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Revisiting and Reimagining the Notion of Responsibility in German Foreign Policy

KATY A. CROSSLEY-FROLICK
Denison University

This article traces the evolution of a postwar leitmotif of German foreign policy, *Verantwortungspolitik* (politics of responsibility), first articulated by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in 1975. In its original Genscher formulation, *Verantwortungspolitik* emphasized several important features of German behavior on the world stage, including restraint, multilateralism, and humanitarianism. Since the end of the Cold War, German foreign policymakers have steadily revised and reimagined the leitmotif, stressing the importance of Germany's international responsibilities and the need to close the gap between Germany's power (capabilities) and willingness to assume a more prominent international role, including a readiness to use force, particularly when human rights are at stake. Although articulation of the norm is fairly persistent, its meaning has changed as Germany confronts new challenges on the global stage. This has important implications for how, where, and when Germany engages internationally and the instruments it utilizes to achieve its foreign policy objectives.

Keywords: Germany, foreign policy, memory

> Germany has never been as prosperous, secure, and free as it is today. But power and influence entail responsibility. This also means that it has to take on new responsibilities (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik and The German Marshall Fund of the United States 2013, 2).

What is a state responsible for and to whom? What does responsibility mean in the context of foreign policy making? What are the expectations of responsibility that emanate from power? This article explores the postwar leitmotif of *Verantwortungspolitik* (politics of responsibility) in German foreign policy. To be sure, Germany is not the only country where questions about international responsibility emerge in foreign policy debates. For example, in the United States, such debates frequently emerge in the context of analyzing American foreign policy along the internationalist–isolationist continuum. Conceptions of responsibility vary from the globally engaged "good citizen" approach to the aloof "disengaged American" (Hastedt 2003). As China stakes out a more prominent international role, questions about responsibility and living up to "great power" expectations are emerging as well (Zhang and Austin 2001). But what makes the German case unique is that questions about political responsibility in the international context are situated against the backdrop of World War II, Nazism, and the Holocaust. Indeed, for what and to whom Germany is responsible *now*, and in the *future*, cannot entirely be divorced from its responsibility for *past* acts (Zehfuss 2007). And for much of its post-Cold War history, Germany has struggled to clarify the normative dimensions and policies associated with a "politics

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of responsibility" largely because it wrestles with two competing, often incompatible, demands. On the one hand, the lessons of history often lead to domestic calls for caution, restraint, antimilitarism, and an appealing (if unprecedented) form of multilateralism where consensus among the permanent five members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council is expected (Leithner 2009, 4). On the other hand, German foreign policy makers face a complex global environment in the post-Cold War era, which demands a nimble, forward-postured German foreign policy that utilizes a variety of foreign policy instruments, including military force, even if the precise requirements for multilateralism are not satisfied (Leithner 2009, 4).

This article analyzes these competing impulses in German foreign policy and is structured into four parts. The first part traces the genealogy of Germany's "politics of responsibility." The second part explores the "politics of responsibility" against the backdrop of scholarly literature on German foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. The third part proposes a way of thinking about responsibility from two perspectives: from the outside-in (from the international to the national) and from the inside-out (from the national to the international).[1] The former begins with the state as the primary unit of analysis. It considers the international responsibilities that flow from power, sovereignty, and statehood. These are distinct from legal obligations as enshrined in international law and treaties. The latter focuses on several domestic factors that frequently serve as the link between international influences and foreign policy outputs (Harnisch 2013, 78). Specifically, it analyzes a snapshot of recent statements by political elites at the Munich Security Conference in 2014, public opinion about Germany's role in the international system, particularly as it relates to responsibility, and the findings of a sweeping review of German foreign policy and its global responsibilities carried out by the Federal Foreign Ministry in 2014. The final part concludes with a preliminary sketch of a broader research agenda for analyzing German foreign policy around the concept of responsibility. Such an agenda would facilitate an assessment of the relationship between the normative dimensions or underpinnings of German foreign policy and the specific foreign policy decisions or outputs. Moreover, it would provide a framework for exploring the short- and long-term policy implications that emerge from Germany's foreign policy as framed or driven by the notion of responsibility.

The Genealogy of *Verantwortungspolitik*

During the Cold War decades of the so-called "Bonn Republic," former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP) was the central political figure associated with the concept of *Verantwortungspolitik* (Lantis 2002, 2). From Genscher's point of view, Germany's future could not be shaped without carefully considering the past (Moneta 2010). Hence, responsibility encapsulated a mood of caution. This meant curbing the inclination to put German interests before others, let alone articulate them, and demonstrating stability and predictability in its foreign policy behavior. This was perhaps more tangibly expressed in its unambiguous commitment to the postwar international order, multilateralism, and humanitarianism.

After the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany in 1990, foreign policy elites began utilizing the expression in a manner that emphasized more engagement with the world (militarily and economically) as well as the desire and need to have more influence on the global stage, that is, a permanent seat in the UN Security Council (Bock 2002; Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008). Most recently, in three speeches at the Munich Security Conference in 2014, Federal President Joachim Gauck, the Federal Minister of Defense Ursula von der

[1] In doing so, I am borrowing from and modifying an analogous approach presented by Foot (2001) and Chan (2001).

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Leyen (CDU), and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) stressed the need to close the gap between Germany's power (capabilities) and its willingness to shoulder more international responsibilities, particularly when peace and human rights are threatened (Gauck 2014; Steinmeier 2014; von der Leyen 2014).

Genscher's version of *Verantwortungspolitik* expressed what one might term a "negative" notion of responsibility, that is, Germany should refrain *from* behaviors that might be perceived, both at home and/or abroad, as threatening or potentially disruptive for the international order and/or colliding with its core values. In this version, Germany's foreign policy is best expressed and characterized by an enduring "culture of restraint" that obliges it to tread lightly in international affairs (Maull 1992; Berger 1998; Duffield 1998; Leithner 2009).

In the post-Cold War era, foreign policy elites have deliberately recast the notion to convey a more "positive" notion of responsibility, one premised on a forward-postured foreign policy (Leithner 2009, 46).[2] Both interpretations are affected by domestic and international contexts and draw different lessons from history. Both are also confronted with the demanding obligations that flow from Germany's active participation in the international system without losing sight of or being paralyzed by the past. But the Genscherite version is waning. For many of Germany's post-Cold War leaders, the past bequeaths the lesson that Germany's foreign policy should be more proactive. As such, responsibility is reimagined and redefined as an essentially positive consequence of the restoration of full sovereignty at the end of the Cold War and German unification. Germany's changed status means that its "foreign policy is much less determined by its geopolitical position" (Oppermann 2012, 508) and therefore permits it to actively shape affairs in-line with its values *and* interests. This revisited notion of responsibility scuttles the rather naïve assumption that a country as powerful and influential as Germany would *not* have interests and begins carving out space for it to articulate them in a way that makes them at least appear compatible with its revered postwar values.

