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Abstract (English)

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Brexit, and a weakening transatlantic relationship – Europe's security environment is changing dramatically, and so is Germany's role in it. It is thus imperative to better comprehend the 'puzzle' that has been Germany's security and military policy since the turn of the century. This thesis aims to extend the current understanding of Germany's military policy by applying role theory to the three distinctive German military policy debates leading to engagement in Afghanistan in 2001 and Syria in 2015, as well as non-participation in Libya in 2011. More precisely, it establishes if and how role-theoretical elements, most importantly self-perceived national role conceptions, have been used by members of the German parliament and government to justify decisions on military engagements abroad in the three cases. The research method is a qualitative content analysis of debates of the German Bundestag, government statements, answers to interpellations, and requests and motions by members of parliament. The thesis finds that German decision-makers justified decisions on military missions based on their self-perceived national role conceptions. Moreover, it concludes that the narrative of such role conceptions as bases of justifications has shifted away from Germany as the ideal type of a civilian power, which had been the ascribed role of Germany ever since the commencement of its independent military policy, to Germany as a normal power picking civilian power maxims as they fit its interests. The three cases reveal Germany as a faithful ally when it wanted to participate militarily, and as an anti-militarist agent when it did not wish to participate militarily, but always as a normal power. Such an understanding of Germany's self-perceived role regarding military policy offers predictability as it limits the possibility for action in highly uncertain times for the security of Europe.

Keywords: Role theory, National role conceptions, German military policy, Civilian Power, Normal Power

Abstract (German)

Das Europäische Sicherheitsumfeld befindet sich im Wandel und dementsprechend auch die Rolle Deutschlands darin. Infolgedessen ist es essenziell das militärpolitische Entscheidungsverhalten Deutschlands besser nachvollziehen und erfassen zu können. Die vorliegende Arbeit strebt es an, die Lücken in der bestehenden Literatur zu füllen und zu einem breiteren Verständnis über die Militärpolitik Deutschlands im bisherigen 21. Jahrhunderts beizutragen. Dafür werden Elemente aus der Rollentheorie auf die Argumentation der Entscheidungsträger für oder gegen Militäreinsätze in Afghanistan in 2001, in Libyen in 2011 und in Syrien in 2015 angewandt. Das Ergebnis dieser Arbeit ist, dass sich Deutschland weg von der vorgeschriebenen Rolle der Zivilmacht und hinein in die Rolle einer Normalmacht entwickelt hat, welche einzelne Zivilmachtmaxime verfolgt wenn es in ihrem Interesse liegt. Diese Erkenntnis bietet eine gewisse Erwartbarkeit für das militärpolitische Handeln der Regierung und des Bundestags in sehr unkalkulierbaren Zeiten für die Sicherheit Europas.

Keywords: Rollentheorie, Militärpolitik, Zivilmacht, Normalmacht

Pledge of Honesty

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Pauline Hennings

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
METHODOLOGY	12
CASE STUDIES	14
AFGHANISTAN 2001	14
LIBYA 2001	15
SYRIA 2015	17
APPLICATION	19
EVOLUTION OF GERMANY’S CORE NATIONAL ROLE CONCEPTIONS	19
EXPECTATIONS	25
ANALYSIS: ROLE CONCEPTIONS AS BASES FOR ARGUMENTATION IN THE BUNDESTAG	26
<i>Afghanistan</i>	26
<i>Libya</i>	31
<i>Syria</i>	34
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	40
ROLE CHANGE	41
CONCLUSION	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46
APPENDIX	51

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Outline of the analysis	12
Figure 2: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Afghanistan	27
Figure 3: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Libya.....	32
Figure 4: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Syria	35
Figure 5: Summary of Germany’s role conceptions as bases for argumentation in the three cases.....	40

Introduction

Arguably the most tragic consequence of the anarchical structure of the international system is the continuous emergence of armed conflicts. For the longest time, they have been the direct, presumably most devastating and wreckful result of human decision making. Though the nature of armed conflicts has changed drastically since the end of the Second World War, they still kill hundreds of thousands of people every year¹ and injure and traumatize many more. Today, compared to the first half of the last century, domestic wars and internationalized civil wars have superseded interstate wars² in frequency and death tolls.³ This thesis focuses on foreign powers' interventions in domestic wars. More precisely, it aspires to expand the current understanding of the 'puzzle',⁴ which has been Germany's military engagement abroad since the turn of the century.

Mainstream International Relations scholarship frequently fails to explicate Germany's military policy,⁵ "rendering inconvertible theories irrelevant regularly," for the policy's "unpredictability."⁶ This thesis intends to investigate three specific cases of policy decisions on military involvement made by Germany in the first two decades of the 21st century, which have scholars divided on the debate of 'continuance or change' of Germany's security policy and on the controversy of Germany's role as a civilian power. To do so, it proposes to apply role theory and aims to answer the following research question:

RQ: To what extent have role-theoretical elements been used by members of the German parliament and government to justify decisions on military engagements abroad?

I examine how **Germany's role conceptions** affect and shape policy **choices on military intervention**, both in constraining and facilitating action. The three cases of decisions on military intervention are the decision to deploy Bundeswehr troops to Afghanistan in 2001, the

¹ Approximately 120.000 people died in conflicts in 2020: Ian Davis and van der Lijn Jaïr, "Global Developments in Armed Conflicts, Peace Processes and Peace Operations," SIPEI Yearbook 2021 (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021), <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2021/02>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

² Russia's invasion of Ukraine began after the commencement of this research and is ongoing by the time of writing.

³ Frank Schimmelfennig, *Internationale Politik*, 2., aktualisierte Aufl, UTB Politikwissenschaft 3107 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010).

⁴ Jeffrey D. Martinson, "What Makes Leaders 'Think War?': Foreign Military Intervention Decision Making in Post-Cold War Germany" (Dissertation, Ohio, Ohio State University, 2005).

⁵ Martison.

⁶ Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1997).

decision not to join the NATO-led military mission in Libya in 2011, and the decision to engage militarily in Syria in 2015. I aim to answer the research question using a qualitative content analysis of debates of the German Bundestag, government statements, and answers by the government to interpellations. To answer the research question is, in the best case, to better understand the decision-making on military interventions of a powerful nation and thereby establish some predictability in highly unpredictable times.

The following section offers an overview of the existing literature on German security policy analyses and role-theoretical approaches to foreign policy analysis. After that follow this thesis' role-theoretical framework and the methodology section explaining the content-analytical methods applied in the research, as well as the case studies section, which summarizes the three cases under investigation. The second chapter comprises an outline of the evolution of Germany's core national role conception(s), as found in the literature, and the analysis of how the core role conception(s), or other role conceptions, were used as bases for argumentation for or against German military engagement abroad in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The third and last chapter covers the discussion and conclusion, which incorporate the results of the analysis into the current events putting to test Germany's security policy.

Literature review

There is a substantial volume of literature on German security policy analyses. Given Germany's history as the aggressor who is widely responsible for the atrocities of the First and Second World Wars, scholars are particularly interested in the military role of Germany, specifically in international interventions in domestic armed conflicts. Much of the literature analyzes Germany as a civilian power, like Harnisch and Maull⁷, Wolff⁸, or Harnisch⁹ and Maull¹⁰ separately. Essentially, the role of a civilian power revolves around the two concepts of multilateralism and anti-militarism.¹¹ It does not strictly exclude the use of force but highlights the essentiality of legitimization for such under international law. The combination

⁷ Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull, eds., *Germany as a Civilian Power? The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, Issues in German Politics (Manchester; New York: New York: Manchester University Press; Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2001).

⁸ Jonas Wolff, "Democracy Promotion and Civilian Power: The Example of Germany's 'Value-Oriented' Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 22, no. 4 (December 2013): 477–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2013.853043>.

⁹ Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (April 2001): 35–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644000412331307384>.

¹⁰ Hanns W. Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *Survival* 42, no. 2 (January 2000): 56–80, <https://doi.org/10.1093/survival/42.2.56>.

¹¹ Elke Krahnemann, "Germany: Civilian Power Revisited," in *Commercialising Security in Europe: Political Consequences for Peace Operations*, ed. Anna Leander (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 161–81.

of the expansion of multilateralism and the juridification of the use of force exclusively for civilian and humanitarian purposes, aims to limit armed conflicts.¹²

Maull asserted in 2000, shortly after the German partaking in the Kosovo intervention headed by NATO, that a “direct challenge to the civilian-power role concept . . . [was] unlikely in the foreseeable future.”¹³ However, scholars are divided on the question of the suitability of the concept of a civilian power to the unified, more assertive Federal Republic. An examination of such a scholarly debate, which is part of the more significant divide between continuity and fundamental change of German security policy following the unification, is included in the later chapter on the evolution of Germany’s core national role conceptions.

Some scholars have attempted to analyze the German engagement in Afghanistan by focusing on the decision-making behind it, like Johnston and Lagassé, and Mello. One of the most essential features of such decision-making is the importance of the German parliament, the Bundestag, for the deployment of the German army, the Bundeswehr, implied in the latter’s nature of a *Parlamentsarmee* or parliamentary army.¹⁴ The essential role of the Bundestag for Bundeswehr deployments is especially apparent compared to most other foreign policy areas, which provide for a weaker part of the Bundestag. At the same time, the scholars highlight the significance of informal cooperation between the Bundestag and the government for military deployments abroad. Such a “co-determinative nature”¹⁵ is considered in this thesis’ content analysis, which, to triangulate, encompasses debates of the German Bundestag, governmental statements, and answers by the government to interpellations.

Müller and Wolff debate that the German engagement in Afghanistan is coherent with the concept of a civilian power, for its ‘half-heartedness’ and ‘inconsistency’.¹⁶ Others have focused on the non-engagement of Germany in the Libyan crisis in 2011, like Hansel and Oppermann and Miskimmon. Hansel and Oppermann’s counterfactual analysis discloses that,

¹² Knut Kirste and Hanns W. Maull, “Zivilmacht Und Rollentheorie,” *Zeitschrift Für Internationale Beziehungen* 3, no. 2 (1996): 283–312. As found in: Patrick A. Mello, “Von Der Bonner Zur Berliner Republik: Die „Zivilmacht“ Deutschland Im Spiegel Parlamentarischer Debatten Zu Auslandseinsätzen Der Bundeswehr, 1990 Bis 2018,” in *Zivilmacht Bundesrepublik?: Bundesdeutsche Außenpolitische Rollen Vor Und Nach 1989 Aus Politik- Und Geschichtswissenschaftlichen Perspektiven*, ed. Klaus Brummer and Friedrich Kießling (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748904878> (free translation from German).

¹³ Maull, “Germany and the Use of Force.”

¹⁴ Philippe Lagassé and Patrick A. Mello, “The Unintended Consequences of Parliamentary Involvement: Elite Collusion and Afghanistan Deployments in Canada and Germany,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 20, no. 1 (February 2018): 135–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117745681>.

¹⁵ Karin L. Johnston, “Germany, Afghanistan, and the Process of Decision Making in German Foreign Policy: Constructing a Framework for Analysis” (Dissertation, Maryland, University of Maryland, 2011).

¹⁶ Harald Müller and Jonas Wolff, “A Civilian Power at War: An Analysis of Germany’s Military Engagement in Afghanistan since 2001” (Frankfurt am Main: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2012).

contrary to the general scholarly expectation, the then-upcoming regional elections in Germany did not impact the decision-making on the Libya resolution and that the result would have been the same, elections or not.¹⁷ Miskimmon's analysis showed that Germany's decision on the Libya resolution was an outlier rather than an essential change of German security policy and potentially a result of domestic pressure due to the Eurozone crisis.¹⁸ Harnisch discusses the supposed failure of the security policy decision making under Angela Merkel on the Libya intervention and suggests that a role-theoretical approach to analyzing the case is more suitable than other approaches like purely normative ones, ignoring the interactional effects at play.¹⁹ The diverging conclusions in the literature on Germany's decision-making in the Libyan case show the need for a better understanding of the 'puzzle', that is Germany's security policy, especially over time and comparing different cases.

Germany's 2015 military engagement against the Islamic State in Syria, the third case under investigation in this thesis, has not yet attracted much scholarly attention.

One attractive alternative to the usual top-down approaches to the analysis of German security policy is the bottom-up *histoire des mentalités*, or *Mentalitätsgeschichte* approach applied by Williams, who studies the mentality of the regular German citizen relating to the use of force by Germany, how such mentality is impacted by popular culture and how it impacts the elite's security policy decision-making.²⁰ He contends that the German public is more cautious, whereas the elite is more open to Germany assuming a military role of a 'normal power' and that the result is an enduring "Gesamtmentalität" of Germany as a civilian power.²¹

Another interesting cultural debate on Germany and the use of force is the discussion on the impact of Germany's strategic culture on its military involvement. Longhurst defines the strategic culture approach in the field of security studies to essentially revolve around the domestic origins of a nation's security policy. It aims to determine how the nation's past, that

¹⁷ Mischa Hansel and Kai Oppermann, "Counterfactual Reasoning in Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of German Nonparticipation in the Libya Intervention of 2011," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, April 2014, n/a-n/a, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12054>.

¹⁸ Alister Miskimmon, "German Foreign Policy and the Libya Crisis," *German Politics* 21, no. 4 (December 2012): 392–410, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2012.739610>.

¹⁹ Sebastian Harnisch, "Deutschlands Rolle in Der Libyen-Intervention: Führung, Gefolgschaft Und Das Angebliche Versagen Der Regierung Merkel," in *Standortbestimmung Deutschlands: Innere Verfasstheit Und Internationale Verantwortung*, 1. Aufl, Veröffentlichungen Der Deutschen Gesellschaft Für Politikwissenschaft 32 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015), 85–122.

