Introduction

On March 1, 1917, Gustav Stresemann addressed the German Reichstag. Commenting on recent international developments, the rising star of the National Liberal Party had much to ponder. After the German Reich had resumed unrestricted submarine warfare just one month earlier, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson had cut off diplomatic relations. After thirty-one months of neutrality, it no longer seemed likely that the United States would refrain from joining the war coalition against Germany. Not yet forty years old, Stresemann, Germany's future foreign minister and Nobel peace laureate, applied his oratory skill to explaining the deterioration of German-American relations in the preceding years. Trying to comprehend why the U.S. stance on Germany had shifted from neutral to somewhat belligerent, Stresemann focused not on the Reich's violation of Belgian neutrality in August 1914, not on its infamous sinking of the ocean liner *Lusitania* in May 1915, not on its acts of sabotage on American soil during 1915 and 1916, and not even on the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare (which he had supported); instead he told his audience: "with regard to German-American relations, we now have to pay the price for the distorted image of Germany that was able to develop abroad because we have not even tried to properly influence international public opinion."[1] At the heart of America's growing enmity, Stresemann held, lay not Germany's wartime decisions but a fundamental misunderstanding of Germany and the German people. Ultimately, a "distorted image" of the Reich as an aggressive, militaristic, and autocratic nation was to blame for the trans-

1 See Gustav Stresemann in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags, Mar. 1, 1917, 2470 A.

atlantic discord.[2] As the two countries edged toward war, Stresemann regarded Germany's international isolation and even U. S. belligerence as the product of failures in German public relations.

Given Stresemann's strong support for the resumed submarine warfare just a few months earlier, it would be easy to dismiss his focus on such an imponderable factor as Germany's "distorted image" as a convenient excuse for a policy gone wrong. But Stresemann was far from alone in this assessment. The left-liberal opponents of submarine warfare, too, widely attributed American belligerence to the Imperial government's long-standing neglect of public diplomacy. While Allied propaganda had successfully turned Germans into "Huns," German leaders had apparently not mustered any determined or effective countermeasures.[3] On the contrary: for decades already, they claimed, the German government had failed to pursue a modern communications strategy as it lacked both the necessary expertise and interest. With its foreign service steeped in aristocratic privilege and the Reichstag relegated to the fringes of foreign policy-making, the Kaiserreich had never perceived international opinion as a "power factor" at all. A few days after the Reichstag debate, news broke of the intercepted Zimmermann Telegram, wherein German Undersecretary of State Arthur Zimmermann had promised parts of the United States to Mexico in exchange for its military support in case of war. For many critics, this seemed to be merely the most recent in a long string of diplomatic blunders, and yet another indication of the disregard for foreign psychology in German statecraft.

For Germany's future leaders, including Stresemann, the importance of public relations and the need for systematic public diplomacy was among the central lessons of the Great War. From 1917 onward, they set out "to make up," as Stresemann put it, "for what we have long neglected."[4] Spurred on by the realities of defeat in late 1918 and the loss of hard power options in 1919, a debate emerged in the postwar years about the significance of public opinion in international relations, along with a commitment to reshaping Germany's image in the world. Whatever their previous positions, many Germans realized the international impact of public sentiment as a result of World War I. Henceforth, foreign policy could no longer be conducted as it had been before. As Stresemann had already concluded in March 1917: "We just have to get used to the fact that today throughout the world we live in a democratic age, in which these public attitudes have such great importance, are so powerful a factor, that we have no option but to counter Britain's enormous efforts in this field with

2 Gustav Stresemann in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags, Mar. 29, 1917, 2850 D–2851 A.

3 For more details on this discussion, see Chapter 2.

4 Stresemann in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags, Mar. 1, 1917, 2470 A.

something similar of our own."[5] And nowhere would this be more apparent than in the United States, where Germany had suffered its most spectacular wartime failure and where it had its greatest postwar ambitions.

This study is about Weimar Germany's American project. It traces the Weimar Republic's efforts to make public diplomacy an essential part of its foreign policy toward the United States. At the same time, it follows the initiative of a group of educated bourgeois German publicists, educators, and parliamentarians to rebuild trust and sympathy within America after the devastations of the war. In the 1920s, official and private groups were united in their desire to overcome German isolation and secure the support of the United States, in the hope that it could help bring about a revision of the Versailles peace treaty. Realizing that this would first require a solution to Germany's postwar "image problem," this group of *peaceful revisionists* established a new way of thinking about foreign relations that differed notably from the nineteenth century and became commonplace thereafter; the cultural institutions and transatlantic outreach programs they created continue to define Germany's foreign representations even now, a century later.