In sum, *Verantwortungspolitik* has traversed a long historical path since the end of World War II. Along the way, its meaning has been steadily revised in ways that move Germany away from the cautious shores of restraint into the murkier waters of action. The change in meaning has not been abrupt but rather gradual "and veiled under the cloak of rhetorical continuity" (Bock 2002, 39). However, this continuity conceals significant fault lines in the German body politic as expressed in public opinion about what German is responsible for on the global stage and how it goes about shouldering those responsibilities. Surprisingly, however, there has been little scholarship detailing this journey. In fact, there are few systematic analyses of how its meaning has evolved and how it is understood by both domestic and international audiences. The extant analyses often rely on discourse analysis, though even here the scholarship is slim. Indeed, as Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer (2008, 16) note, in spite of an abundance of scholarship about German foreign policy *writ large*, the study of foreign policy discourse—the words that policymakers use to communicate foreign policy objectives and action—is largely neglected. Speaking more broadly, most analyses of *Verantwortungspolitik* elide normative questions and concerns intrinsic to foreign policy decision making.

German Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future

To better understand the significance of *Verantwortungspolitik* in German foreign policy, it behooves us to situate this discussion in the broader scholarly and policy debates about Germany's international role in the post-Cold War era. A significant part of these debates, often subsumed under the catchphrase "continuity or

[2]Leithner (2009) describes this as the shift from "passive" responsibility to "active" responsibility.

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change,"[3] revolves around the extent to which German foreign policy behavior in the post-Cold War era signifies a new German identity in international relations. Another way of describing the debate is between those who advocate a more assertive German foreign policy, premised on the notion that Germany is a "normal" great power in Europe, and the critics of a more assertive approach. Thus, for realists, the end of the Cold War facilitated Germany's return to a "normal" mode of state behavior assumed to be characteristic of all states, namely, the pursuit of power, interests, and military dominance (Mearsheimer 1990; Schöllgen 1993; Sperling 1994; Hacke 1997). But the relentless pursuit of power does not mean that it is done recklessly. As Schöllgen (1993, 48) notes, Germans should accept international responsibilities "commensurate with the status of their country as a sovereign, equal nation-state and with its strength as a European power, without repressing, forgetting or least of all repeating the clumsiness, mistakes and crimes of the first half of this century". Some argue that from this perspective, "responsibility" functions as a code-word for awareness of both German power and interests (Kreile 1996). Use of the term is a "cynical ploy in which the old wolf has put on new sheepskin" (Katzenstein 1997, 2).

In contrast, political scientists from the "liberal institutionalist" school of thought detect continuity and see Germany's foreign policy behavior as rooted in a set of consistent foreign policy principles dating back to the immediate postwar period (Katzenstein 1997; Duffield 1998; Banchoff 1999; Crawford 2007). These principles include antimilitarism, multilateralism, promoting democracy and the rule of law, reliable cooperation with traditional allies, and peaceful means of conflict resolution. Responsibility is thus more or less synonymous with the persistent adherence to these fundamental postwar foreign policy principles.

Finally, constructivists start from the premise that reality is socially constructed. Historical memory, culture, norms, identities, and beliefs constitute the pathways to understanding state behavior. In the German context, Germany's "self-perception" of its foreign policy identity helps frame our understanding of its foreign policy behavior (Duffield 1994; Berger 1998; Banchoff 1999; Longhurst 2004). Maintaining cautious foreign policy behavior, as dictated by the legacies of history, best illustrates a "politics of responsibility."

Scholars who study the language or discourse of foreign policy frequently note the limitations of the aforementioned schools of thought in the existing international relations literature (and their respective progenies) in explaining critical shifts and nuances in state's foreign policies (Adler 1997; Hopf 1998; Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1999; Risse 2004). Of the three, constructivism comes the closest to acknowledging the importance of language on the development of ideas and beliefs and understanding social behavior. Yet, even if constructivism provides more hospitable intellectual space for the examination of language and discourse, there are doubts about whether it is sensitive enough to the subtle changes in language that impact foreign policy identity (Milliken 1999; Bock 2002; Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008). Moreover, not all constructivists approach the study of language with the same set of assumptions or share the same goals. Some are inspired by poststructuralism and the critical philosophies of Foucault and Derrida (Walker 1986; Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Ashley and Walker 1990). Others consider their work more conventional, offering a different, albeit far from radical, lens for understanding a state's foreign policy behavior compared to the dominant international relations theories (Hopf 1998). Since foreign policy discourse is a relatively new focus of inquiry in international relations, emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the causal relationship between language and foreign policy is not entirely clear, thereby limiting its explanatory impact (Larsen 1997; Baumann 2002).

[3] Harnisch (2013).

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In sum, realists, liberal institutionalists, and constructivists filter the notion of responsibility through a prism of assumptions about Germany's international role and its foreign policy goals. They all acknowledge responsibility as embedded in the genetic composition of German foreign policy behavior. All recognize the historical lineage of responsibility, but differ in how they interpret it. Observers of "change" see Germany's past as no longer playing a restraining role so that responsibility is often equated with some form of action, military or otherwise. In contrast, scholars in the "continuity" camp (liberal institutionalists and constructivists) embrace an essentially Genscherite understanding of responsibility. The legacies of World War II and the Holocaust continue to impose limits on Germany's foreign policy behavior. As a consequence, Germany remains unenthusiastic about acting unilaterally (*Alleingänge*), eschews the use of military power, and carefully assesses how its own actions might impact others, particularly its closest allies.

The lack of consensus about how responsibility is operationalized in Germany's foreign policy provides scholars a unique opportunity to recast the debate and begin mapping out a so-called "responsibility-based" analysis of German foreign policy. This approach articulates a set of questions to probe the policy implications that emerge from a responsibility-motivated foreign policy. It prompts us to examine the notion of responsibility in German foreign policy from different levels of analysis and with a heightened sensitivity to normative concerns and questions.

The Outside-In: Power, Responsibility, and "Being Part of Something Bigger"

If there has indeed been a shift in how responsibility is understood and publicly conveyed by German foreign policymakers, and that the term now conveys a more active and prominent role for Germany on the global stage commensurate with its power, then what responsibilities come with that? How can we begin weighing the empirical or measurable dimensions of power in conjunction with normative expectations about how states should behave?

