, promotes itself as an attractive destination country – demonstrating pride and prestige by showcasing its innovative economic prowess and image as a land of tradition and fairytale castles, and by promising access to a cosmopolitan class. All this is done in comparison (with Germany positioned as superior) to the rest of Europe and the US. Competition within the language education industry leads to marketing of the different language teaching institutions and teacher-entrepreneurs, as they try to distinguish themselves among their competitors. Distinction is most closely connected with a feeling of pride, with its capacity to set up hierarchies and to make the desired object of pride explicitly more ideal and attractive than others. Such moments of hierarchization become particularly visible in cases where different discourses of pride come into conflict, as has been shown in chapter 4.

The *regimentation* of Philippine nurses who decide to work in Germany is a result of a fine-grained selection process. Regulatory documents distributed by German governmental institutions (the German embassy and the GiZ) constantly point to the missing qualifications of nurses and their need to go through medical, professional and linguistic examinations. Inspection and testing are legitimized by assertion of these purported deficits and by positioning the desired workforce as inferior to the standards and demands of the destination country. The duration of the language courses and the location of the Goethe Institute in an elite space of global capitalism in the Philippines – Salcedo Village in Makati City in Manila – serve to select and regiment nurses according to their financial, emotional and physical investments: Analysis of the language education market reveals that most of the costs of preparation to become ready-to-work employees are undertaken by the nurses themselves. The closely connected feelings of anxiety become visible in the transition management materials of the Goethe Institute, where the definition of the ideal, law-abiding citizen is

negotiated. However, the intensity of the effects of anxiety and fear accompanying regimentation can only be comprehended on the ground through lived experiences and encounters. This became visible in section 4.2 as Carlos' journey demonstrated the different institutions' impact and importance within the process of preparing for labor migration.

*Entrepreneurialization* positions and/or trains nurses to be fully responsible for their employability and acceptance as immigrants in Germany. It is fostered by the education system and education discourses in the Philippines and by Germany's transition management materials and implementation of regulations. Furthermore, the evolving language education market requires nurses to incessantly scan for the best options to learn German. Entrepreneurialization cultivates individualization and self-enhancement. It professes that people are fully self-responsible and can participate freely on the market. This makes hierarchies invisible by proposing an individual's complete agency to achieve her or his dreams if the necessary hard work is invested. At the same time, entrepreneurialization enforces hierarchies; this was revealed by the affective responses of deep anxiety and only occasional pride produced by the nurses' experiences during their preparation for the German market. This connection became particularly visible in chapter 5: the pressure on nurses who try to find the best and cheapest way to (learn German and) go to Germany was intensified by the evolving language education market.

*Solidarity* was encouraged by the provision of space by the Goethe Institute; within the spatial arrangement of Makati's business district, an accessible library and a few tables where people could meet, learn and discuss without the obligation to consume were notable. However, the main moments where solidarities became visible required a grounded perspective in lived experiences. The intense time period for language education— months of collectively preparing for a decisive short moment in the form of a language exam— was a time in which friendships developed. This occurred among students and classmates who shared a similar life trajectory; they knew about the financial strains that each individual and their families experienced and hoped to gain mobility that they could never obtain with their Philippine passports without a Schengen visa. There were moments when they decided to put their friends' well-being before the efficiency of their own advancement in their migratory plans. Friendships

also developed between students and their teachers; these friendships transcended a relationship of ‘altruistic charity’ of German teachers— an image of teaching that evokes a transfer of the teacher’s knowledge onto their students, who will pass the test once enlightened. The reciprocity of their relationships granted friendships that led to moments of loyalty on the part of teachers towards their friends and away from their nation or employer. All of these moments where people connected in a deep and trustful manner were reflective of solidarity formation (see May (2012) for a theoretical analysis of the revolutionary potential of friendship).

These processes are vital for the migration infrastructure to function; they help people move through the apparatus, participate and consume in the market, and decide on the right destination country or place to recruit a workforce. As such, they are crucial for the continuous exploitation of historically established mechanisms of domination. Intrinsic hierarchizations are fostered as Germany embraces an empire of care; they provide the basis of a societal system marked by capitalism and patriarchy that thrives on the devaluation of care and the valuation of finance and property.

