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Twitter as an Instrument of Public Diplomacy: A Case Study of Sweden and Germany

Submitted by:

Helen Hoffmann

Supervised by:

Prof. Dr. Karin Hoff
Dr. Nikolas Glover

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Signature

MA Programme Eurоculture
Declaration

I, Helen Hoffmann, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Twitter as an Instrument of Public Diplomacy: A Case Study of Sweden and Germany”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Eurоculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Eurоculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Eurоculture.

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#thankyou

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Introduction

The technological developments of recent years have influenced communication styles and modes in profound ways. While the mere existence of the internet as a medium has changed people's everyday lives already 15 years ago, the emergence of the so-called Web 2.0 challenged the way we interact even more intensely. By now, it has become inevitable also for the political dialogue to acknowledge the demands and offers the internet and their communities make: Political actors can "no longer ignore the digital sphere"[1]. The new technologies that allow anyone to broadcast their opinion have prompted the potential for a power shift in discussing politics.[2] The individual has been given "the communication power that was the monopoly of the nation state in the previous century."[3] Thus, political narratives are challenged, and especially in the delicate realm of international relations, scholars maintain that this new stage in communication has had a strong effect. New ways of communication have changed the way diplomats tackle foreign policy.[4]. Communication with foreign audiences has become a multi-layered dialogue in which non-state communicators have more power than ever before.[5] It is no longer clearly definable who is a diplomat and who is not, and public diplomacy is faced with the demand of becoming "public diplomacy 2.0".

Through assessing two cases of public diplomacy conducted online, this paper aims to shed light on how states react to these circumstances. What can new media, specifically the Web 2.0, and even more precisely for this paper, the micro-blogging site Twitter, offer for international public diplomacy? What strategic demands are made on the new public diplomacy approaches and in how far have the German Goethe-Institut and the Swedish Institute together with Visit Sweden succeeded in adapting their conduct?

[1] Lina Khatib, William Dutton, and Michael Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: An Exploratory Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team" (Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University,), accessed February 28, 2013, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23084/No.120-_Public_Diplomacy_2.0.pdf, 469.
[2] James Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century: A comparative study of policy and practice* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 32.
[3] Nicholas J. Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7, no. 1 (2011): 2, doi:10.1057/pb.2011.2.
[4] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 1.
[5] ibid.

Public Diplomacy

In this paper, public diplomacy is defined as "the communication of an international actor's policies to citizens of foreign countries".[6][7] This communication has in the past mostly been carried out through traditional media like newspapers, the radio and other publications, and efforts such as exchange programs or exhibitions. With the rise of new technologies at the turn of the millennium, internet-based media have given new possibilities and challenges to the way a state portrays itself to the world. National institutions that have the mandate to inform about their country have adopted the internet with its different channels such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and own websites for the use of public and cultural diplomacy. With these new developments, many scholars claim that diplomatic representation has, as Jan Melissen puts it, "reached a new stage"[8]. In their approaches to new public diplomacy, nation states follow their own strategy that shall be examined in this thesis. In how far these strategies represent a fundamental change in public diplomacy conduct, as scholars propose, shall be assessed in this study.

This paper therefore investigates the characteristics and new demands social media make on public diplomacy. It aims to trace what it is that governments expect to be targeting with their public diplomatic conduct and what scholars maintain is changed by new technological opportunities to then analyze in how far this corresponds to the actual practice in the two cases examined, Sweden and Germany.

In order to understand in which socio-cultural context the two studied cases are situated, the following section presents a short overview on Sweden's and Germany's attitude towards technology. Against the background of this knowledge, tracing the reasons for the countries' approaches becomes more comprehensible.

Sweden

Sweden is known as a country of early-adopters: With the world's highest per capita percentage of blogs, almost half of the population registered on Facebook and 475 000 Swedish citizens on Twitter[9], the Swedes are obviously a people keen on using the new

[6] ibid.
[7] This definition will later be expanded in the chapter on public diplomacy.
[8] Jan Melissen, ed., *The New public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (Basingstoke [UK], New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) Brian Hocking, xix.
[9] Hampus Byrnolf, "Twittercensus 2013," accessed April 11, 2013, http://twittercensus.se/twittercensus2013/#more-3296.

possibilities technology offers, [10] and even pioneering in creating start-ups that became global products such as Skype or Spotify. Sweden's technophile society is reflected in the fact that Sweden tops the World Index of information and communication technology (ICT) use. As "most digitally connected" country Sweden is considered to grasp the potential of economic growth through digital innovations.[11] Soumittra Dutta, one of the responsible professors of the index, names Sweden's very "innovation-friendly business environments" with little regulations due to favorable policy work as a reason for Sweden's attitude and advancement regarding (new) technologies. Furthermore, a very high level of education that pairs up for digital research with other institutions such as the strong companies in the technological industry, along with a society holding a positive attitude to new technology and the aforementioned belief that technological solutions can help economic growth and competitiveness, are brought forward to explain the Swedish case. [12]

Sweden likes to be seen as a modern digital pioneer by outsiders. The Swedish Institute, which operates under the Foreign Ministry and is part of the National Board for the Promotion of Sweden, carries out studies on a regular basis to trace the image of Sweden abroad and asks in its 2010 report if Sweden is "doing enough to keep the image of a country that is considered a pioneer […] and a source of innovation […]".[13]Apparently, the image of being a country that is one of the first to come up with new ideas and to make use of innovation is an attribute Sweden likes to be associated with.

In 2011, Sweden decided to use Twitter as a medium to officially communicate to the global audience in an unconventional way through the project "Curators of Sweden". Each week, someone in Sweden is allowed to administer the official Twitter account of the Swedish state and may share tweets uncensored, thus rendering the communication "the most democratic Twitter account", as the Swedish Institute and Visit Sweden put it.[14]

Germany

[10] Erik Bohlin and Oscar Westlund, "Mobile Internet Adoption and Use: Results from a National Survey Study in Sweden," accessed April 11, 2013, http://www.imaginar.org/its2008/269.pdf.

[11] Silke e. a. Stahl-Rolf, "ITB Infoservice: Berichterstattung zur Forschungs-, Technologie- und Innovationspolitik weltweit" (VDI Technologiezentrum GmbH, 2011) (unpublished manuscript, May 29, 2013), http://www.kooperation-international.de/fileadmin/public/downloads/itb/info_11_05_20_1.pdf#page=9, 9.

[12] ibid., 10.

[13] Swedish Institute, "Sverigebildsrapporten 2010," news release, 2010, accessed April 11, 2013, 8.

[14] Swedish Institute and Visit Sweden AB, "Curators of Sweden," accessed March 15, 2013, http://curatorsofsweden.com.

German use of ICT is differing strongly from the Swedish case. Unlike in Sweden, where more than nine of ten citizens have broadband internet,[15] digital infrastructure poses a problem in Germany. The country is lagging behind almost all other European countries when it comes to providing broadband internet.[16] In line with the more limited availability goes a different attitude: Statistics show that German users are less interested in new technologies: only 20 percent regard it very important to own the latest version of their internet device and they are not prepared to allocate large sums of money for technical gadgets.[17] The internet ranges last as a medium of information. Germans consult the television, newspaper and radio before they seek information online.[18] A large part of Germans, 79 percent, does not have mobile internet on their phones or tablet PCs[19] and 20 percent of Germans do not have access to internet at all.[20] Research considers the majority of the German population as not digitalized yet and found that the population's hesitant attitude is grounded in worries about security.[21]

State employees serving on diplomatic missions, the Foreign Ministry and 61 local Goethe-Instituts[22] worldwide use Twitter as a medium to reach out to the public.[23] However, the 2012 "Twiplomacy study" that assesses country promotion on Twitter found that "Germany is together with Italy one of two G8 countries where neither the head of state nor the head of government uses Twitter". Other online channels were employed by the German government and the official spokesperson of the chancellor is tweeting information as well.[24] The German public diplomacy activity on Twitter is therefore more scattered and less centralized than the Swedish account.

[15] Swedish Government, "Sverige ska bli världsbäst på it" (06.10.2011) (unpublished manuscript, May 30, 2013), http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/14468/a/177280, 1.
[16] IT Europa, "Germany needs more fibre," news release, 2010, accessed May 30, 2013, http://www.ftthcouncil.eu/documents/Clippings/2010September/20100917-Germany.pdf, 1.
[17] Renate Köcher, "Neue Dimensionen der Internetnutzung" (Hamburg, 06.10.11), accessed May 30, 2013, http://www.ifd-allensbach.de/fileadmin/ACTA/ACTA_Praesentationen/2011/ACTA2011_Koecher.pdf, 30.
[18] ibid., 22.
[19] ibid., 15.
[20] Malthe Wolf, "Die digitale Gesellschaft in Deutschland: Sechs Nutzertypen im Vergleich," news release, 2010, 2013, accessed May 30, 2013, http://www.initiatived21.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/digitalindex.pdf, 10, 13.
[21] ibid., 7.
[22] The Goethe-Institut is commissioned with the public and cultural diplomacy of Germany abroad and will be introduced in depth later on in the paper.
[23] Own assessment of the Twitter account as of August 2012.
[24] Oliver Druttman, "Germany: Twiplomacy Study," accessed May 4, 2013, http://twiplomacy.com/info/europe/germany/.

These cultural peculiarities build the basis for understanding the empirical data that will be presented in the course of this thesis. The differences in attitude can be one point of reference when this paper examines the mechanisms and dynamics in the Swedish and German account and assesses which assumptions literature makes hold up against empirical findings. It will show which communication levels interplay and to what extent the account are public diplomacy ventures.

Current state of research

Public Diplomacy in social media has begun to become a field of interest for scholars, especially in the English-speaking countries. Still, research on this new phenomenon is only starting to emerge. Publications either focus on different channels (such as Facebook or Second Life) or on different countries (such as Twitter in the United States). The aim of this paper is therefore to bring together these two sides and analyze Twitter as a means of public diplomacy in the German and Swedish case that has not been widely assessed before.
Political and strategic communication is a field that has been studied for a long time. However, scholarly work on public diplomacy and communication from a state to foreign audiences has only recently become an area of interest for research.[25] In the past few years, scientific interest in the public diplomacy of states has significantly increased which shows in the number of published works on the issue.[26]

Two perspectives are being cast upon states' communication to foreign audience, one that is referred to as public diplomacy and one that was coined nation branding. Public diplomacy emerges from the political science field while nation branding originated in marketing studies. In both cases, literature is written not only by scholars but also by practitioners.[27] In some cases, this requires special attention to the objectivity of the source and this paper shall assess the differences between commercial-oriented nation branding and public diplomacy.

With research picking up on the subject, the specific area of this paper has still only to a little extent been covered: the novelty of digital diplomacy can be held responsible for the small

[25] Anna Schwan, "Werbung statt Waffen: Wie Strategische Außenkommunikation die Außenpolitik verändert," *Werbung statt Waffen*, 2011, 28.
[26] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Aktuelle Herausforderungen der Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik," in *Deutsche Aussenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*, ed. Thomas Jäger, Alexander Höse and Kai Oppermann, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 584–602, 600.
[27] Schwan, "Werbung statt Waffen," 28.

amount of published works on the topic, with most of these scholarly contributions being smaller articles instead of larger printed studies. There has been no published comparative study on the digital diplomacy of Germany and Sweden so far which gives this paper an opportunity to contribute with this special perspective. The specific analysis of Swedish digital diplomacy has been begun with James Pamment's comprehensive work, and Christian Christensen has critically assessed the Curators of Sweden project with the only scholarly article on the subject so far. The German State Twitter activities have not been studied up to today.

In an exploratory case study of the German and the Swedish approach to getting their public diplomacy message out to the world, this paper aims to illustrate which functions are given to Twitter in the parallel institutions in Germany and Sweden respectively, the German Goethe-Institut and the Swedish Institute (Si) alongside Visit Sweden. They are the entities that are entrusted with transmitting the image of their respective state. This study focuses on the cases of Swedish and German public diplomacy and seeks to connect political communication in the international sphere with new media research.
Methodically, the paper builds on a quantitative and qualitative media analysis of the two Twitter accounts, and on conducted expert interviews. The policies and strategies both countries have adopted are traced in the policy documents of the Goethe-Institut, the German Foreign Ministry, the Si/Visit Sweden and the Swedish Council for the Promotion of Sweden abroad (NSU).

Structure

As a first step, public diplomacy is introduced and defined more closely. The first chapter and presents the evolution of the term to then focus on the shift to "new public diplomacy" and to discuss the alterations this is said to have made to the traditional public diplomacy approach. The state of the digital diplomacy in Germany and Sweden is assessed to situate the reader in the current activities of the two case study countries.
To be able to later link the content and the medium, Twitter, a familiarization with the specifics of Twitter is attempted in the first chapter that focuses on the possibilities and limitations of Twitter. An explanation of Twitter and the special characteristics that distinguish it from other traditional and social media will be given in order to pinpoint the structure of the medium that the Goethe-Institut and Si/Visit Sweden operate in.

After having established these foundations, the question of how new media and old diplomacy intersect and adapt to each other is investigated in the third chapter. Specific challenges emerging from the new situation and the specific problems of digital diplomacy on Twitter are discussed.

The fourth chapter presents the empiric case study. For this study, several interviews with key decision makers in the respective institutes have been executed. Also, two former Curators of Sweden were interviewed.

To be able to understand the method, chapter four begins with the explanation of the interview framework to then present the interview results. A short orientation on the organization of public diplomacy in Sweden and Germany that each have different institutional approaches precedes the media analysis. The analysis is concerned with the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the German and Swedish Twitter accounts. For each account, two weeks were randomly chosen. These are examined qualitatively, inspired by the categories Lina Khatib applied in her study on the U.S. Digital Outreach Team, according to the themes, tone, imagery, stance and type of rhetoric that are used as well as with regard to the links and retweets they posted.[28] On the quantitative level, an interaction analysis is carried out in which the accounts are scanned for the "@"-sign that indicates dialogue with another person on Twitter, thus establishing the level of interaction on the account.

The second part of the fourth chapter centers upon the discussion of the results. The interview outcome is linked to the academic literature on new public diplomacy, and a critique of @sweden and @GI_Journal is given. The different communication levels on which public diplomacy occurs is discussed and the question whether the concept or the content matter in German and Swedish public diplomacy on Twitter is highlighted against the background of the findings of the case study and compared to the scholarly views on public diplomacy and social media that are examined in the beginning of the paper.

In its conclusion, the paper recurs to and answers the questions posed: 1) which functions has Twitter obtained in German and Swedish public diplomacy, 2) in which ways is diplomacy adapted to the new technology or not, and eventually, 3) what does Twitter have to offer for public diplomacy?

[28] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 458.

Public Diplomacy

Definition

Public diplomacy can be considered a part of what Joseph Nye called "soft power". Soft power, as opposed to hard, military power, relies on images, symbols, simulations and consciously managed information to persuade others to act in the desired way.[29] Public diplomacy is one element of this soft-power strategy[30] and a special part of foreign policy because of its claim to non-political areas of state representation such as culture, trade and society.[31]

The term "public diplomacy" originated in the United States. In the 1960s, Edward Guillon, a foreign affairs practitioner and dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, coined the term to describe a state's reputation management outside the own territory.[32] For this paper, the definition that has been mentioned before shall be broadened and specified through adding Joseph Nye's and Jill Schuker's visions of public diplomacy. Therefore, in this paper, public diplomacy is defined as

> "the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications".[33]

Public diplomacy serves "to understand, value and even emulate" a state's policy and ideas in order to achieve global significance through "outreach" and "persuasion".[34] Through this definition, it is discernible what public diplomacy is and, at least equally important, what it is not, namely a pure advertisement for a country. It seeks to promote understanding through explaining a state's policy at the same time as it exercises influence on the foreign public opinion that in its turn actuates diplomatic policy.[35] Public Diplomacy does not replace

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[29] César Villanueva Rivas, *Representing cultural diplomacy: Soft power, cosmopolitan constructivism and nation branding in Mexico and Sweden* (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2007), 20.
[30] Nancy Snow, "Rethinking Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow, Routledge international handbooks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3–11, 3.
[31] Schwan, "Werbung statt Waffen," 38.
[32] Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Citis and Regions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 12.
[33] ibid.
[34] The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, „Definitions of Public Diplomacy", accessed May 12, 2013, http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Murrow/Diplomacy/Definitions, 1.
[35] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 6,7.

diplomacy, but complements it.[36] The difference between diplomacy and public diplomacy is not least defined by the addressee. While diplomacy concentrates on other foreign governments, public diplomacy aims at engaging with non-governmental public actors[37] and "members of the general public".[38] Public diplomacy creates effect through public attitude, potentially keeping governments on the sidelines. This is especially relevant for this study as digital diplomacy is said to be often addressed at the common citizen instead of the key decision maker and lobbyist.

Elaborating on the features of public diplomacy, scholarly literature names listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting as the five core components of public diplomacy.[39] Joseph Nye further sub-classifies three dimensions of public diplomacy: routine communication, strategic communication and establishing a network of benevolent disseminators. [40] Routine communication encompasses the day-to-day information of the foreign audience and the explanation of political policy and decisions whereas strategic communication is directed rather at long-term goals and at conveying the core themes of the political agenda from the home country. The last dimension, the establishment of a circle of "friendly commentators"[41] entails the building of long-term relationships with individuals that will spread a positive message of the country to their own home country. In this dimension, "face-to-face communications, with the enhanced credibility that reciprocity creates" are central and often generated through exchange programs, scholarships and "access to media channels".[42] In the course of this study, it will become obvious in how far these features are incorporated in the use of Twitter or not.

Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding

To demarcate the term public diplomacy more closely, it is necessary to discuss the term nation branding as well. There are various views in the scholarly discourse on the relationship of public diplomacy and nation branding. Public Diplomacy intersects and overlaps with other

[36] Peter Esaiasson, *Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*, 4th ed. (Stockholm: Norstedts juridik, 2012), 139.
[37] Nancy Snow, "Rethinking Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow, Routledge international handbooks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3–11, 8.
[38] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 1.
[39] ibid., 29, 32.
[40] *the third ACM conference*, 177.
[41] ibid.
[42] Lawrence Bergman et al., "Using twitter to recommend real-time topical news," in, *the third ACM conference* (see note 79).

concepts such as propaganda, cultural relations and nation branding and it is often difficult to disentangle the different related concepts.[43]

Nation branding is most prominently connected with the work of Simon Anholt who indexes the world's nations' reputations and perception. He defines a brand as "a product or service or organization, considered in combination with its name, its identity and its reputation".[44] This concept is transferred onto nation states in the process of nation branding. Anholt maintains, however, that nations cannot be branded in the same way as products, but instead must build upon and develop further what their country is already perceived to be.[45] Crucial to creating a strong nation brand is to convince the people of the branded nation of the brand. The nation brand, just like any other commercial brand, has to be able to provide what it represents.[46]

As one can easily discern when assessing scholars' definitions of both the terms, the line between nation branding and public diplomacy is a fine one. Greg Simons defines nation branding as "seeking direct contact with citizens of another country [...] to attempt to attract people to an idea or cause", a statement very close to the definition of public diplomacy.[47] Melissen regards the two concepts as "sisters under the skin"[48]. Szondi, in his turn, presents five models of the relations between nation branding and public diplomacy: two concepts entirely separated; nation branding as a part of public diplomacy; public diplomacy as a part of nation branding; public diplomacy and nation branding overlapping; and public diplomacy as being the same as nation branding.[49] Assessing these alternatives, one can agree with Schwan who maintains that the fourth model is the truest since nation branding and public diplomacy have very similar content but are structurally differently organized.[50] Without discarding the assumption that there are similarities and overlapping, the commercial market-oriented nature of nation branding must be emphasized in order to grasp the difference

[43] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 19, 20.
[44] Anholt, *Competitive Identity*, 4.
[45] ibid., 5.
[46] Cocomma Bassey, "Understanding Nation Branding: A "New Nationalism" in Germany" (Master ThesisBrandeis University, August 2012), accessed February 21, 2013, http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/86/CBassey_MastersThesis_August2012.pdf?sequence=1, 49.
[47] Greg Simons, "Attempting to re-brand the branded: Russia's international image in the 21st century.," *Russian Journal of Communication*, 4 /3/4) (2011): 324.
[48] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 19, 20.
[49] Gyorgy Szondi, "Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences," in, No 112, No 112:15.
[50] Esaiasson, *Metodpraktikan*, 179.

between nation branding and public diplomacy[51]: Kaneva is right in saying that nation branding is essentially the "reframing [of] national identity in market terms".[52]

It must not be overlooked that, as Villanueva Rivas points out, nation branding often operates with stereotypes, creating images and excluding certain groups in order to create a coherent narrative.[53] As also Kaneva states one of the fundamental shortcomings of nation branding is the failure to resist the temptation of defining a homogeneous community that nations in reality never are. Through "marketing and branding paradigms", it is attempted to constitute a national image[54] that quickly results in exclusion of certain groups.

Nation branding further differentiates itself from public diplomacy by it being directed at a certain customer audience instead of a specific national public.[55] While the public diplomacy work of the embassies in a country is usually aimed at informing about the home country's foreign policy, nation brands focus on target groups, such as e.g. cancer researchers, 50+ tourists or trade investors as the nation branders try to find parallels between the branded country and the surrounding world.[56]

Practitioners have charged the academic discussion with debating the differences between public diplomacy and nation branding in the ivory tower.[57] Still, even taking into account this criticism, it seems advisable that scholarship continues pointing out the fundamental difference between nation branding and public diplomacy with regard to the commercial nature that invites oversimplification through stereotypes and exclusion. In retaining what has been said about the difference between nation branding and public diplomacy, it will later become clearer to determine whether Twitter is used as a public diplomacy tool or as a nation branding exercise.

History

It is necessary to cast a look into the historic development of public diplomacy in order to be able to follow the argumentation of scholars that maintain that public diplomacy has undergone a fundamental change due to technological advancement.

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[51] Stina Bengtsson, "Virtual nation branding: The Swedish embassy in second life," *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 4 (2) (2011): 24.

[52] Nadia Kaneva, "Nation branding: Toward an agenda for critical research. International Journal of Communication," *International Journal of Communication 5 (2011), 117–141*, no. 5 (2011): 118.

[53] Villanueva Rivas, *Representing cultural diplomacy*, 20.

[54] Kaneva, "Nation branding: Toward an agenda for critical research. International Journal of Communication," 118.

[55] Bengtsson, "Virtual nation branding: The Swedish embassy in second life," 24.

[56] ibid., 8.

[57] Esaiasson, *Metodpraktikan*, 176.

The term public diplomacy has been constantly redefined and has experienced significant reshaping also in the very recent past, i.e. in the last decade.[58]

When looking at 20th century public diplomacy, one discovers a setting that departs from the state as the controlling actor. It was characterized by a unidirectional flow of information from the state to the foreign public, with the sender controlling the message. The old public diplomacy focused on short-term objectives and ensured "limited interaction between communicator and 'recipient'".[59]

Two phenomena are considered to have tremendously altered this system: globalization and the development of media. With the internet as a revolutionizing new medium and the world becoming more connected, states could no longer solely preside over the communication on their country. Scholars believe that "traditional foreign ministry gatekeeper structures" were torn down by the new opportunities, and instead of the state emitting messages, it is now a variety of actors that, as Bruce Gregory puts it, "influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values".[60] The first definition of new public diplomacy was brought forward in the scholarly discourse by Jan Melissen in 2005, who argued that it were the new actors and the increasingly interconnected nature of foreign publics as a target group that motivated the shift in public diplomacy. The new public diplomacy was strongly characterized by a more open, less unilateral information flow.[61] Literature claims that the rules of the diplomatic game have changed and that today, success in diplomacy means "openness and transnational cooperation".[62]

This can lead to mixed messages between the different senders and audiences, making the need for coordination more necessary than ever before, as Nancy Snow and Simon Anholt point out.[63] Most countries have different actors, such as the tourist board, investment promotion agency, cultural institute, the country's exporters or the Foreign Ministry, that send at times contradictory messages. Aligning all sectors involved in public diplomacy generates the biggest effect, Anholt argues.[64]

However, in this discussion about the supposedly entirely new diplomatic arena, James Pamment is right in critizing that the discourse on new public diplomacy is conducted in an overly normative manner that does not question or empirically test in how far it is really accurate that new technological potential has changed diplomatic conduct at all. Robin Brown

[58] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 2.
[59] ibid., 3.
[60] ibid.
[61] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, xix, 5,11.
[62] ibid., 5.
[63] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 11.
[64] Anholt, *Competitive Identity*, 2–3, 13.

even goes so far as to say that the new diplomacy is not new in its approaches, but only in its "scope and visibility".[65] It is true that even if some of the publications are written by part-time practitioners, the discussion is based on theories more than on empirical evidence. This shows in the current state of research that does not comprise any in-depth study of actual public diplomacy Twitter activity. As Pamment states, literature thus describes a theoretical ideal of how public diplomacy should be conducted with social media, but does not compare these ideals with the real use of the medium. If Brown's assumption that public diplomacy is not changing its approach when using the new technology is true, shall be evaluated on the basis of the empirical findings later in this paper.