Starting with the obvious, Germany is an economic powerhouse. In 2014, it was the fourth largest economy in the world and the largest in Europe. It is a leader in exports of machinery, vehicles, chemicals, and household equipment and has a highly skilled labor force underpinning its economic outputs (World Bank 2014; Statisches Bundesamt 2015). This power, coupled with its large population, makes Germany the most important country in Europe and the fulcrum of the entire Eurozone. Its leadership in the current Eurozone crisis, however halting or anemic, is as much about protecting its own economic interests as it is about shouldering historical responsibility for the broader project of European integration and cooperation.

In terms of military power, it does not possess nuclear weapons nor does it occupy a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, two viscous and largely anachronistic relics of the Cold War that continue to confer great power status. But when viewed from the outside-in and relying on other measurables, material or hard (military, political, and economic) indicators of power of the post-Cold War era, there can be little doubt that Germany occupies a dominant place in the international hierarchy. Although no match for France or the United Kingdom, Germany is nevertheless a modest military power, ranking ninth globally in terms of its defense budget (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015). It also retains an impressive roster of arms buyers, earning third place among global arms merchants (behind the United States and Russia).Moreover, it is a leader in the market for small arms (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies 2015). Beyond its military clout, it is the largest country in the European Union in terms of population and economy (Eurostat Eu 2015). It is the third largest contributor to the UN budget (ahead of four of the permanent members

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Table 1. German personnel in international operations, 2014

Mission type	Military	Police	Civilian	Total
UN peacekeeping operations	244	20	42	286
UN political/peacebuilding	2	4	13	19
EU missions	484	112	154	750
OSCE missions	0	0	41	41
NATO missions	2,489	0	0	2,489

Source: Center for International Peace Operations (2014).

of the Security Council, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China; Global Policy Forum 2015). And it is the fourth largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget (United Nations 2015b). It contributes quite generously to various UN, EU, NATO, and OSCE peace operations and missions (See Table 1). (Center for International Peace Operations 2014).

Finally, while not the most generous of the Donor Assistance Countries in the OECD, Germany nevertheless ranked third behind the United States and United Kingdom in net dollars dedicated to bilateral assistance in 2013 (Bundesministerium Für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit 2014).

Beyond these measures of hard power, Germany is a leader in terms of "soft" power. Defined by Joseph Nye (2008, 96) as the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce or use force as a means of persuasion, soft power rests on three pillars: "a country's culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)." This kind of power "uses a different kind of currency to engender cooperation . . . an attraction to shared values and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values" (Nye 2004, 11). A 2012 study of soft power by the United Kingdom's Institute for Government ranked Germany third, just behind the United Kingdom and the United States (McClory 2012, 11).

How does soft power manifest itself in policy outcomes? In terms of its culture, one indicator is Germany's ability to attract foreign students or facilitate academic exchanges. In 2014, an estimated 300,000 of the 2.6 million students enrolled in German universities come from abroad, making Germany the third most popular international destination for higher education (Conrad 2014). There are concerted efforts to increase the number to over 350,000 by the end of the decade (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2013, 7). Widely recognized and respected cultural and educational organizations, such as the German Academic Exchange Service *Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst*) and the Goethe Institute, add further value to this dimension of soft power. Another area is sport, which can amplify a state's "brand" or "image" and serve as an important source of national pride displayed on the international stage (Grix and Houlihan 2014, 578). Germany's hosting of the men's soccer World Cup in 2006 served as a watershed moment for Germans to "express their love for their country without being scary or grimly nationalistic" (Majer-O'sickey 2006, 87). More importantly, perhaps, the World Cup attracted over two million foreign visitors (an upward spike that continued into 2007). The successful federally directed campaign to improve Germany's image abroad via soccer, one of its most important national past times, revolved around an explicit strategy and campaign to make it an "attractive" economic location and an attractive place to visit, live, and work (Grix and Houlihan 2014, 581).

Another indicator of Germany's soft power is the Nation Brands Index (NBI), a survey of more than 20,000 people in over twenty countries that assesses the image of various countries, asking questions about exports, governance, culture,

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people, tourism, and immigration/investment. Germany ranked first in 2014, dislodging the United States from its perch. According to the 2014 report,

> Germany appears to have benefited not only from the sports prowess it displayed on the world stage at the FIFA World Cup championship, but also by solidifying its perceived leadership in Europe through a robust economy and steady political stewardship. Germany's score gains in the areas of "honest and competent government," "investment climate," and "social equality" are among the largest it achieved across all the aspects covered by the NBI 2014 survey (GFK 2014).

Perhaps the most significant indicator of Germany's soft power, and one that is most explicitly linked to the normative dimensions of its foreign policy and the language of responsibility, is its emphasis on the promotion of peace (*Friedenspolitik*), including peace mediation, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. The preamble of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany explicitly states "German foreign policy is a policy for peace." In the post-Cold War environment, the pressure to explicitly operationalize that commitment intensified. The Civilian Peace Service (CPS) was established in 1999 within the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Under the motto of "We don't turn our backs on conflict," the CPS sends experts throughout the world to prevent violence, strengthen civil society structures, restore confidence in the law and government institutions, promote human rights, and peacefully resolve conflicts (Ziviler Friedensdienst 2015). Since 1999, the CPS has sent over 1,000 experts to fifty countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Currently, there are approximately 250 CPS experts working on peace-related activities in thirty-six countries (Ziviler Friedensdienst 2015).

Also beginning in 1999, the budget of the Foreign Office included a new line item for peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities (Dückers and Mehler 2007, 256). In April 2000, the federal government presented a nine-point framework entitled "Comprehensive Concept of the Federal Government on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building" (Dückers and Mehler 2007). And in July 2000, the center-left Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Alliance '90/Greens adopted a resolution in the Bundestag calling for the continued development of crisis prevention capabilities. In May 2004, the center-left government (SPD and Alliance '90/Greens) issued an action plan, "Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building," which serves as the most comprehensive statement of German commitment to the promotion of peace around the world (Dückers and Mehler 2007). Finally, Germany ranks in the top ten donors (currently seventh) to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (United Nations 2015a).