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World War I famously ended on November 11, 1918, when the German delegation signed the armistice in a railroad car in the forest of Compiègne.[6] In the preceding weeks, the German military effort had collapsed, German monarchies had broken down, and, only two days prior, the German Republic had been established. Few could have foreseen these developments just weeks earlier. In the early summer, German victory had still seemed possible, even probable, to many contemporaries. Only in late September had the German Supreme Army Command admitted that defeat was imminent and asked the civilian leadership to call immediately for a ceasefire. The parliamentarization of the German monarchy, long demanded by reformers, was now deemed expedient. On October 3, 1918, the liberal Max von Baden formed a new reform government, which included members of the Social Democratic Party for the first time. The following day, the von Baden government called on U.S. President Wilson to negotiate an armistice based on his fourteen points in order to avoid the Allies' more punitive peace terms. When the harsh armistice terms dashed German hopes, the German Navy Command decided on a last "battle of honor" in late October, sparking first local mutiny, then a national revolu-

5 Ibid.

6 I refer here narrowly to the military confrontation of World War I. I am aware of recent literature on the continuation of violence in Europe and elsewhere, even as the war had officially come to a close; see, e.g., Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (New York, 2016).

tion, after four years of deprivation, death, and now unexpected defeat. On November 9, Social Democrat Philipp Scheidemann announced the abdication of the Kaiser, proclaimed the German Republic, and appointed a new leftwing provisional government. Two days later in Compiègne, the representatives of the new republic assumed responsibility for ending a war whose origins and direction they had influenced only marginally. As the Kaiser and his generals fled the country, the republic was left to deal with the consequences of defeat.

The gravity of these consequences only dawned slowly on many Germans during the long armistice period. Those who had held on to illusions of a lenient "Wilson Peace" were shocked by the actual peace terms, which had to be signed, with only minor modifications, on June 28, 1919. While none of the victors were satisfied with the treaty, the Germans experienced it as a devastating injustice and calculated humiliation. The treaty had placed responsibility for the war squarely on Germany's shoulders, sharply reduced its army and navy, and dissolved its air force entirely; sizeable German lands and all colonies had been lost, the Rhineland and the Saar area were to be occupied, and reparations – in an amount yet to be determined – would have to be paid. In a consensus rare during the Weimar period, opposition to the Versailles "dictate" was nearly unanimous at the time. Even as the treaty was ratified in the Reichstag, public discussion focused on how to revise its economic, military, and territorial terms. From then on, revision became the leitmotif of German foreign policy.[7]

It was clear that the United States would have to play a crucial role in Weimar's revisionist project. It had emerged from World War I not only as the leading economic power and main creditor nation – France alone owed it more than $3 billion – but with substantially increased international visibility and moral capital. While German strategists had previously dismissed the very notion of U. S. military power, one million fresh American troops had indeed helped to secure an Allied victory in the summer of 1918 just as President Wilson's vision of a liberal world order had resonated powerfully around the world.[8] As the United States entered the 1920s unburdened by staggering debt and national trauma, the global distribution of power shifted dramatically in its favor. Compared to postwar Europe, engulfed in economic chaos and civil strife, America seemed (at least to European observers) more united, prosperous, and confident than ever.

The new political and economic weight of the United States in the world placed it at the heart of German foreign policy ambitions. On October 4, 1918, the newly established German government had approached not the Allies but

7 On the pathological forms of the "Weimar Revision Syndrome," see Michael Salewski, "Das Weimarer Revisionssyndrom," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B2/80 (Jan. 1980): 14–25.
8 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York, 2007).

President Wilson about armistice negotiations, and, despite the lack of American encouragement, unrealistic German hopes of American goodwill flourished.[9] It was in deference to perceived American wishes that further constitutional reforms were initiated in October, and the abdication of the Kaiser, even the declaration of the republic, were widely perceived as accommodating the United States. After the armistice, the German government and civil groups tried to keep up direct lines of communication with the United States. It was on this country that they settled their hopes for a just peace and economic reconstruction since it seemed more benevolent and had fewer apparent direct interests than the other Allies.[10] Even after the profound disappointment over Versailles (and President Wilson's alleged "betrayal"), German democratic leaders clung to their "basically pro-American orientation."[11] The most pressing issue – in particular, the settlement of the reparations question – depended in part on the United States. As the main creditor to the Allies it was the only nation in a financial and economic position to broker a reasonable settlement, to ward off the large Allied demands, and to finance Germany's economic recovery. Consequently, German hopes were set overwhelmingly on *Amerika*.[12] Convincing an increasingly isolationist, still hostile American public to get involved on Germany's behalf became one of the republic's central foreign policy concerns of the 1920s.

This study details how Germans addressed this concern, that is, how they tried to reach out to a country that seemed to hold a solution to the Weimar Republic's many troubles and what strategies they employed to win over the American public, which they widely perceived as hindering U. S. support and involvement. Throughout the 1920s, German state and nonstate groups created organizations and programs designed to loosen the Allied grip on America and to rebuild German prestige and transatlantic influence. For more than a decade, they fought an uphill battle to overturn Germany's "distorted image," which they felt had contributed to their defeat.

9 As the Reich finance minister explained to the cabinet on April 26, 1919: "Wilson's 14 points are a shield against the demands of our victorious enemies." Akten der Reichskanzlei. Weimar Republik (AdRk) – Das Kabinett Scheidemann/Bd. 1/Dokumente 54 b Ausführungen des Reichsfinanzministers vor dem Reichskabinett über die finanzielle Leistungsfähigkeit des Reiches, Apr. 26, 1919, 233.