New Public Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy 2.0

In the next section, the focus will be shifted towards the interplay of new public diplomacy, that is a new form of conduct towards the audience, and digital diplomacy, the use of new media for diplomatic purposes.

Pamment and Schwan believe the new media to have prompted the shift in public diplomacy during the last decade.[66] While it is debatable if it is only one force that is at work in changing public diplomacy conduct, it seems clear that the new public diplomacy relies heavily on the new media and that this form of interactive media suits the ideas behind the new approach that the scholarly literature postulates.

The evolvement of the new public diplomacy is intrinsically connected to the establishment of what scholars call digital diplomacy or public diplomacy 2.0 [67] and what in its essence simply means to execute diplomacy online with foreign citizens. This new tool is regarded a "new stage in diplomatic representation"[68] and seen as a particularly useful part of public diplomacy due to its two-way communication that enables the diplomat to monitor opinions and needs.[69] Despite this potential, diplomats, however, reacted relatively late to the new

[65] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 9.
[66] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 14; Esaiasson, *Metodpraktikan*, 130.
[67] In this paper, the term digital diplomacy will be employed to describe the public diplomacy that is carried out through the internet. This way, confusion with the term "new public diplomacy", that relates to a situation where not only the state controls the message, shall be avoided.
[68] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, xix.
[69] Daniel Ostrowski, *Die Public Diplomacy der deutschen Auslandsvertretungen weltweit: Theorie und Praxis der deutschen Auslandsöffentlichkeitsarbeit,* SpringerLink : Bücher (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften / GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden, 2010), 134.

communication styles[70] and only in the recent past has the internet's role in public diplomacy become a topic of interest. [71]

A reason for this can be found in the framework of diplomatic affairs: Practitioners were used to dealing with their peers instead of the audience; this and varying digital infrastructure contribute to digital diplomacy coming into use at a different speed, and overall seen late, in the different countries.[72] Many Western states started their digital diplomacy between 2008 and 2009, the year that Twitter became relevant.[73] Melissen believes the diplomatic practitioners to be somewhat toppled by the new demand made on them. Diplomacy still tends to be understood as a network where equals operate and "identifiable players" act on "symmetrical" terms. In reality though, he argues, most actors are not "nearly as much in control as they would like to be", and the picture is not clear anymore.[74]

He is right in stating that digital diplomacy has altered the position of the recipients and their networks in an essential way. Foreign audiences have never been more important for diplomatic work.[75] With leaders having to rely on the recipient to pass on the political message to reach the largest possible audience, the new communication style of web 2.0 further emphasized the power of the addressee.[76] The fact that the audience, in a historically unparalleled position, is and wants to be part of the new public diplomacy brings about an inevitable shift in paradigm. Seib believes that the easy access to information is a reason for citizens to position themselves in their society and then to strive to make an impact on their own country's policy.[77] Digital diplomacy is thus potentially "dialogical, collaborative and inclusive"[78] to a much larger extent. When the idea of the passive recipient is revolutionized, diplomacy's adaptability is put to the test. With interactive services like Twitter gaining users, scholars believe governments will have to adapt to the new media as apparently the users'

[70] Evan H. Potter (ed.), ed., *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 154.
[71] Hannes R. Richter, "Web 2.0 and Public Diplomacy," in *Cyberspaces and global affairs*, ed. Sean S. Costigan and Jake Perry (Farnham, Surrey, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 105–18, 105.
[72] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 5.
[73] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 3f.
[74] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 5.
[75] Nancy Snow, "Rethinking Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow, Routledge international handbooks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3–11, 7.
[76] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 3; Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, xix.
[77] Philip M. Seib, *Real-time diplomacy: Politics and power in the social media era*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 105.
[78] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 3.

influence does not seem to subside. [79] Again, one must nevertheless bear in mind that these assumptions are based on vague ideas of how much influence users actually have. As stated above, reliably measuring effect in social media in the realm of international relations is regarded difficult, and there seems to be little to no data the assumptions are based upon.

Scholars charge diplomats with being overwhelmed with the adaption of their work to new media. Melissen acknowledges that diplomacy has adapted to historical changes in the past, but states that digital diplomacy overturns all previous assumptions and practices. The actual engagement with the foreign audience requires "a totally different mindset" and the willingness to "let go of controlling all risks and embrace modern technology. "[80] Graffy supports this claim and states that digital diplomacy demands a new approach and an entirely new type of diplomat.[81] Literature thereby calls for a fundamentally changed approach but it is yet to be tested if these demands bear up against the practical reality of the case studies. The following section presents the organizational structures in which public diplomacy is executed in order to understand how institutional backgrounds possibly influence the policy approach.

Swedish Public Diplomacy

Organizational framework

Different from the German model, Swedish public diplomacy is much more centralized.[82]
As a small country on the periphery of Europe and in a delicate geo-political position especially during the Cold War, Sweden's public diplomacy efforts center on creating an internationally recognized profile to secure influence in the global community.[83] Communicating the nation in a professional way was for Sweden "a crucial part of legitimizing its continued existence."[84]
The activities to strengthen Sweden's voice in the world are closely connected to the Foreign Ministry, Utrikesdepartmentet. When the Swedish parliament passed guidelines for Swedish public and cultural diplomacy in 1979, it established three motives that should be guiding the

[79] Hannes R. Richter, "Web 2.0 and Public Diplomacy," in *Cyberspaces and global affairs*, ed. Sean S. Costigan and Jake Perry (Farnham, Surrey, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 105–18, 109.
[80] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 6.
[81] Colleen Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0," *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, no. 17 (2009), accessed May 12, 2013, http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2009/17/graffy.php.
[82] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 99.
[83] ibid., 100.
[84] Nikolas Glover, *National relations: Public diplomacy, national identity and the Swedish Institute, 1945-1970* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011), 230.

work: Swedish foreign policy interest, exchange of information for fostering trade and tourism, and promotion of international contacts to "develop the Swedish society".[85] The organization entrusted with these tasks was the Swedish Institute, a body designed following the example of the British Council.

To bundle the efforts, a predecessor of today's National Board for the Promotion of Sweden (NSU) was founded already in 1993, and since 1998 the NSU is imputed to the Foreign Ministry's department for Swedish trade and the promotion of Sweden. The NSU board consists of several actors all concerned with Sweden's image abroad: the Foreign Ministry, the Export Council, the Department of Commerce, the Swedish Institute, the investment agency Invest in Sweden and the tourism agency Visit Sweden.[86] It is striking that the large majority of the members of the board are actors that are concerned with selling Sweden or Swedish products, and also that the decision to put the promotion under the control of the trade department hints at a strong marketing sense in Swedish public diplomacy.

This tendency towards branding and marketing Sweden was further enhanced in the years to come and peaked in the creation of the "Brand Sweden" platform. In 2007, "Brand Sweden" was launched, a so-called common platform that in the Swedish tradition of consensus was supposed to bundle together all efforts for a good Swedish image abroad. The key words guiding this brand are "open", "authentic", "caring" and "innovation". This initiative led to Sweden greatly succeeding e.g. in the Nation Brand Index.[87]

Assessing the Swedish case from a scholarly perspective, one finds that some, as Pamment, go as far as to say that the Swedish public diplomacy is driven by a national interest that in its turn is "defined in competitive, economic terms, with Swedish culture and image employed instrumentally to support these objectives".[88] Indeed, the borders of nation branding, which is more concerned with economic success, and public diplomacy, which focuses on (relatively) independent information services, are increasingly blurred in the Swedish case. Melissen defines nation branding as "the mobilization of all of a nation's forces that can contribute to the promotion of its image abroad",[89] something that applies to the Swedish NSU. He maintains that public diplomacy was confined to the groups that practice diplomacy whereas nation branding is carried out by many different actors, as evident in the Swedish case with

[85] Björn Kohlhepp, *Das Schwedische Institut, ein Organ der auswärtigen Kulturpolitik Schwedens, und das Schwedenbild im Ausland*, 1st ed. (s.l: GRIN Verlag, 2009), http://ebooks.ciando.com/book/index.cfm/bok_id/61148, 13.

[86] Kohlhepp, *Das Schwedische Institut, ein Organ der auswärtigen Kulturpolitik Schwedens, und das Schwedenbild im Ausland*, 36.

[87] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 100–1.

[88] ibid., 102.

[89] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 19.

their tourism board, an investment agency in the NSU. Melissen acknowledges that nation branding and public diplomacy are closely related,[90] but with having outlined the difference between the two concepts above, one can establish that in practice, Sweden with its "Brand Sweden" platform made a conscious decision to venture for an approach that is centered upon the nation brand. It is for these reasons that Swedish public diplomacy seems to concentrate on a certain side of Swedish reality, a glossy image of a country "tailored to the new trade and investment objectives." Providing a simplified account of social practices, the goal is to attract investors.[91]

Digital Swedish diplomacy

Swedish public diplomacy acts out the Swedish values the country wants to convey, or as marketers say, Swedish public diplomacy lives its brand. This becomes especially obvious when looking at the digital activities of the Swedish public diplomacy.[92] The core values openness, authenticity, care and innovation are materialized in the two biggest projects, the Second House of Sweden and Curators of Sweden. The former is a virtual embassy that Sweden opened in the online world "Second Life". Sweden was the first country to launch a virtual diplomatic representation and received large coverage in the traditional media for it. Showing oneself in the digital world was a communicative goal of the project in order to push the ideas of "Brand Sweden".[93] The view of the Cultural Counselor of the Swedish Embassy in Washington, D.C., may serve as an example when he names involvement as a key goal in Swedish public diplomacy: It attempts to turn its brand values into something that is "tactile and personal" for the recipient.[94] This idea, which is materialized in different projects of Sweden's public diplomacy[95], describes what lies at the core of Sweden's Twitter activity: a consistent extension of the ideas of "Brand Sweden" as something that involves the audience. Interestingly, Sweden does not shy away from testing very new and potentially unsound practices. Instead of fearing for its reputation as a respectable state, the country sets out to project innovativeness at almost any cost – the Second House of Sweden was hardly something that was taken seriously in the diplomatic world.

[90] ibid., 22.
[91] James Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7, no. 2 (2011): 129, doi:10.1057/pb.2011.3.
[92] ibid., 128.
[93] ibid., 132.
[94] ibid., 130.
[95] Such as the Washington House of Sweden and the Second House of Sweden

The project Curators of Sweden that shall be analyzed in this paper is an idea financed to equal parts by both organizations that are both part of the NSU.[96]

After the start of the project in December 2011, within as little as the first 15 weeks, the numbers of followers of @Sweden had soared from 8000 to 27 000.[97]

This project was designed to be "the antithesis to conventional, top-down diplomatic efforts"[98] and one of the many signs that scholars find to mark Sweden and the Swedish as 'early adopters'.[99] Curators of Sweden received extensive coverage in relevant traditional media, won several PR awards and has been copied by many unofficial accounts, usually not state-financed or on a national level.[100] As mentioned above, these reactions of appraisal to the project belong though to the sphere of marketing, nation branding and public relations rather than public diplomacy, and must thus be regarded critically.

German Public Diplomacy

Organizational framework

When looking at the German case, one finds that German engagement with foreign audiences relies heavily on executing cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is regarded as one part of public diplomacy[101] and as such attains the goal of fostering understanding for the home country through art, ideas, literature, etc. Even though it is sub-classified as one element of public diplomacy, the notion of cultural diplomacy and its actors seem especially strong and at times take the place of the larger public diplomacy efforts in the German model. This is why in the following these two will be presented together.

The German "Auswärtige Kulturpolitik", which translates approximately to Foreign Cultural Diplomacy or Policy, is considered the third pillar of foreign policy since the times of Chancellor Willy Brandt.[102] It is seen as a means to an end, namely the supporting of foreign

[96] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, March 25, 2013, Stockholm.
[97] Emelie Hallberg and Emelie Lundberg, "PR 2.0: En kvalitativ studie av vilken typ av känslor som väcks hos konsumenterna vid digitala PR-kampanjer" (Bachelor Thesis, Department of Business Administration, University of Gothenburg, 2012), accessed March 15, 2013, https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/29401/1/gupea_2077_29401_1.pdf, 28.
[98] Christian Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," *Popular Communication* 11, no. 1 (2013): 37, doi:10.1080/15405702.2013.751855.
[99] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 4.
[100] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 32.
[101] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[102] The first and second pillars are security and foreign trade.

policy objectives of the government, and thus transcends the idea of simply promoting German culture abroad.[103]

Germany's public diplomacy operates with quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization (quangos). The most prominent partners of the Foreign Ministry can be considered to be the Goethe-Institut and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).[104]

The Goethe-Institut, which is the focus of this study, is entrusted with the cultural diplomacy of Germany and with furthering the knowledge about and the image of the Federal Republic abroad.[105] The Goethe-Institut has about 3000 employees worldwide in over 150 institutes. [106]

It is named as the most prominent German on-location quango in Ostrowski's survey among diplomats serving abroad, thus surpassing the DAAD.[107]

The German foreign objectives that public diplomacy is supposed to support have changed during history: While after the First World War, reintegration into the League of Nations was the most prominent goal, during the Nazi regime cultural imperialism reigned. After the Second World War, German governments worked for reconciliation with other nations once again. [108]

During the 1970s, the idea of bilateral exchange gained more importance for German Cultural Diplomacy, which resulted in the promotion of exchange programs administered e.g. by the DAAD. With the fall of the Berlin Wall at the beginning of the Nineties, Germany assumed a role of aide to the Eastern European neighbors: through cultural diplomacy integration in Europe was to be achieved and democratic processes established. The incorporation of German Foreign Trade increased in importance during the Nineties as well. Cultural Diplomacy was seen as a means to pave the way for the success of German products and brands abroad.[109]

The concept of German Public and Cultural Diplomacy was laid down in a concept paper written in 1975. It establishes that Cultural Diplomacy should be equal to diplomacy and foreign trade policy, must be oriented at foreign policy objectives, but not become too

[103] Druttman, "Germany"
[104] Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Ministry), "Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik (AKBP): Ziele und Aufgaben," accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog/ZieleUndPartner/ZielePartner_node.html, 1.
[105] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[106] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Das deutsche Modell: Die Mittlerorganisationen," in *Kultur und Aussenpolitik: Handbuch für Studium und Praxis*, ed. Kurt-Jürgen Maass, 2nd ed. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 269–81, 276.
[107] *the third ACM conference*, 148.
[108] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, ed., *Kultur und Aussenpolitik: Handbuch für Studium und Praxis*, 2nd ed. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 25.
[109] ibid., 26.

confined by political opinion, should be bilateral, strive for exchange with other cultures, and should convey a balanced, realistic and critical image of Germany. Other documents and contracts that govern the relationship between the state and e.g. the quangos, such as the Rahmenvertrag with the Goethe-Institut, are built upon this first report. [110]

The German government updated the 1975 version of their Cultural and Public Diplomacy concept with a paper called "Konzeption 2000" at the turn of the millennium. This concept emphasizes the role of the Foreign Ministry as coordinator of German Cultural Diplomacy. Already then, the new media are ascribed a "completely new importance". The new concept connects political aims such as conflict prevention and promotion of human rights with the German Cultural Diplomacy and calls for the actors in the field to let themselves guide by democratic values. [111] As can be seen, the ideas of democracy and fundamentally important new media are lifted in the theoretic policy documents of German public diplomacy that thus is to a certain extent aligned with scholarly demands.

With guidelines on how to conduct public diplomacy abroad, the Federal Department of Press and Information published a paper in 2000 that complements the "Konzeption 2000". In it, the main mission of public diplomacy is stated to be a promotion of the German reputation. At the same time though, the guidelines demand the conveyance of a realistic and comprehensive image of Germany. It furthermore explicitly mentions the explanation of German policy to foreign audiences as a mission for public diplomacy, [112] a demand that goes perfectly in line with how the purpose of public diplomacy has been defined earlier in this paper.

The German model of employing quangos to conduct large parts of the public diplomacy has its pros and cons. When assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the German quango model, scholars argue that the quango's bilateral work is serving the thought of exchange and that they are more knowledgeable in their field and can work for long-term goals. Thus these organizations are believed to fulfill tasks that foreign policy cannot, as opposed to the diplomats who are sent out in the short-term rotation system. However, one must critically review these arguments scholars bring forward. The Goethe-Institutes, for example, work mostly with promoting German culture in different ways to their host country audience, and while they cooperate with host country organizations, they hardly transport foreign culture back to Germany which would be a criterion for bilateral work. Also, while this might be

[110] ibid., 27.
[111] ibid., 28.
[112] ibid., 28, 29.

different for other quangos, in the case that is examined in this paper, it must be stated that the Goethe-Institut works on a very similar rotation basis as the embassies, dispatching their staff for a limited period of time to a country.[113]

One can follow the arguments of current scholarly literature in stating that the disadvantages of the quango system include less direct coordination options for the Foreign Ministry and thus less influence to steer and bundle efforts. In trying to still keep control, the result is often a high level of bureaucracy, making it difficult for the quangos to work fast and efficiently. The target audience is challenged with understanding the system of scattered actors,[114] and these actors can end up competing against each other in a detrimental unhealthy way. [115]
Maaß maintains that the employment of quangos is a question of credibility. Through the organizations' distance to the government, they are designed to appear as more credible transmitters of independent information.[116] He believes the Germany's model of public diplomacy to be the one with the highest degree of non-intervention of the state.[117] Even here, one must critically observe how the budget of the Goethe-Institut is comprised. In 2012, the Goethe-Institut had 365 million euros at its disposal, 233 million of which were granted by the German Foreign Ministry. Ten million were acquired through donations and third parties, and 122 million euros were generated through language courses and examinations the institute offers. [118] The vast amount of financial means that are provided by the German Foreign Ministry suggests that the state is not that distant from the proceedings in the quangos. Indeed, the German quangos have contracts with the state in which their mission is defined, so-called "Rahmenverträge". When examining these contracts, which the Foreign Ministry signs on a regular basis also with the Goethe-Institute, it becomes evident how far-reaching the state's authority is. The Goethe-Institutes are free in the work that they carry out de-centrally, but the large amounts of money from the government have been received since 1976, making it the oldest recipient. In 2006, the Foreign Ministry began putting down target agreements in their contracts. These targets are regularly evaluated with the quangos. Interestingly enough, the

[113] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, March 27, 2013, Munich and Uppsala, 1–2.
[114] This aforementioned confusion for the non-German recipient, is alleviated through the internet, Harnischfeger argues. The internet has made it easy to navigate the many actors of German public diplomacy. Connected by links, they are all available for the user. (cf. Harnischfeger)
[115] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Das deutsche Modell: Die Mittlerorganisationen," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 155), 273f.
[116] Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik*, 29.
[117] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Das deutsche Modell: Die Mittlerorganisationen," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 155), 269.
[118] Christoph Mücher, "Zahlen und Fakten 2012," http://www.goethe.de/prs/pro/pressemappe_jpk2012/pressemappe_jpk2012.pdf, 4.

Foreign Ministry has the right to suspend a planned action of the Goethe-Institut due to political reasons. Even though these reasons must be grave and the request remains an exception, the institute must under all circumstances follow the request.[119]

The Foreign Ministry works closely together with the Goethe-Institut and regards the cooperation as very fruitful.[120] Despite the latter's organizational form as an independent non-profit association, the Ministry must be informed about a wide range of activities (including such as employees' business trips abroad) and consent to decisions (such as the closing of local offices.) The Foreign Ministry can decide to open new local branches and suspend employees. [121]

In the interview research for this paper,[122] it became evident that the Goethe-Institut and the Foreign Ministry maintain a good relationship of mutual respect. However, this does not change the fact that the Foreign Ministry and even the Embassies have a large amount of control over the quangos which they could exercise if they wished to. It is thus difficult to maintain that the Goethe-Institut is factually independent.

The reorganization of German public diplomacy in the institutional structure hints at the importance of cultural diplomacy in the German case. The department for external communication used to be part of the Federal Press Office before and was then moved to the Foreign Ministry and merged with the Department for Cultural Diplomacy.[123] This is yet another indicator of the strong position cultural diplomacy holds in German foreign policy, and it shows the weight and significance of promoting cultural ties in German public diplomacy.

Re-branding Germany

Nation branding that must be separated from public diplomacy has also been of relevance in the German case, albeit evoking different reaction among diplomats. During the 2006 Soccer

[119] Goethe-Institut, "Satzung und Rahmenvertrag" (2004) (unpublished manuscript, April 11, 2013), http://www.goethe.de/mmo/priv/1527476-STANDARD.pdf.
[120] *the third ACM conference*, 152.
[121] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Das deutsche Modell: Die Mittlerorganisationen," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 155), 272.
[122] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1., Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[123] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Aktuelle Herausforderungen der Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik," in *Deutsche Aussenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*, ed. Thomas Jäger, Alexander Höse and Kai Oppermann, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 584–602, 593.

Championships, a shift in the image of Germany could be discerned. This change was, as Körber remarks, not a coincidence but instead a concerted branding effort. [124]

For the championships, the German government had commissioned a rebranding that should Relying on Simon Anholt recommendation, the German government created a campaign that was conducted with partners in the industry and followed a branding statement that read: "Germany is open, innovative, efficient and sustainable". Germany's efforts were evaluated as especially successful and "coherent" by Anholt and reached the second spot in the Nation Branding Index the year after the championship. Before, Germany had made it to number 7 only. [125] However, unlike in Sweden where acceptance for the branding of the country appears to be more accepted, the branding of Germany was met by a mixed reception: Representatives of the traditional cultural diplomacy were and are skeptical of the new branding efforts, fearing that their work would be become an all too banal advertisement. Connecting branding and public diplomacy is feared to lead to commercializing the work of independent cultural institutions, and the cooperation with external PR agencies is not favored by German public diplomats.[126] [127] This gives a hint on what difficulties are met when designing a coherent strategy for German public diplomacy, and that it is possibly cultural acceptance that shapes the idea of public diplomacy.

German digital diplomacy

When considering the activities of the German states online, one can find that even here the German pluralism is reflected. The Foreign Ministry created the portal page deutschland.de, which is the most important site for German digital diplomacy, but public diplomacy is further fragmented by publishing an own homepage for cultural diplomacy, kulturportal-deutschland.de, and own pages for the quangos concerned with cultural diplomacy. On top of this, in its efforts to compete for the best scientists, Germany has also launched a page directed at university graduates.[128]

The system of many different sources continues into Twitter: The Foreign Ministry administers the account @auswaertigesamt and @GermanyDiplo, the latter in English, where online editors post news and information about German current foreign politics, and very

[124] Sebastian Körber, "Image, Marke, Branding - Die veränderte Arbeit am Deutschlandbild," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 174), 186f.
[125] ibid., 187.
[126] *the third ACM conference*, 181.
[127] Sebastian Körber, "Image, Marke, Branding - Die veränderte Arbeit am Deutschlandbild," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 174), 189.
[128] ibid., 190.

many of the quangos, as the Goethe-Institut assessed in this study, have one or more own Twitter accounts.[129] It is thus not possible to search for Germany and find the one account; instead the recipient has to decide which sender is the most interesting to him.

[129] www.twitter.com/auswaertigesamt and www.twitter.com/germanydiplo

Characteristics of Twitter

Twitter is part of what is referred to as the Web 2.0, "a site of sharing user-generated content, such as social-networking sites, blogs, wikis, or forums".[130] Having been established only in 2006, Twitter is a "relatively new phenomenon" and has not been studied to a large extent by scholars.[131] The service gained large popularity around 2009[132] , reaching 65 million messages a day[133] and witnessing a major increase in user numbers with 1382 percent growth compared to 2008.[134] Twitter is a so-called micro-blogging site through which users send messages, tweets[135] that are "brief text updates" that can link to a picture or a website, but must not exceed the limit of 140 characters.[136]

It is the so-called following through which communication on Twitter occurs[137], however following does not have to be reciprocal, a feature that distinguishes Twitter from other social media services.[138] Also, one can read tweets without having a Twitter account and without following anyone by simply accessing the account or hashtag online, making Twitter are very easily accessible, open medium.

To start a conversation or discussion about a specific topic on Twitter, the use of so-called hashtags is implied. A word, e.g. EUpolitics is hashtagged with the #-sign (resulting in #EUpolitics), and thus becomes a label that others can search for in order to read about the topic or enter the discussion.[139]

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[130] Lina Khatib, William Dutton, and Michael Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: An Exploratory Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team" (Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University,), accessed February 28, 2013, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23084/No.120-_Public_Diplomacy_2.0.pdf, 454.

