

**“The Influence of News Frames on Foreign Policy: A
Neoclassical Realist Analysis of German Foreign Policy
Towards Turkey”**

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**Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und unter
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Abbreviations

AKP: Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)

ANAP: Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*)

CDU: Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*)

CSU: Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*)

DSP: Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*)

DTP: Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*)

EEC: European Economic Community

EU: European Union

FAZ: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

FDP: Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*)

HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*)

ISIL: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

IR: International Relations

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PKK: Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*)

PYD: Democratic Union Party (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*)

SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

SZ: Süddeutsche Zeitung

YPG: People's Protection Units (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*)

1. Introduction

Diverse and intense relations that go back many centuries connect Germany and Turkey today with many bilateral and multilateral aspects. Turkey's strategic importance for the security of Europe, Germany's major supportive role in Turkey's political and social reforms even since the Ottoman periods, roughly 4 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany, and intense trade relations, which made Germany the top trade partner of Turkey, are only some critical issues of this very long relationship.¹ In fact, as Turkey-expert Günter Seufert rightly argued, in no other country in the world do political developments in Turkey have as much social resonance as in the Federal Republic. Moreover, in German society - as far as Turkey is concerned - there is a unique and often contradictory combination of well-informedness, apparent superiority, and a sense of responsibility.² As a result of this extraordinary interest toward Turkey, various issues concerning German-Turkish relations have already taken intensive attention in many political, academic, and social discussions.³

Among those various issues, the so-called "Böhmermann affair" was one of the most remarkable examples in recent years, which occurred just a couple of days after the 2016 Refugee Deal signed between the European Union and Turkey. After

¹ Reinhard Bettzuege, "Auswärtiger Dienst," in *Handbuch zur deutschen Aussenpolitik*, ed. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf, (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 231.

² Günter Seufert, "Alleinregierung Tayyip Erdoğan: Die Ohnmacht Deutschlands gegenüber der Türkei," SWP Berlin, November 4, 2016, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/kurz-gesagt/die-ohnmacht-deutschlands-gegenueber-der-tuerkei/>.

³ For a more comprehensive and recent perspectives of issues concerning German-Turkish relations see; Ebru Turhan (ed.) *German-Turkish Relations Revisited: The European Dimension, Domestic and Foreign Politics and Transnational Dynamics*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2019), Wolfgang Gieler et al. (ed.), *Deutsch-türkische Beziehungen: Historische, sektorale und migrationsspezifische Aspekte*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2017) and Johanna Chovanec et al. (ed.) *Türkeiforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum: Umbrüche, Krisen und Widerstände*, (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020)

German satirist Jan Böhmermann's reading out a poem on his TV show on public broadcaster ZDF channel, which harshly criticized Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a series of legal cases were initiated by both Erdoğan and Böhmermann. It also resulted in the removal of the 1871 dated "Insults to Bodies and Representatives of Foreign States" passage from the German penal code.⁴ Another notable incident from the recent years was the imprisonment of Deniz Yücel, a German-Turkish journalist and correspondent for the German newspaper Die Welt in Turkey. The interesting point of this legal case was the extraordinary involvement of politicians from both the Turkish and German sides. On the one hand, President Erdoğan, for example, personally intervened in this case by arguing that Deniz Yücel as "a German spy" and "a true terrorist" was hidden by German Embassy in its summer residence in Istanbul. Advancing this discourse further in a short time, Erdoğan even declared that Deniz Yücel would remain in prison as long as he is in power.⁵ On the other hand, Germany immediately started to apply political pressure on Turkey just after the arrest of Yücel. In addition to intensive diplomatic discussions between the two countries, both Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel ensured that the German government would do everything in its power for the release of Yücel.⁶ Finally, after one year in prison, Yücel was freed in February 2018 after a series of direct negotiations between two countries.

Consequently, what demonstrates these two striking examples is quite clear; relations between Germany and Turkey are far beyond the official relations between any two governments. As it was openly seen during these incidents as well as many other crises experienced in the last twenty years, German-Turkish relations attracted widespread attention in both countries, and they initiated considerable discussions, while the media broadly covered these cases in both countries. Also, during an

⁴ "German satirist Jan Böhmermann sues Angela Merkel over Erdogan poem remark," *Deutsche Welle*, April 02, 2019, <https://p.dw.com/p/3G4BF>.

⁵ Cristina Burack, "Erdogan rules out releasing German-Turkish journalist Yucel 'as long as I am in power,'" *Deutsche Welle*, April 14, 2017, <https://p.dw.com/p/2bE5f>.

⁶ Andrea Grunau, "How Deniz Yücel's year in prison affects German-Turkish relations," *Deutsche Welle*, February 14, 2018, <https://p.dw.com/p/2sYkp>.

interview with the editor of Die Zeit newspaper Giovanni di Lorenzo, President Erdoğan openly mentioned that the German media was responsible for the fracturing relations between Germany and Turkey. For this purpose, Erdoğan said, the German media was “pursuing a campaign of denigration” against Turkey.⁷

Within this controversial context, this work focuses on one of the major actors in German-Turkish relations, the German news media, and its influence on German foreign policy decisions towards Turkey. For that purpose, two theoretical approaches were utilized in the dissertation.