10 ADAP Serie A, I, Document 36, "Aufzeichnung des Leiters der vorbereitenden Maßnahmen für die Friedensverhandlungen Graf von Bernstorff," Nov. 24, 1918, 55.

11 Klaus Schwabe, "The United States and the Weimar Republic: A 'Special Relationship' That Failed," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, ed. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, 2:18–29 (Philadelphia, 1985), 24; on the German discussion about Wilson, see Philipp Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich. Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung 1933–1945* (Stuttgart, 1997), 34–46.

12 Manfred Berg, *Gustav Stresemann und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Weltwirtschaftliche Verflechtung und Revisionspolitik* (Baden-Baden, 1990), 17; Peter Berg, *Deutschland und Amerika 1918–1929. Über das deutsche Amerikabild der 20er Jahre* (Lübeck, 1963), 71.

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This story is not widely known. While German-American relations in the 1920s are generally well researched, scholars have focused primarily on economic and financial relations in the context of the reparations tangle. They have underlined how central the United States was to Germany's foreign policymakers and have detailed their efforts to convince a reluctant America to become involved in revising the reparations question and the peace treaty at large.[13] To this end, Germany appealed strategically to the U.S. interest in a stable and prosperous Europe as a market for Americans goods and a bulwark against Bolshevism. Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann was determined to use Germany's remaining economic weight to return it to great power status; he systematically – and ultimately successfully – pursued an America-focused strategy that underlined the need for U.S. involvement in an economically interdependent world.[14] U.S. informal participation in the 1924 Dawes reparations settlement and the subsequent inflow of American capital facilitated Weimar's "relative stabilization" and its reintegration into the family of nations in the mid-1920s. Throughout the 1920s, German-American relations were underpinned by a mutuality of interests and methods: the German policy of recapturing Germany's international position by way of economic recovery matched the American inclination to conduct world affairs through (informal) economic diplomacy; Germans' desire for a peaceful revision of the Versailles treaty dovetailed with American support for peaceful change in Europe.

This mutuality of interest and America's substantial ($3 billion) investments in the Weimar Republic are generally credited with underwriting a remarkable transatlantic rapprochement. While German-American relations had reached a historic low point in 1919, the former enemies proclaimed an extraordinary "friendship" just ten years later. By 1929, German and American diplomats, educators, and businessmen alike agreed that Germany and the United States had reconciled and that, in fact, German-American relations had "never been better."[15] As a number of studies have shown, this rapprochement also went hand in hand with Americans' more sympathetic perception of Germany.[16] A decade after the war, Germany's negative image had been largely reversed, and there

13 See Werner Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland 1921–32* (Düsseldorf, 1970); Michael Wala, *Weimar und Amerika. Botschafter Friedrich von Prittwitz und Gaffron und die deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von 1927 bis 1933* (Stuttgart, 2001); Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden. Die amerikanische und deutsche Friedensstrategie zwischen Ideologie und Machtpolitik, 1918/1919* (Düsseldorf, 1971).

14 Berg, *Gustav Stresemann und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika,* passim.

15 Friedrich Wilhelm von Prittwitz und Gaffron, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten seit dem Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1934), 25.

16 Carmen Müller, *Weimar im Blick der USA. Amerikanische Auslandskorrespondenten und öffentliche Meinung zwischen Perzeption und Realität* (Münster, 1997), 253, 276–326; Klaus Fer-

was even a tendency to see the increasingly stable and prosperous Weimar Republic as an "American prodigy" or a "junior partner" in Europe.[17]

This historiography, however, with its heavy focus on economics, leaves many questions unanswered. While we know that both public relations and the United States acquired a new significance for German foreign policy after World War I, few efforts have been made to analyze the two together. Indeed, research on Weimar public diplomacy, especially its cultural variant, has paid relatively little attention to the United States. This is true for comprehensive studies on the subject,[18] for many older studies on single institutions,[19] and for more recent bilateral explorations alike. While we have detailed studies on German public diplomacy during that period toward Spain, Turkey, Latin America, and the Netherlands, we have none on the United States, which was vital in many respects.[20] At the same time, there are in-depth studies on this aspect of German-American relations for the Wilhelmine era,[21] the Nazi peri-

dinand Schoenthal, "American Attitudes toward Germany, 1918–1932" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1959), 182–203.

17 John G. Siemann, "The American Response to Weimar: Public Perception and Foreign Policy Development in the Decade of the 1920s" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1986), 63.

18 Frank Trommler, *Kulturmacht ohne Kompass. Deutsche auswärtige Kulturbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2013); Kurt Düwell, *Deutschlands auswärtige Kulturpolitik, 1918–1932* (Cologne, 1976).