(3) The dynamic field asks for further sociolinguistic inquiry into the political dimension of language education and testing. The need for future research is nicely captured at the roundtable of the Mabuhay Germany promotion event in the Philippines in 2015. At this event, the commercial counsellor of the German embassy points to the continuing importance of (German) language education in the Philippines:

So what we have identified so far I think to some extent the potential also some shortcomings on both of our sides and everything we have discussed this afternoon is only a snapshot in time. We are talking about an ongoing development, it’s still young, it’s dynamic. I think the direction is pretty clear, it’s towards more openness of the German labor market, it’s towards more participation of the Filipino workforce in that, but it’s an ongoing process and what we have described maybe as not possible today, might very well be possible next year at the same time at the mabuhay, so I would urge everybody who is interested in opportunities in Germany, to follow the news, to follow the Goethe Institute, the website, uhm to follow make-it in Germany and other publications, to look into it, how opportunities develop, and if it’s about learning German, I think it’s never, never a mistake to invest in learning a foreign language. And among those languages available around the globe, since you are English speaking anyway, I think Germany, German is one of next best bets you have.

Commercial counsellor of the German embassy,

round table discussion at Mabuhay Germany, February 21, 2015

The commercial counsellor considers German language skills as ‘speculative capital’ (as used in Tabiola and Lorente 2017) with a very high chance of return on investment. The short excerpt of the discussion at Germany’s self-promotion event in the Philippines shows how interest in a Philippine workforce continues to rise, making German language education a business that promises success. Future studies could shed light on the connections between labor migration and business process outsourcing – this would not only sharpen the understanding of capitalist expansion and the use of imperial hierarchization but also of state authority that can turn to more fine-grained inclusion and exclusion practices marking national territory. Such studies could focus on German language education in connection with the involvement of the German industry (mainly through GPCCI and individual companies) with the development of a dual training program in Philippine public education. This research site is closely connected to German language education in Philippine high schools: The saliency of this development became clear through data collection that began with a focus on nurse migration. More extensive data is needed, especially on the other foreign languages offered by the SPFL from a Philippine perspective connected to the global spread of German through PASCH initiatives. Such a study would give insight into the intricate web between governments and the capitalist market as well as into the crucial role that schools and language teachers have in the facilitation of state interests and industry.

I conducted a few interviews with Philippine nurses who have already started their work in Germany; I visited two of my main informants one month after they had transferred to Germany and one of my informants visited me in Switzerland during his first holiday. These conversations and observations revealed that this study, which focused on the preparation for Germany in the Philippines, should be complemented with a study investigating the role of language (and the continuing need for language education and testing) during (work) life in Germany. The main moments that crystallized in my preliminary data collection centered around the continuous need for German language education in connection with preparation for the B2 exam and exam for recognition of nursing degrees. My informants talked about disillusion with their new job responsibilities, such as basic care rather than the medical tasks they were

allowed to perform in the Philippines, and difficult working conditions, such as low pay and long work hours. Furthermore, all of them experienced some form of racism, which was often connected with language competency: Their German skills allowed them to understand gossip from their German colleagues or insults from patients. My informants' main reactions towards such condescension and attacks were pride in their own English skills, which they failed to see in their German colleagues or patients. I also heard stories where work colleagues defied racist practices when Philippine colleagues were not allowed in a bar for an afterhours drink; they jointly left the space without intention of return. Furthermore, a friendly relationship formed between one of my informants, who works in a care home, and some of the residents. My informant was not willing to accept the limited time she was allowed to spend with the residents and used the fact that she was new and foreign to stay. The residents enjoyed this increase in care and attention and supported her with the improvement of her German. This raises the question of how language skills are actually valued differently in care work based on the hierarchization of hospital patients (or residents of care homes) some of whose linguistic accommodation is more neglectable than others; which in turn raises questions of ageism, wage labor and productivity.