Since this work examines some Germany foreign policy decisions towards Turkey in essence, the main theoretical and methodological background of this thesis is based on an International Relations (IR) theory: “neoclassical realism.” It means that both theoretical presumptions about policymaking processes, foreign policy actors as well as foreign policy analysis methods are rooted in the realist tradition of the IR discipline. However, because the issue of the media-foreign policy relations is still an underdeveloped area in the realist tradition, two additional concepts from the political communication discipline, “framing” and “cascading network activation” models, were added to the original neoclassical realist analysis.⁸ With this synthesis, the dissertation aims to illuminate the influence of the media on a foreign policy decision by answering the “when” and “how” questions with the help of conceptually more developed models from a closely relating academic discipline.

Within this theoretical and methodological framework, Germany’s foreign policy decision towards (1) the accession process of Turkey to the European Union, (2) the Kurdish question in Turkey, (3) the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement, and (4) the 2013 Gezi Park Protests in Turkey are examined in the sense of the possible media influences on German foreign policy decisions. In this context, Germany’s two

⁷ Giovanni di Lorenzo, "They Should Look Up What Dictator Means!," *Die Zeit Online*, Juli 5, 2017, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-07/recep-tayyip-erdogan-g20-summit-interview-english/komplettansicht>.

⁸ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm," *Journal of communication* 43, no.4 (1993): 51-58.

most circulated elite newspaper, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, as well as Germany's most popular news magazine *Der Spiegel* were chosen to determine the dominant media frame regarding the cases mentioned above.

The following sections of the introduction chapter clarify first the research questions and research objectives. After that, four analyzed cases of the dissertation are explained with a brief historical background. Following that, previous studies about Turkey's image in the German media were reviewed in the third subchapter. The fourth subchapter, "theoretical framework," explains both neoclassical realist theory and framing as well as cascading network activation models from a theoretical perspective. Accordingly, the fifth subchapter illustrates research methods proposed by above mentioned theoretical approaches and models. Finally, all the theoretical and methodological propositions are connected with the research cases of this dissertation in the research design part.

1.1. Research Objectives and Research Questions

Even though the media has become an indispensable actor in current German-Turkish relations, the involvement of the media in decision-making processes is a relatively complex issue to study. Considering the fact that foreign policy decisions are actually taken in the minds of some top-level decision-makers, it is hard to measure the level of media influence ultimately. In that case, interviewing with politicians and journalists seems a useful way to follow in the first stage. However, seeing some colored views of politicians and journalists, perhaps a tendency to blame the media or to over-sell the media power, when especially a foreign policy decision caused undesirable outcomes, is also very possible.⁹ Therefore, it is nowhere in this thesis

⁹ Piers Robinson, "The Role of the Media and public opinion," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hudfield and Tim Dunne, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 197.

argued that the media determines the foreign policy decisions of governments directly. Instead, the dissertation argues that it may influence decision-makers in some limited circumstances.

In this context, this dissertation focuses on filling the gap in the literature of realist IR theory by examining the role of the news media in the German foreign policy decision-making process. As a theoretical contribution, the level of “foreign policy involvement” is tested with short-term and long-term foreign policy cases within the scope of neoclassical realism. With this additional dimension, it is hypothesized that mainly the form of foreign policy involvement in different timeframes determines the possibility of media influence on a foreign policy decision. In other words, among various short-term or long-term foreign policy cases in which a country either directly or indirectly involved, it is expected that the news media has more influence on foreign policy decisions when the respective country makes a short-term foreign policy decision about an indirectly involved foreign policy issue.

In order to test this hypothesis, the following research questions are examined in this study:

- What were the media frames used by the German newspapers to represent the image of Turkey concerning Turkey’s EU accession process, the Kurdish problem, the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Deal, and the 2013 Taksim Gezi Park protests?
- When and how the contesting media frames influenced foreign policy preferences of German decision-makers toward Turkey?
- What were the roles of “time periods” and “levels of foreign policy involvement” dimensions on the neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis?

1.2. Case Studies

As one of the most complicated foreign policy partners of Germany, four foreign policy decisions of German governments towards Turkey, which were

experienced between 2002 and 2016 during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) administration in Turkey, are chosen in order to test this hypothesis.

Case 1 - Turkey's EU Accession Process: In the scope of the dissertation, the first case to examine is Turkey's EU accession process. As a long-lasting political issue, the relations between Turkey and the European Union dates officially back to the "Agreement Creating an Association Between the Republic of Turkey and the European Economic Community (EEC)," or widely known as Ankara Agreement, which was signed in 1963. After waiting for more than 40 years as a potential EU candidate, Turkey's official accession negotiations with the EU began on October 3, 2005. Unlike Germany's traditional reluctance towards Turkey's full membership of the EU, Germany's first social democrat-green government under the leadership of Gerhard Schröder together with Joschka Fischer as foreign minister, played a very constructive role in the process.¹⁰ Even though Schröder's successor Angela Merkel consistently advocated the "privileged partnership" concept, she decided to continue Turkey's EU accession negotiations under the *pacta sunt servanda* principle when she became chancellor in 2005.¹¹ In line with the political dispute about Germany's Turkey policy, Turkey's potential and actual candidacy was intensively discussed in the German media during this long process as well. This thesis focuses on the media frames towards Turkey about two critical milestones in the process: (1) 12-13 December 2002 Copenhagen Summit of the European Council, during which the EU Council stated that negotiations would be opened with Turkey "without delay" if Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen criteria, and (2) 16-17 December 2004 European Council Meeting, when the EU leaders agreed on the beginning of the official accession negotiations on October 3, 2005.