19 Ernst Ritter, *Das Deutsche Ausland-Institut in Stuttgart 1917–1945. Ein Beispiel deutscher Volkstumsarbeit zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Wiesbaden, 1971); Volkhard Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch und auswärtige Kulturpolitik. Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) 1923–1945* (Göttingen, 1977); Hans Adolf Jacobsen, "Auswärtige Kulturpolitik als geistige Waffe. Karl Haushofer und die Deutsche Akademie [1923–1937]," in *Deutsche auswärtige Kulturpolitik seit 1871*, ed. Kurt Düwell and Werner Link, 218–256 (Cologne, 1981); Kurt Possekel, "Studien zur Politik des Vereins für das Deutschtum im Ausland [VDA] in der Weimarer Republik" (PhD diss., Universität Rostock, 1967); Gerhard Weidenfeller, *VDA. Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland. Allgemeiner deutscher Schulverein [1881–1918]. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus und Imperialismus im Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1976); for a more recent study, see Eckard Michels, *Von der Deutschen Akademie zum Goethe-Institut. Sprach- und auswärtige Kulturpolitik 1923–1960* (Munich, 2005); Holger Impekoven, *Die Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung und das Ausländerstudium in Deutschland 1925–1945* (Bonn, 2013); Daniela Siebe, *Germania Docet. Ausländische Studenten, auswärtige Kulturpolitik und deutsche Universitäten. 1870–1933* (Husum, 2009).

20 Stefan Rinke, *Der letzte freie Kontinent. Deutsche Lateinamerikapolitik im Zeichen transnationaler Beziehungen, 1918–1933* (Stuttgart, 1996); Ernst Pöppinghaus, *Moralische Eroberungen. Kultur und Politik in den deutsch-spanischen Beziehungen der Jahre 1919–1933* (Frankfurt, 1998); Friedrich Dahlhaus, *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen auswärtiger Kultur- und Pressepolitik dargestellt am Beispiel der deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen 1914–1928* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990); Nicole Eversdijk, *Kultur als politisches Werbemittel. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen kultur- und pressepolitischen Arbeit in den Niederlanden während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Münster, 2010).

21 Bernhard vom Brocke, "Der Deutsch-Amerikanische Professorenaustausch. Preußische Wissenschaftspolitik, internationale Wissenschaftsbeziehungen und die Anfänge einer deutschen auswärtigen Kulturpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 31, no. 2 (1981): 128–182; Franziska von Ungern-Sternberg, *Kulturpolitik zwischen den Kontinenten. Deutschland und Amerika. Das Germanische Museum in Cambridge, Mass.* (Cologne, 1994);

od,[22] and the Bundesrepublik[23] but none for the Weimar years. To be sure, we know that the Weimar governments made many efforts to communicate more effectively with the American public. Foreign Minister Stresemann valued public relations highly as part of his revisionist politics.[24] The German Foreign Ministry systematically cultivated American news correspondents in Berlin,[25] subsidized the agitation against German "war guilt," and aided nonstate and semiofficial bodies like the Berlin-based Vereinigung Carl Schurz in their transatlantic endeavors.[26] Moreover, Michael Wala has skillfully, if briefly, sketched Weimar's attempts to draw on the emotional attachments of German Americans as well as the networks and prestige of German universities to re-establish Germany's standing across the Atlantic.[27] But even though scholars have begun to investigate certain aspects of Weimar's public diplomacy toward the United States, there is no comprehensive study on this topic. Indeed, scholarship on this subject remains, as Wala himself concluded, "rather disappointing."[28] In short, public diplomacy remains underexplored as a factor in Weimar Germany's *Amerikapolitik*.

The present study broadens, complements, and challenges our understanding of transatlantic relations in a number of ways. At its narrowest, it deepens our understanding of German public diplomacy and counterbalances the

Martin Wroblewski, *Moralische Eroberungen als Instrumente der Diplomatie. Die Informations- und Pressepolitik des Auswärtigen Amts 1902–1914* (Göttingen, 2016); World War I is well researched; for a recent study, see Chad Fulwider, *German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I* (Columbia, MO, 2016).

22 Klaus Kipphan, *Deutsche Propaganda in den Vereinigten Staaten 1933–1941* (Heidelberg, 1971); Arthur L. Smith, *The Deutschtum of Nazi Germany and the United States* (The Hague, 1965); Gregory Kupsky, "'The True Spirit of the German People': German Americans and National Socialism, 1919–1955" (PhD., Ohio State University, 2010); Cornelia Wilhelm, *Bewegung oder Verein. Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in den USA* (Stuttgart, 1998).

23 Most recently, see Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY, 2016).

24 Hans Jürgen Müller, *Auswärtige Pressepolitik und Propaganda zwischen Ruhrkampf und Locarno, 1923–1925. Eine Untersuchung über die Rolle der Öffentlichkeit in der Außenpolitik Stresemanns* (Frankfurt, 1991).

25 Müller, *Weimar im Blick der USA*, esp. 276–326.

26 Christian Freitag, "Die Entwicklung der Amerikastudien in Berlin bis 1945 unter Berücksichtigung der Amerikaarbeit staatlicher und privater Organisationen" (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 1977); Rennie Brantz, "German-American Friendship: The Carl Schurz Vereinigung, 1926–1942," *International History Review* 11, no. 2 (1989): 229–251.