(4) These areas of further research should be complemented by responding to the call for a more applied element in critical sociolinguistics; a call, which mainly centers on the dissemination of knowledge but is acutely aware of the interconnection with knowledge production (Kraft and Flubacher 2017). Unlike applied linguistics, which is invested in propositions to improve language practices in the broader public (especially in language education), critical sociolinguistic studies on language and work reveal important insight into the mechanisms that exacerbate social inequalities; however, this knowledge is rarely transported outside academia. Kraft and Flubacher's (2017) call is mainly directed at the research tradition that analyzes language from a political economic perspective. This research tradition can often be characterized by a practice that Tupas (2018) calls "de-centering language:" Tupas argues that language studies interested in proposing more equitable policies should shift their focus from language to the everyday lives of the people they study. Firstly, this shift of focus helps to be more unbiased as to the importance of language (and the spaces language becomes relevant) for a community and their particular needs around language. This is relevant because the importance of language might only be the need of *linguistic* research.



Second, such a shift of focus sharpens our understanding of language in social contexts. So rather than considering language studies obsolete, Tupas (2018) considers “de-centering language” as an – in my understanding theoretical as well as methodological – approach that allows for a more subtle and refined analysis of the role of language in unequal systems of power. Aligning with this challenging task of decentering language as a sociolinguist, I consider it important for a more “applicable” critical sociolinguistics to de-center work as well.

I consider a decentering of work as a source for possible applications of this study and for future projects of knowledge production. In this study as well as in a major part of the research tradition I align with, work is the main lens to better understand mechanisms of social inequality. Inspired by the shift of focus that accompanies “de-centering” (in line with Tupas (2018)) in language studies, a shift of focus away from work in studies of language and political economy might similarly sharpen our understanding of labor. As it is, my study might inspire ideas of improving the conditions of work and migration, such as a better wage, more financial support during the language learning period and less severe visa restrictions. However, I initially positioned this study as decolonial and feminist, as invested in the production of “liberatory knowledges” (Alexander and Mohanty 2013: ix) that ask for tools to radically understand and fight social inequalities. From such a standpoint, inspirations for application cannot stop at improving conditions of work and migration but must have the aspiration to change the underlying dynamics of domination and, thus, wage labor as such.

It is a tentative observation of where the focus could shift when it shifts away from work: glimpses in my theoretical underpinnings, in my data and my analysis point to a focus on the need for freedom of movement and on economies of communities of care. The centrality of freedom of movement in the mapping of social inequalities in the migration infrastructure became particularly evident in section 7.3.1 that discussed the language certificate and the future it promises: Many of the nurses I met were at some point well aware of the fact that their wages in Germany are not as high as presented to them. However, Germany was still attractive mainly because of the Schengen visa that they would receive. This decisive incentive points to a much needed focus on borders and nation states as organizing elements of society that are painfully

responsible for the exacerbation of inequalities. Economies of communities of care as possible other lens than work was particularly salient in section 7.2.2 on forming bonds of friendship: These solidarities among students as well as students and their teachers reveal an organization of society marked by mutual aid rather than mutual competition. The experience of solidarity accompanying language learning together with a focus on the global care work economy demasks the imperative of profit-making – the essence of a capitalist economy – as a possibility and not a necessity, leaving room for theorizing an economy that centers around care (Wichterich 2016).

For future projects of knowledge production these shifts of focus ask for more extensive data on interpersonal (or even community) organizing and accompliceship in the Philippines and later in Germany. The findings of this study could greatly gain from long-time research that accompanies a German class of nurses in the Philippines throughout the whole language education period and then follow them to Germany. A study that focuses on the role of language competency in elderly care would add further insight by sharpening our understanding of the devaluation of care (and the exploitation that accompanies wage labor): in a capitalist system old people are only valuable with regard to their savings (and therefore as consumers). The needs (linguistic or other) for which they cannot pay become neglectable: my short fieldwork in Germany showed how such shared devaluation (as a care worker and immigrant and as an old person) can be a potential starting point for a relationship that functions against a logic of profit and competition. Research that has already shifted its focus on care and communities of care often combines theory with practice (Precarias a la deriva 2011; Graeber 2013): the implications for the applicability of my research therefore point to the need of future projects of knowledge productions; projects that are collective rather than solitary; circular and prefigurative rather than sequential.