²⁰ Michael John Williams, "The Enduring Culture of Restraint in Modern Germany: German *Mentalités* on the Use of Force as Portrayed in Contemporary Television Narratives," *German Politics* 30, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 87–105, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2019.1634693>.

²¹ Williams, "The Enduring Culture of Restraint in Modern Germany: German *Mentalités* on the Use of Force as Portrayed in Contemporary Television Narratives."

is, the shared lessons learned from its history, influences and informs present decision-making behavior on security issues.²² Longhurst offers the strategic culture approach as a direct critique of more conventional security-theoretical advances, especially the neo-realist one. Exemplary of the neo-realist approach, Van Orden predicted in 1991 that post-Cold War Germany would naturally seek a military policy suitable for a great power, more assertively and unilaterally, follow its national interest, and insist on a relevant voice on the international scene.²³ Following Van Orden, German foreign and defense policy had been “unnaturally contained” for forty years and would change with “access to full sovereignty.”²⁴ In other words: “*la République fédérale d’Allemagne sera inévitablement amenée à jouer un rôle majeur dans les domaines international, économique et stratégique,*”²⁵ or, “the Federal Republic of Germany will inevitably be called upon to play a major role in the international, economic and strategic fields.”²⁶

It is without doubt, that Germany is playing a significant economic role, being the fourth-largest economy globally,²⁷ and that Germany has developed its security policy since its reunification. It is precisely this development that has scholars contest the applicability of the “civilian power”- concept and the “continuity”- assumption to the reality of Germany’s security policy since the end of the Cold War. While a general development of Germany’s security and military policy is undeniable, I agree with Longhurst in that the neo-realist analytical approach to German post-Cold War security policy is relatively weak because it essentially ignores the domestic context of decision making in security policy²⁸ and thus considers fundamentally heterogeneous attributes from within states, which presumably influence their respective security policy-making, as homogenous across states.²⁹

The strategic culture approach begins where the neo-realist one ends and highlights the importance of the domestic political culture in the security policy decision-making process. With regards to German security policy, Longhurst contends that the explanatory value of the strategic culture approach lies in the impact of “significant continuities with the past,”

²² Kerry Anne Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, Issues in German Politics (Manchester [UK] ; New York : New York : Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave: Manchester University Press, 2004).

²³ Geoffrey Van Orden, “La Bundeswehr En Transition,” *Politique Étrangère* 56, no. 4 (1991): 873–90.

²⁴ Van Orden. (free translation from French)

²⁵ Van Orden.

²⁶ Van Orden, “La Bundeswehr En Transition.” (emphasis added, free translation from French)

²⁷ The World Bank, “GDP (Current US\$) - All Countries and Economies,” 2020, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=DE&most_recent_value_desc=true.

²⁸ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*.

²⁹ John S. Duffield, “Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism,” *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 765–803, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551066>.

especially due to the nation's bad experiences before the end of the Second World War, paired with the experience of a favorable shaping of the country after the end of the Second World War.³⁰ Such experiences formed Germany's political culture into a "culture of restraint." The "culture of restraint" translated into the role of a civilian power, supposedly explaining why the reality of Germany's security policy after reunification contradicted the expectations of the prominent rationalist theories of International Relations, like neo-realism. Contrary to such neo-realist expectations, Germany did not aspire to build up its military force after reunification.³¹

The strategic culture approach and its critique of the neo-realist approach are valid points of departure for this thesis' role-theoretical approach to German security policy analysis, assuming that Germany's past experiences of a disastrous security policy are a critical factor in the shaping of Germany's core role conceptions and their influence on contemporary German security policy. However, both the cultural and neo-realist approaches to security policy analyses are vague in explaining actual policy behavior. The former concentrates on domestics and the elitist actors, the "strategic cultural agents,"³² while the latter focuses on the system. It is precisely this bridge between the two, this lack of understanding of how the actors relate to the international system in security policy decision-making, which is one of the pivotal problems of International Relations theory, role theory offers to solve. The role conceptions of the important actors combine their perceptions of who they are and how they should consequently cooperate with others in international relationships. Roles are thus at the junction between the system level of analysis and the actor level of analysis.³³

Role theory is a theory of sociological origin, which has recently regained attention in foreign policy research for its "descriptive, organizational, and explanatory value."³⁴ It was first connected to the study of foreign policy in the seminal work by Holsti in 1970. Before 1970, states were usually classified solely in terms of the Cold War, that is, "non-aligned," "bloc leaders," "balancers" and "satellites."³⁵ Such basic classification, however, was as much

³⁰ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*.

³¹ Williams, "The Enduring Culture of Restraint in Modern Germany."

³² Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*.

³³ Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, "Introduction," in *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses*, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1–4.

³⁴ Leslie E. Wehner and Cameron G. Thies, "Role Theory, Narratives, and Interpretation: The Domestic Contestation of Roles," *International Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (September 2014): 411–36, <https://doi.org/10.1111/misr.12149>.

³⁵ Kalevi J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 233–309.

lacking in detail and thus failing to grasp the variety of roles a state can assume back then, as it is today. Accordingly, one focus of role theorists ever since has been to extend the number of national roles to include roles like “leader, mediator, initiator – and counter-roles – such as that of follower [and] aggressor.”³⁶ In his analysis of more than 70 states and their senior officials’ statements on self-conceived national roles, Holsti identifies 17 such national role types, which include, in order of decreasing frequency: ‘regional-subsystem collaborator’, ‘independent’, ‘liberator-supporter’, ‘faithful ally’ and ‘mediator-integrator’.³⁷

Holsti’s categorization has been used by Adigbuo, who applies role theory in the Nigerian case to critique the ‘Eurocentric’ mainstream theories of International Relations.³⁸ Grossman modifies Holsti’s framework to account more accurately for the Russian context of his study and adds roles like that of a ‘co-patriot protector’, ‘anti-hegemon’ and ‘member of the Western world’.³⁹ He finds that investigating role conceptions is potentially valuable for foreseeing changes in foreign policy behavior. However, he himself limits his results to the study of Russia and similar “at best quasi-democratic” countries with equally centralized foreign policy decision-making processes.⁴⁰ I argue that role theory is likewise applicable to a democratic state like Germany, based on the assumption that the government and the parliamentary coalition members, which support the government, share similar role conceptions. Other scholars focalize their analyses on a small number of roles, like Catalinac, or even on just one single role, like Harnisch. The former successfully uses role theory to explain the puzzle that lies in the differing foreign policy decisions made by the Japanese government regarding Japan’s engagement in the Gulf War in 1991 and the U.S. War in Iraq in 2003, respectively.⁴¹ Harnisch, as mentioned above, analyzes German foreign policy behavior in the 1990s in relation to Germany’s ascribed role of a civilian power and finds that various congregating or

³⁶ Sebastian Harnisch, “Role Theory: Operationalization of Key Concepts,” in *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses*, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics (New York: Routledge, 2011), 7–15.

³⁷ Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.”

³⁸ Richard Adigbuo, “Beyond IR Theories: The Case for National Role Conceptions,” *Politikon* 34, no. 1 (April 2007): 83–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589340701336286>.

³⁹ Michael Grossman, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy Change: The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s,” *International Politics* 42, no. 3 (September 2005): 334–51, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800115>.

⁴⁰ Grossman, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy Change: The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s.”

⁴¹ Amy L. Catalinac, “Identity Theory and Foreign Policy: Explaining Japan’s Responses to the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 U.S. War in Iraq,” *Politics & Policy* 35, no. 1 (March 2007): 58–100, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2007.00049.x.c>

even conflicting foreign policy decisions may be embraced in the same national role.⁴² Which ones, if any, of Holsti's 17 defined national role types apply to Germany and its security policy in the first two decades of the 21st century, will be examined in the later analysis of this thesis. The following section develops this thesis's role-theoretical framework.

Theoretical framework

This thesis's framework is based on Holsti's definition of four role-theoretical elements: status, role prescriptions from the alter environment, self-defined national role conceptions, and role performance.⁴³ The four elements are used in this thesis to identify and analyze role-based argumentation in the Bundestag for or against military engagements of the Bundeswehr abroad. Even though the four elements converge in the analysis, I will briefly explain the relevance of each one separately.

The status is the modified version of the original, role-theoretical term 'position'. The latter is imported from the sociological origin to fit the subject of states in International Relations interacting with other states rather than individuals in social relationships. The 'position' in the original role-theoretical scholarship describes a behavioral situation characterized by predetermined tasks, responsibilities, rights, freedoms, and obligations.⁴⁴ Imagine, for example, the responsibilities, freedoms, and obligations of someone in the position of a diplomat. Naturally, the person's choices and actions in that position are very much predefined in a way that is not commensurable to most situations of states' foreign policy making. Though the membership in international organizations is often associated with positions linked to certain specific responsibilities and freedoms, imagine here, for example, the particular part of the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, most of the time, International Relations are too complex to fit the original role theoretical term 'position'. Countries are too multi-operative and have too many relationships with too many states and groups of states in a too poorly organized setting for such a narrow term.⁴⁵ Instead, Holsti offers, and I adopt, the concept of 'status' as an alternative borrowed from the study of global stratification.⁴⁶ Statuses of states exist despite the supposed anarchic nature of the international system. Even though in the international system of sovereign states, "none is entitled to

⁴² Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (April 2001): 35–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644000412331307384>.

⁴³ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy."

⁴⁴ Holsti.

⁴⁵ Holsti.

⁴⁶ Holsti.

command, [and] none is required to obey,”⁴⁷ it is the “constant intrusion, or potential intrusion, of power [which] renders meaningless any conception of equality between members of the international community.”⁴⁸ Power statuses provide for order and hierarchy in the anarchic international system.⁴⁹ The elitist status is that of a great power, which grants distinctive rights, like a seat in the Security Council, but also imposes responsibilities and obligations, like maintaining international peace and security.⁵⁰ The permanent members of the Security Council are commonly referred to as Great Powers,⁵¹ but the classification of Germany is discussed more controversially in the literature. Based on the assumption that the relevant decision-makers are somewhat sensible of the international status of the nation-state they represent and that they act and decide accordingly,⁵² I argue that status considerations impact the national role conceptions and are a potential factor of role change. Thus, I include a brief discussion of the impact of Germany’s status on Germany’s role conceptions and the change thereof in the later discussion of this thesis.

The role prescriptions from the alter environment are the second role-theoretical element discussed by Holsti. Role-theoretical scholars are divided on the alter’s impact on the national role conceptions of a state. While Holsti emphasizes the ego part of roles, more recent work (like Wendt 1999)⁵³ highlights the sociological origin of roles. It incorporates the “systemic dynamics of role change,” meaning the “relational and social roots” of roles.⁵⁴ This controversy has developed further in identity theory, with one strand of research focusing on the effect of social structures on the self and the other aiming to explain the “internal process of self-verification.”⁵⁵ Conversely, this implies that the first strand of research essentially ignores the internal processes for the development of identity, whereas the second one disregards the effect

⁴⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Political Structures,” in *Theory of International Relations*, Addison-Wesley Series in Political Science (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979), 79–102.

⁴⁸ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939* (London, 1939), as cited in Graham Evans, “All States Are Equal, But...,” *Review of International Studies* 7, no. 1 (1981): 59–66.

⁴⁹ Christina Stolte, “Great Powers and the Drive for Status in International Relations,” in *Brazil’s Africa Strategy*, by Christina Stolte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), 15–42, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499578_2.

⁵⁰ Stolte, “Great Powers and the Drive for Status in International Relations.”

⁵¹ Willem Oosterveld and Bianca Torossian, “A Balancing Act: The Role of Middle Powers in Contemporary Diplomacy,” *Strategic Monitor* (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies and Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael,” 2019), <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2018/strategic-monitor-2018-2019/a-balancing-act/>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁵² Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.”

⁵³ Holsti.

⁵⁴ Holsti.

⁵⁵ Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke, “The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (December 2000): 284, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695840>.

of social structures on the internal dynamics of identity.⁵⁶ I recognize the importance of social structures, acknowledge that self-conceptions of roles do not emerge in isolation from social structures,⁵⁷ and argue that the expectations from the alter environment are included and reflected in the decision-makers' national role conceptions. This thesis' discussion succeeding the analysis approximates the impact of the role prescriptions and expectations from the environment on the self-perceived role conceptions and the change of the latter.

The decision-makers' self-perceived national role conceptions are then the center of the framework and constitute the focus of this thesis' analysis. They are the decision-makers' images of the state's identity⁵⁸ or "what [they] want and what [they] do as a result of who [they] think [they] are, want to be, and should be."⁵⁹ In this research, the national role conceptions of interest are Germany's security policy decision-makers' self-perceived images of Germany's role in the world, specifically regarding military interventions. To determine the most essential, the **core** national role conceptions of Germany as a basis for further analysis, the first section of the second chapter of this thesis focuses on the evolution of Germany's national role conceptions as established by the existing literature. Afterwards follows the analysis of the relevant sample documents to assess the decision-makers' justifications for or against military engagements based on the role-theoretical elements comprised in the national role conceptions.

Role conceptions change when fluctuating and imprecise role conceptions are involved, when the external environment's circumstances are uncertain and a speedy adjustment on the side of the decision-makers is required or, finally, when two or more national role commitments are conflicting. The problem is that while the stability of national role conceptions, as opposed to fluctuations thereof, is imperative for the consistency and consequently the predictability of decision-making behavior, role conceptions are sensitive to the circumstantial setting, which implies an ever-present eventuality for a role conflict to arise. Simultaneously, a decision-maker's role conflict is "one of the most obvious stimuli for foreign policy change . . . given the actor's inherent desire for consistency and cognitive stability."⁶⁰ Analyzing how the core role conceptions of German decision-makers have evolved in relation to Germany's role in

⁵⁶ Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory."

⁵⁷ Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke.

⁵⁸ Cameron G. Thies, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy" (Iowa, USA: University of Iowa, 2009), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228985348>.