27 Michael Wala, "'Gegen eine Vereinzelung Deutschlands': Deutsche Kulturpolitik und akademischer Austausch mit den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Deutschland und die USA in der Internationalen Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Festschrift für Detlev Junker*, ed. Manfred Berg and Philipp Gassert, 303–315 (Stuttgart, 2004); Michael Wala, "Reviving Ethnic Identity: Foreign Office, Reichswehr, and German Americans during the Weimar Republic," in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner, 326–341 (Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2004).

28 Wala, "Gegen eine Vereinzelung," 304.

disproportionate attention paid to sensational, but largely unrepresentative, propaganda campaigns such as the agitation against the so-called "black horror," that is, the French use of North African troops in the occupied Rhineland and their alleged transgressions.[29] While focusing on this particular campaign suggests that German policy was committed to abrasive propagandizing, the wider American case reveals an altogether different approach, one that diligently avoided even the semblance of "German propaganda." Rather than embracing atrocity propaganda, Weimar strategies hinged on a less obtrusive and ultimately more constructive information and cultural policy geared toward both short-term revisionist objectives *and* longer-term transatlantic alliance building. From this perspective, public diplomacy emerges as an integral aspect of Weimar's *Amerikapolitik*. Moreover, this study challenges the commonly held notion that the Weimar Republic was relatively unsuccessful in its publicity strategies.[30] While this might have been true domestically – and there is growing doubt about whether it truly was[31] – Weimar was neither unable nor unwilling to represent itself in the United States. Rather, it pursued an often innovative policy to normalize German-American relations and build a politically desirable transatlantic friendship.

The present study also facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the process of reconciliation between the United States and Germany. In fact, the two former enemies' rapid postwar rapprochement still remains something of a puzzle. Although economic factors and growing respect for German statesmen like Stresemann are usually and rightly credited with the development of friendly transatlantic relations,[32] numerous other factors contributed to diminishing wartime resentments, too. Indeed, while we know much about the development of wartime animosities, that is, the process of "cultural mobilization,"

29 This campaign, which appealed strategically to American racism, has received major attention; for a recent bibliography, see Julia Roos, "Nationalism, Racism and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany: Contradictions in the Campaign against the 'Black Horror on the Rhine'," *German History* 30, no. 1 (2012): 45–75, 45. A work that is still seminal on this campaign is Keith Nelson, "Black Horror on the Rhine: Race as a Factor in Post-World War I Diplomacy," *Journal of Modern History* 42, no. 4 (1970): 606–627.

30 See, for example, Manuela Aguilar, *Cultural Diplomacy and Foreign Policy: German-American Relations 1955–1968* (New York, 1995), 28.

31 Corey Ross, "Mass Politics and the Techniques of Leadership: The Promise and Perils of Propaganda in Weimar Germany," *German History* 24, no. 2 (2006): 184–211; there is increasing scholarship challenging this very notion, such as Nadine Rossol, *Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany: Sports, Spectacle and Political Symbolism, 1926–1936* (London, 2010); Michael Meyer, *Symbolarme Republik? Das politische Zeremoniell der Weimarer Republik in den Staatsbesuchen zwischen 1920 und 1933* (Frankfurt, 2014); see also Christian Welzbacher, *Edwin Redslob. Biografie eines unverbesserlichen Idealisten* (Berlin, 2009).

32 Müller, *Weimar im Blick*, 276–326; Schoenthal, "American Attitudes toward Germany," 182–203.

we know comparatively little about the process of "cultural demobilization."[33] How, precisely, were transatlantic contacts rekindled and networks rebuilt? What psychological hurdles had to be overcome to that end and what factors drove or inhibited the process? This process was neither straightforward nor predictable. Rather, resentments could and did flare up again relatively easily during the entire 1920s. Yet if we are to understand cultural demobilization, we need to move beyond economic explanations and into the intangible field of emotions and psychology.

Finally, unlike many studies that extend neither back into Wilhelmine nor forward into the Nazi era, this study both goes back to about the turn of the century and forward to the late 1930s. In doing so, it tries to trace significant continuities and ruptures between these periods – a question that has long preoccupied scholars of German foreign policy. Importantly, this longer perspective highlights a paradigm shift in the conducting of German foreign affairs. Public diplomacy as it developed in the 1920s was only a part of a larger process of adapting diplomatic practices as the world was increasingly transformed by the communication and transportation revolutions of the late nineteenth century. Around 1900, diplomats began to face an increasingly well connected, well informed, and influential global public, whose opinions and sentiments constituted, in Bismarck's memorable phrase, the "imponderables" of foreign relations.[34] The weight of these imponderables necessitated the expansion of foreign policy beyond "high politics" and thereby, as this study will show, turned more and more elements of foreign *relations* into subjects of foreign *policy*: Around the turn of the century hardly anyone in the Wilhelmstrasse thought of foreign students or tourists or news correspondents as foreign policy assets; thirty years later, few thought of them as anything else.

In the German case, I contend, this larger development cannot be understood without looking at both the 1920s and the United States. While the process began around the turn of the century and continued during the 1930s, it was during the 1920s that German statecraft expanded into many heretofore "nonpolitical" fields; diverse groups, such as tourists, students, or Germans abroad first became "geopoliticized"; and an official infrastructure emerged to manage and coordinate these new world-political "resources."[35] Germany's postwar situation greatly facilitated this development. Its loss of hard-power

33 On the concepts of cultural mobilization and demobilization, see John Horne, "Demobilizing the Mind: France and the Legacy of the Great War, 1919–1939," *French History & Civilization* 2 (2009): 101–119.