Case 2 – Kurdish Problem in Turkey: The second long-term political issue to examine is the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Although Germany has not been a

¹⁰ Stephan Bierling, *Vormacht Wider Willen: deutsche Außenpolitik von der Wiedervereinigung bis zur Gegenwart* (München: C.H. Beck, 2014), 125-127.

¹¹ Michael Thumann, "Schöne Tradition," *Zeit Online*, October 6, 2006, <https://www.zeit.de/online/2006/41/Merkel-Tuerkei-Kommentar>.

directly participating actor in this one of the most important political and social problems in the history of modern Turkey, the Kurdish issue has indirectly connected with Germany since the 1990s in many different aspects. Relating with the first case as well, concerns of the European Union regarding human rights violations during the fight against the Kurdish separatist movement in the Southeastern Anatolia has been one of the most critical themes in German-Turkish relations as well. More recently, especially since the collapse of the Kurdish solution process and re-escalating military conflict between the Turkish government and Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2015, the EU institutions have seriously criticized Turkey's security operations in the region.¹² Apart from the EU perspective, the Kurdish issue also attracted much attention from the German public and the news media. As a reflection of the existing conflict in Turkey, increasing tension between Turkish and Kurdish migrant communities in Germany, along with many violent incidents, became a severe threat to Germany's public order, as it was in the 1990s.

Furthermore, the sensibility of the German public opinion regarding the German foreign arms trade with Turkey caused a negative public opinion against Turkey, due to the allegations that the Turkish army used German weapons in the fight against the Kurds.¹³ Accordingly, the German government's restrictive covenant towards Turkey on the use of arms solely for national defense, which was imposed until 2009, was also brought into question by the German media.¹⁴ Historically, this critical issue emerged after the German embargo on the arms trade to Turkey in 1992 in order to prevent the usage of German weapons against Kurds in southeastern

¹² European Commission, *Commission staff working document: Turkey 2016 Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2016), 6, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_turkey.pdf.

¹³ Martin Greive and Donat Riedel, "German arms policy under fire," *Handelsblatt Online*, January 24, 2018, <https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/german-arms-policy-under-fire-878946>.

¹⁴ Wolfgang Wichmann, "Leopard-2-Panzer für die Türkei: Exportschlager ohne Einsatzbeschränkung," *Tagesschau*, January 23, 2018, <http://faktenfinder.tagesschau.de/inland/leopard-109.html>.

Anatolia. Since then, it has remained a controversial issue in the bilateral trade relations between the two countries.¹⁵

From this standpoint, the selection of this case aimed to analyze the critical position of the Kurdish problem in German-Turkish relations and reflections on the German media in the long-term. For this purpose, three examining periods are chosen; (1) 2006-2013, during which the military conflict re-escalated after the end of PKK unilateral ceasefire, EU negotiations with Turkey officially started, and the first signs of a possible peace plan emerged, (2) 2013-2015 when the Turkish Prime Minister officially announced the negotiations with imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan on a broader peace plan, and (3) 2015-2016, during which the peace process is ended, and the military conflict started once again.

Case 3 – 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Deal: One of the most recent political crises, which the German news media actively took part in, is the 2015 European refugee crisis and the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement, which was signed on March 18, 2016.

The illegal migration to the EU has a long historical background, as it has become a common problem for the whole continent after political, social, or economic instabilities in many different regions like the Middle East, northern Africa, western Asia, and Balkans. Nevertheless, the massive wave of unexpected refugees towards the European countries as a result of the Syrian civil war and the invasion of some Syrian and Iraqi cities by the ISIL caused enormous political instability, which the European continent has not experienced for decades.

At first, illegal migration became a growing problem for predominantly Mediterranean EU members such as Greece, Italy, and Malta. However, it attracted the general EU public attention first after the 2013 Lampedusa migrant shipwreck and death of 360 people in the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁶ In 2015, the situation worsened

¹⁵ "Schmutz und Sünde," *Der Spiegel*, April 06, 1992, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13687862.html>.

¹⁶ "Lampedusa boat tragedy: Migrants 'raped and tortured'," *BBC*, November 3, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24866338>.

drastically, and in total, more than 3770 refugees died this year while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁷ The shocking photo image of a 3-year-old refugee Alan Kurdi, whose dead body washed ashore on a beach in Turkey, became another critical turning point in this period. Following this incident, Germany's unilateral decision to open its borders to refugees from Syria led to huge discussions both in Germany and in other European Union countries.¹⁸ During that period, the media became an active participant in this discussion, and many German media institutions called for a new refugee policy.¹⁹ About six months after the incident, in March 2016, the EU and Turkey agreed on a deal to stop the illegal migration to Europe. Accordingly, Turkey promised to admit returned illegal refugees that reached Greek shores through the Aegean Sea and, in exchange, to send refugees to EU countries for resettlement based on the "one-for-one" principle. Also, the EU authorities promised additional financial aid to help refugees in Turkey and the visa liberalization process for Turkish citizens. Nevertheless, the one-side dependency of the EU countries on Turkey, the amount of financial aid from the EU budget, and Turkey's own problems on the human rights and democracy issues were intensively criticized in the German media. In this regard, in order to see the role of the media during the crisis, this study examines the period from December 2015, in which the first drafts of the EU-Turkey deal emerged with the reaching of the crisis to its climax until reaching the agreement in March 2016.