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## Appendix

### List of all informants who appear in this study with their names (pseudonyms)

Mam <b>Ays</b> (Ms. Garcia)	She is the Triple Win coordinator at Berlitz Philippines. Aware of the effort that students put into their German language education, she is whole-heartedly engaged in the well-being of students. She is a nurse and contemplates enrolling in the project herself.
<b>Ben</b>	He is a former student at the Goethe Institute, where he finished his German class and now helps with cultural events. He started language education even before having found an employer or a brokering agency. Together with Sebastian, he decided to join CarePers but his application procedure has not progressed since.
<b>Carlos</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited, where he was a central figure in creating a space of care. He was among the weaker students and very nervous about the upcoming B1 exam. Unfortunately, he was the last among the classmates to be without an employer. Nursing is not his dream job but he is determined to make the best of it.
<b>Chris</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited. He was extremely lively and always supported his classmates by lightening up the atmosphere. He was allocated to a hospital in Germany along with four of his classmates at Berlitz (including Mai).

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<b>Christiane</b>	She is a teacher at the Goethe Institute. She teaches advanced classes and the PASCH-teachers in Manila. She came to the Philippines from Germany after having worked for another Goethe Institute in Asia. She is in her fifties and decided to change her profession to become a teacher of German as a foreign language.
<b>Daniel</b>	He is a teacher at Berlitz Philippines who taught the class that I visited; he was personally invested in the emotional well-being of his class. He is in his late twenties and was on a gap year after his IT studies, which he finished with a bachelor's degree. He did not have any teaching experience prior to working at Berlitz but joined the team upon receiving an offer while he was traveling in the Philippines.
<b>Divine</b>	She is a Filipina in her mid-twenties who came to Manila from the Southern Philippines (Mindanao). She invited me to her wedding with Günther, a German immigrant. She was excited about German and fully supported Günther on his plans to establish a language school.
<b>Gerald</b>	He is a businessman and educator from a provincial city in Luzon. He is acquainted with Miguel and they developed a business plan because they detected a niche market (German education for young nurses in the province).
<b>Günther</b>	He is a doctor from Germany who has lived in the Philippines since his early retirement because of a medical condition. Together with his girlfriend (and later wife) Divine, he wanted to develop a German language school in Manila. This school was supposed to explicitly focus on the language education of nurses, offering professional language and medical background knowledge on care work in Germany.
<b>Justin</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited. He had already found an employer at a care home where he would work together with Selma. He was one of my main informants and helped me to gain access to Berlitz. He was one of the strongest students in the class and enthusiastic about German as well as Germany; he supported his classmates with their language learning.

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<b>Katrina</b>	She is a Triple Win candidate and former student of Berlitz. She has already completed her B1 certificate and is waiting for her deployment to a care home in Germany. She is supposed to start work together with Tim, who failed one of the exam modules. This resulted in a prolonged waiting period for both of them (for which she never reprimanded him).
<b>Mr. Liske</b>	He is a German teacher at his own small language school in Cebu. He has been living in the Philippines for many years, working as a teacher after retirement in Germany (where he had worked as an educator). He considers his engagement as a German teacher more as a passion than as work and he would like to prepare and educate his students for life in Germany.
<b>Lloyd</b>	He is a nurse who had started German education without having found a brokering agency or an employer. He initially wanted to apply for the Triple Win project but missed the deadline. He is preparing for his B1 exam and had to change language schools because of financial and geographical restrictions.
<b>Magdalena</b>	She is a teacher at the Goethe Institute. She is in her mid-twenties and has worked as a teacher for German as a foreign language for a few years – mainly with the Goethe Institute. Prior to her engagement in the Philippines, she did not have work experience outside Germany or Poland (her country of origin): This was her main motivation to apply for work in Manila.
<b>Mai</b>	She is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited. She was one of the few Manileñ@s I met. Her commute to Makati was strenuous and she had to continue work while studying. She was allocated to a hospital in Germany where she would start work together with four of her classmates at Berlitz (including Chris).
<b>Marcus</b>	He is a German teacher at a high school in the Southern Philippines (he is thus a teacher within the SPFL and the PASCH programs). His teaching schedule is very dense and he fights for moments where he can continue his own German education (so far he has reached A2-level). However, he is very enthusiastic about teaching a foreign language and considers it an important asset of his employer in the competition for students.