[131] ibid.

[132] Nicholas J. Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7, no. 1 (2011): 5, doi:10.1057/pb.2011.2.

[133] Philip M. Seib, *Real-time diplomacy: Politics and power in the social media era*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 89.

[134] Hannes R. Richter, "Web 2.0 and Public Diplomacy," in *Cyberspaces and global affairs*, ed. Sean S. Costigan and Jake Perry (Farnham, Surrey, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 105–18, 108.

[135] In this paper, real tweets are considered those messages that are sent by actual people who either tweet privately, for businesses or organizations. In distinction to this, there are also RSS-feeds that automatically generate messages that inform about updates on a website. These are not considered real tweets as they do not fulfill the criteria of human interaction but are automatized.

[136] Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243, 243.

[137] Twitter.com, "New User FAQs," accessed May 2, 2013, https://support.twitter.com/forums/10711/entries/13920.

[138] Michael Rappa et al., "What is Twitter, a social network or a news media?" in *the 19th international conference*, 591, 591.

[139] ibid. 592.

Twitter operates with replies and retweets. A retweet is a message that another user has sent and that is then copied into the own tweet. Retweeting is a powerful tool of Twitter as it "empowers users to spread information of their choice beyond the reach of the original tweet's followers".[140]. On Twitter, it is thus not necessarily relevant how many followers an account has but rather how many retweets it can generate.[141]

For the geographic area applicable to the user's location as well as globally, Twitter collects content that is mentioned most often and publishes this to the left side of the Twitter feed as trending topics.[142] A topic that becomes popular, often an event or a political discussion, is thereby easy to trace.

Because of its distinctive characteristics, Twitter is different from traditional media and also from other social media. For example, Rappa et al. have found that most connections on Twitter are one-way and that those that actually are reciprocated are often based on common interests of the users. Content is not based on personal relations but on common interest that users share and through which they meet. Bearing this in mind, the benefits for state actors are pointed at: people cannot actually have a personal 'friendship' with a state but they can certainly connect to through common topics.

Also, the degree of separation[143] was found to be lower than expected in a non-reciprocal setting. Information flows over "less than 5 or fewer hops between 93, 5 % of user pairs" which leads Rappa et al. to suggest that Twitter is less a tool for social networking than a strong medium for information.[144] This idea diverges from what the majority of scholars state about the concept of new technology that they believe to be largely concerned with dialogical networking.

As might be expected, Twitter not just differs from other new media, like e.g. Facebook, but from traditional media as well. On Twitter, information comes from those accounts a user is voluntarily following, which, as Teasley et al. have found, adds strong credibility to the content as it comes from a personal and trusted network that the user himself has selected.[145][146] This is an especially interesting characteristic for public diplomacy purposes

[140] ibid.
[141] Michael Rappa et al., "What is Twitter, a social network or a news media?," in *the 19th international conference*, 591, 598.
[142] ibid., 592.
[143] Stanley Milgram's experiment on the degree of separation suggests that every person is connected to any over over six hops.
[144] ibid., 594.
[145] Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243, 245.

that heavily rely on credibility. Additionally, Teasley et al. identify two further main characteristics as twitter-specific content features that make communication on Twitter different from other media: the frequent updates about daily life and real time information.
Technologically, the characteristics of Twitter are described by scholars as brevity, mobility and easy access, speed, and broadcast nature.[147] Socially, Twitter is considered an easy way to share one's life with others. The brevity of the tweets prompts concise messages which are perceived as beneficial by the informants that Teasley interviewed[148] and the low cost and accessibility through mobile phones make the medium attractive to users.[149]
The speed on Twitter is usually faster than in other media. Real-time information is often conveyed through micro-blogging rather than through traditional media or even websites with lengthier information. In their study, Teasley et al. have established that Twitter is regarded a "quick and interesting source of news", avoiding the often outdated longer website versions.[150]

In case users have not set their account to be private, tweets go out to the whole public, thus creating the broadcast nature of Twitter. It is not possible to define who will benefit from the information, but the user can share the content he or she thinks is interesting to the public. This can result in creating connections through hashtags: for example, two people interested in the same topic, i.e. hashtag, can start communicating without having known each other at all before.[151] This is a feature that is not given on other social media sites like Facebook that (apart from their 'like' and 'fan' pages) rely on the personal relation between people.

These features made Twitter a welcome tool for political agitating. Especially in the developing countries, as Nicolas Cull remarks, these characteristics have made Twitter the powerful tool as which it served during the revolutions in the Arab Spring. Many public diplomacy practitioners even in democratic countries embraced Twitter as a means of communication, albeit for different reasons than those in the Arab Spring[152]. Scholars maintain that a reason for this could be the fact that due to the aforementioned characteristics, the micro-blogging services provide "access to thoughts, intentions and activities of millions

[146] Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243, 245.
[147] ibid., 247–8.
[148] ibid., 249.
[149] ibid.
[150] ibid., 247.
[151] ibid.
[152] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 5.

of users in real-time";[153] the insight public diplomacy needs to influence public opinion. The question this paper will therefore address is if and how Twitter is actually used for public diplomacy in practice and what it can offer for the field.

Effective social media use

In order to be able to assess the quality of the two accounts studied, criteria for what is considered successful social media practice for public diplomacy shall be described in the following.

Today, public diplomacy and public relations often intersect. Pamment defines the public relations industry as "designed to interject in public debate in order to shape opinion, using controlled information and key members of society as strategic resources"[154]. Comparing this definition with what this paper has defined as public diplomacy, it shows that both concepts are relatively alike. One must nevertheless critically distance public diplomacy from mostly commercially oriented public relations. Public diplomacy is different in being, per definition, commissioned with explaining policy and further acceptance and understanding.

Consequently, one cannot follow Hallberg and Lundberg's idea of measuring a project like Curators of Sweden through attention in traditional media and awards in public relations competitions.[155] While these categories might serve for evaluating mere PR efforts, this paper will look into what other scholarly literature sees as quality attributes. [156]

However to begin with, the discourse faces a problem with determining good practices in the field as there is no widely-agreed upon method of measurement yet[157]. Evaluation depends heavily on the original objective a country wishes to attain with its public diplomacy. As Robert Banks remarks, states can aim to achieve different or also numerous goals with their public diplomacy efforts and therefore general measurement is difficult.[158] He also draws

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[153] Lawrence Bergman et al., "Using twitter to recommend real-time topical news," in *the third ACM conference*, 385, 385.

[154] James Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century: A comparative study of policy and practice* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 23.

[155] Emelie Hallberg and Emelie Lundberg, "PR 2.0: En kvalitativ studie av vilken typ av känslor som väcks hos konsumenterna vid digitala PR-kampanjer" (Bachelor Thesis, Department of Business Administration, University of Gothenburg, 2012), accessed March 15, 2013, https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/29401/1/gupea_2077_29401_1.pdf, 27.

[156] Nancy Snow, "Rethinking Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow, Routledge international handbooks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3–11, 9.

[157] Cocomma Bassey, "Understanding Nation Branding: A "New Nationalism" in Germany" (Master Thesis Brandeis University, August 2012), accessed February 21, 2013, http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/86/CBassey_MastersThesis_August2012.pdf?sequence=1, 49.

[158] Robert Banks, "A Resource Guide to Public Diplomacy Evaluation," University of Southern California, accessed February 28, 2013, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/publications/perspectives/CPD_Perspectives_Paper%209_2011.pdf, 25.

attention to a number of facts that complicate measuring: 1) the impact of public diplomacy efforts usually shows only after a long-term engagement, 2) public diplomacy tries to promote intangible changes in people's thinking concepts and 3) often results cannot be traced directly back to a certain public diplomacy action. Also problematic is the often occurring confusion between outcome and output. These two notions are distinguished by the degree of control the public diplomacy practitioner has over them, a challenge especially in social media. The new media demand new evaluation procedures that are yet to be developed further. [159] These challenges in evaluating the work of public diplomats on, as in the present case, Twitter, must be borne in mind when trying to understand the attitudes institutions hold toward the medium.

Despite the mentioned difficulties, scholars do agree on a certain set of criteria. One of the most important guidelines is to listen to public opinion before broadcasting information. The process of listening is considered the foundation of both social media and public diplomacy.[160]

In line with this the demand for multilateral communication instead of the distribution of "unilateral information that reports about the favorable aspects of a country" is voiced. To engage in dialogue is seen as a main criterion for successful public diplomacy online.[161] To "encourage interaction and foster interest in long-term dialogue" is a key element of what the literature describes as good digital public diplomacy. [162]

Research has found that it is crucial for public diplomacy practitioners to know their medium well in order to use new social media effectively. [163]A thorough "understanding of their role in the information environment and their ability to facilitate dialogue" leads to a clearer position in the social media sphere in which not every social media tool is useful. Success is probable in digital public diplomacy if those executing it understand which tools are the right ones for their target audience and further potential for future dialogue with it. In her study on the U.S. embassy in Indonesia, Ciolek remarks in that a fruitful implementation of online public diplomacy includes "capitalizing on trends in the target media environment".

[159] ibid., 11–3.
[160] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 107.
[161] Jan Melissen, ed., *The New public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (Basingstoke [UK], New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) Brian Hocking, 13.
[162] Melanie Ciolek, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy: How Embassy Jakarta's Facebook Outreach Illuminates the Limitations and Potential for the State Department's Use of Social Media" (Essay, Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, University of Southern California, 2010), accessed February 28, 2013, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/mciolek_socialmedia_indonesia.pdf, 20.
[163] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:10.

Following her argument, one can connect it to the dynamics of hashtagging on Twitter that allows for entering discussion of relevance to the target audience.

Profound knowledge of the medium is also required to convince lawmakers and governments to engage, also financially, more in digital public diplomacy.[164] Furthermore, scholars state that good social media must be based upon an official strategy and guidelines by the organization in order to yield the desired effect.[165]

The most prominent measurement for success that scholars put forward is the involvement in informal dialogue. While there are risks that need to be taken into account, interaction should still always be advocated and pursued, they demand, and the effectiveness of social media work should be evaluated according to the level of engagement and relationship building with the target audience.[166]

These criteria demanding listening, knowledge of the medium and the establishing of dialogue are an ideal for digital public diplomacy that scholars have postulated and that will be contrasted with the reality of the German and Swedish case in this paper.

[164] Ciolek, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy," 20.

[165] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:10.

[166] Ciolek, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy," 19.

Challenges: New Media and Old Diplomacy

In this chapter, the new media's influence on old diplomacy shall be portrayed and the thus altered situation for public diplomacy be depicted. It has already been established that globalization and new technology have revolutionized communication. How this has affected public diplomacy and confronted it with new problems and new opportunities shall be assessed in the following. By tracing the scholarly call for a renewed public diplomacy with the new media, the case study can be contrasted with these normative demands to compare scholars' and practitioners' concepts of digital diplomacy.

Context and Conditions of Digital Diplomacy

As earlier mentioned, international relations are no longer conducted the same way as before the advent of new media.[167] To refine this statement, one can draw on Pamment's four characteristics of old public diplomacy: First, its message was distributed in a one-flow direction from top, the state, to bottom, the foreign audience. Second, in this process the sender controlled the message to the greatest possible extent. [168] Third, the focus of the message was on achieving short-term objectives, and fourth, the dialogue between the sender and the audience was very limited.[169]

In the new arena for public diplomacy, we now see most of these principles reversed: The state can hardly control the message in a time of modern media, and the audience can reply with a mere mouse click, most easily in the medium analyzed for this study, Twitter. The new public diplomacy does not aim at executing one campaign, but concentrates on building long-term relationships. There is not one unilateral sender of messages anymore, but a huge amount of information from many different sources.[170] [171] Still, this does not at all mean the work of public diplomats has become obsolete. Rather, the new technology's possibilities have "leveled the playing field" in which public diplomacy is conducted. [172]

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[167] Anholt, *Competitive Identity*, 13.

[168] Obviously, messages in communication, especially mass communication, can only be controlled to a certain degree, but this degree was much higher in the old public diplomacy than it is today.

[169] ibid., 3.

[170] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346.

[171] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 3.

[172] Evan H. Potter (ed.), *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century.*

Also, new media do not rule out traditional media: On the one hand, most Web 2.0 phenomena have partnered up with established newspapers, magazines and TV stations to maximize their reach.[173][174] Also, the internet is used as the starting point for journalists in traditional media for the gathering of topics and opinions. Thus, online content can be very influential in "intermedia agenda setting", but at the same time it can only realize its power through the old media's cooperation.[175] The public diplomat therefore has to perform a balancing act: adapt to new media without leaving behind traditional communication channels.[176]

As mentioned above, the times in which the new public diplomacy has to establish its concepts are characterized by information overload. The amount of messages is vaster than ever before and makes being heard by the recipient one aims at much more difficult.[177] [178] This poses several challenges for public diplomacy: To begin with, it is necessary to become better at reaching out to its audience. Also, one key element of public diplomacy, the explaining of policy becomes even more important when citizens are confronted with different, contesting information from sources that all follow their own political agenda. Moreover, public diplomacy actors need to establish a credibility that makes them one of the voices that is heard and trusted among users. Armstrong believes that those public diplomacy actors who fail to engage in social media will lose their relevance and competitiveness in the ongoing fight for influence. Ignoring the opportunities social media offers is "surrendering the high ground in the enduring battle to influence minds around the world."[179] If one actor does not take the stage and connect with the target group he is interested in, this group will be contacted and influenced by another actor.

To use the new communication modes without adapting to the new structures, however, does not make much sense.[180] The medium might be part of the message, or rather the meta-message, but it cannot figure as the message itself. Marshall McLuhan coined the statement "The Medium is the Message" and while at first sight it appears to be contradicting the above, it rather points at an additional perspective in this context. McLuhan draws attention to the

[173] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 2.
[174] Cull names for example WikiLeaks cooperation with major national newspapers.
[175] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 465.
[176] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 122.
[177] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 3.
[178] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 469.
[179] Matt Armstrong, "Social Media as Public Diplomacy," http://www.layaline.tv/publications/Perspectives/MattArmstrong.html.
[180] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:2.

idea that the medium is the scale of the message and that without the medium, there cannot be any content.[181] He argues that it is the larger scope of the medium that should be regarded: it is not the tangible result that is relevant, he states, but the underlying idea. Transcending the obvious, he calls for looking for the effects the medium makes without putting the content in focus. Federman, in interpreting McLuhan, argues that it is the "change in inter-personal dynamics" that the medium enhances that is of interest.[182] This is just what is meant when saying that new public diplomacy cannot persuade its online audience by issuing the same statements in the same manner as before.[183] It is not sufficient to hire more staff that disseminates the government's messages; the tone and indeed the approach itself have to be adapted[184], and thus as McLuhan demands, the communicational dynamics changed. As Khatib points out in her study, simply posting information to a forum or a feed without interactive following-up is not new public diplomacy, but a perfect display of "an old-fashioned, one-way mode of communication". [185]

Challenges the new public diplomacy poses

Like any new technology and concept, digital diplomacy comes with challenges and opportunities. One of the most important decisions those executing digital diplomacy have to make is that for a "formal feed" or a humanized foreign policy.[186] In the two cases examined in this paper, these different approaches will become very clear. While Germany relies on an institutional, correct feed, Sweden favors an extremely personified outreach strategy.

Using an example of the U.S. digital diplomacy, Cull illustrates the of inappropriateness of humanized feeds under certain circumstances: During a foreign policy crisis, employees of the Department of State posted pictures of their Frappucinos, thus reaching out with a very typical feature of Twitter, the sharing of frequent life updates. However, the United States were on the verge of war during this time, which made the post seem cynical and did not help the public diplomacy of the state at all.[187]

[181] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man.
[182] Mark Federman, „What is the Meaning of The Medium is the Message", accessed May 12, 2013, http://individual.utoronto.ca/markfederman/article_mediumisthemessage.htm.
[183] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 134.
[184] Evgeny Morozov, "The future of "Public Diplomacy 2.0"" accessed April 11, 2013, http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/06/09/the_future_of_public_diplomacy_20.
[185] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 469.
[186] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 5.
[187] ibid.

Even with the difficulties a humanized digital outreach brings, research has shown that users trust those messages most that are sent from "someone like me".[188] The humanization of public diplomacy adds to the credibility of the state actor that is implementing it.[189] Individuals as public diplomats become more important, and as mentioned before, the lines between formal diplomats and other representatives blur.

If we depart from the assumption that social media is most credible and effective with a humanized approach, clear rules have to be established as to which extent the social media activity should be casual, the actual content must be adapted to the medium and audience. Due to the aforementioned information masses, the essential requirement for a tweet is that it has to awaken the recipients' interest. [190] Copying, shortening to 140 characters and pasting the headlines of website articles or Facebook statuses cannot be regarded an adaptation to the medium because it neglects the altered role of the state as a conversation partner in the global talk instead of a broadcaster to the people.

It seems that this democratic and equal conversation mode can be the very problem for the public diplomacy of many states. With the hierarchical structures in the old-school institutions behind the Twitter feed of states being a reverse image of the prerequisites online, social media could even be a tool that is still too egalitarian for many states' diplomatic organizational frameworks.[191] New public diplomacy can only unlock its full potential if supported by the public diplomat's superiors. Without the Foreign Ministry standing firmly behind the digital diplomatic approach, those working in the diplomatic services will recoil from putting themselves on Twitter for fear of being attacked.[192] The example of Sweden might serve to illustrate how Foreign Affairs minister, Carl Bildt, who is an avid Twitterer himself and blogs about his work, contributes to an innovation-friendly atmosphere in which acceptance towards new technologies prosper. Even if the representative of Visit Sweden rejects the notion that this has directly helped launch a project like Curators of Sweden, it indicates the tech-savvy climate in Sweden in which this brainchild was born.[193] [194]

[188] ibid., 3.
[189] ibid.
[190] ibid., 5.
[191] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 108.
[192] Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0,"
[193] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[194] No, because we haven't asked for his permission. (…) We have an openness in Sweden, so since he's doing it.

One of the biggest fears of public diplomats with social media is the emergence of unwanted dialogue[195] and the felt need to control communication as much as possible which leads to a hesitating attitude towards Twitter. While it is possible to target new audiences and easily interact with them, media such as Twitter also mean that the recipient can easily talk back, ask uncomfortable questions or simply be rude. Here one finds a stark contrast between what scholars demand, interactive dialogue, and what practitioners that fear this interaction and feel ill-equipped to meet the dialogue, want. This goes to show yet again that in order to fully seize their opportunities, diplomats have to be trained and familiarized with the new media. In his survey among German public diplomats Ostrowski found that there was a strong desire to make public diplomacy in general and methods and instruments for digital diplomacy a larger part of diplomatic education.[196]

As already discussed, one element of utmost importance in the realm of digital public diplomacy communication is the credibility of the sender.[197] In an attempt to gain more credibility, multipliers are used by some states' public diplomacy. These actors, not connected to the state by very obvious ties, spread the public diplomacy objectives in a way that is perceived as more independent. While this idea is not new to diplomacy, digital diplomacy brings a new twist to it: The difference lies in the fact that in digital diplomacy, the connecting actors do not have to be famous or powerful in a conventional understanding, but can be an established digital profile "lending credibility to political objectives through their own beliefs and social respectability."[198] In contrast to the ideas of the old public diplomacy where efforts were directed at influential key decision makers and those with power to shape the opinion of others were targeted by other states,[199] today, power has shifted and a Twitterer with many followers or a blogger with numerous readers can influence his or her audience without having a formal key position in the target society.[200] The blogger who in the first instance is a regular citizen becomes a key person but differing from the mechanisms in the old power system, he has acquired this position without necessarily needing formal education

[195] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 31.
[196] *the third ACM conference*, 183.
[197] Claiming something that a state or actor cannot live up to does no longer work as it did before. As the example of WikiLeaks has shown spectacularly, information can leak out and then discredits the state that has acted with little integrity on a much larger scope than was possible before the digital era, with now thousands of users watching.
[198] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 23.
[199] ibid., 10.
[200] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 2.

or a powerful position. Public diplomacy, in the age of democratized information, must and does focus much more strongly on the regular citizen, and the internet's social media provide an excellent tool for that new task. It is the very idea of adapting to these new power structures in social media, however, that seems to prove a real challenge for governments, as Cull remarks very correctly. Even though many states have entered the social media channels, they seem to have "largely missed the shift of power inherent in the new technology".[201] Despite the new circumstances, they continue to transmit the same content in largely the same manner. For example, posting routine updates to Twitter is not a way of adapting one's message to the medium[202]: The risk-averse behavior and "information protective" policies that the following empirical study will showcase are colliding with new media paradigms scholars hypothesize.[203]

Opportunities the new public diplomacy offers

With all these difficulties Twitter comes with, it is important to acknowledge the benefits public diplomacy can derive from the medium in order to judge whether the offers it makes weigh out the problematic issues.

One of the chances of Twitter is the enhancement of the public diplomacy element of listening to foreign audiences, one of the foundations of public diplomacy.[204] According to Pamment, this component is generally underestimated, but plays a bigger role in the new dialogical public diplomacy than it did before.[205] To understand the foreign audience and the concerns in that society it is essential to gain insight into the opinions in the country.[206] Listening can be done through media monitoring and opinion polls, but nowhere can it be done as easily – and cheaply - as on Twitter: here one can simply check the trending topics and read millions of users' thoughts on Swedish politics, Iranian riots or the Belgian candidate in the Eurovision Song Contest. States now have to join the multi-voice conversation instead of controlling it.[207] The offer Twitter makes can greatly develop the decision-making processes which can now be

[201] ibid., 3.
[202] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:10.
[203] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 6.
[204] ibid., 5f.
[205] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 30.
[206] Lawrence Bergman et al., "Using twitter to recommend real-time topical news," in, *the third ACM conference* (see note 79), 385.
[207] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 453.

based on fresh assumptions from interaction with the foreign audience instead of old ideas obtained during the last contact. [208]

If the sender succeeds in establishing credibility, the easy communication flows in social media add value to the activities of governments and state administration because they enhance transparency and democracy.[209]

Twitter opens up a new way to find target audiences because of its set-up. If before, one had to reach the audience through their immediate interest in the country, Twitter makes it possible to establish a relationship on a common interest that does not have to have Sweden or Germany as a starting point. Instead, it can be national products or traits from any sector, ABBA music or Mercedes, skiing or the Baltic Sea Strategy, Carl von Linné or Brezels.[210] If a user looks for a hashtag on a topic of his or her particular interest and finds tweets of the Swedish public diplomats speaking about skiing in Lapland, he might choose to follow the account and has thus become another valuable recipient. A user who has no knowledge of Germany as yet, by clicking on a food hashtag with a brezel might be led to her first contact with Germany. By establishing relationships, common discussion and memories, Twitter and social media in general bring public diplomacy closer to cultural diplomacy that has been praised for "creating experiences rather than simply transmitting information".[211]

These benefits of Twitter for public diplomacy are theoretically brought forward by scholars and through the logical set up of the Twitter service. They are, however, not yet tested against actual empirical data. By assessing the Twitter accounts of the two countries, it shall in the following be analyzed how Germany and Sweden in how far they seize the stated opportunities that digital diplomacy offers and how they cope with the above-mentioned challenges in practice.

[208] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 30.
[209] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 31.
[210] Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243, 249.
[211] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 31.

Media Analysis

Before analyzing the two different Twitter accounts, it is appropriate to give a short overview of the organizational structure of the two accounts in order to understand their particularities.

As mentioned before, the project Curators of Sweden was launched at the end of 2011. The project was developed by the PR agency Volontaire, and was thus also received as a nation-branding campaign exhibiting "good PR sense and a good understanding of how to use social media"[212] by the scholarly discourse.

The authors of the Twitter feed are chosen by a three-person committee, with one representative each from Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute and one representative from the PR agency Volontaire.[213]

The German account that is being analyzed in this paper is one of the three Twitter accounts that the headquarters of the Goethe-Institut in Munich hold. The institute is entrusted with the cultural and public diplomacy of Germany. It operates with a communications department and a department of online editors. The communications department is mostly concerned with promoting the Goethe-Institut's own events and runs the account GI_weltweit whereas the online editors twitter on GI_Journal about "contemporary culture and society life in Germany".[214] The account is administered by four employees of the institute's online editor department that are appearing with their full names in the description of the account.

In the following, a qualitative analysis will be presented that aims to show the frequency of tweets and the degree of interactive dialogue in the two studied accounts. The case study then proceeds with qualitatively assessing a sample of tweets in order to determine what kind of tone is employed and what kind of topics are discussed and in how far they correspond to the themes of public diplomacy or other concepts.