Case 4 – 2013 Taksim Gezi Park Protests: The last case to analyze in the scope of the dissertation is the 2013 Taksim Gezi Park protests, in which Germany

¹⁷ "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC*, March 4, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

¹⁸ "Chancellor Angela Merkel defends Germany's refugee policy as moral and legal," *Deutsche Welle*, September 3, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/chancellor-angela-merkel-defends-germanys-refugee-policy-as-moral-and-legal/a-18692184>.

¹⁹ Maximilian Popp, "Berlin Must Reform or Abolish Its Refugee Policy," *Spiegel Online*, September 17, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/berlin-needs-to-reform-or-abolish-its-current-refugee-policy-a-1053275.html>.; Jasper Jackson, "German paper Bild removes all photos in protest over Alan Kurdi complaints," *The Guardian Online*, September 8, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/sep/08/bild-photos-aylan-kurdi-complaints>.

involved indirectly. Emerged as a small demonstration on May 28, 2013, against an urban development project taking place in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district, the Gezi Park protest turned into the largest protest movement in the history of modern Turkey in the following few days. According to the Turkish Ministry of Interior, in a period that lasted less than a month, almost 2,5 million people joined the protests in 79 of the total 81 provinces of Turkey.²⁰ Regarding the ties with German politics, like many other political issues in Turkey, Gezi protests were discussed in Germany from different perspectives. Above all, many large-scale solidarity protests were held in German cities with the participation of approximately 30,000-40,000 people.²¹ Also, the opposition parties questioned the cooperation between the German and Turkish police forces and the use of police equipment exported from Germany against the protesters and blamed the government for supporting Erdoğan indirectly against the protesters.²² More importantly, the protests coinciding with the European Union's decision to revive the accession process by opening a new accession chapter after more than two years increased the intensity of the discussions in the public sphere. As one of the most discussed political issues about Turkey in recent years, countless articles and interviews about the incidents were published by the German media. Among them, influential news magazine *Der Spiegel's* special ten pages issue in the Turkish language with a clear political message on the cover page "Boyun Eğme / Beugt euch nicht" (Do not Bow Down)²³ was the clear indicator that the German media had a favorable opinion toward the Gezi Park protests. In this context, the political stance of the German media is examined from the beginning of protests in late May 2013 until

²⁰ "2.5 million people attended Gezi protests across Turkey: Interior Ministry," *Hürriyet Daily News*, June 23, 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/25-million-people-attended-gezi-protests-across-turkey-interior-ministry--49292>.

²¹ "Großdemonstration in Köln gegen Erdogan," *FAZ.net*, June 26, 2013, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/protest-auch-in-deutschland-grossdemonstration-in-koeln-gegen-erdogan-12240443.html>.

²² Steven Geyer, "Proteste in Istanbul: Deutschland unterstützt türkische Polizei," *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung Online*, July 17, 2013, <https://www.mz-web.de/politik/proteste-in-istanbul-deutschland-unterstuetzt-tuerkische-polizei-3058800>.

²³ "Beugt Euch nicht, Türkei: Der Aufstand gegen Erdogan," *Der Spiegel*, June 24, 2013.

June 25, when the German government blocked the opening of the new accession chapter during the EU meeting.

1.3. Literature Review

The Turkey image presented by the German elite media has become the subject of many academic studies since the elite media in Germany has always been an influential actor in molding public opinion. In line with the scope of this dissertation, especially four studies contributed to Turkey's media image issue with analyses from different decades.

First, Mustafa Nail Alkan's study "Die Perzeption der Türkei im Spiegel der westdeutschen Presse von 1960 bis 1971" (The perception of Turkey in the mirror of the West German press from 1960 to 1971) analyzed four daily newspapers, namely Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau and Bild with both qualitative and quantitative methods and tested five different hypotheses. Alkan revealed that the German media mostly utilized from Asian and oriental images of Turkey and emphasized Turkey's dependence on Europe for its economic development. As a result, he argued, the German media depicted rather a negative image of Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s.²⁴

Similarly, in his dissertation "Das Bild der Türken in der deutschen Presse" (The image of Turkey in the German Press), Gökçe made a broader analysis of the German media with five national daily, eleven weekly, and six regional newspapers in the 1980s. While in his analysis, Gökçe focused solely on the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal to the Federal Republic of Germany in autumn 1984, he argued

²⁴ Mustafa Nail Alkan, "Die Perzeption der Türkei im Spiegel der westdeutschen Presse von 1960 bis 1971" (Ph.D diss., University of Bonn, 1994).

that the news regarding Turkey in this short period was generally about the conflict in Turkey and the Turks were pictured in the role of causer of specific social problems.²⁵