Nye's insights into soft power are useful for capturing an important dimension of Germany's power. But there is another way of conceptualizing it as well. For Hedley Bull (1977, 196), "great power" identity rested on both material and moral foundations of power embedded in a sense of duty. Above and beyond military prowess or physical capabilities, great powers participated in maintaining the international order and "formed the core of international society ... because they shared an important set of interests ... could generate a set of rules, [and] they were capable of passing these rules on to others within the system" (Foot 2001, 23). They are not system spoilers, or challengers, but rather serve as "system maintainers" (Foot 2001, 23). Germany's integration and consistent participation in the postwar order served as both "an amplifier of influence and source of legitimacy" (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2013, 12). But the fact that it is not entirely constrained by the system and has "the capacity to sabotage the functioning of [it] by non-cooperation" certainly renders it a strong contender for some kind of great power pedigree today (Schöllgen 1994, 41).

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When viewed from the outside-in, there is ample evidence that in the post-World War II era, Germany plays the role of system maintainer and, in Europe, system builder. In fact, one could argue that on this score, Germany's foreign policy behavior has been remarkably consistent and systematically geared toward these two objectives. Beginning in the immediate postwar environment under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's leadership, Germany worked diligently to purposefully integrate into the emerging postwar international system and to embrace the West's system of political ideas via its policy of *Westbindung* or *Westpolitik* (Erb 2003, 24). It handsomely benefitted from *Westbindung*—providing a path to both overcome the past and chart its future by growing its economy, rearming, and demonstrating its commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This also afforded it substantial opportunities to demonstrate predictability in its foreign policy and reliability in its meeting multilateral responsibilities and commitments (Duffield 1994, 66). Reliability earned Germany credibility, and that credibility served and continues to serve as an important source of soft power.

But the international system is not static, and new challenges require that system maintainers adapt. By the 1980s, a responsible state was seen as one that embraced and upheld international regimes on an array of newer issues (e.g., the environment, arms control, human rights, and peacekeeping) that formed the core of international institutions' agendas (Foot 2001, 28). In the post-Cold War environment, the international system "thickened," with new rules, norms, and principles intensifying the links between states and societies (Barnett 2008, 201). Accordingly, the responsible state's mandate broadened to include support for further norm changes, including a human-centered approach to development, security and human rights, and democracy, as well asa more conditional understanding of sovereignty that would permit outside intervention if leaders failed to protect their own citizens (Foot 2001, 29). In short, today responsible states use their power to preserve and protect a liberal world order and acknowledge that the concept of sovereignty is linked to the notion of responsibility. They "pursue not only power but also a sense of purpose, a purpose that has an ethical and normative content" (Barnett 2008, 190). They acknowledge that their duties and obligations to others do not stop at the border's edge; rather, they entail a range of policies and behaviors toward others, living outside the state's national borders, including development assistance, support for human rights, sheltering refugees, and humanitarianism (Barnett 2008, 190).

Whether Germany is a great power in Bull's sense of the term, a so-called middle power, or perhaps even a "great power in denial" is open to question (Bolsinger 2004). What is not is that Germany's hard elements of power, combined with its soft power and consistent support for the postwar international order (its moral power in Bull's terms), translates into expectations—expectations from the outside-in that accurately reflect its place in the international hierarchy. Thus, with all the aforementioned indicators of hard and soft power come, invited or not, a bevy of responsibilities and the assumption that states act responsibly.

From the outside-in, the impression emerges that Germany largely embraces the view that with power comes responsibility, even if it struggles to regularly act in ways that reflect this conviction. Its partners, allies, and even states with whom it has not always had peaceful relations appear more than willing to remind Germany of the important role it plays in the post-Cold War international system and to call it to task when it falls short (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation 2012). A priority, it seems, is to close what has been called the expectation gap (Schultheis 2013). The findings of a 2012 study of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation), entitled "Germany in the Eyes of the World," revealed that many countries want Germany to lead from the front, not from

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behind, and assume more global responsibility in a variety of areas, including trade, energy, climate change, education, research, and development. It often disappoints because it is

> perceived throughout the world to be an honest broker, with no hidden agenda. Expectations that Germany will in the future take on the role of honest broker more frequently are astonishingly high—not just for "politically safe" areas like energy and climate, but also on highly controversial issues like Iran and Syria (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation 2012, 8).

In short, the expectations for Germany are high, but many perceive a national identity crisis that inadvertently produces negative consequences for the functioning of the international system. The findings note, "Germans' own fear of finding themselves out of their depth, coupled with the lack of clarity about their identity, is not conducive to the confident balancing of interests with other partners" (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation 2012, 8). And although Germans might prevaricate about their global role and fret about how the past impacts perceptions of Germany today, other countries are far less troubled. In fact, very few non-German respondents voiced reservations about the country's past and the crimes of the Nazi period as compelling reasons for Germany to disengage from global challenges or hold back (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation 2012, 8). As one respondent from India noted, "Germany reminds me of a 50-year-old son—handsome, well-educated, and with a good income—but still living with his parents because some traumatic experience in childhood has prevented him from moving out and making a life of his own" (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation 2012, 9).

Other examples reinforce the picture of a hesitant, demure Germany, with other countries imploring it to "step up." For example, in 2011, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski (2011), undaunted by the two countries' difficult shared past delivered a bold speech in Berlin asserting that German indecisiveness and *inaction* were far more threatening to European interests than action. Resonant with Bull's logic of great power obligations, he contended that Germany's size and history gave it a "special responsibility to preserve peace and democracy on the continent." More urgently, he stated,

> I demand of Germany that, for your sake and for ours, you help [the euro zone] survive and prosper. You know full well that nobody else can do it. I will probably be the first Polish foreign minister in history to say so, but here it is: I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity. You have become Europe's indispensable nation. You may not fail to lead (Sikorski 2011).

Similarly, in an interview in *Der Spiegel*, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated, "Germany is a normal country today, with the kinds of rights and duties other countries have" (Hoffmann and Schult 2014). He went on to say that he welcomed debates in Germany about this topic,

> not only as NATO secretary general, but also as the former prime minister of Denmark, the small neighbor country once occupied by Germany. Germany needs this debate. I can understand Germany being very cautious when it comes to international military deployments because of its past. But the time has come in Germany for this debate. Europe is ready for it, too (Hoffmann and Schult 2014).

The French register similar views. In 2012, French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine lamented that his counterpart then, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, expressed the "profound German attitude" that "Germany primarily sees itself as a pacifist power. I really don't see what prevents Germany from

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playing a larger role in international politics and military operations" (Neukirch and Repinski 2013). And its closest ally, the United States, strongly desires that Germany be more of a global player in areas of international trade, international security, and, of course, the Euro crisis. In his August 2013 speech at the Brandenburg Gate, President Barack Obama urged Germany to assume more international leadership, noting,

> our shared past shows that none of these challenges can be met unless we see ourselves as part of something bigger than our own experience. Our alliance is the foundation of global security. Our trade and our commerce is the engine of our global economy. Our values call upon us to care about the lives of people we will never meet. When Europe and America lead with our hopes instead of our fears, we do things that no other nations can do, no other nations will do (Obama 2013).