⁵⁹ Ulrich Krotz, "National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policies: France and Germany Compared," Working Paper, Program for the Study of Germany and Europe (Cambridge: Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies Harvard University, 2002), <http://aei.pitt.edu/9291/1/Krotz.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁶⁰ Ole Elgström and Michael Smith, eds., *The European Union's Roles in International Politics: Concepts and Analysis*, Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science 45 (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2006).

international security thus promises to be of great explanatory value for understanding Germany's 'puzzling' decision-making behavior on Bundeswehr engagements since the turn of the century. A discussion on the reasons behind the change of Germany's national role conceptions succeeds this thesis' analysis.

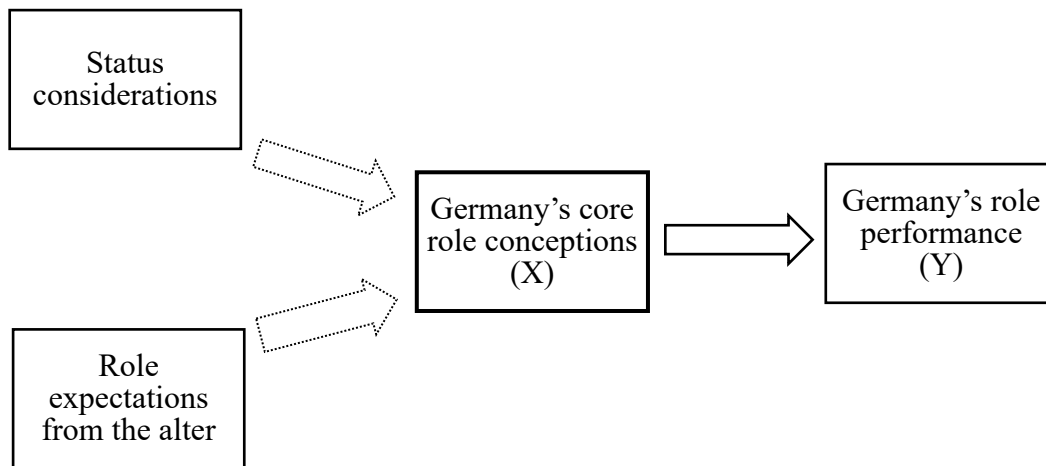
The role performance is the last and the most straightforward role-theoretical concept considered by Holsti. For this paper, to determine Germany's role performance is to examine its military policy behavior, as in the decisions and actions of Germany's decision-makers in the respective three cases of military engagements.⁶¹ Germany's role performance under investigation was to engage militarily in the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan in the first case, to abstain in the Security Council on the establishment of a no-fly-zone in Libya and to not engage militarily in the second case, and to participate militarily in the war against the Islamic State in Syria in the third case. The later background section provides insight into the cases and Germany's respective role performance.

In summary, this thesis' role-theoretical application consists of two essential stages based on the elements discussed by Holsti and explained above. First, I establish the evolution of Germany's core national role conceptions, and second, I analyze whether members of the German parliament utilized these core role conceptions or other role conceptions as bases for argumentation for or against the involvement of the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan, Libya, and in Syria. This second stage of the application, the analysis, is a content analysis of the relevant debates of the Bundestag, which covered the respective military engagements, as well as other governmental and parliamentary documents, like answers to interpellations. The sampling strategy is explained in the succeeding methodology section.

The two-staged application aims to answer the question of the impact of Germany's national role conceptions on its role performance. In other words, Germany's role conceptions are the independent variable (X) and Germany's role performance, that is the decision-making on military involvement in the three specific cases, is the dependent variable (Y). Germany's status considerations and the role expectations from the domestic and the international alter environment influence the independent variable. Their potential importance for role change, and consequently foreign policy change, is discussed in last chapter. Figure 1 illustrates the summarized outline of this thesis' analysis based on the role-theoretical concepts offered by Holsti.

⁶¹ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy."

Figure 1: Outline of the analysis



Methodology

As indicated previously, this thesis is a qualitative research effort. I choose to conduct a qualitative rather than a quantitative study because I seek to understand a “complex and deep-rooted” research situation⁶² and obtain profound information for a small number of cases. This thesis explores three cases, which are purposefully selected for their typicality, relative to the research interest of German military engagements, yet for the diversity among themselves. They are typical cases and thus representative⁶³ of situations, in which German foreign policy-makers have been confronted with the decision to deploy Bundeswehr troops abroad in the last two decades. At the same time, they are diverse cases in relation to each other, for the diverging decisions made in the three situations (i.e., involvement and non-involvement).

The method applied to analyze the three cases within the role-theoretical framework established above is a qualitative content analysis of documents purposefully selected from the archive of the German Bundestag. More precisely, the analysis comprises six Bundestag debates, three government statements, one answer by the government to an interpellation and one request by the members of the Bundestag to the Federal Government in the first case, four Bundestag debates, one motion by the Free Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Union

⁶² Pauline Hennings, “Loss Aversion, Risk-Acceptance, and Powerful Leaders’ Deviations from Reality: A Prospect-Theoretical Application to the American Escalation of the Vietnam War” (Enschede, Netherlands, University of Twente, 2020).

⁶³ Jason Seawright and John Gerring, “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research,” *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 294–308.

of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CDU/CSU), as well as two government statements for the second case, and, lastly, one recommendation to the Bundestag for a resolution and report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the motion of the Federal Government, five Bundestag debates, and one government statement for the third case. In total, 21 governmental and parliamentary documents were analyzed by the means of a content analysis. The sample documents were purposively selected based on a previous evaluation of relevance to the respective debates. For the purpose of such a previous evaluation, I searched for specific keywords (i.e. ‘Afghanistan,’ ‘Auslandseinsatz,’ ‘Libyen,’ or ‘Syrien’) in the search engine of the archive of the Bundestag. To further confine the number of relevant sample documents, the periods were limited to one year before and one year after the decision was made or the vote was taken in the respective case. However, most relevant documents fall within a period of two months before and after the individual decision. The results of the evaluation of relevance were closely inspected until the final sample for the qualitative content analysis comprised 21 documents.

A qualitative content analysis revolves around the categorization of the data as the focus of the analysis, and it is guided by theory.⁶⁴ This research follows an explorative design of a content analysis of inductively formulated categories, characterized by an “open coding” approach.⁶⁵ As opposed to the deductive procedure, this inductive one aspires to lessen any potential bias from the researcher’s prior understanding of the topic. Following Mayring, I first define the category and level of abstraction as the role conceptions perceived and expressed by Germany’s decision-making elite in the sample. Then, I begin with coding the material by drafting categories close to the text, then subsume the subsequent passages or formulate new categories (i.e., core role conceptions). Approximately halfway through the material, I revise the categories before I finish the coding and finally interpret the category system and the frequency of coded for categories to continue the role-theoretical analysis as outlined in the framework, and answer my research question.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Philipp Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Foundation, Basic Procedures and Software Solution” (Klagenfurt: SSOAR, 2014), <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-395173>, last accessed on 10 June 2022.

⁶⁵ Mayring.

⁶⁶ The inductive category formation is based on Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Foundation, Basic Procedures and Software Solution.”

Case studies

This section comprises an overview of the three case studies. It aims to present the key events and briefly put the decisions under investigation into context, beginning with the German decision to engage militarily in Afghanistan in 2001. Doing so, it does not claim completeness of information on the origins of the respective crises.

Afghanistan 2001

The elaboration of the German engagement in Afghanistan published by the German Bundestag begins with the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union on December 25, 1979, following independence from Great Britain in 1919.⁶⁷ The Soviet soldiers left Afghanistan in February 1989, succeeding the signing of the Geneva Accords by Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, and the United States in 1988. Following the violent toppling of the government of the post-soviet regime under Mohammed Nadschibullah in 1992, civil war ensued, and the rule of the Mudschaheddin began and lasted until 1996, when the rule of the Taliban commenced with the founding of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in September 1996. The latter was officially recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The Taliban allowed Arab Jihadists to establish their headquarters and training camps in their Emirate, including Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

September 09, 2011, was a historic turning point for global security. 2.977 people died, and more than 6000 were injured in the September 11 attacks (9/11), when commercial airline planes were hijacked by terrorists and flown into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia. One airplane crash-landed on a field near Pennsylvania. Osama Bin Laden was quickly identified as the mastermind of 9/11 and was believed to be staying in Afghanistan. U.S. President George W. Bush issued an ultimatum to the Afghan government (the Taliban), demanding the transfer of bin Laden to the United States. After the Taliban refused to do so, on September 26, 2001, Bush announced the United States' 'war on terror'. On September 18, 2001, the president signed into law the U.S. Congress' *Joint Resolution To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States*. On October 07, 2001, the U.S. military operation

⁶⁷ This background section on Afghanistan is based on: Deutscher Bundestag, "Der Afghanistan-Einsatz 2001-2021 Eine Sicherheitspolitische Chronologie," Ausarbeitung, January 20, 2022, <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/881198/27fd4f597e1d4ee43350aafffc6f9d8c/WD-2-062-21-pdf-data.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

commenced the U.S. ‘war on terror’ with airstrikes on Afghanistan. The invasion of Afghanistan received the codename ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’.

On September 12, 2001, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced German solidarity with the US, and the NATO allies invoked the principle of collective self-defence as written down in the treaty’s Article 5, based on the premise that investigations proved that the attack was organized from outside the United States. On October 4, 2001, the NATO allies decided the *casus foederis*: case for the alliance. On November 16, 2001, Schröder asked the Bundestag for a vote of confidence in combination with, for the first time since the establishment of the Federal Republic, a factual issue, namely the deployment of Bundeswehr troops to Afghanistan to join the U.S.’ ‘war on terror’ and its ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’. Schröder secured only two more votes than necessary for the required absolute majority. A second debate and vote on the *Participation of German armed forces in the deployment of an international security support force in Afghanistan on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 1386 (2001), 1383 (2001) and 1378 (200)*, took place in the Bundestag on December 22, 2001. 538 votes out of 581 votes cast were in favor. Only 35 votes were cast against, primarily by members of the PDS (the Democratic Socialists, today the Left).⁶⁸

Libya 2001

The second case under investigation in this thesis is Germany’s decision not to participate in the international military intervention in Libya. The international military intervention in the first Libyan Civil War was preceded by the Libyan Revolution, which was part of the Arab Spring that began in Tunisia in the beginning of 2011 and quickly spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The Libyan Revolution specifically was an uprising against Muammar al-Gaddafi’s 40-year rule of the North African country. Unlike the Arab Spring demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt, where protests led to regime change quickly, the uprising in Libya escalated into a civil war.⁶⁹

On February 23, 2011, Muammar al-Gaddafi pledged to “cleanse Libya house by house” of the protesters, whom he referred to as “greasy rats . . . [and] mercenaries.”⁷⁰ In response to, and

⁶⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, “Stenographischer Bericht 210. Sitzung” (Berlin, December 22, 2001), <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14210.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁶⁹ This background section on Libya is based on: The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Libya Revolt of 2011” (Britannica, n.d.), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Libya-Revolt-of-2011>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁷⁰ Noor-ul-Ain Khawaja, “The Libyan Crisis and UNSC Resolution 1973: Authority, Legitimacy and Prospects,” *Pakistan Horizon*, The Arab Uprising, 64, no. 3 (July 3, 2011): 73–92.

in shock by, Gaddafi's use of violence against the Libyan people, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1970 only three days later, on February 26, 2011. The resolution, which was legally enforceable under Art. 41 of the UN Charter, demanded an "immediate end to the violence and [called] for steps to fulfill the legitimate demands of the population." Resolution 1970 momentarily included an ICC-referral of the situation in Libya, which was the Security Council's first ICC-referral ever with the support of the United States, which is not an ICC-member.⁷¹ The resolution also included an arms embargo, a travel ban, and an asset freeze against Gaddafi and his associates. With the resolution, the Security Council, including Germany as a non-permanent member, expressed its "grave concern at the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and [condemned] the violence and use of force against civilians, [and considered] that the widespread and systematic attacks . . . taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity."⁷²

Almost three weeks after the adoption of Resolution 1970, on March 17, 2011, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1973 with 10-0 in favor and five abstentions as a reaction to the "failure of the Libyan authorities to comply with resolution 1970 (2011)." Resolution 1973 established a no-fly zone over Libya, banning "all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians" and authorized the Member States "to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights ... and *all necessary measures ... to protect civilians* and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya ... [short of] a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of the Libyan territory."⁷³ The resolution was supported by the seven non-permanent members Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Gabon, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, and South Africa, and the three permanent members United Kingdom, United States, and France. Three non-permanent members abstained, namely Brazil, Germany, and India, as well as the two permanent members China and the Russian Federation.⁷⁴ With Germany's abstention, it voted against all its NATO

⁷¹ Colum Lynch, "U.N. Votes to Impose Sanction on Gaddafi," *The Washington Post*, February 26, 2011, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/26/AR2011022603386.html>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁷² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1970 (2011)," February 26, 2011, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/245/58/PDF/N1124558.pdf?OpenElement>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁷³ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1973 (2011)," March 17, 2011, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement> (emphasis added), last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁷⁴ Wolfgang Seibel, "Libyen, Das Prinzip Der Schutzverantwortung Und Deutschlands Stimmenthaltung Im UN-Sicherheitsrat Bei Der Abstimmung Über Resolution 1973 Am 17. März 2011," *Die Friedens-Warte* 88, no. 1/2 (2013): 87–115.

and EU allies in the Security Council for the first time. In comparison, when Germany and France voted against the United States and Great Britain on the intervention in Iraq in 2003, a transatlantic crisis ensued.⁷⁵

Germany faced a seemingly indissoluble dilemma. Voting for the military engagement alongside its major allies, Great Britain, France, and the United States, would have gone against the grave concerns of chancellor Angela Merkel, foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, and defense minister Thomas de Maizière. Voting against the resolution was no option because Russia had previously declared not to veto the resolution, and China presumably would not veto military engagement by itself. Thus, a German “no” was deemed unrealistic by the German foreign ministry from the start. Following Berlin’s receipt of the information from New York that the necessary majority in the Security Council was ensured without the German vote, the abstention was decided in the German foreign ministry, with Merkel, Westerwelle, and de Maizière all in favor of the decision.⁷⁶ On March 19, 2001, two days after the resolution was adopted, the military intervention in Libya began, but the domestic debate in Germany continued.