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<b>Marlon</b>	He is a former Goethe Institute student and a nurse who had started German education without having found a brokering agency or an employer. He is preparing for his B1 exam and needed to change language schools because of financial and geographical restrictions. He already has overseas experience in the Middle East, where he heard about work opportunities in Germany. This option made him go back to the Philippines to start learning German.
<b>Melody</b>	She is a Goethe Institute student and nurse who started German education without having found a brokering agency or an employer. She is the student and friend of Magdalena. She had no connections with Germany, German or the Goethe Institute, but is determined to navigate the preparation period because of her (initially very general) wish to leave the Philippines.
<b>Miguel</b>	He is a German teacher at higher education institutions in the Philippines. He decided to teach German when he came back to the Philippines after having spent several years in Germany with his sister who had found work there. After working in Manila, he is looking for work in the province to be closer to his son. He is acquainted with Miguel and they developed a business plan after having detected a niche market (German education for young nurses in the province).
<b>Peter</b>	He is a teacher at a small language school in Cebu as well as a private tutor for students preparing an exam. He permanently moved from Germany to the Philippines, where he has worked as a German teacher for many years. He is personally invested in the well-being of his students and tries to show them ways of navigating the system with less exploitation. He later joined Mr. Liske's language school, where working conditions are better.
<b>Ralf</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited. His future employer in Germany is a rehabilitation clinic located in a village close to the city where many of his classmates were going to work. He visited me during his first holidays after having started work in Germany and gave me important feedback on my preliminary analysis.

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<b>Sir Randy</b>	He is the Triple Win coordinator at the GiZ Philippines. He is responsible for the Philippine candidates of the project and organizes their German language training and job interviews with employers, reporting to the head of the project in Germany. He is also a nurse and considers taking part in the program himself.
<b>Rob</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and former Goethe Institute student. He started his German language training before being officially nominated to do so—meaning that he had to pay for it himself. He passed his B2 certificate but has not found an employer. He tried to finance his waiting period by working as a German teacher or tutor. Further, he has extensively researched the migration opportunities for Philippine nurses in Germany and generously shared this knowledge with colleagues (and with me).
<b>Sebastian</b>	He is a former student at the Goethe Institute, where he received his B2 certificate. He started language education on his own initiative after being nominated as a Triple Win candidate. After several months, he learned that he was not included in the program after all and desperately started to find a different brokering agency. Together with Ben, he decided to join CarePers, but his application procedure was not progressing.
<b>Selma</b>	She is a Triple Win candidate and student of the Berlitz class that I visited. She was looking forward to moving to Germany because she could join her boyfriend – a Philippine nurse who had worked there for many years – and because she wanted to support her siblings financially. She was allocated to a care home in Germany where she would start work together Justin.
<b>Tim</b>	He is a Triple Win candidate and former student of Berlitz. He is going to work in a care home in Germany together with Katrina but he needs to retake a module of the B1 exam. He is a former student of Daniel and close friends with Justin. He was one of my main informants; I met him in Manila, in his hometown in the Philippines, and in Germany.

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**Wilbur**

He is a nurse who had started German education without having found a brokering agency or an employer. He is preparing for his B1 certificate but had to change his language school several times because of the high fees. He is trying to find a way to enter Germany with B1 instead of B2 even though he is not part of the Triple Win project.

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