Quantitative Analysis

When analyzing Twitter, the website limits the amount of tweets returned to the 3200 most recent messages sent from the respective account. This is a result of capacity issues on Twitter's part.[215]

[212] Christian Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," *Popular Communication* 11, no. 1 (2013): 45, doi:10.1080/15405702.2013.751855.
[213] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 40.
[214] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, March 27, 2013, Munich and Uppsala, 1–2.
[215] Jason Costa, Internet Forum Discussion to Michael Owens, 2012.

Account	time span	time	tweets per day	number of tweets
GI_Journal	Feb 9, 2010 - Apr 15, 2013	3 years, 65 days	2,75	3200
Sweden	Feb 18, 2013 - Apr 16, 2013	57 days	56,1	3200

Table 1

The time span covered by 3200 tweets differs considerably between the @sweden account and @GI_Journal account. The Swedish account sent 3200 in only 57 days, so that the time period considered goes from February 18, 2013 to April 16, 2013. The German account, in contrast, stretches its 3200 most recent tweets over a time of 3 years and 65 days, which corresponds to the period from February 9, 2010 to April 15, 2013. These mere quantities already indicate the different frequencies with which the two accounts are updated. Sweden on average tweets 56 times[216] a day in the considered time period (including retweets) while Germany sends out 3 messages a day.

Interaction Analysis

One of the crucial points of new public diplomacy online is considered to be the multi-directional communication the new technology encourages. While 20th century public diplomacy operated with a "one-way flow" during which the sender controls the message and in which interaction between the communicator and recipient was limited [217], social media, and certainly Twitter with its complete visibility of all interaction tweets, have entirely reversed this situation. Not only does the technology allow for these easy dialogues, scholars consider effective online public diplomacy as reaching out and communicating with the audience. In her study of the online activities of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Ciolek concludes that one of the key lessons for success in online public diplomacy is to recognize the importance of "direct informal communication". She maintains that whether or not a public diplomacy endeavor in social media can be seen as successful and effective should moreover be determined by exactly this measurement: the engagement with target audiences.[218]

[216] All number are rounded off/up

[217] James Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century: A comparative study of policy and practice* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

[218] Melanie Ciolek, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy: How Embassy Jakarta's Facebook Outreach Illuminates the Limitations and Potential for the State Department's Use of Social Media" (Essay, Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, University of Southern California, 2010), accessed February 28, 2013, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/mciolek_socialmedia_indonesia.pdf, 19.

One, if not the, important new characteristic of the new media and at the same time one of the fundamental differences to traditional media being the easily accessible means of interaction, it seems reasonable to use this variable – frequency of interaction - as one measurement for assessing the Twitter accounts of @Sweden and @GI_Journal, and to contrast the normative claims of literature with the actual reality of the Twitter accounts.

The interaction analysis is performed through a quantitative assessment of the @-sign. Using the @ on Twitter signals the mentioning of another Twitter user. The @-sign is then preceding the other user's Twitter name. This practice is usually employed to reply to the user's tweet or to draw the target user's attention to your message. Looking for the amount of @-signs thus gives an account of how many times the authors of the Twitter account have interacted with other Twitter users.
When analyzing the two accounts, several outcomes regarding the level of interactivity can be observed. Both accounts mention themselves, i.e. @sweden and @GI_Journal, in their tweets. This is usually due to their retweeting comments that other users have directed at them. GI_Journal also mentions their sister accounts, GI_English and GI_weltweit, in their tweets.

Screenshot 1: Example of self-mention in a retweet: @sweden, @HomaNasab, @ChoppaB and @Stefan_Jhg are the users that the user @LarsAmreus mentioned. The Curator of the week, David, retweets this message in which he is tagged himself, thus making it a self-mention.

The German account has 420 @-signs in their 3200 most recent tweets, 15 of which refer to their own account and are therefore not considered. This leaves the account with 405 interactions in the past 3 years. These comprise the sister accounts also: GI_English is mentioned once and GI_weltweit is mentioned 31 times. Since these accounts are administered in the same organization and thus do not create informal personal dialogue, these mentions cannot be considered a sign of interaction. This brings down the number of interactions of the Goethe-Institut's account to 373, corresponding to 12 percent of all tweets.

Account	Mention of @	Mention of own @account	@interactions	Interaction rate
GI_Journal	420	15 (+32)	373	12 %
Sweden	3884	607	3277	102 %

Table 2: Interaction Analysis (one tweet can have more than one @)

The Swedish account has a much higher number of @-signs in total. In 3200 tweets 3884 @-signs can be found. The reason for the @-signs outnumbering the total tweets is that one tweet can contain more than one @-sign, e.g. when the author refers to several people she is interacting with. The own account is mentioned 607 times in the feed. In total, the Swedish account comes to 3277 interactions, a result which still corresponds to more than one interaction in the tweets. The @sweden account has therefore a very high interaction rate of 102 percent.

Hashtag Analysis

To enter or start a conversation topic on Twitter, users employ so-called hashtags that are represented by the #-key. Hashtags refer to a determined topic and make it easy to categorize what the tweet is about. At the same time, hashtags are automatically links that, once clicked, lead to a list of all tweets with the same hashtag. When a certain hashtag is used very often, the topic in question is regarded a so-called trending topic. If a user wants to contribute something regarding a specific topic it is thus easy to become a part of the discussion by hashtagging the tweet with the topic. It is not necessarily relevant which followers you have if you have a specific hashtag in the tweet because apart from the followers all users searching the topic will find your tweet. This even applies to people not being registered on Twitter as they can also easily click through the hashtags on the Twitter website. This practice makes Twitter less person-bound and more topic-related than for example Facebook. .

Analyzing the hashtags in the accounts can therefore shed light on whether and how often the authors try to enter conversation topics. This shows how they manage to relate their foreign affairs objectives to topics that are relevant to the global audience; it can be classified as the public diplomacy virtue of listening.

Screenshot 2: Example of a tweet that is hashtagged twice

The Goethe-Institut's account shows 2066 hashtags in their 3200 most recent tweets. This means that a large part of their tweets, on average 64, 5 percent, include a hashtag. The hashtags used recur and are often related to the institute's own categories such as Kunstkalender (art calendar) or kulturheute (culture today). This way, the institute proposes its own topics for a conversation. At the same time, however, the tweets do not enter a topic that is already of relevance to others or that is being discussed but instead refers to their own specific content. When taking a sample of the hashtag activity of #Kunstkalender it becomes evident that no other personal user[219] is using the hashtag. While the hashtag still makes it convenient to search for all tweets related to a certain topic, it only generates a list of the Goethe-Institut's own tweets and does not contribute to engaging in a conversation with other users. Instead of looking for conversations in which Germany is already the topic and entering these, they bring forth only their own, thus neglecting one – the more connective – function of hashtags.

Account	Hashtags	Percent of tweets with hashtags
GI_Journal	2066	65 %
Sweden	425	14 %

Table 3: Hashtag Analysis

The Curators of Sweden account operates with far less hashtags than the Goethe-Institut. In 3200 tweets, only 425 hashtags are to be found, amounting to as little as 14 percent of tweets. They occasionally refer to Swedish customs, traditions or specialties, and are also sometimes newly created to involve followers with certain, mostly fun, topics such as #myweirdestjob. It is interesting to observe that even though the authors of the tweets change every week, the overall level of hashtags stays low.

The two accounts thus show two fundamental differences in the quantitative assessment. While @sweden is very concerned with interacting with other users, it uses the technique of entering a conversation through a common topic with a hashtag scarcely. Considerably less interactive, @GI_Journal places more emphasis on hashtagging articles but fails to interact with others. The hashtags employed often relate to own categories and therefore do not serve the intended idea of connecting users on a thematically instead of personal level.

The Swedish account is not interested in talking about a specific topic but starts with the person that administers it and his or her interests. This person becomes a real counterpart for the other users and engages in lively interaction with these. In this respect, the account could

[219] A personal user is a real person whereas the accounts using the hashtag #Kunstkalender refer to businesses.

be evaluated as a success because it does fulfill the criterion of directly and informally communicating with the followers. However, the interaction is more based around the personal identity of the author than on the foreign affairs objectives when personal conversation is pursued instead of the discussion of overarching topics. The question in how far the success is a public diplomacy success or a public relations success must therefore be taken into account.

The German account distributes information that corresponds to the objectives of the work the Goethe-Institut is entrusted to carry out and thus meets the requirement for conducting public diplomacy. However, it rarely connects with its followers and thus falls short of using the opportunities the new medium offers. Instead, it sends out messages that resemble the old public diplomacy methods that distribute information unilaterally. Even though the account tries to place its tweets in the digital sphere by putting hashtags into them, it cannot penetrate the vast information landscape on Twitter because the key words are usually their own and not topics that already engage the public. From a foreign affairs objective, this can be considered a missed opportunity of explaining and informing about German culture by not entering the conversation on Twitter but instead keeping to own exclusive categories.

Qualitative Analysis

Categories for Assessment

In the following, two randomly picked weeks of the two accounts will be assessed in a qualitative analysis. In order to establish a reliable assessment, the tweets will be analyzed according to a number of categories. This analysis will be based on a combination of categories: some that fit the format of the tweets, others that loosely follow those of Lina Khatib's assessment of the United States Digital Outreach Team, an entity that can, if not closely, to a certain extent be compared to the German and Swedish accounts promoting the foreign affairs interest of the respective country. Since Khatib focuses on a very different situation – the Cairo Obama Speech and the reception in the Muslim world – only some of her categories can be utilized.

The categories employed are therefore the stance, the tone and the themes that are mentioned in the tweets.[220] The stance is categorized as positive, negative or neutral. A neutral tweet thus

[220] Lina Khatib, William Dutton, and Michael Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: An Exploratory Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team" (Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University,), accessed February 28, 2013, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23084/No.120-_Public_Diplomacy_2.0.pdf, 458.

does not express any kind of opinion or emotion towards the delivered message, e.g. the Goethe-Institut's tweet "The winners of the Hugo Häring Award for Architecture are being presented from February 18 in Stuttgart. #kulturheute http://bit.ly/11Kv5va" that presents the information neutrally.[221] A negative tone is exemplified in some of @sweden's tweets, in the analyzed sample particularly in conjunction with political utterings, such as "@JensHakanson yes, everybody knows that. And the ones who says the opposite are a bunch of liars". A positive stance was also most prominent in the Swedish account, often in direct interaction with other users: "@heatherwgaona thanks!!! That means a lot to me <3".

The tone of the tweets can be more faceted and is grouped as

- funny ("Still practising my english. "van, to, sri, får, fajv, siks, säven, ejt, najn, tänn". Ok. It will work.")
- engaging, i.e. trying to involve the followers in a way ("Memories of Bella Italia? Upload your souvenir, determine the #grandtour13 and win a trip to "Belpaese": http://bit.ly/YiW4I1")[222] ,
- advertising ("@Goonerfletch there are always a lot to do. The archipelago in stockholm is wonderful. North of sweden also.")
- informative ("There is a flagday today in Sweden. It s Victorias namesday. Victoria is our crownprincess. http://t.co/dI25p6WD" or "The @StaatstheaterKa honors Georg Friedrich Händel with a festival for his 318th birthday. #kulturheute http://bit.ly/X4CO2H")[223]
- refuting ("And I told you what Swedes don´t do indoors. They don´t smoke and they take off their shoes."),
- political ("Feministof the world, unit!! Think and read about intersectionality, so that we don't use the patriarchys power on eachother.")
- refusing political opinion ("@R_Steffens am convinced that @plankanu deals best with this discussion")[224]
- friendly ("It has been a pleasure twittering with you")
- neutral ("Short about me: I was born in south of Sweden, lives in Umeå in the north and work for a organisation called @xingboarders").

[221] Die Gewinner des Hugo-Häring-Architekturpreises werden ab dem 18.02. in Stuttgart präsentiert. #kulturheute http://bit.ly/11Kv5va

[222] Erinnerungen an Bella Italia? Souvenir hochladen, die #grandtour13 festlegen und eine Reise ins „Belpaese" gewinnen: http://bit.ly/YiW4I1

[223] Das @StaatstheaterKa würdigt Georg Friedrich Händel zu dessen 318. Geburtstag mit einem Festival. #kulturheute http://bit.ly/X4CO2H

[224] @R_Steffens är övertygad om att @plankanu tar den här diskussionen bäst :)

As their differences are grounded in the country-affiliation, the themes must be considered for the respective account.

The German account's tweets are categorized under the topics art, the institute's own activities, music, design and fashion, media, theater, literature, politics, history, travel, film and culture in general.

The Swedish account's tweets are assigned to the following themes: general information about Sweden, personal/daily life, customs/traditions/language, politics, nature, travel/languages outside of Sweden, music, sports, media, the Curator's own job, and the Curator project.

In the cases in which tweets would fit more than one tone or topic, the tweet was categorized after the most prominent topic/tone, e.g. a tweet that was funny but primarily engaged with advertising was grouped as an advertising tone.

Media Analysis Outcome: Goethe-Institut

The analysis of the Goethe-Institut's account brings forth several striking characteristics: the use of German as a lingua franca, the focus on high-brow culture, the extremely neutral and at times very short tweets and the low quantity of messages, totaling up to only 26 in two weeks. The two analyzed weeks were randomly picked, one less recent week in August 2011 and one more recent week in January 2013. There were no key events in Germany during that period that could have influenced the Twitter feed in an unusual way so it can be assumed that the two weeks are a representative sample of the regular Twitter activity of the Goethe-Institut. Also, considering the quantitative analysis, it becomes clear that the amount of tweets in the two sample weeks corresponds roughly to the average activity, though staying below it slightly with 2 tweets a day instead of 3 tweets a day.[225]

Language

All tweets on the Goethe-Institut's feed are in German. The institute also publishes a feed in English under @GI_English which, however, is merely an RSS-feed from the website, meaning that it is not original author-generated content, but a status update on anything new that is uploaded to a particular website, in this case the article section of the Goethe-Institut's

[225] Cf. Table 1.

website. The feed shows the heading of the article and the link, and can hardly be described as a real tweet in the original sense of the medium.

Stance and Tone

The stance of entirely all tweets on the Goethe-Institut's account can be determined as neutral, occasionally reaching a level of unengaged obviousness tweets where just deliver a fact without further information (e.g. "Until the 30th of June 2013 there is an exhibition in Riegel dedicated to the life work of Marc Chagall").

The tone is mostly neutral or informative, often advertising an event or an article. The tweets are never political, friendly or refuting. A certain small amount of messages try to engage the reader and some pick up on a lighter, funny tone that is connected to plays on words.

Themes

The @GI_Journal account thematically focuses clearly on art. More than a third of all tweets refer to art, art exhibitions or architectural art projects (35 percent). Interestingly enough, the second most salient topic is the institute's own activities (15 percent) with a three-time-mention of their sister account @GI_weltweit in two weeks. This mentioning is purely advertising the other account and recurs in a similar wording. Music as a field comes third in importance on the feed (11 percent), with design/fashion and media following (each 8 percent). Other topics mentioned concern theater, literature, politics, history, travel, film and culture in general (each 4 percent).

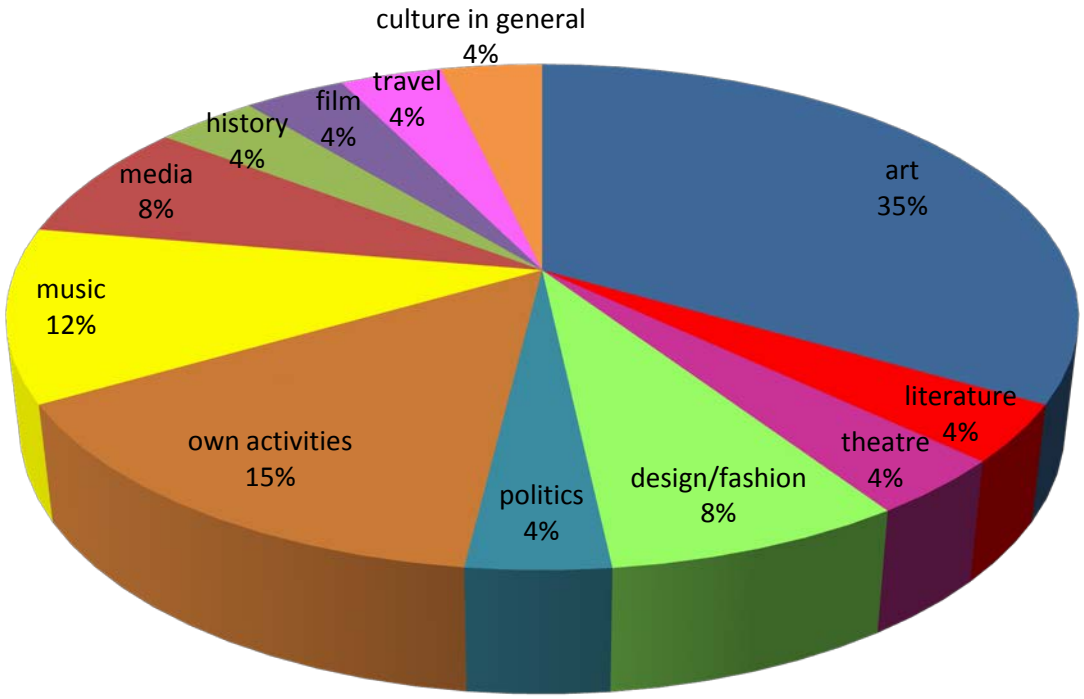

Illustration 1 Thematic Focus of @GI_Journal

Links

It is striking that in the vast majority of tweets of 2011, the authors use long links to the Goethe-Institute's website instead of the wide-spread practice of shortening links through special services such as the bit.ly site. Long links take up much character space, the scarcest resource in a Twitter message, which is restricted to 140 characters. By using long links, the authors "waste" space that could be used for additional information or interaction. The tweets of 2013 show a clear policy shift with regard to this as they all use the bit.ly short links which usually have 13 characters. The average length in characters of the 2013 tweets is therefore 126 including the short links. The content of the tweet comprises on average 113 characters. In 2011, only 105 characters make up the message, the rest is filled up by the links, meaning that 35 characters are used for linking the article or event. This might seem little, but considering the extreme shortness of tweets, and the need to make use of the limited space in the best possible way in order to reach the audience that is being flooded with messages, it is crucial how authors deal with the amount of space available.

The tweets' links refer to the Goethe-Institut's website exclusively, with the exception of one single tweet that is a retweet of a German magazine. There are no pictures posted on the feed.

Media Analysis Outcome: Curators of Sweden

What can be seen from the qualitative analysis of @sweden is a very strong emphasis on interaction, a focus on the daily life of the Curators and the use of visual images.

Stance and Tone

Similar to the Goethe-Institut's account, the Twitter feed of @sweden does not show a significant number of tweets with a negative stance. Less than one percent can be categorized as negative. However, the rest of the messages are not entirely neutral, like the Goethe-Institut's tweets, but mostly positive (55 percent). One can assume that this has to do with two different approaches: while the Goethe-Institut is presenting an informational feed, the Swedish account is designed to be personal. This personal approach shows in the positive stance and also goes in line with the high rate of interaction Often, the positive stance is explicitly supported by smiley emoticons. The majority of positive tweets can be accredited to the high interaction rate. In the dialogue with the followers, Curators almost always act friendly and positively. The rest of the feed is neutrally written (44 percent) and these tweets often concentrate more on informing and explaining than on interaction.

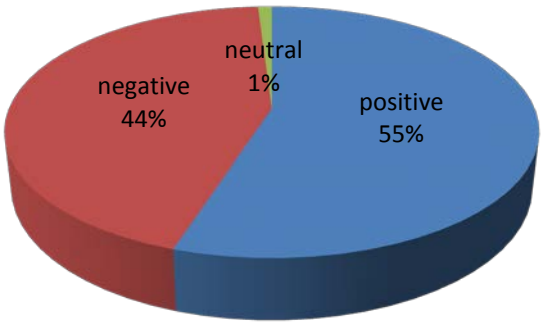

Illustration 2: Stance of @sweden

Being friendly and informative, the Swedish Twitter feed is probably regarded as pleasant to read by its followers. The tone is mostly friendly (32 percent) due to the aforementioned positive and friendly interaction Curators enter into with their readers. The second most salient tone is informing about Sweden and advertising it. Curators frequently recommend places to visit, describe their preferred products or inform about Swedish habits. The objective of telling the story of Sweden and boosting the nation's country image is taken up by the Curators.

The @sweden account also succeeds in engaging its reader to a certain extent with newly created hashtags under which people are to share common experiences or ideas (such as "best

Swedish things", "Swedenfacts") or simply engage in dialogue about a specific topic in a question-and-answer-way with single followers.

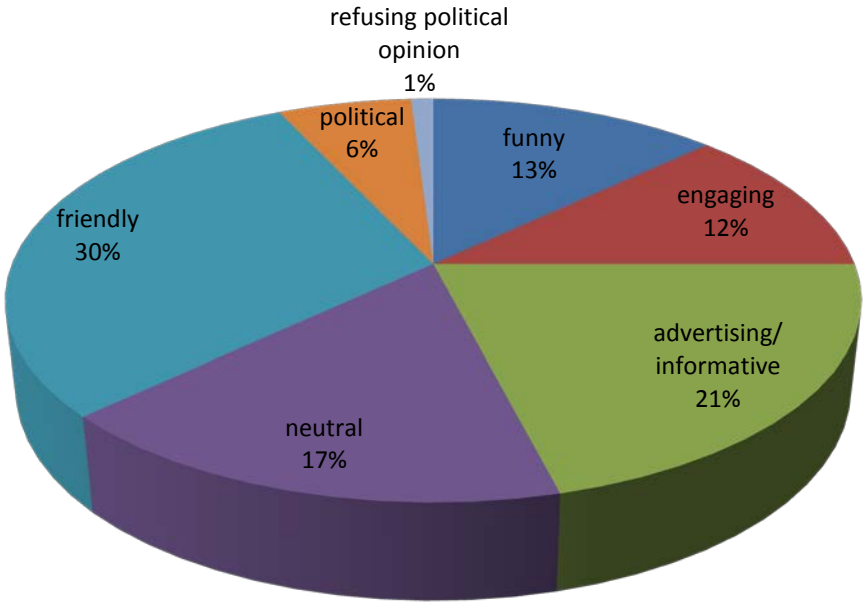

Illustration 3: Tone of @sweden

Themes

Not every tweet can be categorized under a topic because messages like the friendly interaction with followers often do not correspond to a specific topic (e.g. very short responses such as "Yepp", "<3", or "Hello to you, too"), or it is not possible to detect which topic is referred to in the message.

Looking at those tweets that can be grouped under a common heading, it becomes evident that the largest group of tweets is made up of the messages that are concerned with interacting with the followers. Almost half of the tweets in the sample of two separate weeks, totaling up to 1143 tweets, are replies to other Twitter users. They are very often greetings or thank yous.

The second most salient topic is general information about Sweden, albeit with a considerably lower percentage (16 percent). These tweets can be considered as very close to public diplomacy as they inform about Sweden and try to explain how things are done in the country. They report about food, literature, celebrities, economy and prices or give travel information.

A large part of tweets can, as mentioned before, not be categorized. These messages make up for 13 percent of the entire analyzed feed.

The personal daily life of the Curators is the topic of 7 percent of all tweets. Even though these tweets sometimes intersect with the category "customs, traditions, language", the tweets grouped under daily life have a stronger focus on the author's own relationships and living

habits. Curators tell their audience about their normal Tuesdays, their family rituals and health issues.

Interestingly enough, the project Curators of Sweden itself ranges in the fifth place in the thematic analysis. A whole 4 percent of tweets are occupied with informing the audience about the project, what rules apply and how authors are selected.

Politics, with some exceptions mostly Swedish domestic politics, are mentioned in 4 percent of all tweets despite the fact that the account has as a guideline not to voice explicit personal political opinion. It has to be noted that even in the two weeks analyzed a significant difference could be detected between the two authors, with one being much more politically involved and outspoken than the other. A majority of political tweets refer to gender equality and different policies around this topic, e.g. the debate about "hen", the third-gender pronoun.

The Curators' own jobs and semi-professional activities make up for 3 percent of the feed, followed by marginal percentages dealing with music (2 percent), travel to and information about foreign nations (1 percent), sports (0,4 percent), media (0,3 percent), and nature (0,3 percent). Even here, there is a difference to be noted between the two weeks, suggesting that each Curators' personal interests influence the amount of a certain topic strongly.