Syria 2015

Peaceful protests against the reigning regime began in Syria, like in Libya, as part of the Arab Spring in 2011 and then turned into a civil war.⁷⁷ The protests that took place all over the country were violently shut down by the government of Bashar al-Assad. Hundreds of people died because of the increasingly brutal repression of the protests. In the Summer of 2011, one part of Assad’s opposition established itself as the Free Syrian Army and armed itself heavily. The civil war began, and new groups evolved among the war parties, including various religiously motivated militia.

In August 2013, the Assad regime allegedly deployed chemical weapons against civilians in Ghouta, close to Damascus, causing international outrage. In November 2013, various Islamic opposition groups united to form the Islamic Front. In June 2014, the terrorist organization Islamic Front renamed itself to Islamic State and proclaimed a caliphate in the parts of Iraq and Syria under its control. In August 2014, the United States and its allies began

⁷⁵ Andreas Rinke, “Eingreifen Oder Nicht? Warum Sich Die Bundesregierung in Der Libyen-Frage Enthielt.,” *Internationale Politik*, August 2011, 44–52.

⁷⁶ Rinke, “Eingreifen Oder Nicht? Warum Sich Die Bundesregierung in Der Libyen-Frage Enthielt.”

⁷⁷ This background section on Syria is based on: Malteser International, “Von Der Protestbewegung Zum Krieg in Syrien – Ein Überblick,” n.d., <https://www.malteser-international.org/de/hilfe-weltweit/naher-osten/syrien/der-buergerkrieg-in-syrien-ein-ueberblick.html#c661533>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

air strikes on IS targets in Iraq and then, a little later in September, in Syria. The mission was called ‘Operation Inherent Resolve’. The following year, the Islamic State intensified its global terror campaign. On the night of November 13, 2015, the Paris attacks took place, which killed 130 people and injured hundreds more. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks.⁷⁸

On December 4, 2015, the German Bundestag debated and voted on the Federal Government’s motion on the *Deployment of armed German forces to prevent and suppress terrorist acts by the terrorist organization IS on the basis of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter in conjunction with Article 42 paragraph 7 of the Treaty on European Union and Resolutions 2170 (2014), 2199 (2015), 2249 (2015) of the United Nations Security Council*.⁷⁹ Article 51 of the UN Charter contains the right of individual or collective self-defense and Article 42 (7) TEU is the “obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in [the member states’] power” in the case of an act of armed aggression against another member state,⁸⁰ which, in this case, was France. The unanimously adopted Resolution 2249 (2015), appealed to all capable member states “to *take all necessary measures*, in compliance with international law . . . on the territory under the control of ISIL also known as Da’esh, in Syria and Iraq, to redouble and coordinate their efforts *to prevent and suppress terrorist acts . . .*”.⁸¹

Germany’s Federal Government’s motion was accepted with 445 out of 597 votes cast. 145 members of the Bundestag voted against it, and seven abstained. The mandate for ‘Operation Counter Daesh’ allowed for 1.200 Bundeswehr soldiers, six Tornado reconnaissance aircrafts, an air-to-air refueling tanker transport aircraft, and a frigate to assist the multinational Combined Joint Task Force ‘Operation Inherent Resolve’.⁸²

⁷⁸ BBC News, “Paris Attacks: What Happened on the Night,” *BBC*, December 9, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34818994>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁷⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, “Stenografischer Bericht 144. Sitzung,” Plenarprotokoll (Berlin, December 4, 2015), https://dip.bundestag.de/drucksache/einsatz-bewaffneter-deutscher-streitkräfte-zur-verhütung-und-unterbindung-terroristischer-handlungen/57916?term=syrien&f.datum.start=2015-12-01&f.datum.end=2016-01-01&rows=25&sort=datum_auf&pos=1 (free translation from German), last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁸⁰ “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union,” October 26, 2012, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF, last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁸¹ United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 2249 (2015),” November 20, 2015, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2249.pdf (emphasis added), last accessed 10 June 2022.

⁸² Deutscher Bundestag, “Stenografischer Bericht 144. Sitzung.”

Application

The following application connects the theory to the cases, and the actors to the system. The first part of application consists of the examination of the evolution of **Germany's core national role conceptions** relating to security policy by means of a study of relevant scholarly articles.

Evolution of Germany's core national role conceptions

During the years following the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, its first Federal Government under chancellor Adenauer assumed the security policy role of a “Schützling” (protégé). The role of a protégé incorporated the three fundamental maxims of dependency, willingness to integrate, and alignment with the West. The dependency was the government's security and foreign policy focus initially, and integration and alignment were the attempts to lessen such dependency over time.⁸³ The dependency of Germany was implicated by its status as a protectorate of France, Great Britain, and the United States. It meant that Germany was unable to make foreign and security policy decisions by itself and that it had to be humble and cautious always. Adenauer considered the integration of West Germany into international and European institutions to be essential for a normalization of the Federal Republic in its international relationships, and he persisted on an integration exclusively towards the West. Germany's role of a “Schützling” was thereby strongly connected to the United States' role of the protector.

By 1955, following West Germany's integration into the European Coal and Steel Community and NATO, as well as the founding of the Bundeswehr in 1956, Germany had “outgrown its role of a ‘Schützling’”.⁸⁴ The national role conception guiding the security policy of the Federal Republic in the following transformed into one of a “modest, limitedly sovereign, and reliable ally.”⁸⁵ Chancellor Kohl declared that the Federal Republic's decision “for Europe, for Western integration and for the Atlantic Alliance” was “irreversible” and “part of [the Federal Republic's] reason of state.”⁸⁶ For the years to come, this resulted in a role performance characterized by a “strongly pronounced coordination and cooperation reflex,”

⁸³ Rachel Folz, *Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010* (Nomos, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845244365>.

⁸⁴ Folz.

⁸⁵ Folz.

⁸⁶ Helmut Kohl, then Federal Chancellor (1984) as cited in Folz, *Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010* (free translation from German, emphasis added).

multilaterally and bilaterally, as well as a high level of cautiousness by Germany's foreign and security policy-makers to avoid anxiety from the alter (and ego) over another potential German 'Sonderweg'.⁸⁷ The German security policy needed "Fingerspitzengefühl"⁸⁸ (tact). It was "ausgewogen" und "maßvoll"⁸⁹ (balanced and restrained).

In 1970, Holsti identified five role conceptions held by the Federal Republic, including the role of the faithful ally. All the roles fit the modest and cautious tenets of the Federal Republic's foreign and defense policy. They included, next to the role of the faithful ally, the role of a mediator/integrator, a regional subsystem collaborator, a developer, and a bridge. A state with a national role conception of a mediator/integrator perceives itself to be continuously tasked with assisting the settlement of differences between other actors in the system. In contrast, a regional-subsystem collaborator is committed more far-reaching "to cooperative efforts with other states to build wider communities." The bridging role vaguer, much more "ephemeral" than the mediator/integrator role. A developer feels especially obligated to help other, less developed or developing states. As its name implies, a faithful ally identifies itself with a solid commitment to and permanent support for another state's government's policies.⁹⁰ The five different role conceptions identified by Holsti fit the paradigm of a cautious foreign policy and security actor with the need for 'Fingerspitzengefühl'.

Many role-theoretical applications to German foreign policy analysis following Holsti comprise the five mentioned similar roles into one very complex role conception, which entails a high potential for inner-role conflict. They focus on Germany's role of **a civilian power**, ascribed to Germany's political "Kultur der Zurückhaltung"⁹¹ or 'culture of restraint', and debate the level of change or continuity of Germany's security policy. Before unification, German security policy was continuous of 'paradoxical magnitude' and pertinent to the role expectations of a civilian power. The empirically observed high level of continuity was politically paradoxical considering how rapidly changing the environment surrounding

⁸⁷ Folz "Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010".

⁸⁸ Georg Leber, then Federal Minister of Defense (1974) as cited in Folz, *Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010*.

⁸⁹ Walter Scheel, then Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs (1973) as cited in Folz, *Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010*.

⁹⁰ Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy."

⁹¹ Mello, "Von Der Bonner Zur Berliner Republik: Die „Zivilmacht“ Deutschland Im Spiegel Parlamentarischer Debatten Zu Auslandseinsätzen Der Bundeswehr, 1990 Bis 2018."

German foreign policy decision-making was.⁹² The continuity consolidated the ‘grand strategy’ of making foreign policy decisions based on the civilian power role. This ‘grand strategy’ was continuous while allowing for minor adjustments required by changes in the environment.⁹³ The unification of West Germany and East Germany was arguably the most significant change in the environment and the greatest challenge to the continuity of the German foreign and security policy making. While the continuity of West Germany as a civilian power before the unification is relatively undisputed, the role of the Federal Republic after the caesura caused by the unification is not as definite. It is undeniable that changes in Germany’s security policy in the years following the unification happened. The essential question is whether these undeniably evident changes “are compatible with the essence of civilian power [or] not.”⁹⁴

In terms of self-perception of the decision-makers, a security-political continuity guided by the civilian power concept was indeed the most ‘natural’ way to go after the unification, most notably in order to allay alter fears of a German change of course back towards power politics.⁹⁵ Accordingly, Berlin’s political decision-making elite at the beginning of the 1990s expressed repeatedly how “the ‘new’ Federal Republic would continue the foreign and security policy of the ‘old’ Federal Republic without interruption.”⁹⁶ Such self-perception was accompanied by the inherent conflicts implied by the role of a civilian power. Germany’s dilemma between expanding democracy through pushing for the NATO enlargement to the east and establishing and maintaining peaceful relations with Russia, was characteristic of Germany’s inner-role conflict as a self-perceived civilian power shortly after unification. The Federal Republic’s commitment to the success of the NATO-Russia Act in 1997 is another example of such.⁹⁷ Both show, however, the discontinuity of Adenauer’s maxim of exclusive integration to the West.

The German participation in the 1999 NATO intervention in the Kosovo War was the first real threat to the civilian power role after the unification. One of the most influential advocates

⁹² Hanns W. Maull, “Neue Deutsche Außenpolitik: Mehr Kontinuität Als Wandel,” in *Neues Deutschland*, ed. Eckhard Jesse and Eberhard Sandschneider (Nomos, 2008), 125–40, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845205786-125>.

⁹³ Maull.

⁹⁴ Harnisch, “Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy.”

⁹⁵ Wilfried von Bredow, “Mittelmacht Mit Schwankenden Ambitionen: Die Deutsche Außen- Und Sicherheitspolitik Im Wandel,” *Zeitschrift Für Staats- Und Europawissenschaften* 4, no. 4 (January 20, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1515/ZSE.2006.027>.

⁹⁶ Von Bredow.

⁹⁷ Harnisch, “Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy.”

of the idea of Germany as a civilian power, Maull, contends that Germany's involvement in Kosovo signified a security policy "reorientation *within* Germany's traditional post-war foreign policy identity as a civilian power,"⁹⁸ rather than a normalization of its entire security policy towards power-politics, because the humanitarian catastrophe was Germany's main incentive for engagement. However, Maull's contention makes sense only based on the disputed premises, that, first, Germany's sole motivation was to counter the humanitarian catastrophe and, second, that to a civilian power, the defense of human rights is more important than the respect for international law.⁹⁹ Kriz and Urbanovska are skeptical of Maull's unprecedented ranking of the two essential elements of a civilian power's security policy, which would be human rights over international law, as well as of Germany's single humanitarian impetus, given the existence of alleged alternative motives behind the German involvement, most importantly the "fear of refugees."¹⁰⁰ Germany's engagement in the Kosovo War without the legitimizing basis of a resolution by the United Nations Security Council was thus the first fundamental change of Germany's security policy with the potential to render the latter incompatible with the role of a civilian power.

The decision to deploy Bundeswehr troops to Afghanistan in 2001 is often, yet again not undisputedly, added to the list of Germany's deviations from the ideal type of a civilian power and changes towards a "normal major middle power."¹⁰¹ While the decision to engage militarily in Afghanistan was characterized by Germany's continuing reflex to coordinate and cooperate to avoid fears of a German 'Sonderweg', it also showed signs of a more demanding and more "self-interest oriented" Germany.¹⁰² Germany's behavior in Afghanistan was "highly incoherent and irrational at the surface", which can be interpreted either as "the outcome of the intense effort to deal with the dilemmas of a civilian power at war,"¹⁰³ or as the emergence of a cautious yet demanding normal power. For the purpose of this thesis, the role of a normal power follows the realist definition of normalcy in International Relations, describing a "sovereign state [that] should and will pursue its interests in a way commensurate

⁹⁸ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force."

⁹⁹ Zdenek Kriz and Jana Urbanovska, *Deutschlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach der Vereinigung: Zivilmacht, Handelsstaat oder Mittelmacht?*. (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1606002>.

¹⁰⁰ Kriz and Urbanovska, "Deutschlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach der Vereinigung: Zivilmacht, Handelsstaat oder Mittelmacht?"

¹⁰¹ Müller and Wolff, "A Civilian Power at War: An Analysis of Germany's Military Engagement in Afghanistan since 2001."

¹⁰² Folz, *Deutschland, Schweden Und Der Wandel Der Sicherheitspolitik in Europa von 1945 Bis 2010*.