The Inside-Out: New Power, New Responsibility[4]

From the inside-out, the nexus between responsibility and power is not as obvious, or it is understood quite differently by the German public. Indeed, in spite of a radically changed global landscape, since the end of the Cold War, the German public is highly skeptical of a more proactive German foreign policy that is framed by the language of responsibility. More pointedly, as a Körber Stiftung (2014) Foundation survey reveals, there is a large disconnect between German public opinion and German political elites about what responsibility entails and how it might be best expressed. As noted above, the end of the Cold War and events unfolding beyond German borders opened the door to a range of debates that began whittling away at Genscher's interpretation of *Verantwortungspolitik*. German political elites began arguing that, in-line with Germany's growing political power and economic influence, it was time to shoulder more not fewer international responsibilities (Bock 2002). These debates reached a crescendo of sorts in January 2014 at the 50th Annual Munich Security Conference. Federal President Joachim Gauck (2014), Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen (2014), and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2014) all made appeals at the conference for a more active German foreign policy. All three emphasized a key theme from the outside-in perspective, namely, that a responsible state is one that uses its power to preserve and protect an open, liberal world order.

But it was Gauck, the first German head of state to open the conference, who delivered an important speech directed primarily at his fellow citizens entitled "Germany's Role in the World: Reflections on Responsibility, Norms and Alliances." Gauck picked up where former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer left off a decade earlier, relaunching a serious debate about Germany's strategic role in the world (Dempsey 2014). Such a debate, he urged, should not be limited to circles of experts or elites, but "should be a matter for reflection in the heart of society" (Gauck 2014, 3). President Gauck (2014, 3) pulled no punches, offering a forthright rationale for Germany to "step up" and assume more responsibility in international affairs. He criticized those who hid behind the past "as a shield for laziness or a desire to disengage from the world." And he took a swipe at those in Germany who said that "international responsibility" is a

> euphemism, veiling what's really at stake. Germany would have to pay more, some people think; Germany would have to send in more soldiers, others say. And they are all convinced that "more responsibility" primarily means more trouble ... Politicians always have to take responsibility for their actions. But they

[4]Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (2013).

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> also have to live with the consequences of their omissions. He who fails to act bears responsibility too (2014, 5).

Defense Minister von der Leyen (2014) was candid as well and explicitly underscored the relationship between power and responsibility, noting that "[i]ndifference is not an option for Germany. As a major economy and a country of significant size we have a strong interest in international peace and stability. Given these facts the Federal Government is prepared to enhance our international responsibility." Foreign Minister Steinmeier's speech stressed the same points, arguing that

> Germany must be ready for earlier, more decisive and more substantive engagement in the foreign and security policy sphere. Assuming responsibility in this sphere must always mean something concrete. It must amount to more than rhetorical outrage or the mere issue of grades for the efforts and activities of others ... (Steinmeier 2014).

Steinmeier also preemptively addressed any doubts from Germany's allies and partners about German views on the use of military power stating "[t]he use of military force is an instrument of last resort. It should rightly be used with restraint. *Yet a culture of restraint for Germany must not become a culture of standing aloof.* Germany is too big merely to comment on world affairs from the sidelines" (Steinmeier 2014; emphasis added).

To be sure, these speeches were certainly not the first attempts to nudge the German public to move beyond its collective comfort zone and to challenge prevailing opinion that when Germany engages it has only military instruments at its disposal or that engagement inevitably leads to disastrous outcomes. Indeed, in 2003, in the run-up to the US invasion of Iraq, the evercautious Angela Merkel criticized Schroeder's government for its position on the matter, writing in a *Washington Post* opinion piece,

> The history of Germany and Europe in the 20th century in particular certainly teaches us this: that while military force cannot be the normal continuation of politics by other means, it must never be ruled out, or even merely questioned—as has been done by the German federal government—as the ultimate means of dealing with dictators. Anyone who rejects military action as a last resort weakens the pressure that needs to be maintained on dictators and consequently makes a war not less but more likely... Responsible political leadership must on no account trade the genuine peace of the future for the deceptive peace of the present (Merkel 2003).

What made these speeches especially important and hardhitting were three factors. First, these speeches came at the beginning of the new grand coalition's (CDU-SPD) tenure and signaled the abandonment the oft-criticized "hesitant" or "halting," "amateurish"[5] foreign policy course of the previous center-right government (CDU-FDP) and former Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle. Germany's position on two key issues during this time illustrated "the slow-motion implosion" of its foreign policy and a lack of readiness to shoulder the international responsibilities expected of it (Frankenburger and Maull 2011). The government's clumsy and indecisive handling of the Eurozone crisis dating back to 2009 and Germany's disastrous abstention from the UN Security Council's vote on the Libya intervention in March 2011 raised serious questions about its willingness to lead in a way that was expected of it and its reliability (Miskkimmon 2012). The

[5]Pers. comm., May 2011.

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chilly isolation that Germany experienced after the Libya vote forced, at a minimum, a recalibration of its messaging.

Second, the prominent venue of the annual security conference enabled Gauck, Steinmeier, and von der Leyen to speak in a common language to two audiences at once: a doubtful German public and an uncertain, though largely hopeful, international community. Third, the cohesive, iterative, and reinforcing tone of the three speeches served as a full-court press. They demonstrated that in contrast to the previous government, the grand coalition had a common sense of purpose and forward-looking message in the realm of foreign policy making.

But was the government prepared to enhance its international responsibility? That depends largely on how one defines “prepared,” the situation at hand, and the instruments of statecraft that might be involved. Could it do so without the willingness of citizens to follow? Not in a vibrant democracy like Germany. Indeed, German public opinion was highly apprehensive of this variety of German foreign policy (Körber Stiftung 2014).