Third, Gürsel Gür examined *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, and *Die Welt* in his dissertation, “Das Türkeiimage in der deutschen Presse unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der EU-Türkei-Beziehungen“ (The Turkey image in the German press with special consideration of EU-Turkey relations) by mainly focusing on the late 1980s and the 1990s. For Gür, even though Turkey’s European integration efforts were usually a hot topic, there was generally no continuous coverage about a particular issue concerning Turkey. Instead, the coverage depended mostly on subjects. Also, he argued that because the German media generally used the same sources, such as comments from politicians, the Turkey image conveyed by different media institutions was generally similar. Eventually, he concluded that the Turkish image in the German media was also negative during those years.²⁶

Last and most recently, in her work “Das Türkeiimage der deutschen Presse“ (The Turkey image in the German Press), Miriam Freudenberger analyzed *Taz*, *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Frankfurter Rundschau* and she concluded that there was no continuous background coverage of Turkey in the German press. Instead, the image of Turkey in the German press was based heavily on event-related reporting. Nevertheless, concerning the overall presentation, the German press reflected a predominantly negative image of Turkey in the 2000s.²⁷

²⁵ Orhan Gökçe, “Das Bild der Türken in der deutschen Presse. Eine Inhaltsanalyse der Berichterstattung zum Besuch des türkischen Ministerpräsidenten Turgut Özal im Herbst 1984 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland” (Ph.D diss., University of Gießen, 1988).

²⁶ Gürsel Gür, “Das Türkeiimage in der deutschen Presse unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der EU-Türkei-Beziehungen: eine Inhaltsanalyse für den Zeitraum 1987-1995” (Ph.D diss., University of Münster, 1998).

²⁷ Miriam Freudenberger, *Das Türkeiimage der deutschen Presse: Wie Tageszeitungen konstruieren* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag-Dr. Müller, 2008).

Apart from those examples, some other academic contributions specifically dealt with the more recent issues in Turkey's EU membership bid. Among them, Madeker's discourse analysis examined three newspapers (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Welt), as well as two news magazines (Der Spiegel, Die Zeit). The writer found out with the examination that the issue was mostly covered around one master frame, the collective European identity, and Turkey's position in it. Accordingly, she showed that roughly 60 percent of articles published in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and more than half of the articles published in Süddeutsche Zeitung were against the accession of Turkey in one way or another.²⁸

Quite similarly, Bülent Küçük analyzed Turkey's EU accession process from both Turkish and German media perspectives between 1997 and 2004. Concerning the examined German daily newspapers (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, die tageszeitung), Küçük argued that the focal point of the discussion turned from Turkey's incapability to become an EU member to the question of cultures. In other words, after the emergence of the possibility to start the official accession negotiations, the hegemonic discourse became Turkey's cultural identity, which fits neither in Europe nor in the Islamic world completely.²⁹

In addition to that, a similar examination of Walter concerning Turkey's EU accession process in the late 1990s and early 2000s assessed German and British newspapers with the historical evaluation of the Turkey image in news texts. For Walter, thanks to its front state position during the Cold War, Turkey's approach to the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1960s was considered positively in the media. Similarly, Turkey's application for full membership in the 1980s was generally recognized as a positive development. Mostly because of the Islamic

²⁸ Ellen Madeker, *Türkei und europäische Identität Eine wissenssoziologische Analyse der Debatte um den EU-Beitritt*, (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008).

²⁹ Bülent Küçük, *Die Türkei und das andere Europa. Phantasmen der Identität im Beitrittsdiskurs*, (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2008).

Revolution in Iran, Turkey's ambition to become a secular, pluralistic democracy helped Turkey to be perceived as a reliable partner for Europeans.³⁰

In general, all these mentioned studies have similarities with this dissertation concerning the examined issues such as Turkey's EU accession process and the Kurdish question. Moreover, in terms of Turkey's perception in the German media, this dissertation has some similarities with those works. However, this study is differentiated from them by taking this analysis one step forward and explaining how and when those media images influenced the foreign policy decisions of Germany towards Turkey.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

The discipline of International Relations has experienced rapid proliferation in the development of new theories since the early 1990s. As a reaction to the domination of realist and liberal theories, the emergence of new theories like the critical, green, or feminist theories extended the scope of the discipline much further. Without a doubt, the existing IR theories were also affected by this rapidly changing environment in the discipline and searched answers for dozens of newly emerged questions. Furthermore, some longstanding issues of IR were also transformed into a new structure in the last three decades.

Among these subjects, the media has been considered as an essential element of the politics and decision-making processes for many centuries. Already in 1787, one of the Founding Father and the former President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, clearly emphasized the importance of the media with the words that "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the

³⁰ Jochen Walter, *Die Türkei – ‚Das Ding auf der Schwelle‘: (De-) Konstruktionen der Grenzen Europas*, (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008).

latter.”³¹ Nevertheless, for a more detailed analysis of the media effect on the governments’ foreign policy decisions, scholars in the IR discipline had waited much more time. In one of the earliest analyses, Martin Linsky suggested in 1987 that “the effect of the press is, in general, more substantial in foreign policy than in domestic policy. We are not at all sure why this is so, or what are the consequences for both of the specific differences.”³²

As one of the most utilized school of thought in IR, realism had similarly neglected the media effect for a long time. Even today, the dominant version of the realist school, neorealism, is still prone to see the media as an instrument of foreign policy elites or to ignore it in foreign policy formation completely. At the same time, more recent realist variations, such as neoclassical realism, put much more emphasis on the domestic foreign policy constraints, including the relations between the media and the actors of foreign policy decision-making, though detailed analyses of these issues are in a minimal number.