34 "We Germans Fear God and Nothing Else in the World!": Bismarck Addresses the Reichstag (February 6, 1888), German History in Documents and Images, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1865.

35 I borrow the term "geopoliticization" from Paul Kramer, "Is the World Our Campus? International Students and U.S. Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009): 775–806, 781.

options re-directed attention to many previously neglected soft-power assets. The peculiarities of the American case, however, truly pushed Berlin to adopt a more systematic approach to public diplomacy. Not only did the American public seem particularly influential and particularly ill-informed, but America's self-imposed political isolation and suspicion of foreign propaganda forced Germany to pursue informal, not overtly political relations. While scholars have long acknowledged U.S. influence on the Weimar Republic's embrace of economic foreign policy, it was equally important in the cultural realm: America's disdain for – and Germany's lack of – hard power conspired to turn public relations and cultural affairs between the two nations into a field of "proxy diplomacy" in the 1920s.

Finally, this study on German public diplomacy in the interwar period helps to shift historical interest away from the American-sponsored programs and the Cold War era. In recent years, in particular, so many studies on Cold War public diplomacy have appeared that historians have cautioned us to "soft pedal our ongoing fascination with the Cold War"[36] and direct more historical attention to the time "before the cultural cold wars."[37] Doing so reveals that many of the Cold War's defining strategies and transatlantic networks had roots in the interwar period. Moreover, the study counterbalances the substantial scholarship on the cultural Americanization of Germany in the 1920s. American economic expansion in Europe, as studies have shown, was flanked by the extension of its cultural influence. Whether wittingly (through American foundations or Herbert Hoover's humanitarian relief) or unwittingly (through American tourism, movies, and music), this process of cultural "Americanization" shaped German discourses about modernity and forged an image of America as efficient and progressive, which in turn facilitated the country's growing economic influence.[38] But, as we will see, even in the 1920s Americans were as much targets as they were sponsors of public diplomacy.[39]

36 Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "The Anomaly of the Cold War: Cultural Diplomacy and Civil Society since 1850," in *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History*, ed. Kenneth Osgood and Brian Etheridge, 25–56, 31–32; an effort to shift this focus is also made by the contributions in Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Marc Dornfried, eds., *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy* (New York, 2010).

37 Katharina Rietzler, "Before the Cultural Cold Wars: American Philanthropy and Cultural Diplomacy in the Inter-war Years," *Historical Research* 84, no. 223 (2011): 148–164.

38 Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York, 1982); Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca, NY, 1984); scholarship on the Americanization of Weimar is extensive; a good starting point is Egbert Klautke, *Unbegrenzte Möglichkeiten. Amerikanisierung in Deutschland und Frankreich 1900–1933* (Stuttgart, 2003).

39 There is a lack of studies on the United States as a target, not just as a sponsor of cultural diplomacy; see Osgood and Etheridge, eds., *The United States and Public Diplomacy*, 11; a pioneering work is Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago, 2009).

While the impact of "Americanization" was profound, Germany was far from just passive and on the "receiving end."[40] The war had effected a sea change in the two countries' economic and financial relationship, yet not in their cultural relations. Germany's cultural prestige had suffered – and perhaps more than German contemporaries realized or liked to admit – but its feelings of cultural importance had survived nearly unscathed. Many Germans, indeed, were ready to ignore the Americanizing undertones of aid programs, U.S. tourism, or America's philanthropic largesse and see them for what they also were: opportunities to escape postwar isolation, to mend transatlantic ties, and to draw the United States back into Germany's cultural domain. If this project ultimately failed, it was not for lack of trying.

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To be sure, many aspects of interwar diplomacy between Germany and the United States lie beyond the scope of this study. It offers no exhaustive treatment of transatlantic diplomacy or even of transatlantic public diplomacy. It does not aim to cover all private cultural exchanges or state-sponsored propaganda initiatives and casts only a cursory glance at Weimar's official press and information policy. Instead, it is concerned with public *relations* in the basic sense of the word. It traces how German officials and private groups sought to recultivate and manage transatlantic cultural and social relations in the national interest, that is, how they conducted what Americans call *public diplomacy* and Germans call *cultural diplomacy* (or external cultural policy).[41]

40 Scholars today operate with a much more interactive concept of Americanization. As Jessica Gienow-Hecht has pointed out, processes that have long been understood as tokens of "cultural imperialism" should be considered processes of potentially bi-directional "cultural transmission." Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer and the Cold War: A Critical Review," *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 3 (2000): 465–494, 491; as a recent historiographical essay put it: "Where there was Americanization, there always was Europeanization, too." See Egbert Klautke, "Anti-Americanism in Twentieth-Century Europe," *Historical Journal* 54, no. 4 (2011): 1125–1139, 1137; scholars of tourism, albeit for the post-WWII period, recently provided an apt example: Neal Rosendorf, "Be El Caudillo's Guest: The Franco Regime's Quest for Rehabilitation and Dollars after World War II via the Promotion of Tourism to Spain," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 3 (2006): 366–406, 373.