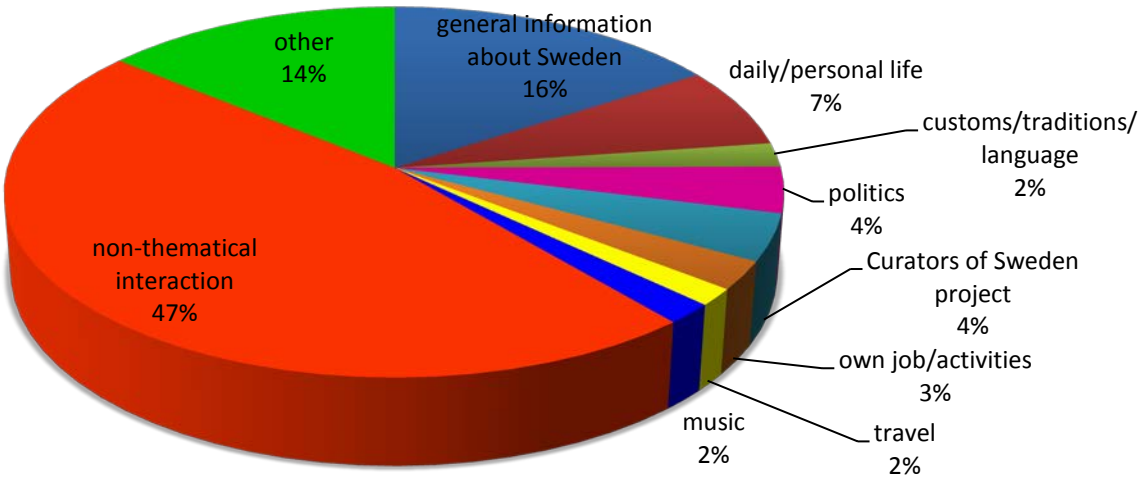

Illustration 4: Thematic Focus of @sweden

Links and Pictures

The Swedish account shows a relatively high amount of links. A total of 154 links were posted during the two sample weeks of which the majority (104) were pictures accessible through links.

The photos are mostly taken in the daily life of the Curator, i.e. depicting colleagues, their meals, own pets, and things that they encountered during their week. The second largest part of photos are pictures with local content: Stores from the town that the author lives in, sceneries in the countryside, famous sights or cultural objects are shown.

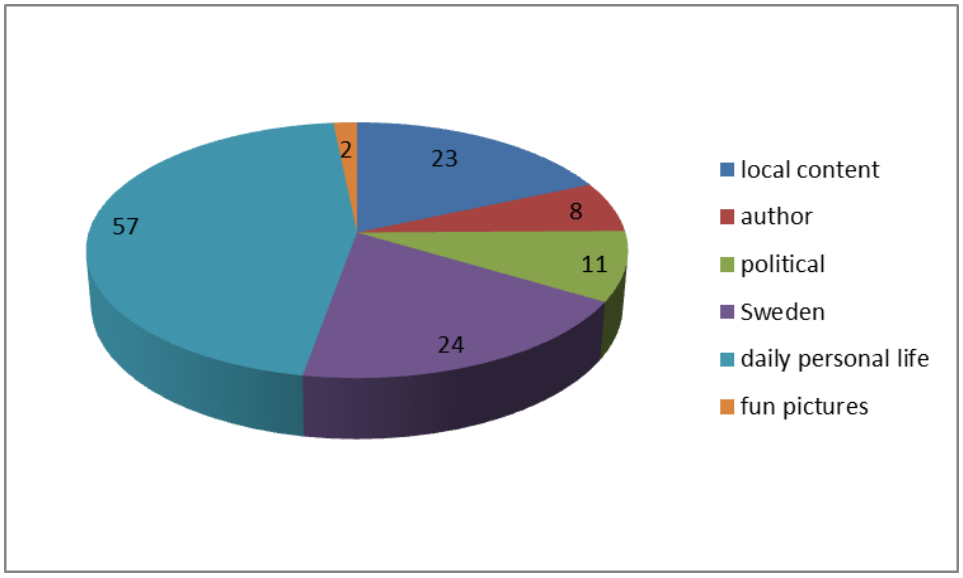

Illustration 5: Pictures on @sweden

The links lead to topics related to the Curators' own job equally often as to political information or causes. Music and the Curators of Sweden project itself come in third. Strikingly, links related to the country Sweden appear much less frequently than photos, with only three links in two weeks specifically about Sweden.

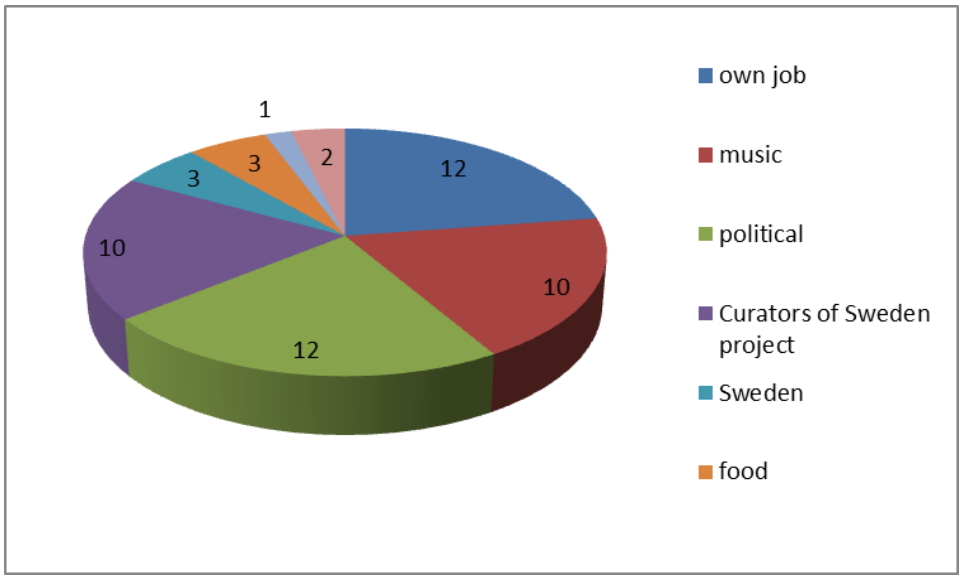

Illustration 6: Links to other websites

For both account, it can be seen that the authors' and accounts' own activities, i.e. the Goethe-Institut's other offers, the Curators' own jobs and the Curator project are one of the most-named topics on the Twitter feed. The question whether the Twitter accounts aimed at public diplomacy do indeed edge on centering about themselves and in how far this is beneficial or not to the original mission is one of the questions that shall be discussed in the analysis.

Interview results

Interview Framework

Method

This study is based upon a media analysis and expert interviews. The interviews were conducted with representatives from the two organizations that control the Twitter accounts studied here, Visit Sweden and the Goethe-Institut, and with two former Curators, i.e. Swedes that had twittered for @sweden. In the German case, both the representative and the actual Twitterer are the same, which is why only one expert was interviewed. To gain insight into the policy behind the decision on public diplomacy, a representative of the German Embassy in Sweden was interviewed, and written correspondence with the Foreign Ministry in German was maintained.

The interviews were conducted in March and April 2013, in three of four cases on the phone due to logistic reasons. The interviewing was carried out in a semi-structured manner, encompassing a range of topics and suggested questions while leaving room for adapting questions, follow-up questions and spontaneous statement on the part of the interviewees.[226] In cases in which the studied field is as yet relatively unknown, open-end interviews are considered to be a particularly suitable method to gather information.[227] In the case of German and Swedish public diplomacy, one can establish that the field has not been widely studied, and this paper presents an exploratory study, hence the choice of the interview method.

Recruiting proved sufficiently easy in the cases of the two former Curators for @sweden, and more difficult for the employees of the organizations. Further contact with Visit Sweden and the Foreign Ministry was especially difficult. Requested policy documents and statistics were either not existent or could not be made accessible due to confidentiality reasons.

The interviews took between 20 minutes and an hour, the most common length being just over half an hour. The interviews were recorded in all cases but one in which the Embassy's policy disallowed audio recording; instead, notes were taken. All interviews were transcribed

[226] Steinar Kvale, *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997), 117.
[227] Esaiasson, *Metodpraktikan*, 283.

in full length.[228] None of the interviewees demanded anonymity, thus they will be mentioned with their full names in this thesis. Interviews were conducted in the first language of the interviewee, i.e. Swedish or German, except for one case where English was employed. This use of English in one of the first interviews may have influenced validity and spontaneous expression of the non-native speaker. Therefore, the interview design was revised regarding this point and only the interviewees' native languages used in the course of the other interviews.

Questions

The interview aimed at understanding the background of the practitioners' use of Twitter and motivations. In the case of @sweden, the semi-structured questionnaire asked the former Curators about their personal background, their motivation to become part of @sweden and whether they received guidelines, instructions or help. Moreover, their own perspective on what makes Twitter different from other media, what is important on Twitter and what successful use of Twitter entails was discussed. Their view on what their week of @sweden had presented and whether they believed the project was recommendable to other nations was asked and their relation to other Curators investigated.

In the interview with the German Goethe-Institute, questions concerning the organizational structure of the Twitter activities and the coordination of the German public diplomacy with special regard to the role the Goethe-Institut sees for itself were asked. The interview further focused on questions of social media execution, such as linguistic matters and evaluation methods. It was enquired how the Goethe-Institute perceives Twitter as a media channel in comparison to others. Moreover, the content of the tweets as well as the target audience were discussed. In order to evoke spontaneous statements, examples of the German and the Swedish Twitter account were presented and flow charts shown to indicate where in the organization which decisions for social media are taken. These were shown to all representatives of the organizations. Through this visual and more open format, the interviewee had even more opportunity to express him-or herself freely.

When speaking to Visit Sweden, the overall organizational structure of the Twitter project was traced, including financial matters, people involved in the project and choice mechanisms for Curators. The reasons and reservations in the organization before starting the project were

[228] The transcripts can be obtained upon request.

queried. The expectations of the organization for the account and their perception of Twitter as a channel next to others were investigated, and the interviewee was asked about the idea @sweden has about the recipient.

In the conversation with the German Embassy representative, the focus was set on the policy background of public diplomacy. The interviewee had declared beforehand not to be entirely firm on the specific Twitter issues since the Embassy, unlike the Goethe-Institute and the Foreign Ministry, does not have a Twitter account. During the interview, questions about the overall coordination and organization of the German public diplomacy were posed and the relationship of the Foreign Ministry, Embassies and the Goethe-Institut was assessed. The beginnings of the use of social media in German foreign policy were traced, and the opinions on Twitter as a channel gathered.

Results

The interviews yielded results that allow insight into how the practitioners in the two cases regard the question of Twitter and public diplomacy, how they views diverge or correspond to scholarly literature and what governs the practice of tweeting. With the answers of the interviewees in mind, it becomes possible to better judge the results of the media study against the background of scholarly literature.

For the German side, Jörn Müller, employee of the internet editorial department of the Goethe-Institut headquarters in Munich, and Conradin Weindl, press attaché of the German Embassy in Sweden, were interviewed. Additionally, written correspondence was conducted with Najareh Shirzadian, responsible for social media in the headquarters of the Goethe-Institut, and Christiane Scholz, online editor of the German Foreign Ministry.

To assess the Swedish case, Helén Malmberg, Marketing Director at Visit Sweden, Lars Lundqvist and Elin Jonsson were interviewed. Lundqvist and Jonsson were picked from the sample of former Curators. In order to get a more nuanced view, one man and one woman were chosen who 1) both live in different places in Sweden (Visby on Gotland and Gothenburg), who 2) work in different professions not directly related to PR or journalism (civil servant for the Swedish National Heritage board and freelance illustrator respectively) and who 3) have an age difference (28 years and 54 years old). Both administered the account in 2012, Lundqvist between July 9 and July 15, 2012 and Jonsson between May 7 and May 13, 2012.

Interviews with the German representatives

The respondents on the German side gave valuable insight into the German understanding of public diplomacy and social media. Public Diplomacy is regarded part of two of the three pillars of German foreign policy. The third pillar comprises Germany's cultural diplomacy, in which field quangos are very common. The integration of cultural and public diplomacy, especially in terms of communication, shows in the explanations of Weindl: Culture and Communication is one department in the Foreign Ministry, which is also the department that administers the budget for the biggest quango, the Goethe-Institut.[229] So even though public diplomacy is not officially part of the cultural diplomacy, the organizational structure clearly shows intersections.

The choice of an independent actor like the Goethe-Institut was a very conscious one, to "avoid making it look like state propaganda".[230] The Goethe-Institut is explicitly not commissioned with debating "factual issues" or "transmitting a message."[231] Foreign audiences often do not make a difference between the cultural institute and the political Germany, Weindl notes. This is why the Foreign Ministry tries to retain the political aspects of public diplomacy and does not commission the cultural institutes. At the same time, the Goethe-Institut's independence is, as mentioned before, limited. The institute can apply for additional special funds every year, and according to Weindl does so regularly, but must then go through the embassies to apply to the Foreign Ministry. The Embassy reports back about all activities to the Foreign Ministry. This rather ambiguous status might be a problem in the practical reality of communication of the Goethe-Institut.

The aforementioned confusion because of the many quangos in the German system is reiterated in the expert interview. Outsiders have trouble placing responsibilities right.[232]

[229] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[230] Es ist eine bewusste Entscheidung gewesen, dass das GI unabhängig ist, damit es nicht als eine Art Staatspropaganda rüber kommt.ibid.
[231] ibid.
[232] ibid.

Digital diplomacy in the Web 2.0 was "observed for a long time" and the guiding question German diplomats struggled with was whether this tool could be "meaningful" for "sincere debate" with foreign audiences.[233]

Embassies are allowed to twitter and have no guidelines on Twitter itself, but on social media in general. The Foreign Ministry's own Twitter is administered in the Press Department and Twitter is considered an additional element in the press work, and the communication of journalists on Twitter is one of the functions the micro-blogging is assigned.[234]
When looking at exemplary tweets, Weindl states that the German Twitter is written in a casual tone, without, however, establishing an equal, friendly relationship with the recipient. He stresses the importance of providing correct information and emphasizes that the philosophy of the German public diplomacy "is not turned upside down by the emergence of a new medium"[235], a meaningful statement of a practitioner when considering how literature claims that everything has been fundamentally changed through new media.

Asked to assess the Swedish Twitter account, Weindl points out that Swedish public diplomacy is not solely reliant on Curators of Sweden, but comprised of more parts.
International recognition like the Curators of Sweden project is a significant measurement of success, he states, but the act of communication is German public diplomacy not an end in itself. Weindl believes it important to safeguard that communication does not center on itself without a clear message.[236]
When asked what new technology he would wish for to enhance public diplomacy, Weindl answers that a tool to facilitate easier "matching"[237] with interested target groups would be desirable.

The German Foreign Ministry defines the values of German public diplomacy as EU-friendly, peace – and security-oriented and interested in keeping good relationships with other nations.
Twitter was launched to make German policy more transparent, with the idea originating in the press department. The main reasons for the use of social media in German public diplomacy were to establish contact to a larger and younger audience and to reach out to

[233] ibid., 2.
[234] ibid.
[235] Ein neues Medium stellt nicht die ganze Philosophie um, die der Arbeit zugrunde liegt.ibid.
[236] ibid.
[237] ibid., 3.

journalists. The necessity to network with other foreign affairs actors for own information was another motive mentioned.

Worries and reservations arose from the complexity of foreign affairs that, according to Weindl, cannot be conveyed in 140 characters. It was doubted that the recipient of social media might be interested in foreign affairs. Also, negative reactions or too many requests were feared.

The Foreign Ministry's account is deliberately not coordinated with the Goethe-Institut's Twitter activities. The Foreign Ministry states that it considers the institute as an independent actor. Exhibiting knowledge of the medium, the representative from the Foreign Ministry points out that harmonization of tweets would be too time-consuming for a medium that has such a high demand on the speed of messages. Instead, twitter-typical connections are pursued, such as Follower Fridays and Retweets. [238]The success on Twitter of the Goethe-Institut is mostly evaluated through Twitter's own statistical tools.

The guidelines for Twitter for employees of the Foreign Ministry are not accessible for the public or research. Scholz explained that they are concerned with the ways Twitter works, the basic rules and guidelines for reacting to comments and interaction on Twitter. For Embassies, the Foreign Ministry has a booklet of guidelines that comprises Facebook as well, but according to Weindl, not Twitter.[239]

The unofficial project @I_amGermany that is designed after @sweden and operates on a rotation curator system as well is known to the Foreign Ministry and believed to be serving the same goal of promoting a good image of Germany abroad.[240]

The German Foreign Ministry states that they decided not to use @germany but @AuswaertigesAmt and @GermanyDiplo in order to be "clearly identifiable and findable for other users". [241]

The Goethe-Institut, in its turn, chose its name, @GI_Journal, to summarize its activities on its account. In order not to confuse recipients with other names that are used in the institute, they tried to avoid a name that reappeared in other contexts on the institute's website.[242]

[238] For Follower Friday, Twitter users post the users they like to follow most with the hashtag #ff or #followerfriday on a Friday. This way, attention is drawn to Twitterers that other users wish to recommend and promote. Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, May 14, 2013, 2.

[239] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[240] ibid., 3.

[241] Das Auswärtige Amt will sich auf Twitter durch die Nutzung von @AuswaertigesAmt und @GermanyDiplo klar zu erkennen geben und auch für andere Nutzer auffindbar sein.Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[242] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, March 27, 2013, Munich and Uppsala, 1.

The institute administers three Twitter accounts in the headquarters; all local institutes are free to twitter for their local branch. The three central accounts are 1) GI_weltweit which is located in the department of public relations, 2) GI_English which is RSS-feeds only, and 3) the account that is assessed in this study, GI_Journal. It is administered in the online editor's department. The channel that is used by the PR department has a stronger focus on promoting the activities of the institute and aims at the "German interested public but also international audiences" informing about selected projects. @GI_Journal is concerned with informing about "contemporary, cultural and societal life in Germany". [243]

Müller is unaware of specific rules the Foreign Ministry imposes on the Goethe-Institut except for the Rahmenvertrag contract. Pointing to the financial dependencies of the institute, he confirms the need for friendly cooperation.

The understanding of the Goethe-Institute itself in the field of German public diplomacy is described as being the "best and sole representative". [244] The Goethe-Institute uses Twitter in German because it believes to reach more people in Germany and abroad. The main reason for the Goethe-Institute to use Twitter is to reach special target groups. The presence of journalists on Twitter is also mentioned as a reason. This decision was not taken on statistically evaluated grounds, though. Generally, the Goethe-Institut publishes everything online in German and English, but for Twitter there are not enough staff capacities, so the institute makes use of RSS-feeds for the English-speaking channel @GI_English.

The Goethe-Institut started using Twitter between 2008 and 2009, and Müller believes that most public diplomacy institutions started in 2009, at the latest. The initiative to start Twitter came from online editors who had the idea of promoting their articles through social media. In a first test phase, Twitter was used without the formal approval of the institute's management. Reservations in the institute towards Twitter are usually based on worries about the faster and less controllable ways of the medium. The main argument against Twitter though was staff shortages. Decisions on the daily work regarding Twitter are taken in the department by the employees. When it comes to conceptual issues or determining which communication channel

[243] ich bin jetzt hier Vertreter der Onlineredaktion, und unsere Aufgabe ist es sozusagen, also, ich sag immer, zu informieren über das zeitgenössische, kulturelle und gesellschaftliche Leben in Deutschland. Das heißt, wir machen eigentlich normal keine Eigen-PR über Veranstaltungen des Goetheinstituts, sondern informieren allgemein in diesem Arbeitsfeld des GI, alles, was eben mit zeitgenössischer Kultur und dem Gesellschaftsleben in Deutschland zu tun hat.ibid., 1–2.

[244] Ich glaube schon, dass das GI in seinem Arbeitsfeld den Anspruch hat, als bester und alleiniger Vertreter zu vertreten. Da gibt's andere Mittler wie der DAAD oder die DW wo es immer mal Überschneidungen gibt der Aktivitäten aber im Großen und Ganzen glaub ich schon dass das GI da den Anspruch hat, der offizieller Vertreter Deutschlands im Arbeitsfeld den Anspruch zu sein. ibid., 2.

is suitable for which content, the decision is made decided on higher hierarchical levels or in the PR department.

Reactions to the institute's Twitter feed are very seldom. Müller estimates that there is one reaction per month and explains this with the fact that @GI_Journal is not used as a medium of dialogue, but rather for the promotion of the articles, a significant comment that entirely diverges from the scholarly demands. Comparing the Goethe-Institut's Twitter to @sweden, Müller finds the high rate of interaction and the personal presentation of the respective Curator most striking.

The evaluation of the institute's digital diplomacy is done by monitoring how many clicks a link on Twitter generates and by counting followers.[245] One third of recipients, thus the larger part, are from Germany, the rest is scattered world-wide with quite small percentages in many different countries. Australia follows Germany with only 5percent as the second-largest recipient country.

Twitter is considered one of the less important tools in the work of the Goethe-Institut because little time is allocated for it. Müller believes the effect not to be the same as with professional press work. He states that it is good and beneficial to be on Twitter and listen, but that the Goethe-Institut does not make more than a reasonable "minimal to medium" effort on Twitter. [246]

Müller regards Facebook as similar to Twitter but believes it to have a different user pattern. In his view, Facebook is used more for private purposes while Twitter is "half-professional, half-private".[247] According to Müller, Twitter assembles an older audience than Facebook. Müller as an online editor is rarely present at the institute's events and can therefore not make a statement as to whether followers and visitors are the same group.

Social media facilitate immediate and direct communication, Müller remarks, and the inhibitions to make contact are much lower. By way of example, Müller explains that if an article misspells a name, readers can react directly to that and the misspelling can be changed.

[245] Najereh Shirzadian, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, May 2, 2013, 1.
[246] Es ist gut und sinnvoll, da zu sein und dabei zu sein, auch so ein Ohr nach draußen zu haben, aber damit ist es auch ganz gut abgedeckt. … Wir bieten ein ganz gutes Mindest – bis Mittelmaß. Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[247] Bei Facebook ist die Nutzung etwas privater und bei Twitter etwas professioneller, im Sinne von ‚Ich nutz das halbberuflich, halbprivat'. ibid., 4.

Differently from other press work, one gets to know at very short notice what people think. Thematically, the Twitter account does not pick up on current events of life in Germany.

To Müller, a good tweet is short enough to be retweeted with a personal remark by the person retweeting. Furthermore, it should be clearly understandable. He considers a success on Twitter when there are many retweets, reactions and clicks on the link that is part of the tweet.

When asked what new technology he would wish for to enhance public diplomacy more, Müller speaks of a technique to enhance the opportunity of interaction, something that creates motivation to react "so that a real dialogue emerges and not just sending and sporadic reactions, but a form of equal dialogue".[248] When adverted to the fact that Twitter offers this very possibility, he admits that this would be possible already if the institute allocated more resources.

Interviews with the Swedish Representatives

The Swedish side is represented by the brand officer of Visit Sweden, Helen Malmberg, and two former Curators, Elin Jonsson and Lars Lundqvist.

In the interview, Malmberg states that the reasons to start @sweden are rooted in the "Brand Sweden" values. She stresses that openness, authenticity and innovation are core the values and that all communication is expected to reflect these. The Curators of Sweden project is "a campaign for openness and to show that we dare to get all our people to tell their opinions".[249] As a prominent statement, Malmberg points out that @sweden is not a mere tourist attraction project, but instead has a wider scope through the participation of the Swedish institute that is commissioned with cultural diplomacy and knowledge exchange.

Malmberg remains relatively unspecific about the reasons of those in the organization who were hesitant toward the project. She remarks, however, that they were worried about things getting out of hand and explains that this is the reason why @sweden has a crisis committee that was indeed put into action three times during the last year. In addition to the crisis committee, there is a group which nominates the Curators. All committees are manned with staff from Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute. Upon further inquiry, Malmberg adds that the PR agency that designed Curators of Sweden is also part of the committee. The members

[248] Also mehr Motivation schaffen, dass die Rückmeldungen kommen und dass sozusagen mehr am Laufen halten. Also, dass es wirklich einen Dialog gibt und nicht „senden" und vereinzeltes Rückmelden, sondern eine Art gleichberechtigter auch zeitlich usw. gleichgearteter Dialog.ibid., 5.
[249] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, March 25, 2013, Stockholm, 1.

in the nomination committee change regularly in order to avoid getting routine-blinded. There are many nominations coming in, including requests to make celebrities Curators. Malmberg explains that famous Curators are not intended and therefore denied. She stresses that the fact that one needs to be nominated. Former Curator Lundquist believes that the nomination is a kind of security filter to avoid the risks social media holds. For the nomination committee it is possible to already judge the candidate's suitability to a certain extent if he or she is known to be an established Twitter user. Indeed, the nomination is in fact a recommendation by someone else with the purpose to make the group of applicants smaller and distinguish the account as something special, as Malmberg puts it: "We have one week at a time and we don't want everybody to do it either. So it's more, I think, it's a strategic way to do it. Otherwise it would be like any account, you know, like Facebook or whatever, daily conversations".[250] She explicitly states the idea of inclusion and exclusion that she develops further when later saying that she regards Twitter as different from Facebook because not everybody communicates with this medium. Twitter requires a higher degree of familiarization with the medium, she believes. The professions of the interviewed Curators confirm the idea of a certain group of people being eligible to become @sweden. Former Curator Elin Jonsson works within an app- and web-company. Lars Lundqvist works for the Swedish Heritage Board in the department for new media and internet issues, and is professionally concerned with social media. He describes himself as part of the Swedish social media bubble and has many relations to others working in the field. This is how he was nominated by someone from the network and became a Curator. Both Curators recall as reasons to accept the invitation to be a Curator was because it seemed fun and "extremely flattering" to be entrusted with the account [251], an offer very hard to decline. Lundquist elaborates that decided to do a week on @sweden because he found it "quite cool" to get a chance on an account with so many followers and "so much global buzz".[252] He also saw it as an opportunity to build his own personal brand, to show loyalty to his employer. Also, he felt he was commissioned by Visit Sweden to explain the work of –a civil servant.[253] What can be linked to Malmberg's statement of including experienced Twitter users is Lundquist's elaboration that Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute had mentioned that they are looking for Curators who understand the medium and realize that people are complex and have

[250] Ibid., 2.