In terms of the realist foreign policy analysis of Germany, this academic gap in the literature remains not only in the media-foreign policy relations but also in the overall analysis of German foreign policy. Compared to realism, two other mainstream IR theories, liberalism, and constructivism, dominated the studies on German foreign policy through the Cold War years thanks to efforts of the scholars like Ernst-Otto Czempiel, Helga Haftendorn, and Karl Kaiser. Similarly, Germany’s long-time commitment to principles like “culture of restraint” and “multilateralism” supported the position of liberal-constructivist arguments concerning the German foreign policy after the reunification.³³

³¹ National Archives and Records Administration, “From Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 16 January 1787,” *Founders Online*, accessed January 9, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0047>.

³² Martin Linsky, *Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policy Making*, (New York: Norton, 1986), 224.

³³ Gunther Hellmann, “Fatal Attraction? German Foreign Policy and IR/Foreign Policy Theory,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 12, no.3 (2009): 259-260.

In addition to those mainstream theories, some other foreign policy concepts, which were directly influenced by liberal and constructivist IR theories, have also made vital contributions to the German foreign policy discussions. Among them, Katzenstein's "tamed power" understanding argued that Germans remove the concept of power from their "political vocabulary" after the Second World War, and instead, they embraced the "language of political responsibility."³⁴ Similarly, Harnisch and Maull's "civilian power" approach emphasized multilateralism, limit the use of force in international relations, institution-building, and integration elements of German foreign policy.³⁵ In line with those two approaches, the "trading state" concept focused on the role of civilian strategies, instruments, and international trade in pursuit of national interests³⁶

Although it is still one of the most utilized theories among IR scholars in many countries, the realist paradigm is especially not popular among the scholars who work on German foreign policy.³⁷ Many of these scholars are convinced that the realist analysis was failed to explain German foreign policy since Germany showed no sign to return the balance of power politics, as structural realists expected. Similarly, many structural realist scholars considered foreign policy decisions of post-reunification Germany as an obvious anomaly.³⁸ Therefore, like foreign policy-media relations, only updated and revised versions of realism dealt with German foreign policy to a limited

³⁴ Peter Katzenstein, "United Germany in an Integrated Europe," *Current History* 96, no.608 (1997): 116.

³⁵ Hanns, W. Maull, "German foreign policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'civilian power?'" *German Politics* 9, no.2 (2000): 56.

³⁶ Richard N. Rosecrance, *Der neue Handelsstaat: Herausforderungen für Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 1987)., Michael Staack, *Handelsstaat Deutschland: deutsche Aussenpolitik in einem neuen internationalen System*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2000), 19.

³⁷ Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar et.al., "The IR of the beholder: examining global IR using the 2014 TRIP survey," *International Studies Review* 18, no.1 (2016), 26-27.

³⁸ Peter Katzenstein, "United Germany in an Integrating Europe", in *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) and Hellmann, "Fatal Attraction?," 260-261.

extent. Among them, Rittberger, Baumann, and Wagner analyzed the general foreign policy strategy of Germany with the “modified realism” approach, which adds some intervening variables such as technological, geographical, and economic factors into realist foreign policy analysis.³⁹ Also, Alexander Reichwein explored some vital foreign policy decisions of Germany after the reunification with the neoclassical realist perspective like diplomatic recognition of the former Yugoslav republics, participation in the NATO missions during the Kosovo War, supporting the EU and NATO enlargement in the 1990s and 2000s, and not joining Iraq War.⁴⁰

Within this context, the theoretical framework of the thesis is the neoclassical approach of the realist IR school with the aim of contributing to realist IR understanding both media-foreign policy relations and German foreign policy perspective. Accordingly, the main theoretical assumptions of neoclassical realism and framing theory, which is proposed in this dissertation as a supplementary theory to neoclassical realism, is explained in the following part of the chapter.

1.4.1. Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics

Coined first time by American social scientist Gideon Rose in 1998, neoclassical realism initially emerged as a collection of some realist foreign policy analyses of scholars like Randall L. Schweller, William C. Wohlforth, Thomas

³⁹ Rainer Baumann, Volker Rittberger and Wolfgang Wagner, “Neorealist Foreign Policy Theory,” in *German Foreign Policy Since Unification: Theories and Case Studies*, ed. Volker Rittberger (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 57.

⁴⁰ Alexander Reichwein, “Germany’s Growing Power in Europe: From Multilateral Collectivism Towards Re-Nationalization and Destabilization?” in *Fear and Uncertainty in Europe: The Return to Realism?*, ed. Roberto Belloni, Vincent Della Sala, and Paul Viotti (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 89-100.

Christensen, and Fareed Zakaria.⁴¹ According to Rose, who compared those realist contributions with other mainstream realist approaches, the essential feature of neoclassical realism is using the combination of both internal and external variables for analysis.