¹⁰³ Folz.

with its power base.”¹⁰⁴ When deciding on the country’s foreign, security, and military policy, normal power elites must be willing to “acknowledge national interests and act on them.”¹⁰⁵ Analyzing whether the decision-makers in the German parliament and the government based their argumentation for the military engagement in Afghanistan on their role conception of Germany as a civilian power, as a normal power, or on another role conception, is part of the subsequent analysis and aims to provide a better insight into the actual, self-perceived role of Germany with regards to military policy at the beginning of the 21st century.

The decision not to support the U.S. in the Security Council on its motion to intervene in Iraq and not to participate militarily in Iraq in 2003 was another break for Germany’s foreign and security policy, shortly after Afghanistan. Iraq presented the German government with a dilemma, with an incompatibility of three normative, civilian power principles. Deciding on a Bundeswehr deployment in Iraq essentially meant balancing the requirement of alliance solidarity with the U.S. (‘never alone’), against anti-militarism in general and the wariness to deploy the Bundeswehr abroad in particular (‘politics before force’), as well as the necessity of an explicit legitimization under international law (‘never again’).¹⁰⁶ The German government under chancellor Gerhard Schröder (Social Democratic Party of Germany) and foreign minister Joschka Fischer (Alliance 90/The Greens) decided against the alliance solidarity with the United States, marking the beginning of anti-American sentiment in German security policy, a sentiment against Germany’s historically most important ally (in terms of security policy). This neglect of the alliance with the United States was a sign of ‘wear and tear’ of Germany’s role conception of a civilian power, especially combined with the increased German “claim to power.”¹⁰⁷ Germany’s aspiration to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council is another more power-oriented behavior than what the civilian power role ideally allows for.

Security Council Resolution 1973, concerning the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya, presented another impasse to the German government, now under chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union) and foreign minister Guido Westerwelle (Free Democratic Party). This time, the balancing act to be managed was between voting with the

¹⁰⁴ Mary N. Hampton, “The Past, Present, and the Perhaps’ Is Germany a ‘Normal’ Power?,” *Security Studies* 10, no. 2 (December 2000): 179–202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410008429433>.

¹⁰⁵ Hampton.

¹⁰⁶ Hanns W. Maull, “Deutsche Außenpolitik: Orientierungslos,” *Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft* 21, no. 1 (2011): 95–119, <https://doi.org/10.5771/1430-6387-2011-1-95>.

¹⁰⁷ Maull.

alliance and following the principle of ‘never alone’, as well as acting on the doctrine of ‘responsibility to protect’ (‘never again’) on the one side, and the hesitance to deploy German troops abroad (‘politics before force’), on the other side.¹⁰⁸ Germany decided to follow its anti-militarist culture and abstained. Unlike the Russian and Chinese abstentions, which were waivers of their respective veto powers and were thus understood as two affirmatives, the German abstention was internationally received as a ‘no’. In other words, the German abstention was perceived from the alter as a German ‘Sonderweg’.¹⁰⁹ This was rather difficult to combine with the civilian power ideal, especially given that the allies’ proposed action, in comparison to Iraq 2003, was legitimized by international law and followed a humanitarian, civilian-power-compatible aim (“never again”). The German abstention on the Libya Resolution is interesting also for the dynamic role change Germany went through in months. At the beginning of the outbreak of violence in Libya in early February 2011, Germany found itself in a leading, agenda-setting role, which turned into the role of a loyal follower who struggled significantly to sell its abstention as the possibility to enhance the strategic relations with its fellow abstaining Security Council members, India, Russia, and Brazil.¹¹⁰ Whether German decision-makers argued according to such role conception or any other role conception in the debate on the Libya intervention is analyzed in the subsequent section.

The 2010s and the beginning of the 2020s were characterized, among others, by the declining importance of the United States under Trump and the United Kingdom after Brexit to the security of Europe, China’s rise, and Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. The changing international environment put great pressure on Germany’s decision-makers to reconstruct the role of Germany with regard to global and European security. Germany’s response to Russia’s invasion of Crimea in the form of a “coercive use of economic instruments” indicated Germany’s preparedness “to take a leading role on issues once left to American leadership.”¹¹¹ Despite Germany’s elite’s preference for geo-economic power over geopolitical power in the Crimean case, the ideal type of a civilian power no longer presented the most suitable role for Germany in its foreign and security policy. Instead, Germany was confronted (and continues to be confronted) with the choice between the positively associated role of a ‘Gestaltungsmacht’ (shaping power) and the (generally) negatively associated role of a

¹⁰⁸ Maull, “Deutsche Außenpolitik: Orientierungslos.”

¹⁰⁹ Maull.

¹¹⁰ Harnisch, “Standortbestimmung Deutschlands.”

¹¹¹ Stephen F. Szabo, “Germany: From Civilian Power to a Geo-Economic Shaping Power,” *German Politics and Society* 35, no. 3 (September 1, 2017): 38–54, <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2017.350303>.

hegemon.^{112,113} The reality of Germany's military policy has shown a transformation towards the role of a 'Gestaltungsmacht'. Germany's current head of state and former foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier described the new self-perception of Germany as that of a "responsible, restrained, and reflective leader,"¹¹⁴ with a "responsibility to actively shape the global order."¹¹⁵ Incidentally, it has been dubbed unlikely that Germany would evolve into a hegemon, for that "German power is too limited and too fragile to provide the type of hegemonic leadership many either desire or fear."¹¹⁶

This outline of the evolution of Germany's core national role conception(s) has shown that many scholars compare Germany's security policy to an ideal type and analyze how much of a civilian power the 'new' Federal Republic has continued to be over time. However, based on this initial outline, I argue that the ideal type has practically become out of reach in the rapidly changing alter environment. I suggest that Germany's security policy, especially concerning Bundeswehr deployments after the turn of the century, has evolved too far away from the ideal type of a civilian power to not explore other, less complex roles with potentially higher explanatory value.

Expectations

Based on the role-theoretical framework and the outline of the evolution of Germany's core national role conceptions, the following expectations for the analysis arise. First, role theory in International Relations assumes that decision-makers are aware of their nation's role and behave and decide accordingly. Thus, I expect to find that the relevant decision-makers were mindful of Germany's role and used it to justify their decision for or against the deployment of troops to Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Proving this proposition is the essential aspiration of this research. The pursuant null hypothesis (H_0) is that the decision-makers did not argue based on role considerations. If I cannot disprove H_0 , the role-theoretical application does not make sense for solving the 'puzzle' of Germany's military engagement abroad. Assuming, however,

¹¹² Szabo. "Germany: From Civilian Power to a Geo-Economic Shaping Power."

¹¹³ Gunther Hellmann, "Zwischen Gestaltungsmacht Und Hegemoniefalle," *Aus Politik Und Zeitgeschichte* 66 (2016): 4–12.

¹¹⁴ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "Germany's New Global Role: Berlin Steps Up," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): 106–13.

¹¹⁵ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Weißbuch 2016. Zur Sicherheitspolitik Und Zur Zukunft Der Bundeswehr" (Berlin, 2016), <https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/dossiers/weissbuch>, free translation from German, last accessed 10 June 2022.

¹¹⁶ Szabo, "Germany: From Civilian Power to a Geo-Economic Shaping Power."

the first proposition holds, I further expect that the decision-makers primarily argued for or against military engagements based on role conceptions other than that of the civilian power. This second proposition is derived from the previous outline of the evolution of Germany's core role conceptions, which conveyed the ambivalence and the complexity of the idealized role and Germany's consequential, seeming development away from it. Lastly, assuming the second proposition holds, I propose that this development, this role change, happened alongside continuous developments of Germany's status and expectations from the alter. The first two propositions guide the analysis, and, if they hold, the third one will be subject to the discussion section following the analysis.

Analysis: Role conceptions as bases for argumentation in the Bundestag

This analysis presents and investigates the results of the content analysis of the governmental and parliamentary documents relevant to the debates on German military engagement in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The analysis aspires to detect role conceptions as the decision-makers' bases for justification of Germany's role performance and thereby prove proposition 1. The role performance is the respective security policy decision made by the government and the Bundestag,¹¹⁷ which was, as mentioned above, to engage militarily in the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan in the first case, to abstain in the Security Council on the establishment of a no-fly-zone in Libya and to not engage militarily in the second case, and to participate militarily in the war against the Islamic State in Syria in the third case. The first subsection of the analysis is on the first case, the Afghan case.

Afghanistan

The qualitative content analysis for the Afghan case comprises six relevant debates of the Bundestag, one government statement, one answer by the government to an interpellation, and one request by the members of the Bundestag to the government¹¹⁸ concerning Germany's (military) reaction to the September 11 attacks and the following controversy of a possible German participation in the United States-led 'war on terror'. The results are presented in the figure below.

¹¹⁷ In the Libyan case, the Bundestag did not get to vote on the Federal Government's decision.

¹¹⁸ The debates of the Bundestag, the government statement and the request by the members of the Bundestag date from September 12, 2001 to December 22, 2001. The answer by the government regards foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr generally and dates February 1, 2000. See Appendix 1 for the document list of the content analysis in the Afghanistan case.

Figure 2: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Afghanistan

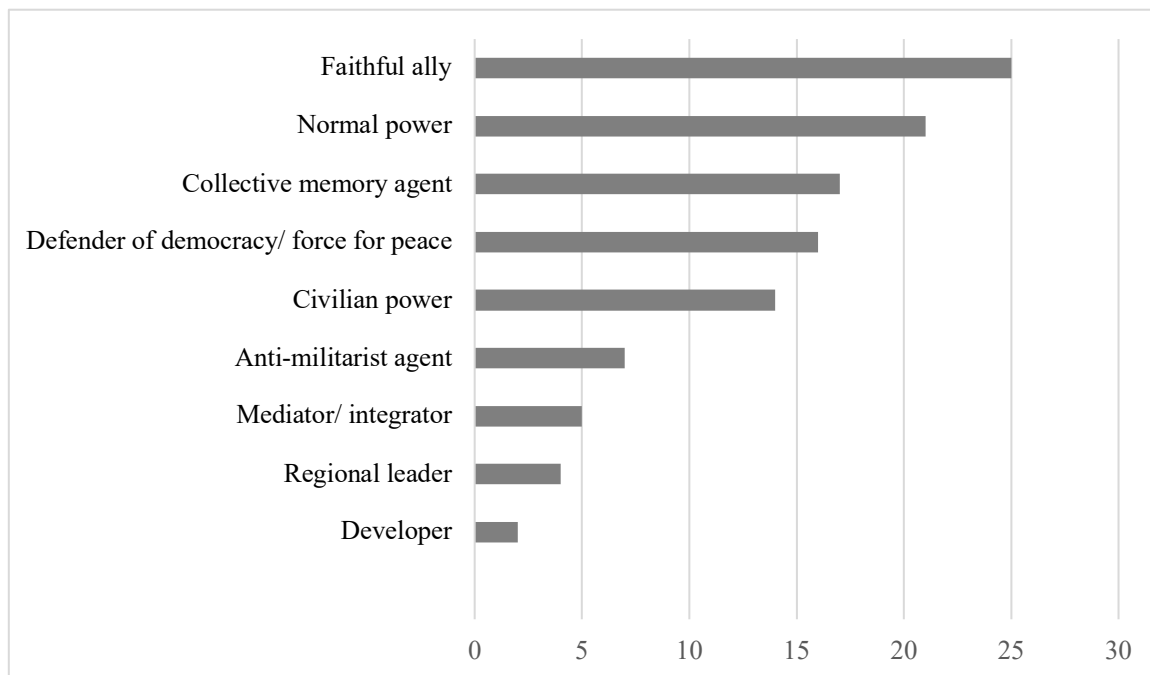


Figure 2 shows that the dominant, primarily coded for role conception used as an argument in the deliberations on Afghanistan was that of Germany as a faithful ally to the United States.

Deutschland steht angesichts dieses beispiellosen Angriffs *uneingeschränkt* an der Seite der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika (In the face of this unprecedented attack, Germany stands *unreservedly* by the side of the United States of America).¹¹⁹

The expressions of the role conception of a faithful ally by the members of parliament, the ministers in the cabinet, and the chancellor himself were often accompanied by statements demonstrating Germany's collective memory of its role in the 20th century. The role of a faithful ally seems to have been perceived as one imposed on Germany by obligation, almost by guilt, as if Germany had to assume this role out of debt to the United States, for the latter's role in 'liberating' Germany from its Nazi regime:

Unser Bekenntnis zur . . . Solidarität mit den USA ist in diesen Tagen mehr als eine bloße Selbstverständlichkeit. Gerade hier in Berlin werden wir Deutschen niemals vergessen, was die Vereinigten Staaten für uns getan haben. Es waren die Amerikaner,

¹¹⁹ Gerhard Schröder, SPD, doc. 1b (free translation from German, emphasis added).

die ganz entscheidend zum Sieg über den Nationalsozialismus beigetragen haben, und es waren unsere amerikanischen Freunde, die uns nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg einen Neuanfang in Freiheit und Demokratie ermöglicht haben. Sie haben nicht nur die Lebensfähigkeit, sondern auch die Freiheit Westberlins garantiert und geschützt. Sie haben uns geholfen, unsere staatliche Einheit in einem friedlichen, demokratischen Europa wiederzugewinnen. (Our commitment to . . . solidarity with the United States is more than a mere matter of course these days. Especially here in Berlin, we Germans will never forget what the United States has done for us. It was the Americans who made a decisive contribution to the victory over National Socialism, and it was our American friends who enabled us to make a new start in freedom and democracy after the Second World War. They guaranteed and protected not only the viability but also the freedom of West Berlin. They helped us to regain our national unity in a peaceful, democratic Europe).¹²⁰

The role of a faithful ally is, measured by the frequency of coding, more important to the sum of members of the Bundestag and the government than the role of the civilian power. The expectations from the alter and the ego implied by the former role are seemingly enough for many decision-makers to engage Bundeswehr troops to stand by the Americans in their ‘war on terror’.