41 For a concise presentation that addresses the different terms, see David Welch, "Cultural Propaganda," in *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500–Present*, ed. Nicholas J. Cull, David Culbert, and David Welch (Santa Barbara, CA, 2003), 101: "Cultural Propaganda is a long-term process intended to promote a better understanding of the nation that is sponsoring the activity. The United States refers to it as 'public diplomacy,' whereas Britain and France prefer to call it 'cultural diplomacy' or 'cultural relations.' Such activity involves the dissemination of cultural products–films, magazines, radio and televisions programs, art exhibitions, traveling theater groups and orchestras–as well as the promotion of language teaching and a wide range of 'educational' activities, such as student-exchange schemes. Over a period of time, these activities are designed to enhance the nation's image among the populations of other coun-

In doing so, the study focuses on three distinct "fields": Germandom policies (*Volkstumspolitik*), that is, German relations toward German Americans; academic diplomacy, that is, the harnessing of academic relations to foreign policy ends; and the management of transatlantic travel, including aspects of tourism promotion and visitor hospitality. While these fields are treated separately only in the second part of the book, they underpin the analysis throughout.

There are very good reasons to focus on these three fields of transatlantic public diplomacy. For one, they were among the most prominent of their time, drawing a disproportionate share of resources, attention, and expertise. As a result, by the early 1930s all of them had become more or less firmly integrated in a state-sponsored public diplomacy apparatus. Second, from the perspective of historiography it is precisely because these fields were embedded in (semi) official infrastructures that they reveal instructive continuities and ruptures between Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi Germany. While, for example, lecture tours of individual German authors in the 1920s can tell us a great deal about the Weimar period, they do not lend themselves as readily to longer-term observations as, say, the organization of academic exchanges. Third, because these different fields aimed to activate different American target groups, namely, Americans of German birth or descent, academic audiences, and a broader travel-minded public, respectively, they allow for a fairly comprehensive assessment of German efforts to shape the American climate of opinion. Finally, there is an exceptional wealth of archival material on them. Whereas the files of the Foreign Ministry's Art and Music Section were destroyed during World War II, files on ethnic, academic, and travel matters have largely survived. In short, a focus on these fields affords the chance to write a relatively comprehensive study based on archival research that elucidates major trends from 1900 into the 1930s.

The official publications of diplomatic sources – Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) and Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik (ADAP) – are of limited use regarding cultural affairs, but the surviving archival base is nothing short of excellent. In Germany, the Foreign Ministry Archives offer an unparalleled wealth of files on a broad range of cultural activities, particularly for the Weimar period. Although the files of the state secretary and foreign minister usually yield little information on cultural policy – a clear indication of how far it was removed from "high politics" – the files of the Cultural Department, the America Department, as well as parts of the Press Department cover this subject in great detail. Unfortunately, only small remnants of the German consular files for the interwar period have survived – an irretrievable loss. The German consulate general in New York, especially, seems to have handled a

tries, with a view to creating goodwill and influencing the policies of the governments through the pressure of public opinion."

substantial part of German public diplomacy in the United States, which the embassy files (themselves decimated) cannot fully replace. The Foreign Ministry's personnel files, a number of personal papers, and memoirs have thus been used to reconstruct some of the activities of German consulates. Diplomatic records are complemented and challenged by the repositories of student, professorial, and tourist associations (Bundesarchiv), university archives (Munich, Marburg, Heidelberg, Berlin), company archives (Bayer and Krupp), and personal papers (Stresemann, Maltzan, Bonn, Morsbach, etc.). The roughly two hundred boxes of material left by the German Tourist Information Office in New York, 1925 – 1941 (held at the U. S. National Archives in College Park, MD) proved to be particularly valuable – and not just for the study of tourism.

On the American side, official diplomatic materials have been considerably less useful. Not until the late 1930s did the State Department show significant interest in cultural affairs. Nevertheless, the records of American foundations (especially the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), universities (Columbia, Princeton, Cornell), and the papers of key cultural internationalists (like Nicholas Murray Butler) offer a veritable treasure trove of information on U. S. informal cultural policy. Moreover, the papers of American ambassadors to Germany William Dodd (1933–1937) and Jacob Gould Schurman (1925–1929) document the intimate connection between U. S. diplomacy and academia at the time. The records of the German Society of Pennsylvania and the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation also help elucidate the key role played by German-American organizations in German policies. The archives of the Institute of International Education at the Rockefeller Archive Center have fortunately just been opened to researchers.