Research Program	Epistemology and methodology	View of the international system	View of the Units	Dependent Variable	Underlying causal logic
CLASSICAL REALISM	Inductive theories; philosophical reflection on nature of politics or detailed historical analysis (generally drawn from W. European History)	Somewhat important	Differentiated	Foreign policies of states	Power distributions or distribution of interests (revisionist vs. Status quo)→foreign policy
NEOREALISM	Deductive theories; competitive hypothesis testing using qualitative and sometimes quantitative methods	Very important; inherently competitive and uncertain	Undifferentiated	International political outcomes	Relative power distributions (independent variable)→ international outcomes (dependent variable)
NEOCLASSICAL REALISM	Deductive theorising; competitive hypothesis testing using qualitative methods	Important; implications of anarchy are variable and sometimes opaque to decision-makers	Differentiated	Foreign policies of states	Relative power distributions (independent variable) → domestic constraints and elite perceptions (intervening variables) → foreign policy (dependent variable)

Table 1: Classical Realism, Neo-Realism, and Neoclassical Realism (Taliaferro, Lobell and Ripsman 2009: 20)

Rose sees this approach realist because, above all, it accepts the international system and relative material power of states as the main driving forces behind foreign policy decisions. On the other hand, he specifies this approach neoclassical since it uses unit level intervening variables for translating systemic pressures.⁴² Table 1 above

⁴¹ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy." *World politics* 51, no.1 (1998): 144.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 146.

compares three realist research programs in terms of epistemology and methodology, view of the international system, view of the units, dependent variables, and underlying causal logic.

Within this context, the most remarkable addition of neoclassical realism to the realist understanding is domestic constraints and elite perceptions. For Schweller, domestic political features of states “act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces.”⁴³ Therefore, unlike the structural realist assumption, states may react differently to similar systemic pressures, as domestic factors are similarly influential on decision-makers.

Neoclassical realists see adding such elements to their analysis as a necessary modification to answer new questions coming with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a much more complex and chaotic international environment. For them, there are four critical deficiencies of the structural realist analysis: (1) decision-makers may sometimes misinterpret the systemic requirements, (2) the international system may not give open indicators concerning the risks and chances in the system, (3) even if these requirements are interpreted correctly, leaders still may choose responding irrationally, and (4) states may not organize necessary resources adequately to encounter systemic pressures.⁴⁴

In order to respond to these deficiencies, neoclassical realist scholars introduced “intervening variables” as their primary analysis tool to add domestic constraints into their analyses. Accordingly, they employed numerous intervening variables, such as regime types, public opinion, culture, identity, perceptions, ideas, and beliefs. Furthermore, comparative political economy issues, which have been a long time neglected by neorealist scholars as a realm of liberal IR theory, are

⁴³ Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 6.

⁴⁴ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical realist theory of international politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12.

increasingly utilized in neoclassical foreign policy studies.⁴⁵ More generally, these variables are classified under three roughly defined categories; motivations and interests of states, decision-makers' perceptions, and domestic structure.⁴⁶

Although neoclassical realism has theoretically and empirically evolved in many ways, especially such plurality triggered some critics towards neoclassical realism. Most importantly, some scholars argued that neoclassical realism is more or less “a loose grouping of works that attempt to combine the examination of the structural drivers of foreign policy with the consideration of the unique domestic settings of the states they analyze in order to understand foreign policy outcomes.”⁴⁷ From this perspective, its logical inconsistency, as well as lacking a realist “essence,” were the main criticisms towards neoclassical realism.⁴⁸

Theoretically, both these criticisms imply essential points concerning the neoclassical realist theory. Nevertheless, unlike general criticisms about a theory, those mentioned issues show the strength of neoclassical realism at the same time. In terms of the realist essence, as criticisms rightly pointed out, the “realist” emphasis of the neoclassical realism approach is majorly based on “external material power in anarchy,” and the focal point of neoclassical realist explanation is the response of decision-makers to domestic constraints. Therefore, it can reasonably be argued that while the international structure in a realist sense plays a central role in shaping the

⁴⁵ Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical realism and domestic interest groups," in *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*, ed. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 170.

⁴⁶ Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism and facets of power in international relations," in *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007), 59-60.

⁴⁷ Nicholas Ross Smith, "Can neoclassical realism become a genuine theory of International Relations?," *The Journal of Politics* 80, no.2 (2018): 747.

⁴⁸ Kevin Narizny, "On systemic paradigms and domestic politics: A critique of the newest realism," *International Security* 42, no. 2 (2017): 155-190; Jeffrey W. Legro, and Andrew Moravcsik. "Is anybody still a realist?," *International security* 24, no.2 (1999): 5-55.

analysis, it is actually not the dominant feature of a neoclassical realist analysis.⁴⁹ However, this does not mean that this theory is not a realist one. Instead, it utilizes the realist paradigm from a different perspective.

Secondly, the issue of theoretical inconsistency seems a fair critique as well. When the essential elements of neoclassical realism, such as domestic actors or particular emphasis on culture, belief, and identities, are considered together, one can easily see some common points with liberal and constructivist IR theories as well. However, unlike neorealism's uncompromising theoretical understanding, these elements give neoclassical realism unusual flexibility. Instead of theoretical parsimony, this flexibility helps to reach more comprehensive explanation power without having concrete theoretical walls.