Wir Deutschen haben gewaltige Freundschaft erfahren dürfen. Wir wollen in dieser Stunde des Grauens diese Freundschaft aus tiefster Überzeugung erwidern und wir müssen auch bereit sein, *alle Mittel* unseres Landes einzusetzen, um zu helfen, wo wir helfen können. (We Germans have experienced tremendous friendship. In this hour of horror, we want to return this friendship with the deepest conviction, and we must also be prepared to *use all the means* of our country to help where we can).¹²¹

In combination with the perceived role of a faithful ally, many of the relevant speakers expressed that Germany needed to engage in Afghanistan for Germany itself. The reasonably frequent line of argumentation highlighting Germany’s national interest in a military mission stands in opposition to the ideal type of the civilian power role, which either makes Afghanistan

¹²⁰ Gerhard Schröder, SPD, doc. 1b (free translation from German, emphasis added).

¹²¹ Michael Glos, CDU/CSU, doc. 1a (free translation from German, emphasis added).

an outlier, or hints at a potentially sustainable conversion of Germany's security policy into one more suitable to a normal power. Especially the Christian Democrats and the Liberals in the Bundestag's opposition perceived this new role of Germany as a normal power and used it to argue in favor of the Bundeswehr engagement abroad and outside of the NATO territory.

Aber damit kein Zweifel entsteht, sage ich: Dank an Amerika allein ist es nicht, warum wir handeln. Genauso wichtig ist, dass die deutsche Beteiligung am militärischen Einsatz . . . *in unserer eigenen nationalen Interesse* liegt. (But so that there is no doubt, I say: Thanks to America alone is not why we act. It is just as important that German participation in the military campaign . . . is in our *own national interest*).¹²²

The third most frequently coded for role is that of a defender of democracy. The defender of democracy role is derived from Holsti's role of the 'defender of faith', which was described in the previous section regarding the national role conceptions of East Germany. In this thesis, Holsti's role of the defender of faith is adjusted to fit Germany as the defender of, specifically, the democratic form of government, freedom and peace. The analysis distinguishes between the seemingly similar roles of the defender of democracy and the civilian power, because they provide slightly different patterns of justification of military engagements. The argument for or against military engagements based on the role conception of Germany as a civilian power emphasizes the goal of civilizing international relations and the requirement of a strict compliance with international law. Most importantly, for a line of argumentation to count as a civilian power argument, it must be apparent that the military deployment is a matter of last resort and that all other diplomatic means are unfit to achieve the goal of civilizing International Relations. The role of the defender of democracy is much less complex compared to the civilian power. Based on these distinguishing characteristics, the members of the Bundestag referred to Germany enacting its role of the defender of democracy by deploying the Bundeswehr to Afghanistan, slightly more often than to Germany as a civilian power. The line of argumentation based on the role conception of the defender of democracy centered around how Germany is a "wehrhafte Demokratie," a democracy able to defend its' democratic values on the inside and outside, and how it must fight (militarily) to support the defense of its "liberality and its way of living in an open society."¹²³ In comparison, the argumentation for the

¹²² Friedrich Merz, CDU/CSU, doc. 1d (free translation from German, emphasis added).

¹²³ Gerhard Schröder, SPD, doc. 1b (free translation from German).

deployment of the Bundeswehr to Afghanistan, based on the perceived role of a civilian power, highlighted the causality of previous legitimization of the mission by international law for an affirmative decision:

. . . Mir ist es im Hinblick auf die Öffentlichkeit wichtig, . . . festzustellen, dass alle Maßnahmen einschließlich der militärischen exakt auf dieser völkerrechtlich verbindlichen Basis getroffen worden sind, also durch die Staatengemeinschaft und durch das internationale Recht in vollem Umfang legitimiert sind. (. . . It is important to me in terms of public opinion . . . to state that all measures, including the military ones, have been taken precisely on this basis, which is binding under international law, meaning that they are fully legitimized by the community of states and by international law).¹²⁴

The remaining role conceptions found in the material, namely those of the expressively anti-militarist power (perceived mainly by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), today the left party, and used as an argument against a German military involvement in Afghanistan), the mediator/ integrator, the regional leader (i.e., Germany in the EU and NATO), and the developer, were coded for only a few times, conveying relative unimportance to the decision-makers.

The content analysis of Bundestag debates and governmental statements shows that the relevant decision-makers in the Bundestag and the government mainly used the self-perceived role of Germany as a faithful ally to argue for the deployment of Bundeswehr troops to Afghanistan. Germany as an ally, which, on the one hand, feels obligated to be faithful and to defend its democratic values abroad based on its collective memory of past experiences, while, on the other hand, emphasizes its national interests in participating in a military mission, like a normal power. The difference between the various roles reveals Germany's struggle between continuity and change of its security policy. Based on the results of the content analysis, I argue that Germany has deviated from the *ideal* type of a civilian power toward a more normal but reliable power in the debate on military engagement in Afghanistan. At the same time, the two essential role conceptions of the defender of democracy and the faithful ally, as well as the less often coded for civilian power, convey that German decision-makers are not ready to let go of the continuity of Germany's foreign and security policy role completely. They make a feature

¹²⁴ Gerhard Schröder, SPD, doc. 1d (free translation from German).

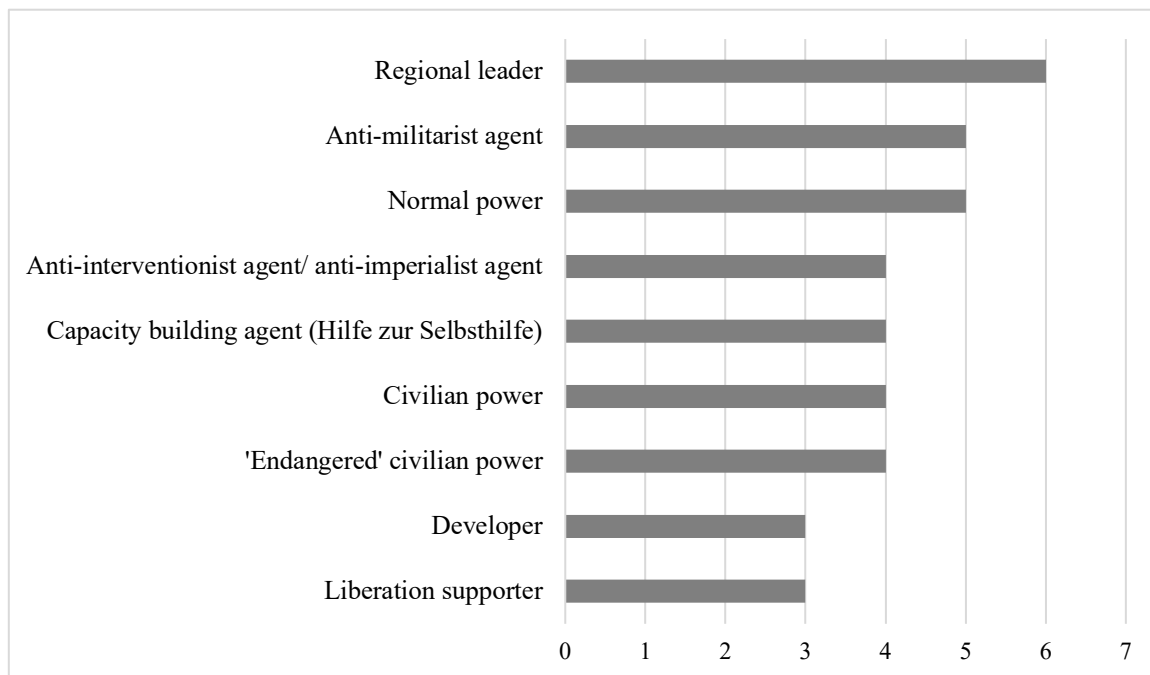
of the civilian power maxims of ‘never alone’, actualized in the perceived role of the faithful ally to the United States, and the necessity of a legitimization under international law (‘never again’). The anti-militarist maxim is expressed overwhelmingly by the PDS (the Left Party), the smallest faction of a parliamentary party in the German Bundestag and the smallest opposition party to the red-green parliament (SPD and Bündnis 90/die Grünen). The weight of the sole argument of ‘politics before force’ in the debate on the deployment of Bundeswehr troops to Afghanistan can thus be considered subordinate. Without emphasizing ‘politics before force’, Germany is a faithful ally and a defender of democracy, but not an ideal civilian power.

Libya

The picture is an entirely different one in the Libyan case. Of course, given that there was no vote on any decision regarding Libya in the Bundestag, the debates on the situation in Libya and Germany’s (potential) role in it differ substantively and quantitatively from the debates held on Afghanistan. Nonetheless, four Bundestag debates, one motion by the Free Democratic Party together with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CDU/CSU), the two factions of parliamentary parties in the German Bundestag holding the majority and carrying the government, as well as two governmental statements by then foreign minister Guido Westerwelle were identified as relevant and thus included in the content analysis.¹²⁵ However, as figure 3 shows, there was relatively less argumentation based on role conceptions in the Bundestag on Libya as compared to Afghanistan, and the role conceptions that were expressed fluctuated at different times during the debate, which is why the overall picture is not as easily interpretable.

¹²⁵ See Appendix 3 for the document list of the content analysis in the Libya case.

Figure 3: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Libya



What can be seen in figure 3 is that the most dominant role conception in the Afghanistan debate, namely that of Germany as a faithful ally, was utterly absent in the debate in the Bundestag on a potential German military engagement in Libya. Instead, when the violence first escalated in Libya, Germany disapproved strongly of other EU members' behavior towards Libya, especially Italy.

Es ist völlig inakzeptabel, dass vor allem ein EU-Land aus falsch verstandener Partnerschaft zu Libyen die EU am dringend erforderlichen Handeln hindert und damit zugleich eine Ignoranz der brutalen Menschenrechtsverletzungen zum Ausdruck bringt. (It is completely unacceptable that an EU country, because of a misunderstood partnership with Libya, is preventing the EU from taking urgently needed action and at the same time expressing ignorance of the brutal human rights violations).¹²⁶

After the German abstention in the Security Council on Resolution 1973, Germany's situation and role changed greatly. Before the abstention, the role conception primarily coded for was that of a regional leader, especially within the European Union and NATO.

¹²⁶ Andreas Schockenhoff, CDU/CSU, doc. 3b (free translation from German).

Wir als Deutsche sind diejenigen, die es sich aufgrund ihrer zentralen Lage – geografisch, politisch und auch wirtschaftlich – am allerwenigsten leisten können, den Blick nur auf den Süden oder nur auf den Osten zu verengen. Deswegen werden wir auch hier eine *engagierte Führungsrolle* wahrnehmen. (As Germans, we are the ones who, because of our central location - geographically, politically, and also economically - can least afford to narrow our gaze only to the South or only to the East. That is why we will take a *committed leadership role* here as well).¹²⁷

After the vote in the Security Council and with its abstention, Germany, for the first time, had voted against all its NATO and EU members.¹²⁸ While then chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized after the abstention repeatedly how the decision to abstain did not equate to a German declaration of neutrality on the issue and that Germany fully shared the objectives of the resolution and stood with its allies,¹²⁹ the ego and alter conception of Germany's role turned from a relatively often coded for civilian power before the abstention, to more of a failed or endangered civilian power after the abstention.

Wir sollten uns alle miteinander in Demut üben. Wir sollten auf der Hut sein und um unsere Verantwortung wissen . . . die ganze Zeit wird über Enthaltung bzw. Nichtenthaltung diskutiert. Ich weiß, dass sich daran manches festmacht. Aber nach vorne blickend sage ich: Es reicht nicht, auf die Risiken hinzuweisen, Herr Außenminister. Die Frage ist jetzt: *Wie verhindern wir, dass von deutscher Seite der Anschein erweckt wird, es gehe uns nicht hinreichend um die Menschenrechte der Menschen dort.* (We should all practice humility with each other. We should be on our guard and know our responsibility . . . all the time there is discussion about abstention or non-abstention. I know that some things are based on that. But looking forward, I say: it is not enough to point out the risks, Mr. Foreign Minister. The question now is: *How do we prevent the German side from giving the impression that we are not sufficiently concerned about the human rights of the people there.*)¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Werner Hoyer, FDP, doc. 3b (free translation from German, emphasis added).

¹²⁸ Rinke, "Eingreifen Oder Nicht? Warum Sich Die Bundesregierung in Der Libyen-Frage Enthielt."

¹²⁹ "Pressestatement von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel Zur Aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen" (Berlin, March 18, 2011), <https://www.bundestkanzler.de/bk-de/aktuelles/pressestatement-von-bundestkanzlerin-angela-merkel-zur-aktuellen-entwicklung-in-libyen-842900>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

¹³⁰ Renate Künast, Alliance 90/ The Greens, doc. 3d (free translation from German, emphasis added).

When considering the entire period of the Libya debate, before and after the decision not to engage militarily in Libya, the three dominant and reinforcing themes were those of Germany in the roles of an anti-interventionist agent, a capacity builder, and a normal power. Germany as a normal power expressed how it made decisions on military interventions abroad based on its national interest, including its commercial interests abroad, rather than by being pushed into commitments by allies and expectations from third states. Germany as a normal power was no longer the “problem solver” who would “take the blame later when something [had gone] wrong.”¹³¹ In line with engaging militarily only when it served its interest as a normal power, Germany perceived itself as an anti-interventionist agent, promoting a “national solution” found in the dialogue within the country (Libya) and not by foreign troops.¹³² While it was in Germany’s national interest *not* to intervene militarily, it *was* in Germany’s interest to act as a capacity builder in Libya. Among others, did unrest in Libya imply an increase of refugees in Europe. Thus, by offering “Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe,”¹³³ meaning capacity building and taking on a “stabilizing role” in the region,¹³⁴ Germany aimed to give the Libyan people “a perspective” so that they could find employment, “stay there and have a future” instead.¹³⁵ The less frequently coded roles of a developer and a liberation supporter coincide with the analysis of a normal power with interests to enact the roles of an anti-interventionist agent and capacity builder.