Two important events occurred after the Munich speeches; both aimed at closing the gap between elite and public opinion and breathing some fresh air into what had become a stale and largely uninspired national quarrel about Germany’s role in the world. First, in February 2014, with a new foreign minister at the helm, the Federal Foreign Office began an unprecedented, highly visible examination of the future of German foreign policy called *Review 2014*. The review centered on two questions: What was wrong with German foreign policy? How it could change? (Auswärtiges Amt 2014a). Utilizing all the tools of social media, the review included ideas from sixty town hall meetings with German voters and online debates with foreign experts. The goal, as the foreign minister explained, was to reflect on the differences in two sets of expectations about Germany’s role in the world. On the one hand, the international community expressed hopes and high expectations for Germany to play more of a leading role in global affairs. On the other hand, however, German voters continued to expect that, regardless of challenge, “our habitual, familiar procedures in international politics” will work (Auswärtiges Amt 2014b). The review process, Steinmeier asserted, would facilitate “a mature, enlightened discussion on the institutional framework within which our foreign policy activities should take place, on the degree of responsibility we can shoulder in the next ten to twenty years, and also on where the limits of our capabilities lie” (Auswärtiges Amt 2014b).

Second, in the spring of 2014, the Körber Foundation commissioned a survey of 1,000 Germans over the age of eighteen probing whether the country was prepared to assume greater responsibility, the places/topics on the international agenda where Germany can/should be more proactive, and the goals of German foreign policy (Körber Stiftung 2014). The findings were quite sobering for those who embraced a more forward-postured German foreign policy. They suggested that irrespective of Germany’s international power and influence, a rapidly changing global environment, and its vital role in the preservation of the international order, the public was not enthusiastic about Germany stepping up (Körber Stiftung 2014, 1). For German voters, power did not necessarily translate into new or repackaged forms of responsibility.

Specifically, the survey found that while Germans maintained a high interest in foreign affairs (approximately 68 percent saying that foreign policy was interesting or highly interesting), there was only tepid support for international engagement (37 percent), particularly in crisis situations (Körber Stiftung 2014, 2–3). When one breaks down the 37 percent who supported more engagement, the narrative about how power translates into more responsibility resonates. An overwhelming majority (93 percent) of those who supported more engagement agreed with the statement “Germany owes its economic prosperity to international trade and should thus make a contribution to world peace and global security”

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(Körber Stiftung 2014, 3). An impressive 89 percent agreed with the statement "Germany's greater political and economic significance should be reflected in the assumption of more international responsibility" (Körber Stiftung 2014, 3). But a majority (60 percent) of respondents defaulted to the deeply engrained postwar pattern of restraint (Körber Stiftung 2014, 3). The reasons for this restraint vary: 73 percent of those who were more skeptical of involvement believe that Germany had enough problems of its own and should try to resolve them before dealing with other issues (Körber Stiftung 2014, 3). Meanwhile, 50 percent invoked German history (especially in the sixty and older demographic), whereas 37 percent believed that Germany did not have enough influence to have an impact (Körber Stiftung 2014, 3).

What is perhaps most stunning in this data is not necessarily the lack of support for engagement, but that the lack of support was nearly the opposite of what it was in 1994 (Körber Stiftung 2014, 3). At first glance, one would not guess that 1994 would be an auspicious year for Germans to support more international engagement. Notwithstanding the war in Bosnia, acrimonious debates in Germany about how, where, and when it could militarily participate in international missions, and a landmark ruling of the Constitutional Court in July permitting Bundeswehr participation in out-of-area missions, 62 percent supported the idea of more engagement, whereas 37 percent favored restraint (Körber Stiftung 2014, 4). Thus, over a period of two decades, nearly the entire time span wherein many political elites deliberately endeavored to develop a narrative around the theme of "power = responsibility," public opinion moved in the opposite direction from being more willing to more averse. The government's best hope for turning this tide might be the younger cohort: 51 percent of younger individuals (18–29) were more likely to support more engagement, compared to 26 percent of those sixty years of age and older (Körber Stiftung 2014, 8).

But even here, there is a note of caution. The data suggested that one reason why support for taking on more international responsibility was so low was that responsibility was equated with military engagement. The notion of responsibility frequently conjures up images of violence, war, and conflict. Anxieties about ongoing crises in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and Iraq hemorrhage into many aspects of German foreign policy and impact how the public interprets the notion of responsibility (Lindsey 2013). This raises the question of whether it is not so much the *content* of what President Gauck and others say about responsibility, but rather the international *context* of crises that causes the public to reflexively turn inward (Polke-Majewski 2014).

This begs the question: Why is the notion of responsibility generally perceived as a Trojan horse for military intervention? At least three critical factors seem to be at work. First, the media has, willingly or unwillingly, played a role in distorting the words of President Gauck and others, thereby obfuscating the notion of responsibility (Tuschhoff 2015). With few exceptions, the media tended to frame the speech as a simplistic tale of antagonism between elites and masses. Although German elites urged German citizens to accept more international responsibility, the media tended to cultivate two favorite story lines: Responsibility is automatically equated with unwise military adventures to "manufacture peace" (Hoffmann and Neukirch 2013) and/or a responsible Germany is one that should continue its historical, restrained course of action while playing a big role in fostering economic development or measures to preserve peace but nothing more (De Wijs 2015). Both stories miss the point. The current debate about responsibility is not only about the instruments or means of foreign policy but also whether, to what extent, and with what goals in mind Germany should assume responsibility.

Recent scholarship by Tuschoff analyzing media responses to Guack's Munich speech finds that the reporting afterwards took away one profoundly incorrect message, namely, that the president was calling for a militarized German foreign

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and security policy (Tuschhoff 2015, 108–10). The leitmotif of the speech, the call for Germany to be more of global player (*Gestaltungsmacht,* or in American foreign policy terms, be more "internationalist") and assume more responsibility was largely ignored. To be sure, the Munich conference is devoted to more traditional security and military matters, and this may have contributed to the reporting bias, but this alone does not suffice (Tuschhoff 2015, 101). Apart from only a very few exceptions, subsequent media coverage failed to substantially articulate or interrogate positions calling for greater military engagement, one variety of internationalism, or isolationism (Tuschhoff 2015, 104). The entire "debate" was essentially a nondebate with virtually no opposing views advanced.

Second, a key political institution, the Bundestag, may also have contributed unintentionally to the impression that responsibility is synonymous with military action. As Gauck (2014) noted in his Munich speech, since 1994 the Bundestag has convened less than ten major debates about foreign and security policy; in contrast, it has had over 240 debates on the matter of deploying the German army. While the latter can be explained in part by its stronger, more assertive voice in foreign policy matters since unification, the steady rise in deployment requests over the past twenty years, and its constitutional role in approving such deployments, the dearth or silence of debate on larger strategic questions and goals related to pressing foreign policy issues speaks volumes. By avoiding these debates and/or postponing them, the Bundestag ceded space in the marketplace of ideas to one-sided and largely uncomplicated views of foreign policy making that are amplified, and at times, manufactured via newer social media outlets.