To be sure, official public diplomacy impacted only a small number of transatlantic encounters, and even where it did, its influence is near impossible to measure. The successes of other policy initiatives are visible in the durability of treaty provisions or the development of trade statistics, for example, yet the public impact of foreign study and travel is much more difficult to ascertain. Moreover, public diplomacy, by virtue of its very intention, is often a long-term project. In its cultural variant, in particular, it aims not so much to convey immediate information but to project a desirable national image. Its ultimate aim, as one German publicist concluded in 1916, is to create among foreign elites an "inclination of the heart" toward Germany, that is, to engender a public climate in which German economic and political objectives can be more easily attained.[42] But such an "inclination of the heart" cannot be measured and its political implications cannot be predicted. The pursuit of such a policy at all,

42 Clipping: "Ein Fortschritt deutscher Kulturpolitik," *Weser Zeitung*, Oct. 28, 1916, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (PA) R121333.

then, requires a leap of faith. Astonishing, above all, is that in the precarious 1920s so many Germans were ready to take this leap.

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This leap was certainly greatest for the German Foreign Ministry. Following the public relations disaster of the war, the Wilhelmstrasse was thoroughly reformed and two public diplomacy departments – one for cultural policy and one for press policy – were established. In line with the newly established America Department, they set out to conceptualize and coordinate the campaign to rewin American hearts and minds. A number of high-ranking officials with a distinct interest in public diplomacy, first and foremost, Foreign Minister Stresemann (1923–1929), ensured that the originally haphazard efforts to improve Germany's image turned into manageable, increasingly well-designed programs. Often outpacing Berlin's lead, German ambassadors and consuls in the United States also worked diligently to "create a general attitude of sympathetic understanding" for Germany.[43] From 1926 to 1929 alone, the Foreign Ministry's cultural diplomacy budget rose from 4.7 to 8.3 million marks.

However, the Wilhelmstrasse (as it was itself most painfully aware) could pursue none of its cultural activities on its own. Its constitutional competence, funds, staffing, and expertise were all severely limited. As a consequence, it depended on the cooperation of other ministries, especially the Prussian Ministry of Culture, university administrations, and a mushrooming array of organizations, institutes, and makeshift propaganda bureaus. Some of these were longstanding mass membership organizations like the Association for Germandom Abroad (Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, est. 1881), while others like the German Tourism Promotion Bureau (Reichszentrale für deutsche Verkehrswerbung, est. 1920) or the Association of German Universities (Verband deutscher Hochschulen, est. 1920) were of more recent origin. Following agendas of their own, they were at times indifferent, at times hostile, to reconciliation with the West, and the Foreign Ministry spent considerable time cajoling or restraining them to suit its foreign policy needs. With time, the Foreign Ministry thus created a number of ostensibly private but financially dependent organizations (like the German Academic Exchange Service, est. 1923/25) to manage new policy fields while hiding state involvement.

To this end, it relied on a group of what I call "peaceful revisionists," who operated outside – albeit usually in close touch with – the German foreign policy establishment.[44] These men (and a very few women) provided funds,

43 Consulate General, San Francisco [Wiehl] to AA, Dec. 6, 1927, "Französische Kulturpropaganda in San Francisco," PA R 61130.
44 Link, *Amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik*, 565, 572.

sat on committees, directed semiofficial organizations or assumed quasi-diplomatic functions at international conferences or roundtable discussions. This illustrious group included financier Max Warburg, industrialists Carl Duisberg and Robert Bosch, parliamentarians like Anton Erkelenz, publicists like Ernst Jäckh, and educators like Albrecht Penck, Moritz Julius Bonn, Alfred Weber, Reinhold Schairer, and Adolf Morsbach, as well as (former) diplomats like Walter Simons or Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff. As heterogeneous as this group appears at first, these men shared an educated bourgeois background, a comparatively positive attitude toward the republic (they were often, like Stresemann himself, "republicans by reason"), a staunch commitment to revisionism, and a common agenda: to win American sympathy and support. In concert with the Foreign Ministry, they would turn public diplomacy into a key instrument of peaceful revision.

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In telling this story, this book is divided into three parts, which correspond to the larger political and economic periodizations of the Weimar Republic. Though alternative chronologies were considered, in the end the economic and political caesurae of the years 1923/24 and 1929/1930 proved too momentous to ignore.

The first part focuses on the tumultuous years from 1918 to 1924. Chapter 1 begins on the heels of German defeat. It points to the depth of German moral isolation and the nature of America's anti-German sentiments, analyzing their implications for Germany's revisionist politics. As will be shown, Germany recognized that the hostile and isolationist American public was a major stumbling block to American support and began to realize that revision would require improvement in America's sentiments toward Germany. The strategies they decided on, however, were heavily informed by earlier experiences. Chapter 2 thus returns to the prewar period and retraces earlier German steps to win American public opinion. Germany had already pursued a substantial goodwill campaign among Americans since 1902. This section on pre-1917 developments is intended to offer an English-language overview of the extensive German-language scholarship on this subject. At the same time, it demonstrates that the sensational failure of this German campaign, as reflected in the U.S. entry into the war in 1917, profoundly affected postwar initiatives. Without an understanding of their prewar and wartime experiences, the decisions of Weimar-era public diplomats are incomprehensible. Only substantial postwar reforms placed the Foreign Ministry (theoretically at least) in a position to conduct more effective public diplomacy. However, German efforts, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, met with limited success until 1923/24. German inflation and lingering wartime resentment did not create the financial or psychological ba-