The comparison between the Afghan and the Libyan case is interesting. Whereas the ideal type of civilian power role in Afghanistan was missing the ‘politics before force’ aspect as the basis for argumentation, in Libya, it was the ‘never alone’ maxim, which the decision-makers were rarely expressing. Instead of voting with its allies and contributing to the no-fly zone legitimized under international law, Germany stood alone in not wanting to become a “war party in a civil war”¹³⁶ and prioritized its maxim of ‘politics before force’.

Syria

The Syrian case conveys yet another order of prioritization of role conceptions and civilian power maxims by the members of parliament and government. The content analysis for the

¹³¹ Rainer Stinner, FDP, doc. 3c (free translation from German).

¹³² Guido Westerwelle, FDP, doc. 3d (free translation from German).

¹³³ Cornelia Pieper, FDP, doc. 3a.

¹³⁴ Rolf Mützenich, SPD, doc. 3b (free translation from German).

¹³⁵ Gudrun Kopp, FDP, doc. 3b (free translation from German).

¹³⁶ Guido Westerwelle, FDP, doc. 3c (free translation from German).

Syrian case comprised one recommendation to the Bundestag for a resolution and report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the motion of the Federal Government, five Bundestag debates, and one government statement. The results of the content analysis, meaning the role conceptions used as bases for argumentation in the debate on a German engagement in Syria against the Islamic State, are presented in figure 4.

Figure 4: Argumentation based on role conceptions – Syria

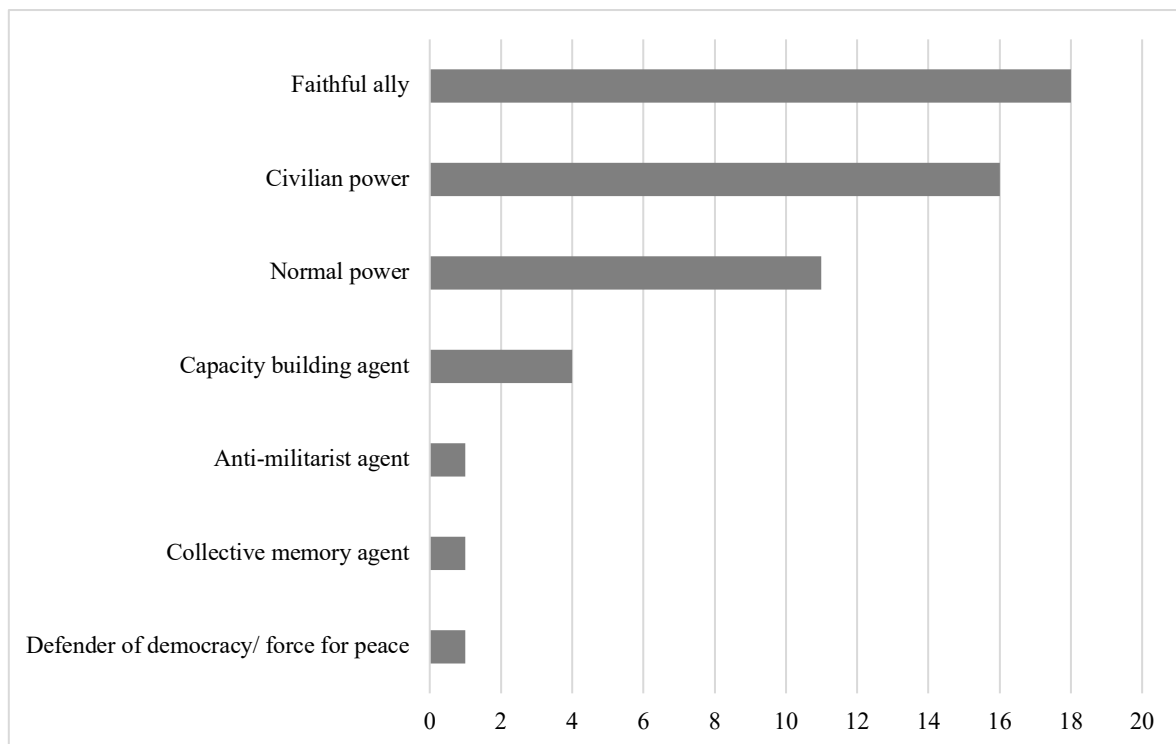


Figure 4 draws a much clearer picture of the debate on Syria than the previous two debates on Afghanistan and Libya, respectively. Comparable to the debate on the Bundeswehr deployment to Afghanistan in 2001, the most important role conception as a basis for argumentation for the military engagement against the Islamic State in Syria in 2015 was that of Germany as a faithful ally. In 2015 however, as compared to 2001, Germany perceived itself as a faithful ally to France rather than to the United States. While Germany’s decision-makers in 2001 perceived Germany as a faithful ally to the United States by obligation and out of guilt, in 2015, Germany was a faithful ally to “one of its closest friends,”¹³⁷ to France, to a country on the same level as Germany. Germany’s role as a faithful ally to France was supposed to be essential for Europe.

¹³⁷ Niels Annen, SPD, doc. 5b (free translation from German).

A Europe without Germany as a faithful ally to France would have been “simply incapable of action.”¹³⁸ The terrorist attacks directly targeted not just Paris but also Germany and “Europe’s liberal order of values” as a whole.¹³⁹ Especially in such “times of a weak Europe, France, and Germany, the main pillars of the European Union, could not be separated.”¹⁴⁰ Beyond the faithful alliance to France, which was the “immovable core of the German foreign policy,”¹⁴¹ the decision on the military engagement against the Islamic State in Syria was also debated based on the role conception of Germany as a faithful ally in more general terms. The decision-makers perceived that the decision to militarily stand beside France in its fight against the Islamic State in Syria was vital to the credibility of the German role as a faithful ally, potentially also to make amends for the abstention on the Libyan question four years before.

Deutschland ist fest verankert in seinen Bündnissen. Es ist ein *verlässlicher Partner*. Zuverlässig zeigen wir Solidarität. So wie wir Solidarität einfordern, so müssen wir sie auch leisten, auch in schwierigen Zeiten, auch militärisch. (Germany is firmly anchored in its alliances. It is a *reliable partner*. We reliably show solidarity. Just as we demand solidarity, we must also provide it, even in difficult times, including militarily.)¹⁴²

The debate on the Syrian case emphasized how Germany needed the role of the faithful ally, of the reliable partner, to promote the unlikelihood of a German ‘Sonderweg’:

Die europäische Integration; dass Deutschland seinen Weg niemals alleine gehen soll; dass wir uns nicht isolieren dürfen. Deswegen will ich hier einmal diese Frage stellen: Wie hätte man denn auf eine Bitte um Unterstützung unseres wichtigsten Bündnispartners in Europa in einer solchen Situation reagieren können? *Wenn wir da Nein gesagt hätten, was wäre die Reaktion gewesen?* (European integration; that Germany should never go its way alone; that we must not isolate ourselves. That is why I want to ask this question here: How could we have reacted to a request for support

¹³⁸ Johann Wadepful, CDU/CSU, doc. 5d (free translation from German).

¹³⁹ Auswärtiger Ausschuss “Beschlussempfehlung und Bericht”, doc. 6a (free translation from German).

¹⁴⁰ Josip Juratovic, SPD, doc. 5c (free translation from German).

¹⁴¹ Angela Merkel, CDU/CSU, doc. 5e (free translation from German).

¹⁴² Ursula von der Leyen, CDU/CSU, doc. 5b (free translation from German, emphasis added).

from our most important ally in Europe in such a situation? *If we had said no, what would have been the reaction?*)¹⁴³

Wir sind ein verlässlicher Bündnispartner und Freund. Wir wollen keinen deutschen Sonderweg und keine Isolation. (We are a reliable ally and friend. We do not want a German ‘Sonderweg’ and no isolation.)¹⁴⁴

Germany’s ‘never alone’ is also an essential part of its perceived, more complex role of a civilian power, which was relatively more important as a basis for argumentation in the Syrian case, compared to Afghanistan and Libya. Interestingly to note is that, in the Syrian case, the decision-makers used the role of Germany as a civilian power to argue *for* a military engagement. In contrast, regarding Libya they used it as an argument *against* a Bundeswehr deployment. The argument for a military engagement in Syria as a civilian power highlighted both the civilian aim and purpose of the engagement as well as its legitimization by international law. Using the civilian power argument, the decision-makers furthermore aspired to convey the continuity of German defense policy and how the military engagement in Syria was not an outlier to such.

Meine Damen und Herren, wir *bleiben bei diesem Einsatz unseren Grundlinien treu*. Dieser militärische Einsatz ist *eingebettet in ein politisches Gesamtkonzept* [(dem Friedensprozess für Syrien)], *zusammen mit 64 Staaten einer Allianz auf einer klaren völkerrechtlichen Grundlage* und mit einem Mandat des Deutschen Bundestages. (Ladies and gentlemen, we *remain true to our basic principles* in this deployment. This military deployment is *embedded in an overall political concept* [(the peace process for Syria)], *together with 64 states of an alliance on a clear basis of international law* and with a mandate from the German Bundestag.)¹⁴⁵

Ich möchte . . . darauf aufmerksam machen, *dass die deutsche Außenpolitik in einer großen Kontinuität steht*. Sie stellt die Diplomatie, die Verständigung und das Herstellen von Gesprächskontakten in den Mittelpunkt ihrer Arbeit. Das ist bei

¹⁴³ Niels Annen, SPD, doc. 5b (free translation from German, emphasis added).

¹⁴⁴ Florian Hahn, CDU/CSU, doc. 5b (free translation from German).

¹⁴⁵ Hennig Otte, CDU/CSU, doc. 5d (free translation from German, emphasis added).

Vorgängerregierungen so gewesen, und das ist bei den aktuellen Konflikten, die wir zu bewältigen hatten, auch so gewesen. (I would like to point out *that there is a great deal of continuity in German foreign policy*. It places diplomacy, understanding and the establishment of contacts at the center of its work. That was the case with previous governments, and it has also been the case with the current conflicts we have had to deal with.)¹⁴⁶

At the same time, as has been observed in the Afghan and the Libyan cases, there was a collateral sentiment of Germany in the role of a normal power in the Syrian case. However, again in contrast to the Libyan case, the decision-makers used the perceived role as a normal power to argue *for* a military engagement in Syria rather than *against* it (like in Libya). Whereas in 2011, the decision-makers argued that Germany as a normal power must not and could not intervene everywhere its traditional allies and other states wanted it to intervene, in the Syrian case, the decision-makers recognized the responsibility that accompanies Germany's growing power and how nonaction by a normal power might entail serious ramifications. In 2015, the decision-makers expressed how Germany as a normal power "wants to and will assume responsibility" and that "the one who affirms responsibility in the world must not escape the burden that comes with it."¹⁴⁷ Next to the responsibility implied by Germany's increasing power, the decision-makers acknowledged Germany's national security interests in fighting the Islamic State in Syria. Like any other normal power, Germany had to engage militarily abroad to defend its security.

Similar to the debate on the Libyan intervention, it was evident in the Syrian case that it was in the interest of Germany as a normal power to also enact the role of a capacity builder stabilizing the region. The less coded for roles of an anti-militarist agent, collective memory agent, and defender of democracy/ force for peace were relatively unimportant to the debate. The anti-militarist agent is the role that the left party aspired Germany to be, claiming that "no war may emanate from German soil."¹⁴⁸

Both in the Syrian and the Afghan case, the decision-makers in the German Bundestag and Federal Government argued for the deployment of Bundeswehr troops based on, and

¹⁴⁶ Johann Wadephul, CDU/CSU, doc. 5d (free translation from German, emphasis added).

¹⁴⁷ Hennig Otte, CDU/CSU, citing philosopher Georg Picht, doc. 5c (free translation from German)

¹⁴⁸ Sevim Dagdelen, Die Linke, doc. 5c (free translation from German).

highlighted the importance of, the two civilian power maxims of ‘never alone’ and ‘never again’. They emphasized the role of Germany as a faithful ally and the necessity of legitimization for the use of force under international law. The two maxims were used to excuse the breach of the third maxim ‘politics before force’. The argumentation in the Libyan case was the complete opposite, which makes sense given that the decision made (abstention and non-intervention) was the opposite of the decisions made in the other two cases (intervention). In the Libyan case, the decision-makers emphasized ‘politics before force’ and neglected the maxim of ‘never alone’. They did appreciate the existence of a legitimization of the use of force under international law but disregarded it for ‘politics before force’ and normal power motives.

The analysis shows, first, that the decision-makers did argue according to role conceptions. Second, in none of the three cases, they primarily argued based on Germany as an *ideal type* of a civilian power. Propositions 1 and 2 hold. All three cases reveal normal power motives and deviations from the role conception of a civilian power. What stands out is the continuous use of selected civilian power maxims and how the decision-makers choose which of these maxims to use to explain specific behavior: to explain the decision to vote for a military intervention, they concentrate and emphasize on ‘never alone’ in the form of Germany’s role of a faithful ally and the implications of such a role, actively disregarding the maxim of ‘politics before force’. When explaining the decision not to intervene, the decision-makers highlight Germany’s anti-militarist role and disregard its role of a faithful ally. While none of the two is surprising, the findings convey a Germany in the role of a normal power picking the civilian power maxims that best fit its preferred course of action, rather than Germany as a coherent, ideal type of a civilian power.