[251] Det är otrolig smickrade att få det förtorendet och det lät roligt. Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, April 8, 2013, Oldenburg and Gothenburg, 1.

[252] Det är svårt att tacka nej till nåt sånt. Det är ju otroligt smickrande. [....]Jag tyckte det var smickrande, flattering. Och så ganska häfftigt att få ett konto som är gnska omskriven. Sonja, eller hejsonja, var en månad innan mig, så det var ju enormt mycket global buzz kring det. Det var ju bara häfftigt att få chansen.

[253] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, April 4, 2013, Oldenburg and Visby, 2.

distinctive attitudes. Lundqvist finds that a part of the Curators were "somewhat broken people" who had a hard time and used Twitter "as a therapy" which made them very present in the medium and interesting for others.[254] He believes that @sweden represents mostly white people, many men, "surprisingly many lesbians",[255] suggesting that it is an overly large proportion of lesbians represented on Twitter that would stick out less in a non-Twitter setting with a broader range of people represented. He feels that many are white males in positions of – often medial - power. This, he suspects, is rooted in the fact that one condition to become a Curator is an established presence on Twitter. Therefore, he concludes, following the argument of exclusivity, that @sweden does not in fact reach out to everyone.

In a way ironic against the statements of exclusivity is Malmberg's response when asked if there was special content they had hoped for to be sent out by the Curators, Malmberg explains that the only hope was to "get our values out" and demonstrate the democratic approach.[256] In line with this idea of democracy, both Curators state that they did not receive detailed instructors on what to tweet. Before starting their week as @sweden, Jonsson and Lundquist were instructed by Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute to continue the conduct she had exhibited on their own Twitter account. Jonsson states that she did not receive any more instructions. Her only resolution before starting her week was to emphasize visual impressions more and upload many photos. Otherwise she continued her normal way of twittering and did not prepare. Lundquist states that even though he spoke to a representative of Visit Sweden and thought about his week in advance, he resolved to tweet as usual and reflect his interests. He mentions an A4-paper with instructions that he felt were very liberal and that he never challenged. Like Jonsson, the only resolution he made was to post more photos than usual, but without advertising for tourism.

Malmberg sees the target group for @sweden in those "connectors" that can further a positive image of Sweden after having read the @sweden-tweets. This way, a "more global reach" is aimed at.[257] The recipient is seen as a person to be inspired by Sweden and to pass on that message, preferably in retweets. The former Curators do not have journalists in mind as their audience but assume that @sweden reaches very diverse audiences, i.e. all age groups and a very broad target audience, mostly users that are interested in Sweden, a large part of which

[254] [...] En del har ju varit lite trasiga människor, har haft lite tufft i livet och varit ganska öppet om det. [...] De har nog litegrann använd Twitter som terapi. [...] De har byggt upp en stark närvaro på Twitter och vågar blotta sig lite. Det tycker folk är intressant.ibid., 5.
[255] Vita, mycket män, förvånansvärt många lesbiska. ibid., 4.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid., 3.

were Americans. Lundquist assumes that @sweden is followed by people in the young and middle ages, between 25 and 50. As a main benefit from the conversations on @sweden, Jonsson mentions the fact that she could interact with this large group. She thinks that despite the variety of followers, her time as a Curator helped to realize the personal similarities between her followers on @sweden and herself.

The complete budget for @sweden is 400,000 Swedish crowns, financed half by Visit Sweden and half by the Swedish Institute. Malmberg refers to it as a "really low budget for this fantastic [project]".[258] While the institutions thus create great effect with a low budget, the Curators benefit from their position during their @sweden week by gaining more followers. After her week as a Curator, Jonsson gained 500 new followers for her own account who followed her from @sweden to the private Twitter account she keeps. Lundquist's number of followers on his private account increased by 15 to 20 percent of followers after his week as @sweden.

Malmberg calls Twitter an important PR tool, especially to reach journalists and the global audience, but believes it to be "one thing in the mix" and emphasizes the importance of an "integrated marketing mix". She agrees that there is an openness towards new media in Swedish society, but rejects the idea that Swedish Foreign Affairs Minister Carl Bildt has influenced the decision for @sweden, explaining that he did not have a say in the project. Lastly, she explains that the evaluation of Twitter is done with comprehensive statistics, which, unfortunately, were not accessible for this research.

Asked about what is important when tweeting, Jonsson explains that a good tweet is a fun tweet or, alternatively, it should be interesting to the audience, and explain one's own perspective on issues relevant to a broader group of people. For Lundqvist, a good tweet comes from someone one has some kind of relation to – though not necessarily in real life –in order to understand the context of the message. It should be a message that means something and is relevant to the recipient, possibly thought-provoking, or, funny. For him, the most important thing to tweet about is one's daily life with both the good and the bad sides, and to show what one believes in and stands for. Jonsson states that success on Twitter relies on an affinity for the medium and agrees with Lundquist that one has to like to interact with people that one does not have a conventional personal relationship with, but still feels a connection to through the communication on Twitter.

[258] Ibid.

With the idea of @sweden portraying the Swedish values, the question was posed what kind of Swedish image the Curators believe to have portrayed. Jonsson assumes her week on @sweden added to the image of Sweden as a feminist country with a population that speaks English well. Generally, she believes the message of those promoting Sweden is that the country is well off, that Swedes are open as a people and that Sweden's nature is of outstanding beauty. She also thinks that Sweden as a progressive country is an image that is promoted, even though "that is not so clear from the account". She believes that the progressiveness might not really be true when looking at the domestic politics in Sweden but "still those are the voices that get to speak on Twitter". [259] Lundquist, regarding the question from a more personal perspective, states that his week as @sweden gave the impression of a "moderately boring state employee" on vacation who spoke about his job and living on an island.[260]

Asked about the differences between traditional media and Twitter they see, both Curators name the rapid speed and Twitter's openness. Jonsson explains that Twitter is much faster and that people without medial power can gain a large reach as long as they are "fast and smart in commenting on things and kind of good at phrasing, and give a smart perspective". [261] On Twitter, she concluded, one does not need to have an established audience but can expand one's reach by being retweeted. Unlike in print media, "a small person" can get a lot of attention via smart comments. [262] Lundquist emphasizes Twitter's options that give the sender the option to be exclusive or inclusive. This difference is not only visible between traditional and new media, he also regards Facebook as much less open because users interact in closed social networks.

Both Curators would recommend the project idea to other countries, even though Jonsson is not sure if the concept "is as big abroad". [263] She believes it is much fun for the home citizens to follow the person tweeting for their common home country, but adds that the Swedish followers are usually very critical. She draws attention to the necessity to give a nuanced view of states and that @sweden is a good way of doing it. Lundquist follows her argument in advising to copy the project only if handling it as liberally as Sweden does. He remarks that

[259] Det framgår ju inte så mycket på kontot men just att vi är ett progressivt land och blablabla – även om det kanske inte tämmer om an ser till dne politik som förs i landet just nu men så är det ju ändå de rösterna som kommer till tals på Twitter, tycker jag.ibid., 2.
[260] De fick se en lite lagom tråkig statstjänsteman. ibid., 3.
[261] [...] folk som inte har någon medial makt får synas så länge de är snabba och smarta att kommentera på grejer och liksom formulera sig väl och ger ett smart perspektiv. ibid.
[262] Så även om man är en liten person så kan man ju få en otrolig reach med Twitter. ibid.
[263] Som koncept alltså jag vet inte hur stort det är som koncept utomlands.ibid., 4.

some of those who copied the idea for other countries ended up broadcasting mostly tourist advertisement and working with clichés, which he would advise against.

Jonsson does not recall any bad memories from her time as Curator, but acknowledges that Curators must be aware that not everybody of the approximately 60.000 followers will like one and be positive. Lundquist, however, recalls the problem he faced were the followers that tried to enter into a discussion about Julian Assange. He consulted Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute about it because he was tempted to reply in an absurd way, but he decided to simply ignore them. He recalls the committees at Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute being very accessible and very supportive and advising him to do as he thought is best.

Communication Levels: Critique of @Sweden and @GI_Journal

In the following, both accounts shall be critically assessed to then shed light on the different levels of communication that are salient in the public diplomatic Twitter.

Twitter is not only a medium to transmit messages. Twitter itself is a statement. Using a service that is technologically cutting-edge at its time and serves as a "symbol of global, borderless, communicative freedom"[264] is giving a meta-message. One can almost be sure that this meta-message is not accidentally communicated, but, to varying degrees in the Swedish and German case, deliberately chosen.

Regarding the Swedish case, it becomes obvious that choosing Twitter as an instrument of digital diplomacy means a logical prolongation of Swedish public diplomacy.[265] It "virtualizes" Swedish values[266] as the statement the PR agency Volontaire that developed the project clearly shows: "Tweet by tweet, the image of Sweden is built: dynamic, innovative and deeply human. No censorship, no limits."[267] The idea of Sweden representing these characteristics is translated into the medium that is chosen for representation. Twitter is the fastest medium of the current times, thus dynamic, and it is still one of the newest ideas on the internet that have further transformed communication, thus innovative. The fact that @sweden chooses different regular Swedes to administer the account corresponds perfectly to the idea of Sweden being deeply human, or as the brand value reads, caring. Sweden as the country with maximal freedom of speech and unlimited possibilities is exemplified in using Twitter, the tool that supposedly freed the Arab World that suffered from censorship.[268]

It is almost violently obvious how strong the meta-message is in the Curators of Sweden project.[269] The qualitative results of the media analysis for this paper have shown that very large parts of the @sweden feed are concerned with relatively trivial interaction that does not deliver content or information. The question how important the actual content on the feed is compared to the meta-message emerges inevitably. Christensen goes as far as to say that "it was the "@Sweden" concept itself which was the product, not the curators or the content of their tweets"[270]. Cull joins into this critique, maintaining that the PR value of Swedish digital

[264] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 31.
[265] ibid.
[266] Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," 132.
[267] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 36.
[268] L. I. XIGUANG and WANG JING, "Web-based public diplomacy," *Journal of International Communication* 16, no. 1 (2010), doi:10.1080/13216597.2010.9674756; Seib, *Real-time diplomacy.*
[269] Hallberg and Lundberg, "PR 2.0," 41.
[270] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 42.

diplomacy[271] is great as it receives large coverage in traditional media, but whether the public diplomacy objective was fulfilled can be questioned. [272]

Curators of Sweden is a project that places Sweden on the global map and gives it a vague image of being a pioneer online – but possibly not more than that. In depth information or critical portrayal are not transmitted. Swedish public diplomacy is very concerned with the image Sweden has abroad.[273] The NSU regularly conducts a study on the Swedish image abroad that serves as a measurement for public diplomacy success. The study focuses on what foreign audiences think rather than why they think it. This is another element in the explanation of why Swedish public diplomacy is organized and constructed the way it is: it is crucial that people believe in Sweden as a digital democratic pioneer, but it matters less what is actually happening on the very innovative channel, as Thomas Carlhed's, the then Swedish Brand Officer, quote, exemplifies: "Progressive communication is about testing new things, being at the forefront, and you don't have to take it so seriously."[274] This could also been seen in the media analysis that showed a large number of tweets without content that transcends the chit-chat.

The representation of values in materials or medium is not a new practice in Swedish public diplomacy. In his assessment of the House of Sweden in Washington, Pamment has observed that the architecture picks up the ideals Sweden wishes to be associated with: openness, transparency, consensus-drive and a welcoming attitude. The house is built with glass exterior, a "visitor-friendly environment" and many conference rooms that embody the Swedish consensus culture.[275]

The values the meta-message promotes do not hold entirely when critically assessing the circumstances and content. While @Sweden emphasizes openness, the Swedish Foreign Ministry is secretive about their spending of tax money. Their budget is guarded and not transparent,[276] the Twitter statistics were not made available for this research. Presenting itself as a project promoting democracy and participation, it is curious that the group of Curators is somewhat homogenous and recruited from a tiny percentage of Swedes. Brand Officer Malmberg even stated that the process of nomination is followed because "we don't want

[271] In his paper, he is relating his statement to the Second House of Sweden.
[272] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 4; Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," 132.
[273] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 112.
[274] ibid., 119.
[275] Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," 127, 129; Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 31.
[276] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 104.

everybody to do it either"[277] Apparently, there is a clear objective behind the choice of Curators and no any "ordinary" Swede[278], as the project is described, is eligible for this mission.

Curators of Sweden maintains that there is no censorship whatsoever and aims to exemplify Sweden's liberal values in letting Curators tweet what they wish with minimal rules. At a closer look though, the not widely known fact that the Swedish Institute and Visit Sweden retain the right to remove tweets without prior notice shows that the account is not as free as it is presented. Of course it makes sense from the side of the state to not let go of all control on an official Twitter account. Nevertheless, this limits the supposedly unlimited expression of freedom that is advertised. [279]

While the guidelines Curators receive might be short and relatively open, they still set a certain agenda that for example excludes political discussion. Malmberg even calls this a "hygiene factor"[280] that is implemented to prevent broadcasting political opinion that Sweden does not officially want to support. This way, a very indirect kind of censorship is induced that does not harm the Swedish brand values as it seems very understandable to not let go of all control and prevent ambiguous political discussion. At the same time, these mechanisms influence the messages that are sent out much more than it is visible.

Interestingly enough, even though the state keeps that backdoor open, Sweden has so far chosen to display its liberal values exactly through non-censoring. When the case of Sonja Abrahamsson[281] occurred, the responsible people deliberately chose not to intervene, thus even further displaying the Swedish virtue of freedom of speech.

What can be witnessed in the case of @sweden is what Simon Anholt mentions as convincing the branded nation of its own brand values[282] and what Aoki-Okabe et al. call the "construction of a 'national culture' by projecting such culture outward".[283] By first defining very clearly what kind of cultural traits Sweden is to have in its "Brand Sweden" and then

[277] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[278] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 36.
[279] ibid., 41.
[280] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[281] Sonja Abrahamsson was @sweden's Curator in June 2012 and provoked heated discussion with her comments on Jews, homosexuals, pornography, drugs and AIDS.
[282] Anholt, Competitive Identity, 4.
[283] Maki Aoki-Okabe, Yoko Kawamura, and Toichi Makita, "Germany in Europe, Japan and Asia: National Commitments to Cultural Relations within Regional Frameworks," in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, ed. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, Explorations in Culture & International History, vol. 6 (New York: Berghahn Books, Inc., 2010), 212–40, 212.

projecting these traits in a medium with a strong meta-message, an image of the nation is formed that is orienting both Swedish and foreign citizens on what to believe of Sweden.[284]

The former Curator Jonsson remarks this when she says that Sweden is portrayed a progressive country regardless of the fact "that is not so clear from the account". She sees a discrepancy between actual domestic politics and which "voices that get to speak on Twitter" [285] and thus highlights the effect of projecting progressiveness as a national characteristic through the chosen medium and the representatives on it. Sweden chooses Curators that might not entirely support the brand idea because it thus portrays itself as even more open and uncencsored. There is consequently a meta-message also in choosing the Curators. Moreover, both interviewees strongly emphasized how very flattered they were by the request. This might help establish a sense of loyalty to those that have picked the Curators. It gives the person in charge of @sweden for one week the feeling of power and being trusted[286] [287].

Looking at these different levels and messages that are sent out in the context of @sweden, Christensen's argument that there is a need to examine "if and how such services contribute to broadening a participation in public debate, and to what extent it merely serves as yet another arena for established societal actors"[288] becomes very salient. Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute can certainly be considered "established societal actors" but by using third parties, namely the Curators, an appearance of completely independence is created, adding credibility to the nation brand's message, a vital characteristic on Twitter. In being very liberal with their instructions, and not even censoring when topics get hot, Sweden displays almost borderless freedom of speech. By using the latest social media there is, the country presents itself as a pioneer in technology. However, when we consider the findings of the media analysis conducted in this paper, it becomes evident that it is these meta-messages that mostly make the @sweden account so successful. The actual content of the account is often drained of information. What we see is many tweets, much interactivity, but little hashtag which would suggest entering topical discussion and half of the messages being chit-chats between users.

It is though undeniable that the Swedish Twitter account excels at using the medium Twitter correctly and it exhibits formidable PR skills in getting the meta-message across and generating large press coverage. It also succeeds in engaging some 60,000 followers and

[284] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 124.

[285] Det framgår ju inte så mycket på kontot men just att vi är ett progressivt land och blablabla – även om det kanske inte tämmer om an ser till dne politik som förs i landet just nu men så är det ju ändå de rösterna som kommer till tals på Twitter, tycker jag.Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[286] ibid.

[287] Det är otroligt smickrande att få det förtroendet.

[288] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 35.

giving them a much personified and locally rooted perspective on the lives of Swedish social media enthusiasts. This remarkable success must, however, be evaluated as a PR and branding success more than a public diplomacy endeavor[289] when held against the findings of this media analysis. Even though @sweden does fulfill some of the criteria for public diplomacy, eventually one has to conclude that the public diplomacy impact is secondary in this project.
In Swedish public diplomacy, it appears the medium is the message[290], the means is boosting a good image and the goal is to sell the nation,[291] not to explain policy or reliably influence foreign audiences politically.

The German case is an impressive example of the claim that "the idea that social media and dialogical communication models are synonyms in PD work is questionable".[292] It shows how public diplomacy trying to enter the digital diplomacy field by using Twitter, but using it within old media traditions.
Scholars name "virtual echo chambers" as a key threat with social media: to circle around one's own messages and ideas instead of entering a dialogue of diverse opinions and viewpoints.[293] The media analysis in this paper has shown that @GI_Journal employs hashtags that no other users take up; they are thus getting caught in the trap of actually circling around themselves.
It seems peculiar that @GI_Journal is not meeting most of the requirement for effective social media as the Goethe-Institute apparently tries to educate their employees on best practices online.[294] However, it does goes in line with the interviewees' responses that stated that @GI_Journal does consciously not use Twitter as a dialogical tool.[295] Against the background what all research says about social media,[296] this seems a major fail. The key to digital diplomacy is quick transmission of messages to an audience one can interact with. The German Twitter account falls short of fulfilling these criteria. The Goethe-Institut instead uses

[289] Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," 132.
[290] ibid., 129.
[291] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 45.
[292] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 28.
[293] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 471.
[294] Zudem sind alle Mitarbeiter, die weltweit für Social-Media zuständig sind, über eine Mailingliste in Kontakt, in der wir auch über inhaltliche Best-Practice Beispiele kommunizieren und Erfahrungswerte austauschen.Najereh Shirzadian, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[295] Wie oft kommen Reaktionen vor? Sehr selten. Rückfragen oder so, einmal im Monat oder noch seltener. Woran liegt das? Weil wir das nicht so als Dialogmedium einsetzen, sondern hauptsächlich um die Artikel weiterzutwittern.Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[296] Giles Crouch, "Why Governments Engage in Digital Diplomacy Through Social Media," accessed April 11, 2013, http://www.mediabadger.com/2012/04/why-governments-engage-in-digital-diplomacy-through-social-media/.

Twitter as a promotional platform for their articles. This can been definitely be regarded a different communicative layer than Potter's "many-to-many-communication"[297] and continues in all German respondents stressing the fact that journalists monitor Twitter and by using the medium, diplomats could reach this target group. Departing from what this paper has established about public and digital diplomacy before, one must regard communication with journalists as yet another level of communication. It is not, as scholars in new public diplomacy in the soft power context propose, contact with the general citizen, but with key decision makers with medial power.

The German side showed aware of the problem of an image surpassing the actual content: Weindl states that "it is important that communication does not go in circles without clear content", something @sweden could be charged to do.[298] Interviewees stated that the German public diplomats are concerned with providing correct information and engaging in sincere discussion.[299] The objectives for German foreign policy are gauged very much towards international cooperation on a political level influenced by German history, with the German nation brand, compared to the Swedish, being much more detached both in the organizational structure and the actual execution of foreign policy. The topics found on the German Twitter account are representing very high-cultural content, drawing on the intellectual past and present of Germany. One reason for this can be the Goethe-Institut's mission as a cultural institution, but it also shows that the brand values are not employed here.

What could be seen from this critical assessment of the two accounts is that especially in the Swedish case the subtexts and meta-messages are very present and the democratic open nature of the project as it is promoted outwards must be questioned. The German case also shows different levels of communication with the account being used as a promotional tool and a point of contact to journalists. It furthermore exhibits a circling upon itself that must be seen critically against the background of the scholarly demand of a dialogical new public diplomacy. After this critique of the different layers of communication, an analysis of this study's findings with regard to specific criteria of digital diplomacy shall be presented in the next chapter.

[297] Evan H. Potter (ed.), *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century.*
[298] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[299] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann., Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann; Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann.

Analysis

As established in the first part of this paper, there is a set of characteristics of digital diplomacy are agreed upon by most scholars. Among others, this set includes "many-to many international communication" instead of one-to-many communication, a higher speed, democratization of information that makes decision-makers more accountable, and the soft-power nature of the undertaking. [300]

This study aims to compare the claims literature makes with the realities of practical public diplomacy in order to assess what Twitter can actually offer for public diplomacy. In the following, the interplay of what is demanded of digital public diplomacy and what could be empirically found to be employed will be analyzed in a discussion.

Humanized Feed/Institutional Feed

Since the emergence of Web 2.0, information online from a company or an institution is not just information, but a humanized way of interacting with the target group. With users uploading content that they generated themselves, unilateral communication online has become much less present. In the social internet arena with equal users interacting and with the credibility question of the sender constantly in mind, a humanized feed is more likely to succeed.

In the case of the German Twitter account, however, we see that the @GI_Journal account provides a strictly institutional, anonymous feed. Those administering the account do not have immediate contact to the audience in real life either – such as attending events of the Goethe-Institut, something that could bridge the shortcomings of an institutional feed.[301]

A reason for this conduct that contradicts the underlying ideas of the medium can be found in the organizational structure of Germany public diplomacy. Weindl clearly states that the Goethe-Institut has no mission to transmit a certain message or debate factual issues.[302] This could be a reason for the creation of a very institutional feed that is more secure, official and bears a smaller risk of transmitting something that the Goethe-Institut is not supposed to send out. Also, the institutional confusion that the German respondents mention[303] could be an argument to keep all German channels in an institutional conduct. That way, even if recipients cannot distinguish Foreign Ministry and Goethe-Institut, the conduct and message will be similar and not contradictory.

[300] Evan H. Potter (ed.), *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, 154.
[301] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 6.
[302] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[303] Cf. Chapter on Interview Results

The Swedish case, on the other hand, exhibits an overly humanized feed. It concentrates on personal human interaction and personified images of Sweden. Here, we see an alignment with the key words of "Brand Sweden", especially with the value of "caring". As the media study has shown, the Curators avidly reply to their followers, they care about them. An institutional Twitter account can hardly care, but Pernilla, David and Fredrik, presented with their photos, biographies and lives, can. Embracing the risks that humanized feeds bring, the Swedish account relies strongly on people.

Familiarity with the medium and the issue of representativeness

Sweden's practice of relying on short-term selected people brings Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute in a position in which they can, every week anew, appoint and pick people that know the medium. Literature states this as a vital requirement for digital diplomacy according to scholars and practitioners; it is here that they see the main reasons for failure and ineffectiveness.[304] Both Swedish interviewees for this study work in the realm of new media PR[305][306]. As they were picked relatively randomly from the sample of former Curators, this suggests that many of the Curators are part of the "Swedish social media bubble"[307] because of the criterion of familiarity with Twitter that @sweden demands.