A third factor contributing to a muddled public discussion about Germany's global responsibilities might be, oddly enough, best captured by the metaphor of porcupines mating. In a 2013 interview in *Der Spiegel,* former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder discussed the challenges of getting German citizens to consider military action, the demands and obligations of German leadership, and the situations where war indeed might be warranted. He noted that as Germany's economic power and political influence grew, calls for Germany to play a bigger role, particularly in Europe, were unavoidable. But Germany would need to lead "in the way that porcupines mate . . . very carefully . . . other countries expect leadership from Germany, not arrogance" (Hoffmann and Neukirch 2013). It may be that some of the reticence that Germans express about assuming greater responsibility is because they fear blowback, particularly when things go wrong. Resorting to the tried-and-true pattern of the reliable partner who underwrites military action and development with checkbook diplomacy is appealing, careful, and believed to inoculate Germany against accusations of arrogance. Indeed, as the Körber Stiftung (2014, 5) survey shows, Germans strongly supported these forms of responsibility. Defending the security of one's allies and protecting weaker states against external aggressors ranked very low on the list of priorities (twenty-six percent support, respectively). But, as one commentator noted, "this is the role in which Germany likes to see itself, and it is a way for Germany to assume responsibility without going beyond its national comfort zone." For European and international partners, however, a "checkbook Germany" is not enough (De Wijs 2015). The more controversial policy scenarios, including those that do not automatically involve a consideration of military instruments, will nevertheless likely continue to appear on the foreign policy agenda. It is precisely these scenarios that the public most strongly reacts to, and thereby, acts as a brake on policies that come with high expectations of responsibility.

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A Preliminary Sketch of a Responsibility-Based Approach to German Foreign Policy

This article will conclude with a preliminary sketch of a broader research agenda for analyzing German foreign policy. Although discourse analysis—the most common method of analyzing the "politics of responsibility" in Germany foreign policy—is informative, I propose we zoom out and consider the potential value of what Hastedt (2003) refers to in the American foreign policy context as a "responsibility-based analysis" of foreign policy. Utilizing this framework and posing the kinds of questions it generates, challenges scholars and policymakers to think about how power, purpose (national interest), and responsibility are linked to notions of obligation, accountability, and a definition of community (Hastedt 2003). A responsibility-based approach to studying German foreign policy begins by asking a set of questions to investigate the purposes and principles of its actions.[6]

Is There a Contradiction between National Responsibility and Global Responsibility?

With the exception of Germany's postwar reconciliation efforts, much of its postwar foreign policy behavior framed national interests as distinct from global concerns. In fact, it was virtually taboo to speak publicly about German interests, and until recently, "safe" discussions of national interests were limited to academic and think-tank circles. All that began to change in 1999 when former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder did the virtually impossible, asserting in a monthly publication dedicated to union issues that "Germany . . . has every interest in considering itself as a *great power* in Europe—something our neighbors have done for a long time—and to orient its foreign policy accordingly within the framework of Euro-Atlantic institutions"' (Cohen 1999; emphasis added). This policy, he declared, must be one of "'fully acknowledged self-interest" (Cohen 1999). In fact, until Schröder's tenure, Germany's postwar chancellors followed a path of restraint in both word and deed as obligated by Genscher's version of *Verantwortungspolitik*, very carefully avoiding the juxtaposition of the words "German," "power," and "interest."

It was only in 2008, when Chancellor Merkel's conservative bloc called for the establishment of a National Security Council to oversee the ministries and agencies responsible for implementing domestic *and* foreign policies and presented a national security strategy (a first of sorts) that attempted to square its national and global interests, that leaders began publicly discussing German "interests" more explicitly (CDU/CSU 2008; Dempsey 2008). But these moments did not entirely change or lift the deeply engrained, self-imposed gag-rule on the discussion of interests. In 2010 following a *Deutschland Radio* interview, President Horst Köhler resigned amid a fusillade of criticism and accusations that he endorsed a form of "gunboat policy" (Connolly 2010). Commenting on German participation in Afghanistan, Köhler's offending words were that

> A country of our size, with its focus on exports and thus reliance on foreign trade, must be aware that . . . military deployments are necessary in an emergency to protect our interests—for example when it comes to trade routes, for example when it comes to preventing regional instabilities that could negatively influence our trade, jobs and incomes (Dempsey 2010).

Although it was a blundering political gaffe coming from a politician of his stature and office, it was also a stunningly honest assessment of what other states factor in as they develop and implement their foreign policies.

A year later, in a Bundestag debate about the most significant reforms of the Bundeswehr since its establishment in 1955, and the presentation of new defense

[6] The questions draw explicitly on Hastedt (2003).

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policy guidelines entitled "Safeguarding National Interests—Assuming International Responsibility—Shaping Security Together," Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière spoke openly about Germany's interests and linked them explicitly to an understanding of responsibility noting,

> Germany is ready, as the expression of its will to national self-assertion and its national sovereignty, to deploy the full range of national means within the bounds of international law to protect its security. This also includes the deployment of military forces . . . each individual case requires a clear-cut answer to the question as to how far the direct or indirect interests of Germany or the exercise of international responsibility require and justify the respective military operation, but also as to the consequences of not participating (Deutscher Bundestag 2011, 12816).

This time, however, there was minimal blowback. Why is this so? Was it the naked linkage of military instruments with economic interests that led to Köhler's resignation? Was it the broader context of de Maizière's words that made them more palatable?

A responsibility-based approach to studying German foreign policy would compel a reexamination, among other things, of Köhler's and de Maizière's words and German policy outputs. It would not be limited to tracing where the national begins and ends, or the extent to which they are interconnected, even interdependent. Rather, it would reposition the analysis. By starting with the notion of responsibility, we move the "conceptual starting point" and consider not just the instrumental logic to discover how the means might be used to realize goals (ends) but to be "explicit about the reasons" for action or the goals (Hastedt 2003, 14).

This approach would also reflect on the different methods available to analyze accountability or the idea that "actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met" (Grant and Keohane 2005, 29). What are the standards for accountability that accompany the notions of responsibility in foreign policy? Who is held accountable when the state fails to exercise its responsibilities? How are they held accountable? What are the different approaches to accountability at the national and international levels?

What Is the Most Effective Foundation on Which to Build a Foreign Policy?

History is the cornerstone of Germany's postwar foreign policy, with its powerful mixture of guilt, "legacies of a culture of atonement," and transformation into a vibrant, liberal democracy (Economist 2015). But is this adequate for the challenges that it and the global community face today? Does this allow for a broad consideration of goals and their attendant logic? In a democracy, at least, foreign policy requires more than history to evaluate global challenges and map out responses to them.