The questions posed earlier were, first, whether deviations from the ideal type were acceptable to the role of a civilian power and, second, whether there may be an ordering of preferences (i.e., ‘never alone’ over ‘never again’) within the role conception of a civilian power. It is evident that German decision-makers deviated from the ideal type of a civilian power in the debates on the three respective military engagements abroad and that German decision-makers fluctuated in their respective preference orderings of the three maxims. Whether Germany deviated too much from the ideal type of a civilian power in the three cases of justifications of military interventions under investigation here, to still be considered a civilian power more generally, is too speculative and subjective for me to answer. Instead, I argue that the ideal type of a civilian power lacks explanatory value because of its complexity and I propose the role conceptions found in the preceding content analysis to better describe

the reality of Germany’s decision-making on military interventions abroad in the first two decades of the 21st century. The most important role conceptions are summarized in figure 5.

Figure 5: Summary of Germany’s role conceptions as bases for argumentation in the three cases



The following section discusses the implications of the results of the content analysis for the predictability of Germany’s security and defense policy, as well as the reasons for the role change.

Discussion and conclusion

In 1949, West Germany was a protectorate, a ‘Schützling’ of foreign powers, with the United States leading the way. At the time, there was no independent, no self-determined foreign and security policy in West Germany. With the unification and the increase in, primarily economic and political, but also strategic importance globally, Germany’s security political role evolved – most definitely concerning foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr. This thesis’ analysis has shown that German decision-makers primarily argued in all three cases under investigation based on the role conception of Germany as a more normal power hand-picking civilian power maxims, rather than based on Germany as the ideal type of a civilian power. The role change

of Germany in the long run, that is, from 1949 until the turn of the century and beyond, has many potential causes.

Role change

Generally, as mentioned above, role change happens when role conceptions are fluctuating and imprecise, when two or more role commitments are conflicting or when the external environment is uncertain and changing. Germany's imprecise and complex role of a civilian power presupposes role change, as it is difficult for decision-makers to navigate and emphasize the complexity of the civilian power role when arguing for or against military engagements. The complexity of the role implies inner-role conflicts between the maxims of 'never again', 'never alone' and 'politics before force'. The analysis has shown that Germany's decision-makers trade-off these maxims against each other to fit Germany's normal power aspirations when arguing for or against Bundeswehr deployments abroad. In other words, the decision-makers hold on to the individual civilian power maxims and still argue based on them. However, by balancing them to fit Germany's normal power interests, they deviate further from the ideal type of a civilian power. Next to the complexity of the role leading to inner-role conflicts and difficulties to navigate for decision-makers, alternating role prescriptions from the alter and the evolution of Germany's status presumably have contributed to the change of national role conceptions used as bases for justifications of decisions on military deployments abroad.

Both the role expectations from international partners as well as the status of Germany have developed immensely since the end of the Second World War. While the post-Second World War era was characterized by allies trying to contain Germany in the role of the aggressor, the post-Cold War era has been marked by "forceful and demanding expectations of Germany's partners . . . that Germany pulls its weight in international military missions."¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, Germany has evolved from its status of a protectorate to a 'middle power'¹⁵⁰ and eventually to a 'great power'.¹⁵¹ Based on Holsti's considerations of the importance of the decision-makers' awareness of their countries' statuses for the respective self-perceived national role

¹⁴⁹ Kai Oppermann, "National Role Conceptions, Domestic Constraints and the New 'Normalcy' in German Foreign Policy: The Eurozone Crisis, Libya and Beyond," *German Politics* 21, no. 4 (December 2012): 502–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2012.748268>.

¹⁵⁰ Bredow, "Mittelmacht Mit Schwankenden Ambitionen."

¹⁵¹ Eric Gujer, *Schluss mit der Heuchelei: Deutschland ist eine Großmacht ; ein Standpunkt*, ed. Roger de Weck, 1. Aufl, Standpunkte (Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung, 2007).

conceptions, and based on the premise that expectations from the alter environment somewhat shape the national role conceptions as well, it is evident that the transformations of both contributed to the role change of Germany and the change of the decision-makers' argumentation for or against military engagement based on national role conceptions. Proposition 3 holds.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to solve the puzzle of Germany's military engagement abroad using a role-theoretical application to the study of three cases of justifications of decisions on Bundeswehr deployments in the first two decades of the 21st century. It aspired to answer the following research question:

RQ: To what extent have role-theoretical elements been used by members of the German parliament and government to justify decisions on military engagements abroad?

The content analysis of 21 governmental and parliamentary documents identified 13 different role conceptions expressed by the members of parliament and the government as justifications of decisions on military engagements in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. The most important role conception used to justify the deployment of German troops was that of a faithful ally. The one role conception identified in every case as one of the most important role conceptions, including the Libyan case in which abstention was decided, was that of a normal power. In comparison, the role of a civilian power, which had been ascribed to Germany since the commencement of its independent military policy, was in no case the principal role conception and was only in the Syrian case among the three most important ones. However, the civilian power maxims were individually represented in other, less complex role conceptions, like the faithful ally or the defender of democracy. Based on these observations, I conclude that German decision-makers do not (or no longer do) argue and decide for or against military deployments based on the ideal type of the civilian power role. Instead, as mentioned above, they pick the individual civilian power maxims that fit Germany's interests as a normal power. This finding provides a certain level of predictability and insight into the puzzle of Germany's military policy in times of a highly unpredictable security environment. It predicts that Germany behaves and justifies its behavior based on the self-perceived role of a normal power, yet tries

to comply with the civilian power maxims as much as possible without compromising its normal power role.

The findings of this research are important beyond the cases of the decision-makers' justifications of Germany's military policy concerning Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Germany currently finds itself confronted with a highly unpredictable and vastly changing environment. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Germany's decision-makers need to manage a security situation unprecedented in the history of the Federal Republic. Russia's act of aggression has fundamentally altered the European and global security environment, it has dramatically deepened the divide between Russia and the West, and it has challenged Germany's role and responsibility for international and European security. Germany's Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz addressed the nation and declared four principles guiding the Federal Republic's strategy in Ukraine in response to Russia's war. These four principles underline the main finding of this thesis' analysis, that Germany is a normal power following selected civilian power maxims:

Erstens: Keine deutschen Alleingänge! Was immer wir tun, stimmen wir auf das Engste mit unseren Bündnispartnern ab – in Europa und jenseits des Atlantiks. Zweitens: Bei allem, was wir tun, achten wir darauf, unsere eigene Verteidigungsfähigkeit zu erhalten! Und: Wir haben entschieden, die Bundeswehr deutlich besser auszustatten, damit sie uns auch in Zukunft verteidigen kann. Drittens: Wir unternehmen nichts, was uns und unseren Partnern mehr schadet als Russland. Und viertens: Wir werden keine Entscheidung treffen, die die Nato Kriegspartei werden lässt. Dabei bleibt es! (First: No German unilateral action! Whatever we do, we coordinate in the closest possible way with our allies - in Europe and on the other side of the Atlantic. Second: In everything we do, we take care to maintain our own defense capability! And: We have decided to equip the Bundeswehr significantly better so that it can continue to defend us in the future. Third: We will not do anything that harms us and our partners more than Russia. And fourth: We will not make any decision that would make NATO a party to the war. That is the way it will stay!¹⁵²

¹⁵² Tagesschau, "Scholz: Ukraine-Unterstützung Ist 'Vermächtnis Des 8. Mai'" (Berlin, May 8, 2022), <https://youtu.be/4g72BjWvUgE>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

He declared Germany's support for Ukraine against Russia's aggression to be the "legacy" of the 8th of May, the 'Tag der Befreiung' or 'Victory in Europe Day'. Furthermore, he reminded of the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany and recalled the biggest lesson learned from them: "**Never again.** Never again war. Never again genocide. Never again tyranny."¹⁵³ Scholz based his argumentation for Germany's support of Ukraine, in the form of unprecedented arms deliveries, on the civilian power maxims of 'never again' and 'never alone'. At the same time, the Scholz government has announced unparalleled reforms of the German armed forces, which aim at an "efficient, highly modern and progressive Bundeswehr . . . [suitable for] a country of [that] size and importance in Europe."¹⁵⁴

Scholz confirms the results of this thesis' analysis: Germany decides and argues its military policy based on its role as a normal power following selected civilian power maxims. Despite the singularity and uncertainty of the current security situation and the decisions taken by the Scholz government so far, the idea of Germany in the role of a normal power following civilian power maxims offers countability as it sets the scene and limits for Germany's military policy decision-making.

Moreover, this thesis' findings endorse role theory's applicability to the analysis of nation states' justifications of their military behavior. It supports role theory's central claim in International Relations that actors are aware of their nation's role and decide and act accordingly. Thereby, it promotes the role-theoretical idea that knowledge of a nation's self-perceived role offers a level of predictability of its behavior, and connects the actor level with the system level in International Relations.

However, role-theoretical applications to military policy analysis have their limitations, which this research does too. Fundamentally, there is no "immediate and direct link between beliefs and behavior . . . provided by role theory."¹⁵⁵ We cannot assume causality and surely predict the role performance following the expression of role conceptions. Furthermore, this thesis simplifies the application of role theory to military policy analysis for time and resource restraints. I suggest further research to include an analysis of the impact of changes of government and parliamentary majorities on the quantity and quality of expressed role conceptions, and to divide up further the influence of expectations of the alter, given that the

¹⁵³ Tagesschau, "Scholz: Ukraine-Unterstützung Ist 'Vermächtnis Des 8. Mai'."

¹⁵⁴ Tagesschau, "Pläne Der Bundesregierung: 100 Milliarden Euro Für Die Bundeswehr," February 27, 2022, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/bundeswehr-sondervermoegen-scholz-101.html>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

¹⁵⁵ Thies, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy."

connection between such expectations and the development of self-perceived role conceptions is the primary bridge between the system level and the actor level of analysis. Additionally, I propose incorporating insights from ‘groupthink’ theory to better account for the influence of social interaction on decision-makers. For example, one could test for the dynamics within a parliamentary party that lead to similarly perceived role conceptions and a corresponding role performance.

Despite the limitations, this thesis offers a promising way of solving the puzzle of Germany’s military engagements abroad. The evolution of Germany’s self-perceived role conception regarding Bundeswehr deployments from an ideal type of a civilian power towards a more normal power picking civilian power maxims that fit its interest, is in line with the current development of Germany’s security policy.

This thesis aims to inspire future research on the correlation between role conceptions and decision-makers’ justifications of military interventions. In the specific case of Germany, it will be interesting to follow up on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the alter and ego expectations on the role of Germany, how these changing expectations influence the decision-makers’ expressions of Germany’s role, and, finally, how these expressions affect Germany’s role performance concerning military engagement abroad and the decision-makers’ justifications of such. With Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, understanding and predicting Germany’s military policy, which was the main aim of this thesis, matters more than ever.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Document list of the content analysis (Afghanistan)

1. Debates of the German Bundestag:
 - a. 12.09.2001 (incl. government statement)
 - b. 19.09.2001 (incl. government statement)
 - c. 18.10.2001
 - d. 08.11.2001 (incl. government statement)
 - e. 16.11.2001
 - f. 22.12.2001
2. Other governmental or parliamentary documents:
 - a. Answer by the government to an interpellation (01.02.2000)
 - b. Request by the members of the Bundestag to the Federal Government (14.11.2001)

Appendix 2: References (content analysis: Afghanistan)

- Deutscher Bundestag. "Antrag (Drucksache 14/2630)." Berlin, February 1, 2000. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/14/026/1402630.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Antrag (Drucksache 14/7445)." Berlin, November 14, 2011. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/14/074/1407445.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 186. Sitzung." Berlin, September 12, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14186.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 187. Sitzung." Berlin, September 19, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14187.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 195. Sitzung." Berlin, October 18, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14195.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 198. Sitzung." Berlin, November 8, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14198.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 202. Sitzung." Berlin, November 16, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14202.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . "Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 210. Sitzung." Berlin, December 22, 2001. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/14/14210.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.

Appendix 3: Document list of the content analysis (Libya)

3. Debates of the German Bundestag:
 - a. 23.02.2011
 - b. 24.02.2011
 - c. 16.03.2011 (incl. government statement)
 - d. 18.03.2011 (incl. government statement)
 - e. 23.03.2011
4. Other governmental or parliamentary documents:
 - a. Motion by the FDP and CDU/CSU (23.03.2011)

Appendix 4: References (content analysis: Libya)

- Deutscher Bundestag. “Antrag (Drucksache 17/5193).” Berlin, March 23, 2011. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/17/051/1705193.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 92. Sitzung.” Berlin, February 23, 2011. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/17/17092.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
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- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 97. Sitzung.” Berlin, March 18, 2011. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/17/17097.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
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Appendix 5: Document list of the content analysis (Syria)

5. Debates of the German Bundestag:
 - a. 25.11.2015
 - b. 02.12.2015
 - c. 03.12.2015
 - d. 04.12.2015
 - e. 16.12.2015 (incl. government statement)
 - f. 17.12.2015
6. Other governmental or parliamentary documents:
 - a. Recommendation to the Bundestag for a resolution and report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the motion of the Federal Government (02.12.2015)

Appendix 6: References (content analysis: Syria)

- Deutscher Bundestag.. “Beschlussempfehlung Und Bericht Des Auswärtigen Ausschusses (3. Ausschuss) (Drucksache 18/6912).” Berlin, December 2, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/18/069/1806912.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 139. Sitzung.” Berlin, November 25, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/18/18139.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 142. Sitzung.” Berlin, December 2, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/18/18142.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 143. Sitzung.” Berlin, December 3, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/18/18143.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 144. Sitzung.” Berlin, December 4, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/18/18144.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
- . “Deutscher Bundestag: Stenographischer Bericht 145. Sitzung.” Berlin, December 16, 2015. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/18/18145.pdf>, last accessed 10 June 2022.
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