While this is good for using the medium in an efficient way, it limits without doubt the circle of Swedes from which to choose Curators and thus distorts the image of Swedes the account gives. The limited character of the bubble shows in the Twitter statistics: In 2012, only 0.5 percent of Swedes were "very active" on Twitter, with 7 percent of users accounting for 75 percent of all Swedish tweets.[308] It is hence difficult to maintain that @sweden is representing the nation if only such a small percentage of citizens takes part.[309]

This problem aside, one can conclude that the Curators exhibited a thorough understanding of Twitter, explaining that they believed the best use of the medium could be made through people that liked to interact through common interest(s) instead of a personal relation.

[304] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:10.

[305] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.

[306] Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.

[307] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.

[308] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 40.

[309] The former Curators do mention this problem while Visit Sweden's Brand Officer maintains that @sweden is allowing "to get all our people to tell their, you know, opinions" Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann..

Corresponding to what Teasley et al. and Rappa et al. have argued in their research,[310] Curators also found it important that tweets are relevant to the audience and give a clear statement by the sender; the element of being funny was quite noticeable as well.[311]

On the German side, two authors of the @GI_Journal also twitter privately, albeit without even coming close to the numbers of tweets and followers the Curators have. This does not automatically mean that @GI_Journal authors are less familiar with their medium though. Interview research showed that the employees dealing with the social media of the local Goethe-Institutes worldwide are in contact to share best practices in the field.[312] Also, in the interview, Müller exhibited an understanding of the target groups' use of Twitter and of criteria for tweets, including the acknowledgment of the importance of retweets. Obviously familiarity with the medium is not what is most prominently lacking on @GI_Journal, but, as the media analysis for this paper has shown, potential expertise does not show strongly in the resulting feed on the Twitter account. What seems peculiar is that Müller repeatedly mentions the lack of time and money as the reason for not using Twitter as a dialogical medium.[313] This refers back to the organizational and cultural structure of German public diplomacy: it does not seem to attribute much importance to Twitter, which reflects in the little time allocated for administering it.

Interaction

Agreeing with the literature that Twitter's strength lies within its very open, dialogical potential, the element of interaction becomes one of the most important criteria for effective Twitter use. Multidirectional dialogue and interaction is the feature that distinguishes Twitter from other platforms, and it is at the same time one of the demands scholars make on new public diplomacy. The quantitative media analysis has though shown that the two accounts differ tremendously in their employment of interactivity.

With an interaction rate of more than 100 percent, @sweden clearly ventures on interactivity: There is a constant dialogue going on. As it is not primarily concerned with explaining Swedish foreign policy, however, this dialogue can be charged with not corresponding to public diplomacy objectives because often also trivial aspects of the everyday lives of Swedes are shared. The account is thus unbalanced with regard to using the medium in the most

[310] Michael Rappa et al., "What is Twitter, a social network or a news media?," in *the 19th international conference*, 591; Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243.

[311] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3., Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 4.

[312] Najereh Shirzadian, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 1.

[313] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 6.

interactive way and transmitting a diplomatically significant message. Furthermore, the interaction is not at all as free as proposed on the Swedish account: a crisis committee is constantly at hand to monitor and moderate the dialogue and the Curators can and do choose to ignore certain dialogue partners.

The Goethe-Institut's account shows a mere 12 percent of interaction only. In the interview, Müller declares straightforwardly that Twitter is not used as a medium of dialogue by the Goethe-Institut.[314] When asked for his idea of a new technology for public diplomacy, Müller mentions the desire for a new tool that creates more interaction but basically describes what Twitter already is. He imagines an instrument that turns the communication into "a real dialogue and not just 'sending' and sporadic reactions but an equal dialogue […] I think writing [online] is still a good medium because it grants some kind of remaining anonymity."[315] This shows that @GI_Journal is not at all taking full advantage of the offers Twitter can make for executing public diplomacy. Müller, as mentioned above, attributes this to lacking time resources.

Still, he sees digital channels as a tool that eases interaction and praises its immediate character that allows for direct communication with the audience. As an example of the usefulness of interactivity, however, he speaks of his editors making a spelling mistake in a name and the readers being able to directly report the mistake back to the authors. This way of using Twitter as a tool for formal corrections does not at all correspond to the demands scholars make on digital diplomacy, namely to enhance democratic interaction. This participatory function of Twitter is either not understood or not embraced.

Unilateral information flow

When regarding the scholarly call for multi-lateral information flow, the potential of Twitter and the empirical results of Twitter use, one can detect lacking alignment. Following on Twitter does not have to be reciprocal, resulting in the aforementioned potential for open dialogue. [316] While this would perfectly fit the demand for multi-lateral information flow, Rappa 's empirical research has found that followers make frequent use of the non-

[314] ibid., 3.

[315] Also dass es wirklich einen Dialog gibt und nicht „senden" und vereinzeltes Rückmelden, sondern eine Art gleichberechtigter, auch zeitlich usw. gleichgearteter, Dialog. […] ich glaub, da ist schreiben schon, weil es auch so eine Rest Anonymität garantiert, ein ganz gutes Medium.ibid., 5.

[316] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.

reciprocity[317] and that this non-reciprocal access also encourages unilateral information flow which is a characteristic of the old, not the new public diplomacy.[318]

Rappa's research suggests that Twitter is first and foremost a tool for information rather than for personal social networking. This would legitimize the conduct of the Goethe-Institut that provides thorough and professionally composed information on Germany. In the interview, the focus of the Goethe-Institut on Twitter is clearly defined as promotion of the articles on the website, not as a dialogical medium. Here a clear divergence between what scholars believe to be of utmost importance and what practitioners do can be witnessed. For those user groups that employ Twitter as a news ticker the conduct is sufficient, but it nevertheless conflicts with the concept of new public diplomacy and the original idea of Twitter.

Multipliers

Even if the information flow is operated unilaterally, public diplomacy relies on multipliers that are considered as the third dimension of soft power[319]. In the realm of Twitter public diplomacy, literature names retweeting as a powerful tool on Twitter through which a larger group of people can be reached. While this study could not statistically assess the number of retweets in the two feeds analyzed, interview research has nevertheless established that both the German and Swedish representatives are very aware of this opportunity of the medium. Müller sees a successful tweet as a message that it retweeted often.[320] Visit Sweden's branding officer Malmberg refers to the multipliers that should "bring out our message on Sweden to other people". Like a snowball system, the Curators of Sweden project acts very consciously on the assumption that "we get a little bit those people who know others who can recommend Sweden" to acquire a "more global reach".[321] Former Curator Jonsson also emphasizes the retweet function as a tool to gain a much larger range. A specific difference of Twitter to other media is that "on Twitter, you can appear and have, like, 50 followers […] but if you are retweeted you will come up on very many's feed".[322][323]

[317] Michael Rappa et al., "What is Twitter, a social network or a news media?," in *the 19th international conference*, 591, 600.
[318] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 453.
[319] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft power: The means to success in world politics* (New York: Public Affairs, op. 2004).
[320] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[321] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3, 4.
[322] Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3, 4.
[323] "För då måste man ju redan ha en plattform eller liksom en stor följerskap från början medan på Twitter så kan du komma in och vara, och ha typ 50 follower som ändå säga någonting smart och så kan det bli retweetat och synas hos jättemånga. Så även om man är en liten person så kan man ju få en otrolig reach med Twitter, som man kanske inte kan få i printmedia och på Facebook. "

Multipliers as though not only the regular followers. Scholars regard the balancing act between talking to the user and benefitting from intermedia setting as one of the important challenges for digital public diplomacy. Both accounts are concerned with intermedia setting as all interview partners without exception clearly stated when strongly stressing the importance of reaching out to journalists via Twitter, suggesting an overestimation of journalists in comparison to regular users, which then hints back at the old public diplomacy understanding of reaching influential key persons in societies.

Twitter-specific characteristics

Teasley's study identifies three main characteristics of twitter-specific content: 1) Frequent life updates, 2) information in real-time and 3) trusted network information. Frequent life updates are something @sweden provides, as well as information in real-time and from a personal network. In comparison, @GI_Journal meets the criterion of the trusted network information even more if one departs from the assumption that simple nationality (as on @sweden) is not per se trustworthy when informing on a country. Instead, the Goethe-Institut represents much more an established, trusted information source. As for the first two criteria, one can speculate that the socio-cultural background of Germany where, as mentioned in the first part of this study, the minority of citizens use internet on their phones influences the strive to receive and dispatch frequent, real-time information that without the technological prerequisite cannot be accessed anyway.

Speed and staff shortage as problems for institutions

One of the main characteristics that keep being mentioned in the discourse if the speed of Twitter. Just this speed is a problem for institutions that employ their personnel on a normal basis, both literature and the research for this study have found.

Unlike @sweden, @GI_Journal can and does not react to Twitter on weekends, holidays or nights. Khatib finds that professional staff working normal hours is "a disadvantage in the face of network[ing] individuals operating horizontally"[324] and this problem was reiterated in the interview with Goethe-Institut representative Müller emphasizing the problem of staff capacities as the main counter argument against Twitter.[325][326] Ostrowski names staff shortage as the main complaint public diplomats have voiced in his global study.[327] The key to digital

[324] Khatib, Dutton and Thelwall, "Public Diplomacy 2.0," 467.
[325] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[326] Erst mal faktisch begrenzte Kapazitäten, da wir nicht alles händisch selbst betreuen können.
[327] *the third ACM conference*, 181.

diplomacy is a) the ability to shape a message quickly and adapt it as conditions change and b) to be able to actually engage in dialogue with the target audiences in the foreign country.[328] On Twitter, brief real-time information is favored instead of lengthy, often outdated website versions. With @GI_Journal linking to their website versions and in that sense does not seize the opportunity of Twitter.

The Foreign Ministry stated that the unofficial @I_amGermany that is designed after @sweden is known to them and supported as it works towards the same goal of promoting a good image of Germany, albeit on different conditions of conduct. Since the German official public diplomacy on Twitter is so occupied with being an institutionalized, correct feed, the positive attitude towards the unofficial project @Iam_Germany can be regarded a compromise. While the official side intents to remain serious, it leaves the fast, humanized feed to private persons.

Listening and Broadcasting as elements of public diplomacy

One of the defined elements of public diplomacy is listening. [329] Twitter, with its hashtags and trending topics, theoretically represents an excellent tool to pursue this part of public diplomacy work. Micro-blogging is seen as an option to gain insight into the thoughts and mentalities of millions of user, Bergman maintains.[330]

In practice, the @GI_Journal account does indeed seem to be used for such purposes: According to Müller, one of the reasons the Goethe-Institut had for becoming active on Twitter was to have "an ear to the outside world". He believes that through Twitter is it much easier to get to know what people think. [331] This "ear" – listening, by scholars defined as the foundation of public diplomacy and also as the basis for social media,[332] has shown to be integrated in the reality of practitioners' work in the German case.

The practice of the Swedish account is less focused on listening, but instead concentrates much more strongly on another element of public diplomacy. The media analysis in the paper could show that while the Curators broadcast their lives out to the world, and while they do engage with their audience, they do not actually closely observe their counterparts' realities.

Entering ongoing discussions

[328] Crouch, "Why Governments Engage in Digital Diplomacy Through Social Media"
[329] Pamment, *New public diplomacy in the 21st century*, 29, 32.
[330] Lawrence Bergman et al., "Using twitter to recommend real-time topical news," in, *the third ACM conference* (see note 79), 385.
[331] Es ist gut und sinnvoll, da zu sein und dabei zu sein, auch so ein Ohr nach draußen zu haben, aber damit ist es auch ganz gut abgedeckt.Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[332] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 107.

While it became evident that at least in the German case public diplomats listen on Twitter, the question remains if they also take part in what they hear. Being able to share topics of interest is easier on Twitter than on any other social media websites. Ciolek maintains that to realize the potential of the already on-going discussions relevant to one's target audience is a key element in successful digital public diplomacy.[333] On Twitter, this is done by picking up existing hashtags and creating new ones appropriate for the audience's interests.

As shown in the media analysis, the Goethe-Institut is more active in tagging its tweets and thus theoretically would be able to enter discussions and share topics with the target audience. However, the hashtags are almost exclusively used by @GI_Journal and thus lose their original sense. It is interesting that Weindl voices a desire for a tool that simplifies reaching interested audiences. This, and the way @GI_Journal employs hashtags, shows that the opportunity Twitter offers with hashtags as starting points of shared interests is apparently not recognized and not seized by the German public diplomats despite the expressed wish to do so. This is a curious observation that does not seem to be in line with the Twitter knowledge the representatives exhibited. This shortfall could potentially be explained in the understanding the institute holds of the conducted communication: dialogue is not intended as the main aim and the institute regards itself as the sender of sincere information. Thus, it can also be the one that sets the topic, and the hashtag. Instead of entering a discussion – as new public diplomacy scholars would require – the institute disseminates its information in the non-egalitarian setting of sender and recipient.

In the Swedish case, the media study also showed a deficit in using hashtags in an effective way, here, however, rooted in the absence of the tool. With as few as 14 percent of tweets hashtagged, this is not a prominent practice on the Swedish account. Even when hashtags are employed, the feed stays on a quite personal level. It does thus not enter discussions, but in the best case spark new ones. The media study results in the sample reviewed do however not strongly suggest that the account has strong activity in starting new topics. Drawing on the interview research, one can assume that entering ongoing discussions is not an important goal for @sweden, either. Malmberg states that the aim of the account is distribute the own message about Sweden, not starting to talk about what the global community regards

[333] Melanie Ciolek, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy: How Embassy Jakarta's Facebook Outreach Illuminates the Limitations and Potential for the State Department's Use of Social Media" (Essay, Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, University of Southern California, 2010), accessed February 28, 2013, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/mciolek_socialmedia_indonesia.pdf, 19.

interesting otherwise.[334] In this respect, even if executed different than in the German case and thus camouflaged, one can observe a parallel idea of communication: the account is the sender of a preferred message, not an equal in a global dialogue.

Neutrality

Departing from the above stated, one must critically review in how far the demands literature makes on new public diplomatic communication as more egalitarian are implemented in practice. One feature of new public diplomacy is the accessibility of the sender and the option to contest the narrative presented. In the multi-directional information flow not only the favorable facets of the country are brought forward.[335] To provide a neutral view through interactive communication would thus be a demand on digital diplomacy.

The question whether @sweden does this prompts a variegated answer. On the one hand, giving Curators from different parts of the country, different genders, heritage, ages and professions, relatively great freedom of speech that could potentially lead to negative expression about Sweden[336] suggests that the feed is very neutral. On the other hand, it is necessary to acknowledge that the whole project is assigned to the trade promotion department, designed by a PR agency and concerted with the "Brand Sweden" platform, which hints at a much less neutral background. The general policy framework that has been presented in this study has also drawn attention to the power that is retained behind the scenes with the different committees and regulations. Also, the seemingly wide range of Curators narrows down extremely if one looks at the walks of life they come from. As former Curator Lundquist pointed out[337], the @sweden Curators are all part of the Twitter bubble and often very used to and experienced with (new) media.[338]

In the German case, the Goethe-Institut is deliberately independent to "avoid making it look like state propaganda".[339] At the same time, the organizational structure of the German public diplomacy suggests something else: the Goethe-Institut budget is decided on in the Foreign Ministry, the departments of culture and communication are one. While public diplomacy is in the German three-pillar-model only regarded as part of the pillar of security politics and the pillar of foreign trade politics, the Goethe-Institut, actually representing the pillar cultural

[334] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[335] Melissen, *The New public diplomacy*, 13.
[336] Explicit negative comments on Sweden could though not be found in the samples assessed for this study.
[337] Vi tog upp det här i höstas: var är de andra? De som inte är i bubblan? Hur hittar man dem, ska de vara med också? [...] Det är klart det finns ett prägel i att man ska ha funnits på Twitter ett tag. Det ligger en filter där. Det är klart man inte når ut till vem som helst.
[338] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 4.
[339] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.

diplomacy, undoubtedly carries out a kind of public diplomacy that shapes the German image on Twitter. The intersections are undeniable, and while they do not necessarily influence the neutrality of the messages sent, one has to acknowledge that it is more a fuzzy construct than a clearly independent actor.

Both in the Swedish and the German case, one cannot speak of independent neutrality from the governments and it thus becomes difficult to maintain that the narrative can be thoroughly challenged in the interaction with the Twitter diplomats.

Democracy

This is connected to the next themes of openness and democracy. While old public diplomacy is described as controlled communication with limited opportunities for interaction, digital diplomacy has the air of being entirely democratic. This study could not in detail assess the reply-behavior of the two accounts, but wants to draw attention to the fact that despite the democratic theoretical assumptions, the citizen in reality trying to respond to what the public diplomats dispatch is not guaranteed an answer. If the addressed public diplomacy institution chooses not to reply, chances are low to that one is able to force them. Thus the potential chance of e.g. challenging a certain perspective, as mentioned above, is depending on the will of the sender, in this case the state. This became evident in the case of Lundquist who decided to simply ignore the followers that kept inquiring about Julian Assange. [340] While certainly it can be useful to not enter into any discussion, it shows that the dialogical potential that is reiterated by scholars is, from the recipients' perspective, often more theoretical than practical.

Transnational openness

Even without exhibiting fully democratic values, the accounts can still fulfill the criteria of presenting themselves as transnationally open. Literature regards being open and transnational as success in diplomacy. These values are perfectly demonstrated on the studied cases through simply using an open medium that is globally accessible. However, the difference lies in the linguistic choices: @sweden is employing the language the most people speak in the world, making it transnational, while the German Twitter relies on the domestic language. Even with the German Foreign Ministry stating that the reason to start Twitter was to increase transparency and a general striving for openness thus be detectable, the German account can through the language choice not be described as equally open. However, this suggests that

[340] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, April 4, 2013, Oldenburg and Visby, 3.

@GI_Journal consciously intends to narrow down its target group to those learning or already speaking German. Considering that the promotion of the German language is one of the main objectives of the Goethe-Institut, the objective is focused not on presenting oneself as borderless but rather on promoting own interest and services.

Nation Branding or Public Diplomacy

This promotion of own interests and services would belong more into a commercial realm and the fine line between public diplomacy and nation branding has been discussed earlier. Examining the Twitter accounts, one can find that the @GI_Journal account is promoting its service to a small extent through choosing German as a language, but the overall analysis has shown the execution of what can be classified as public – or possibly only cultural – diplomacy. While one can also maintain to a certain degree that by using Twitter and being represented online, the values of the German brand, openness and innovation, are conveyed, the influence of nation branding seems stronger in the Swedish case. Due to its organizational structure and the constant mixing of "Brand Sweden" and foreign policy, it becomes difficult to make out if branding or diplomacy is at work on the account.

If one follows the scholars that maintain that public diplomacy can only be executed by diplomats, @sweden must be regarded a nation branding campaign. Also, the meta-message of using Twitter as @sweden suggests an exercise in supporting the nation brand of the democratic, innovative Swedish nation. In the interviews for this study, Visit Sweden representative Malmberg clearly states that the reasons to start @sweden were rooted in "Brand Sweden" and that the brand values were to be reflected in all communication. She refers to the project as a "campaign" for the brand values and explains that the only objective of Curators of Sweden is "to get our values out".[341] The fact that the PR agency that designed @sweden is part of the committees working with the project also suggests a strong orientation towards PR and branding. Only upon inquiry, she mentions that the PR agency as a member of the nomination committee is still heavily involved in the project. The fact that she does not bring up this fact before can hint at the belief that it is perfectly natural to have the designer of the project still on board. Her statement that she undoutedbly approves of the agency's continued involvement supports this assumption.[342] Malmberg further speaks of Twitter as a tool in an "integrated marketing mix", a term directed at commercial use.[343]

[341] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 1.
[342] Ibid. ""Yeah, yeah, we have Volontaire, our agency, it was they who came with the idea from the beginning, so yes, they are also involved and should also be."
[343] ibid., 2.

Another argument for seeing @sweden as a brand campaign is the fact that it fits Villanueva Rivas' criteria of nation branding all too well: it involves stereotyping and the excluding of certain groups. In the @sweden case, it has been observed by scholars and interviewees that everyone who is not on Twitter is automatically excluded from representing the nation and that a certain stereotype – even if not the blonde Swede but rather the modern, enlightened global citizen – is promoted.[344]

Still, when debating the question if @sweden is a branding exercise or a diplomatic venture, one must not ignore that the Curators are not instructed to sell Sweden. Lundquist consciously decided against advertising his home island[345][346], which points away from the mere commercial aspect. Also, in the interviews, it became evident that the Curators do not necessarily fully identify with the brand they are called to promote; instead, Jonsson explicitly differentiates between the image of Sweden and between what she experiences in real-life. She is aware of the point the brand makes, but does not seem to entirely agree with it. This is interesting against the background of Anholt's claim that the branded people should be convinced of their brand. By letting dissenting people take over @sweden, Sweden shows, as mentioned before, its tolerance and builds its brand. At the same time also, it gives the account the potential to become a public diplomacy venture that neutrally provides balanced information. However, this potential is never seized in reality because as the media analysis has shown the conversations do rarely touch on critical topics.

It shall not be ignored that German public diplomacy has also chosen to increasingly integrate German foreign trade during the 1990s. This does not seem to influence the mission of informing about the country in a balanced and self-critical way, however. In other words: German public diplomacy is less concerned with selling the nation. This corresponds with the three main points that the Foreign Ministry puts forward as their guidelines to public diplomacy: Germany supports a strong European Union as a global actor in the world, Germany promotes peace and security, and Germany wants to hold on to good relationships from the past and establish new friendly ties with other nations.[347][348]. This shows a stronger orientation towards political cooperation instead of aiming at a commercial target. A reason

[344] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 40; Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 4.
[345] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[346] Jag bestämde också att jag skulle inte springa runt och göra turistreklam för Gotland eller vara för mycket klyschig kring sådana saker.
[347] Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 1; Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Ministry) (2012) (unpublished manuscript, May 10, 2013), http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/608384/publicationFile/169951/Gestaltungsmaechtekonzept.pdf.
[348] Kurt-Jürgen Maass, "Aktuelle Herausforderungen der Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik," in *Deutsche Aussenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*, ed. Thomas Jäger, Alexander Höse and Kai Oppermann, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 584–602, 586.

for this certainly is Germany's position in Europe and the world. Compared to Sweden, Germany lies very centrally in Europe, is a very large economic actor and plays a major role on the political scene. Germany might not have an unsullied image, but it is known to audiences world-wide. These are factors that Sweden cannot play on, which might be a reason for a different kind of public diplomacy execution. The expressed aims of the two countries' public diplomacy are fundamentally differing: While Germany is emphasizing political cooperation; Sweden first and foremost states that the goal of NSU is to "generate interest, trust and goodwill for Sweden". In a list of how Sweden should be perceived, the objectives "trade partner", "attractive market for direct investment", "attractive tourist destination" figure prominently at the beginning. Germany and Sweden mention similar foreign policy objectives in their public diplomacy statements; the emphasis they place is different though.[349] Bluntly stated, Sweden pursues exchange for trade and international recognition, whereas Germany, due to its historical and geographical position, aims at exchange to promote international understanding and to explain its policies, a key element of public diplomacy. This is clearly reflected in the organizational structure of the two countries' public diplomacy.[350] This focus Germany chooses can be difficult to communicate on a medium that has a 140-character-limit. To provide balanced and realistic information often requires more detailed elaboration. Apparently, this has been a worry of the Foreign Ministry before Twitter was implemented. Christiane Scholz states that a reservation was "that it would not be possible to present complex foreign affairs issues in 140 characters"[351][352]

When trying to assess the presentation of nation brand and public diplomacy, we can find that in the context of the German nation brand the words "fun" and "hospitable" appear. The Twitter account does not reflect this; it is not directed at fun. Two of the core values of the German brand are "open", "innovative", values the Goethe-Institut's account would reflect if it was operated in a way more appropriate to the medium. It does choose not to and this may be another sign that Germany does not consider the conveyance of brand values equally relevant in their public diplomacy as Sweden.

Diplomats' reservations toward Twitter

[349] Utrikesdepartmentet (Swedish Foreign Ministry), "Nämnden för Sverigefrämjande i utlandet" (2013) (unpublished manuscript, May 10, 2013), http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/3028/a/146544.

[350] Pamment, "Innovations in public diplomacy and nation brands: Inside the House of Sweden," 129; Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik*, 26.

[351] Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[352] Einer der Einwände war z.B., dass es nicht möglich sei, komplexe außenpolitische Sachverhalte in 140 Zeichen darzustellen.

A large part of what makes public diplomacy in reality is the diplomats' attitude towards it. The reservations, the guidelines they receive, their views on Twitter and their socio-cultural background all form the prerequisites for the execution of public diplomacy on Twitter.