As the foregoing analysis illustrates and the Körber Foundation's survey reveals, public consensus is lacking in Germany about what it is responsible for and to whom. A responsibility-based approach to studying German foreign policy would begin by analyzing the normative basis of consensus and probe the multiple sources that inform Germany's sense of responsibility in global affairs. Importantly, it would interrogate whether and to what extent German foreign policy is motivated by guilt, moral duty, fear, material and/or symbolic interests, or something else. It would ask, for example, what are the limits of policies driven by these factors? What obligations do Germans see as unconditional or non-negotiable? Conversely, what obligations do they view as conditional/negotiable? What are

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the limits to Germany's sense of responsibility on the global stage, when should it "cut-and-run" (Hastedt 2003, 15)? Can/should that "cut-and-run" point differ by policy area? In short, such an approach would create space for thinking about questions #1 (above) and #2 (here) simultaneously, by refracting responsibility through two lenses: the national/international and the national leaders/public.

A current example where these questions are in play, putting national interests and international responsibility in tension with one another, is the growing refugee problem in Europe and the complex blend of challenges it raises for Germans regarding asylum, citizenship, and migration. In the first six months of 2015, Germany received more than 154,000 applications for asylum, more than any other EU country, and up to 68,000 covering the same period in 2014 (Aisch et al. 2015). According to current projections by the Interior Ministry, it is anticipated that 800,000 migrants and refugees, four times the number in 2014, will arrive in Germany in 2015 (Aisch et al. 2015). This is not the first time Germany has examined its asylum and immigration laws amid threats from right-wing extremists in the post-Cold War era. But newer threads appear in the current debate with a focus on international terrorism, global human trafficking networks, and European cooperation. How will Germany balance its responsibilities on the global stage with its responsibilities in Europe and nationally vis-à-vis newly arriving refugees and voters? Or as recently framed in an article in *Spiegel Online International* in August 2015,

> Which Germany will prevail? The Germany of racist chants from the roadside? The Germany of rioters and drunken rock-throwers? "Dark Germany," as resident Joachim Gauck calls it? Or will it be the new, bright Germany, represented by the young policeman with his roots in Afghanistan? Will Western Europe ultimately prefer to allow the refugees to die in trucks rather than to open the door to the desperate? Or will Germany rejoice in helping and in allowing the refugees to take part in the unbelievable prosperity that the republic has enjoyed in recent decades (Speigel Online International 2015)?

The answers to these questions remain open, but based on the findings of *Review 2014*, it appears that Germany's current political leadership is well aware that public consensus about a foreign policy of responsibility is lacking. Are the elements of German foreign policy based largely on history and guilt sufficient for tackling issues that involve multiple levels and communities of concern, for example, international, regional, national, and local? A responsibility-based approach to German foreign policy would explore some of these vexing concerns with potentially important findings for scholars and policymakers.

Why Do Some Policy Coalitions Hold Together and Others Fail?

As Hastedt (2003, 15) notes, studies of foreign policy making employ various models to explain how consensus is generated among key foreign policy actors in the development of policy options. For example, the bureaucratic politics model focuses on institutional factors and competition among them that impact foreign policy making. The virtue of a responsibility-based approach is that it does not jettison any foreign policy models but probes the "fragile nature of the compromises that support a line of action" (Hastedt 2003, 15). This approach would examine, for example, how different narratives of responsibility, as discourse analysis helpfully reveals, impact decision-making, for example, by framing and talking about specific policy options and how different policy options and their respective advocates compete for material resources and/or support from civil society actors. A responsibility-based perspective could potentially provide a deeper and richer understanding of different aspects of German foreign policy as it relates to

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responsibility and how societal support is cultivated. In the area of Germany's peacebuilding policies, for example, we find that notwithstanding important efforts in the 1990s to enhance its "peace profile" and a steady drumbeat of rhetoric about the country's moral and constitutional responsibilities to promote peace in the world, disparate institutional interpretations among various executive level ministries negatively impacted Germany's overall global leadership and effectiveness in this area (Crossley-Frolick 2013). A responsibility-based approach directs us to investigate the absence of an overarching national framework for Germany's peacebuilding policies and indicates that the absence of "solid embedded consensus" (point #2 above) about the goals of peacebuilding and the underlying rationale have yet to congeal.

There are other policy areas that would benefit from this approach as well. For example, one of the most controversial aspects of Germany's post-Cold War foreign policy is military intervention. Different constituencies seem to support military intervention for ostensibly the same humanitarian purposes, including the public at large (Körber Stiftung 2014, 6). But underneath that veneer of consensus are potentially different understandings of responsibility, including collectively defined limits to that responsibility that could cause policymakers to stumble if they are not sensitive to them. For example, should military intervention be for humanitarian goals or for broader security concerns such as halting the spread of terrorism? What about the Eurozone crisis? How does Germany's sense of historical responsibility for the success of the European project look from different perspectives, that is, national, regional, and international? Are coalitions easier to build around areas deemed a "special responsibility" in German foreign policy (e.g., security in Europe, Israel, prevention of genocide, and refugees)? How do coalitions around foreign policy issues that are literally closer to home, such as the crisis in Ukraine, differ from those that are more geographically remote? In sum, in order for a foreign policy to have momentum, it will need a coalition of supporters to sustain it. A responsibility-based approach focuses attention on constituencies and their respective understandings of responsibility. It also affords the opportunity to explore the obstacles that hinder the creation of such shared interpretations.

Conclusion: No Flight from Responsibility

A German "politics of responsibility," as first articulated by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in 1975, is now forty years old and in a mid-life crisis. In its original formulation, it emphasized restraint, multilateralism, and humanitarianism. By 1991, Helmut Kohl declared, "There can be no safe little corner in world politics for us Germans. There is no flight from responsibility. We intend to make a contribution to a world of peace, freedom and justice" (Kohl 1991). Shortly thereafter, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer reframed it, urging his fellow Germans and his own party, with its resilient pacifist roots, to actively engage in the world and to confront genocide and other gross human rights violations (Fischer 1995). Recently, President Joachim Gauck zeroed in on the notion of responsibility again, challenging his fellow citizens to come to terms with the need for Germany to close the gap between its power (capabilities) and its willingness to assume a more prominent international role in global affairs, including a readiness to use force (Gauck 2014). A responsibility-based approach to studying this leitmotif of German foreign policy provides an opportunity to carefully examine how conceptions of power, purpose (national interest), and responsibility are all linked to normative notions of obligation, accountability, and community, both domestic and foreign.

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