In the literature, mention is made of the fear of public diplomats that digital diplomacy might contribute to a banalisation of their work. Both representatives of the German Foreign Ministry recall this reservation and the long time it took for German diplomats to decide in favor of digital diplomacy[353][354]. Interestingly, though, this is not the main reservation the experts that have been interviewed for this study voiced. Instead, on both the Swedish and German sides, though stronger on the German one, the main worry was that negative reactions from the users, who could now quickly and directly interact, might come. The uncontrollable nature of the medium was met with reservation by the diplomats.[355] Seib sees the digital revolution as an opportunity for citizens to position themselves in society and regards the thus increased demand of the general public to influence policy rooted in this new technological opportunity to make easier use of participatory rights. This could be found to be true to some extent with the Swedish Curators stating that @sweden selects users that "dare to have an opinion".[356][357] Public diplomats apparently still have difficulty embracing this risk in order to seize the new opportunities Twitter offers.

Guidelines and strategies

In order to meet these challenges in a well-equipped manner, diplomats should be provided with official guidelines and strategies.[358] In the reviewed cases, guidelines were confidential, so the precise content could thus not be assessed for the study.

What could be established is that Germany is more elaborate on its guidelines. Possibly a result of the scattered nature of the public diplomacy system that offers strategic documents at different stages, such as the Foreign Ministry stage and the quango's own internal stages. The interviewees' description of the guideline documents signaled a strong emphasis on the basic framework of how Twitter is to be used, possibly trying to add to the employees' familiarity with the medium.

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[353] ibid.

[354] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann.

[355] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann; Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann; Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann.

[356] Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[357] Men jag förstod att man ville ha människorna med lite karaktär som vågar vara någonting.

[358] Helle C. Dale, "Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where US Government meets "New Media"," in *Backgrounder*, vol. 2346, ed. The Heritage Foundation (Washington, DC), 2–11, accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/public-diplomacy-2-0-where-the-us-government-meets-new-media, 2346:10.

The @sweden account has a single page to guide its curators.[359] However, by the simple fact that an entire PR company was hired to design the project, it can be assumed that the bigger plan behind the project is more detailed. These documents could not be assessed in the institution, but it seems they would not have directly influenced the impact since they are not readable for the actual Curator either. While @sweden has few guidelines, the former Curators did express the full support they felt from the responsible institutions. As Graffy writes, the degree of "backing from leadership at the top" is a significant factor in executing successful digital diplomacy.[360] @sweden seems to meet this criterion.

One can generally question in how far guidelines and strategies can be helpful at all in this field. If one truly strives for the multi-layered democratic dialogue that literature does not tire of mentioning, governing these very dynamic processes with institutional guidelines appears somewhat anachronistic and difficult.

The need for the completely new diplomat

The argument that guidelines cannot assist the diplomat in the entirety of the Twitter dialogue leads to the call for what literature describes as a completely new type of diplomat. Digital diplomacy is said to require a mindset that allows letting go of wanting to control the risk. On the German account, this can hardly be seen. Even though the employees are free to twitter what they want,[361], the account is anchored in an institutional department of communication that is governed by a framework that does not seem to embrace digital diplomacy through e.g. more budget allocation.

Melissen's statement that diplomacy had reached a completely new stage and is fundamentally changed[362] cannot be validated from what the account show and the interviewees expressed. Instead, the results of the study of the German account vehemently contradict this idea: The new medium is considered a new way of distributing things, but not a reason that prompts a rethinking of the concept for public diplomacy in German institutions.[363] In the analyzed account, this idea shows through very clearly: the account communicates along the lines of traditional press work. In the interviews, this became evident, too, most clearly in Weindl's straightforward statement that "a new medium does not

[359] Jag fick en A4 papper, ganska enkelt, där det stod: kör inte politiskt propaganda, var ingen troll. Kontot är hyperliberalt. De gav väldigt få såna här begränsningar. Lars Lundquist, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[360] Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0,"
[361] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.
[362] Jan Melissen, ed., The New public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations (Basingstoke [UK], New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) Brian Hocking, xix.
[363] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.

turn an organization's philosophy that the organization works with upside down"[364].[365] This shows that German public diplomacy does not comply with the scholarly demand for a completely new diplomat, but seems to be holding on to old traditions and working ways. Weindl furthermore emphasizes the wish to provide correct information and be a reliable official source for recipients. While acting slightly more casual than on other communication channels, he still believes that German diplomatic institutions should still not seek a friend-like relationship with the recipients.

Christensen states that @sweden was designed to be the opposite idea of old public diplomacy: The Swedish account projects its supposedly very different mindset by maintaining that the account is the most democratic one in the world. After closer examination, however, one must acknowledge that this digital diplomacy project relies on a very narrow group of representatives, emphasizes the meta-message for promoting brand values and can in fact be censored by the authorities behind it. It is thus not, as it might appear at first sight, entirely letting go of all risks.[366]

Coordinated public diplomacy efforts

While literature favors the letting go of control, it does emphasize the need for a more coordinated public diplomacy, maintaining that its success is inevitably linked to its coordination. Many states, so even Germany and Sweden, find themselves in a situation where NGOs, PR-agencies and lobby groups freely conduct their own public diplomacy that is colliding with state policy which is why strong cooperation between different actors is crucial.[367]

Similar to the issue of guidelines, the degree of coordination of an activity that is supposed to be executed in dialogue with other users can turn out rather low. When looking at the two different models in Germany and Sweden, it could be found that Germany with its quango system is less centralized whereas Sweden bundles all its forces on their "Brand Sweden" platform. What might look like being more coordinated in the case of Sweden can be questioned though. In Germany, all quangos are closely linked to the Foreign Ministry and operate on elaborate contracts with wide-reaching authority of the Ministry. At the same time, the German Twitter accounts of the Foreign Ministry and its quangos are deliberately not synched and in reality, as interviews have shown, quangos are relatively free in their actions.

[364] Ein neues Medium stellt nicht die ganze Philosophie um, die der Arbeit zugrunde liegt.
[365] ibid.
[366] Christensen, "@Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter," 30–46.
[367] Sebastian Körber, "Image, Marke, Branding - Die veränderte Arbeit am Deutschlandbild," in Maass, *Kultur und Aussenpolitik* (see note 174), 187.

It is thus difficult to determine the degree of coordination of the German public diplomacy as it differs in theoretical power of the Foreign Ministry and the influence that is made use of.
In Sweden, the Curators on Twitter are not employees and receive only few restrictions. Most of the coordination must be done through the selection of Curators, but once they are in charge, they are relatively free to present an image of Sweden that could theoretically also be contradicting the coordinated efforts. As said before, this appears to be part of the brand concept, and as Weindl very correctly points out, @sweden is not the only public diplomacy tool Sweden relies on and thus hints at why Swedish public diplomats dare to choose this one very liberal and hard to control Twitter approach. Furthermore, the role of communication levels becomes interesting again here with the question whether it is relevant what happens on @sweden or that something happens on @sweden. Also, the interviewed Curators stated that they felt flattered and commissioned with an honorable task, suggesting that their attitude was through the subtext of being chosen gauged towards displaying the favored image of Sweden.[368][369].

Views on Twitter

One crucial element of how media is integrated into policy is the attitude policy makers hold against the technology. It is therefore interesting to evaluate how the actual views on Twitter differ. While literature reiterates the constantly growing importance of digital diplomacy[370][371] , German public diplomacy as represented in the interviews sees Twitter as an instrument of minor importance. It is described as "an addition", "less important" and giving "the same effect as conventional press work". [372] [373] It is mentioned often that it is seen as a tool to reach journalists, suggesting that Twitter is perceived more as an instrument of press work than as a way of reaching the citizens of a foreign audience.[374]

[368] Elin Jonsson, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[369] Det är otroligt smickrande att få det förtroendet.
[370] Schwan, "Werbung statt Waffen,"
[371] Ostrowski, *Die Public Diplomacy der deutschen Auslandsvertretungen weltweit.*
[372] Twitter ist ein Extra in der Medienarbeit.
[373] [Twitters Wichtigkeit liegt] Im hinteren Bereich. Es gibt nicht viel Zeitbudget für den Einsatz. Auch der Effekt ist nicht der, den man mit anderen Mittel erzielen könnte, einer professionellen Pressearbeit zum Beispiel. Es ist gut und sinnvoll, da zu sein und dabei zu sein, auch so ein Ohr nach draußen zu haben, aber damit ist es auch ganz gut abgedeckt. … Wir bieten ein ganz gutes Mindest – bis Mittelmaß.Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2., Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.
[374] Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann., Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann., Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann.

Teasley et al. regard Twitter as a tool to connect through personal interests with actors that one would otherwise not come into contact with.[375] This opportunity Twitter offers is rejected by German public diplomacy when Weindl says that "a conversation between friends" is not intended,[376] the communication does not seem to be aimed at establishing relationship between common interests, but serve as an informational tool between a state and interested citizens.

Also, evaluating Twitter does not figure prominently in the German organizations. They either merely count followers, a method giving very little insight, or rely on Twitter's own evaluation tools.[377] Müller explains that the decision to use German was not one that was based on evaluation either. This is striking since at the same time for two reasons. First, the language choice limits the openness of the account, as already discussed. The institute deliberately discards one chance of Twitter without basing the decision on any statistical grounds. Second, the staff shortage is addressed as an important factor in the Twitter activity. Without thorough evaluation of effect, however, arguing for more staff inevitably becomes more difficult[378], which results in Twitter not gaining more importance in the organization and public diplomacy not being able to seize the potential of the tool.

Furthermore, the German Foreign Ministry and the Goethe-Institut both have names on Twitter that cannot be described as self-evident to the user. While they want to be "clearly identifiable" and "findable" for users,[379] they still use names that are rooted in the institutional framework of the own organization and sometimes do not even carry Germany or Goethe-Institut in the name.[380] It becomes more difficult than necessary for the recipient to access the Twitter account. These different factors suggest that Twitter is not regarded a very important tool that should closely be monitored and decided upon.

The Swedish representative Malmberg attributes bigger importance to the medium Twitter, calling it an important PR tool. Even though she also sees it as "one thing in the mix"[381], it is attributed much more importance than it has in the German context. She especially mentions Twitter as a tool to reach a global audience. At the same time, however, like the German respondents, Swedish representatives also see Twitter as a way of reaching out to journalists.

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[375] Stephanie Teasley et al., "How and why people Twitter," in *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 international conference*, 243, 249.

[376] Aber es ist nicht ein Gespräch auf der gleichen Ebene unter Freunden, wie beim schwedischen Account.Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.

[377] Najereh Shirzadian, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 1.

[378] Blanchard, *Social media ROI*, 42.

[379] Christiane Scholz, E-Mail to Helen Hoffmann, 2.

[380] The Foreign Ministry uses @AuswärtigesAmt and @GermanyDiplo. The Goethe-Institut uses @GI_weltweit, @GI_Journal and @GI_English.

[381] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 2.

The Swedish account is evaluated "all the time"[382], which suggests that evaluation efforts are more comprehensive and the appreciation of Twitter as a tool higher. [383]

Sociocultural background

These attitudes toward Twitter and some findings of the two case studies can be partly also attributed to the sociocultural context they are rooted in.

Germany represents a state whose administration is much bigger and more de-centralized than Sweden. This, among other factors, leads to a system like the German diplomatic system: a multifaceted, diverse net of authorities, quangos, and other actors on different levels. It is this diverse background that is reflected in the existence of not just one, but three Twitter accounts of the Goethe-Institut headquarters, two accounts of the German Foreign Ministry and one unofficial account promoting German public diplomacy.

At the same time, this scattered organization does not prompt completely uncoordinated messages, but instead relies on what Weindl calls the loyalty to the employer, i.e. for the German Foreign Service. Trained and employed by this organization, those working on the official Twitter accounts hold "a common view". [384] Decisions are taken independently on lower levels, but all diplomats are operating on the same presumptions and convictions.[385]

These views seem to be relatively hesitant toward Twitter, as interview research has shown, and while the information Twitter dispatches can reach a global audience, the domestic technological infrastructure that is comparatively low in Germany certainly influences the attitude towards digital diplomacy in German diplomacy.

Following this, the Swedish strong embracement of Twitter links back to the society's outlook on technology that has been introduced earlier: Malmberg and even Weindl mention the Swedish openness towards new media which reflects the idea of being "a modern and innovative country that "does not remain in old ways of thinking, regardless of which area".[386][387] The attitude towards technology in Sweden has certainly contributed to the idea of

[382] ibid., 3.

[383] Unfortunately, statistics were not made available for this study.

[384] Die Mitarbeiter des AA sind diesem loyal und haben eine große Selbstdisziplin, so ist gewährleistet, dass man eine Linie fährt. Das AA bildet die Mitarbeiter auch aus und dadurch prägt sich eine ähnliche Einschätzung.Conradin Weindl, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 3.

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[386] Es ist ein bewusst modernes und innovatives Land, das nicht in alten Denkmustern verharrt, egal in welchem Bereich.ibid.

[387] Helen Malmberg, interview by Helen Hoffmann, 4.

promoting the country on Twitter. With a stronger societal affinity to the medium internet, it becomes easier to use just this tool to construct the image of the innovative nation.[388]

Old wine in new wineskins

While most scholars postulate a fundamental change with the digitalization of diplomacy, the view that digital diplomacy is not new at all in its content but only in the means it uses is also voiced. There are different levels on which this non-changing approach can be detected. On a content level, one can find tendencies to pour old wine, that is the same content, into new wineskins, the new media.

Sweden uses a strategy of humanizing and personifying their country image through direct interaction with a person.[389] The idea of personifying the nation is not entirely new: In 1954, "Sweden in profiles" was published where well-known Swedes were presented with photo and biography. Just like the Curator project, this was an approach – then suitable to the non-digital time – that was "easily digestible and popular design", introducing the reader to Sweden by "representing the life, work and views of actual Swedish people". Very similar to @sweden in the digital age, it provided an "anthropomorphic articulation of the nation". [390]

The Goethe-Institut holds on to their pre-Web 2.0 – conduct in another way. This is exemplified in the content of the tweets they send which are in their great majority links to articles the institution published. Uploading content to a website and making it accessible for the public is a practice that belongs to the Web 1.0, and spoils the sense of an interactive medium such as Twitter.

This content-level is intrinsically linked to the communication-level that also tends to hold on to old practices. As discussed above, even though literature speaks of a changed diplomatic arena online, the study showed that when analyzing the circumstances more thoroughly, the traditional idea of controlling the supposedly free dialogue is still present.

[388] Maki Aoki-Okabe, Yoko Kawamura, and Toichi Makita, "Germany in Europe, Japan and Asia: National Commitments to Cultural Relations within Regional Frameworks," in *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, ed. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, Explorations in Culture & International History, vol. 6 (New York: Berghahn Books, Inc., 2010), 212–40, 212.
[389] Jörn Müller, interview by Helen Hoffmann.
[390] Glover, *National relations*, 94–5.

Conclusion

This paper set out to gain insight into the ways Germany and Sweden conduct their public diplomacy on Twitter. It explored the ways in which the organizational structure influences the states' conduct in social media and shed light on the difficulties that arise when trying to adapt diplomacy to a communicative situation that is said to have changed dramatically. In an exploratory study, this thesis tried to answer the larger question whether and in what way Twitter can be of use to public diplomacy.

What can Twitter offer for Public Diplomacy?

What, then, can Twitter as a tool offer for this particular task in foreign policy? The micro-blogging service can enhance the receptive part of public diplomacy, i.e. listening to the target audience. It can provide democratized information and reach the regular citizen in countries with a digital infrastructure. It can bypass governments and traditional media to reach civil society.[391] Because Twitter is designed in a minimalistic way, not much equipment, no high-resolution screens are needed. It can reach even those citizens who only have a mobile phone to go online. Moreover, Twitter is cheap. It is a cost-efficient way for diplomats to disseminate information and interact in dialogue. Twitter offers an opportunity of potentially reaching out to many more citizens than ever before at very little cost.[392] Due to its special set up with hashtags, Twitter can establish interest and relationship by a detour via a certain hashtag that is sent out in combination with the country's account. People who have never been aware of a country can learn about it by following a hashtag on a topic they are interested in or seeing a hashtag trending on their Twitter that eventually leads to a tweet sent by the public diplomats.

Looking at all these benefits and chances Twitter offers, one must carefully examine the downsides of the medium as well in order to decide whether it is suitable for a certain state's public diplomacy. Two major disadvantages must be seen with Twitter. The first one is the constant danger of slipping into shallow communication that hardly meets public diplomacy objectives. The media analysis in this paper has shown that @sweden is filled with a lot of chit-chat that does not fulfill the objective of public diplomacy. The more delicate the political – in this case hard power – situation of a state is, the more problematic Twitter-diplomacy may become. The 'Frappuccino incident' shows how insensitive it can appear when diplomats

[391] Anja Türkan, "Digital Diplomacy. Der Wandel der Außenpolitik im digitalen Zeitalter." (2012) (unpublished manuscript, May 13, 2013), http://cms.ifa.de/fileadmin/pdf/edition/digital_diplomacy.pdf, 10.
[392] Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0,"

try to meet the Twitter-specific criterion of sharing daily life updates at a moment when the state is facing war or other crises.[393]

The second great challenge that lies in using Twitter as a diplomatic tool is the so-called digital divide. The internet itself bears a risk of excluding elderly people, as well as those who have little technical expertise, and other target groups.[394] Twitter, in its turn, is accessible to an even smaller group of people because it requires more effort to familiarize oneself with the medium and its special traits, and it is less commonly used, leading to the inhibition threshold being higher. The small percentages of active Twitter users show that it is certainly not an all-encompassing medium. Public diplomacy must be very aware of how many, or rather how few, recipients it can reach with Twitter in different areas[395].

However, there is no doubt that the target group problem can change with future generations. The children and teenagers of today are growing up to be digital natives and in the next generation, those who are well-acquainted with the internet and social media will be a very large group.[396] As this generation increases

> "their use of these tools, they will expect to find policy-related material through them, much as they have come to expect government leaders to remain in touch with the public through television and radio, and now through websites."[397]

The demographic development may very well abolish the digital divide and it would be advisable that governments of the future were able to use the tools to their best effect.

What have the two cases shown about PD adaptation?

What can also be concluded from this study is that the already blurred lines between nation branding, cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy become even less clear on Twitter.

Sweden uses its account in a way that is difficult to group under the term public diplomacy. The idea was shaped by an external company dealing with public relations and advertisement, and this company is still largely involved in the process of picking Curators. The

[393] ibid.

[394] Jutta Röser and Corinna Peil, "Diffusion and Participation through Domestication: Internet Access and Use in Germany during the years 1997-2007," *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaf*, no. 04 (2010): 15, accessed May 29, 2013, https://www.leuphana.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PERSONALPAGES/Fakultaet_1/Roeser_Jutta/files/Peil_Roeser2010_Internetdomestication_in_Germany.pdf.

[395] Obviously, the level of familiarity with Twitter varies in different target countries and societies.

[396] Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0,"

[397] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 107.

organizational structure of Sweden's public diplomacy rather coerces the activities to be sales-oriented. With the board for the promotion of Sweden, the NSU, being located in the trade department and manned with different actors that have commercial, not diplomatic, interest, it seems almost inevitable that Sweden's activities lean more towards a nation branding approach.

This study has also shown how very important the meta-messages @sweden sends are in comparison to the actual message. It is more the concept that is received than the actual content. The way Sweden uses Twitter as a medium is nothing new in Swedish public diplomacy. With the Second House of Sweden, the country already before Twitter proved to deliver manifestations of Swedishness, with "structures embodying these symbolic values [...] to materialize the brand".[398]

As the research in this study has shown, Germany is struggling to adapt to the new medium. Possibly rooted in the more timid attitude towards new digital media, the German public diplomacy are hesitant to use Twitter in a way that would seize all opportunities the new technology brings. The interviewees declared this to be due to budgetary reasons that do not allow for more engagement on Twitter. One has to question this statement, though, as it hints at an institutional unwillingness to embrace Twitter. If policy makers understood and believed in the relevance of Twitter, budgets would probably be adjusted.

Different from Sweden, Germany's activities in the Twitter sphere lean more towards public diplomacy. The @GI_Journal account tries to promote its articles on German culture and contemporary life to its audience. This audience should per definition be a foreign target group, in the interview, however, it became clear that a large part of recipients are from Germany. Also, reexamining the communication levels the Goethe-Institut operates with, it could be seen that while the articles itself are public diplomacy content, the use of Twitter itself in the context is solely promotional.

What this study could furthermore trace is that the normative claims scholars make are not entirely true in practice. Literature tends to paint the picture of a brave, new digital world that is shook in the fundaments of its diplomatic conduct and in which only the states with social media experts will be heard. Not only can be concluded that despite Germany's mediocre management of Twitter, the country's voice remains powerful, it has also shown that diplomats are less concerned with the change in technology than literature might suggest. The

[398] Pamment, New public diplomacy in the 21st century, 129.

diplomatic systems have taken notice of the new opportunities and have slowly started integrating them, but do not assign Twitter a major importance. Even in Sweden, where the venture on Twitter is larger, interview research has shown that it is regarded one element, not the element. The fact that the Swedish and German state do not appear to be conducting elaborate statistic on their performance on Twitter[399] suggests strongly that Twitter has in practice not completely overturned time-honored diplomacy. Whether this is rightly so or should be re-evaluated by diplomacy in order to potentially seize more opportunities, is a question yet to be tackled, especially taking the aforementioned demographic change in account.

To critically conclude on the case study for this paper, it must be recognized that comparing @sweden and@GI_Journal can be critized since the two accounts are not in all regards entirely comparable. The German account is more concerned with cultural diplomacy than, for example, the account of the German Foreign Ministry. Still, this account was chosen as the subject of comparison because it matches the @sweden-account in so far as that both accounts are situated in the organizational structure of the cultural institutes of both countries. Also, it must be acknowledged that this small-scale study could only assess a limited time window. It is not presumed that it can act as a basis to comprehensively generalize the overall picture of Swedish and German digital diplomacy. As an exploratory research it illustrates tendencies in the public diplomacy execution of both countries on Twitter from which first conclusions can be drawn.

Lessons for public diplomacy online

Every new technology simultaneously presents a burden and a blessing, as Postman puts it.[400] The question that remains to be answered then is how much burden and how much blessing Twitter can be for public diplomacy. . What could be seen from this study is that the answer is highly dependent on how well diplomacy will adapt to the new technology- It is neither sufficient to use Twitter in the way most suitable to the medium without clear public diplomacy objectives (Sweden) nor to push through relatively clear public-diplomacy-

[399] Even if Malmberg states that her institution is evaluating the project continually, she does also emphasize that the government – which represents the diplomatic body – is not concerned with the project.
[400] Gerhard Banse, "„Digital media: new opportunities for democracy and participation?" (Fraunhofer-Anwendungszentrum für Logistiksystemplanung und Informationssysteme (ALI), 24.09.2005) (unpublished manuscript, May 3, 2013), https://igw.tuwien.ac.at/peterf/mediaworkshop/Banse_TU%20Wien_240905_2.pdf, 20.

messages regardless of the medium (Germany). There are still lessons to be learned for public diplomacy in order to be successful on Twitter.

Twitter is not a tool for broadcasting one's own content only. While it makes it easy to transmit own messages, it is at the same time indeed a service that demands lending one's ear to others.[401] Twitter democratizes interaction and requires actors to engage on equal terms with the audience. Successful Twitter diplomacy must take this feature into account and give in to real dialogue. If states fail to use Twitter appropriately because its "egalitarian" set up contradicts cultural traditions or organizational structures, public diplomats ought to reexamine the added value the medium gives to the public diplomacy of their country and reassess whether Twitter really is a "helpful" tool for their particular case.[402] Only when governments accept that communication and, along with it, power structures have shifted (at least on Twitter), can designing new public diplomacy policies for social media become a successful endeavor.[403]

In many public diplomacy institutions, staff is short for conducting digital diplomacy, which the interview research for this paper found evidence for. Arguing that the reach is short, decision makers refuse to allocate financial means to the cause. Drawing on what has been said before, the use of the internet will only increase in the years to come. Diplomacy must adapt to it if it intends to remain relevant to recipients.[404]

With all of the above stated, one must always bear in mind that Twitter is a relevant tool for public diplomacy, but it is only one of different communication modes. Its special and new opportunities are well worth seizing, though, without neglecting successful time-honored approaches and face-to-face-encounter where possible.[405]

Social media will continue to play a role in all parts of people's lives and thus in the realm of state- to-citizen interaction as well. In order to remain relevant to the audiences, diplomats should reexamine the advantages and disadvantages of Twitter for their particular organization and employ the medium only where it is applicable and used with a maximum of seized opportunities the medium offers.

[401] Cull, "WikiLeaks, public diplomacy 2.0 and the state of digital public diplomacy," 5.
[402] Seib, *Real-time diplomacy*, 108.
[403] ibid., 173.
[404] Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0,"
[405] R.S Zaharna and William A. Rugh, "The Use of Social Media in U.S. Public Diplomacy," *Global Media Journal*, no. 21 (2012): 13, accessed April 11, 2013.

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