In principle, neoclassical realist scholars do not aim to reach a "one-size-fits-all" theory. On the contrary, it is an eclectic and pragmatist theory. Also, when the increasing trend of eclecticism and using mid-level theories in the IR literature is taken into account, neoclassical realism reflects the natural progress in IR theory discussions quite correctly.⁵⁰

For a long time, neoclassical realism has been perceived as only a foreign policy analysis approach, which let scholars examine specific, mostly anomalous foreign policy decisions of states based on the international structure in a realist sense and with the help of some domestic constraints. However, more recently, some IR scholars started to ask whether neoclassical realism a genuine theory of IR. At this point, Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's efforts to systemize neoclassical realism significantly contributed to the development of the theory. At the first stage, unlike their structural realist counterparts, they examined the theory's ontological and

⁴⁹ Jack Donnelly, "What Do We Mean by Realism? And How—And What—Does Realism Explain?," in *Fear and Uncertainty in Europe: The Return to Realism?*, ed. Roberto Belloni, Vincent Della Sala, and Paul Viotti (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 28-29.

⁵⁰ David A. Lake, "Theory is dead, long live theory: The end of the Great Debates and the rise of eclecticism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 567-587.

epistemological roots and presented a detailed methodology for neoclassical realist research. Furthermore, as a response to criticisms regarding the lack of clear definitions of intervening variables, they categorized different intervening variables by proposing four comprehensive groups: (1) *leader images*, which emphasizes foreign policy executives' cognitive structures such as personal characteristics, values, beliefs; (2) *strategic culture* as a combination of rooted beliefs, shared expectations and worldviews in the whole society; (3) *state-society relations* by referring the main aspects of interactions between the state institutions and economic or societal groups; and (4) *domestic institutions* such as constitutionally regulated rules or less formal customs, routines, and unwritten rules.⁵¹

As mentioned before, neoclassical realist scholars have not deeply examined the role of media in foreign policy decisions. In principle, Ripsman defines the media as one of the significant domestic constraints in foreign policy decision-making processes.⁵² He believes the media may influence foreign policy by taking part in the understanding of external conditions and the definition of national interests. Therefore, the media institutions are considered as "epistemic communities," which frames the elite debates and actively shape foreign policy executives' way of thinking.⁵³ Moreover, function to reflect the views of different social and ideological groups in the society, as is seen through the elite newspapers in Germany, makes the media an essential actor in the short-term perceptions of political issues than influencing countries' long-term strategic culture.

Ripsman believes that even if the media plays an active role in state-society relations, its influence on foreign policy decisions does not emerge in every foreign policy decision. Especially in a high-threat environment, in which the security of the state is seriously threatened, the effect of domestic actors may drastically reduce. On the other hand, in a low-threat environment, when the cost of meeting domestic actors'

⁵¹ Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 61-77.

⁵² Ripsman, "Neoclassical realism and domestic interest groups," 171.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 185.

expectations is relatively marginal, foreign policy executives may become more willing to include those actors in the foreign policy decision-making process.⁵⁴

Still, for a detailed analysis of the media-foreign policy relations, neoclassical realism does not provide the necessary tools. To overcome this setback, a more developed political communication theory, which seems in general quite compatible with the main propositions of neoclassical realism, is added to the analysis of this dissertation. Accordingly, the following part of the chapter is devoted to the explanation of the “framing” concept as well as the “cascading network activation” model of Entman, which examine the function of different political and social groups and their interaction with each other in spreading of different messages through dominant frames.

1.4.2. Media-Foreign Policy Relations: Framing and Cascading Network Activation Model

Despite the lack of interest from the realist school, research on the role of public opinion and the media in the foreign policymaking process has substantially grown as a subfield of political communication discipline, particularly in the last two decades. In general, two significant developments contributed this theoretical progress: (1) rapidly advancing communication technologies, which allow global information sharing at an extreme pace,⁵⁵ and (2) changing security perception of states with the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 186.

⁵⁵ The “CNN effect” is one of the most discussed media approaches in recent years concerning the role of increasing communication technologies and live broadcasting in foreign policy making processes. As a concept, it is based on the idea that decision-makers may occasionally lose their control over the policy decisions to the media institutions especially during humanitarian crises as it was experienced in 1990s such as in Northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda. For detailed analysis of the “CNN effect” see; Steven Livingston, *Clarifying the CNN effect: An examination of media effects according to type of military intervention*, (Cambridge: Joan

end of the Cold War and increase in the importance of the mass media in policymaking processes as an independent actor.⁵⁶ In the light of those developments, some media theories put particular emphasis on the news media's increasing influence in politics, while accepting it has clear limits.

Chronically, the agenda-setting theory is one of the oldest and most discussed approaches not only in the media-foreign policy relations but also in almost all communication and media studies. As an idea, this approach is based initially on Cohen's famous prediction from 1963 that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."⁵⁷ With their analysis of the presidential election in Chapel Hill (North Carolina, USA), McCombs and Shaw tested for the first time the correlation between the media and political agendas, and they developed the theory with the hypothesis that "the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues."⁵⁸ From that perspective, this approach proposed an indirect effect on politics, mainly through its ability to influence public opinion. For McCombs, constant repetitions of issues give the public an impression that it is an important issue, and it helps the organization of

Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy John F. Kennedy School of Government Harvard University, 1997) and Piers Robinson, *The CNN effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁵⁶ Chomsky and Herman's "propaganda model" was the most popular example of the instrumentalization of the news media instrumentalization, especially during the Cold War. For these scholars, the media and especially foreign news are manipulated by governments to realize their foreign policy goals. Thanks to the restrictive security environment during the Cold War, all media productions are shaped in line with the interests of governments or business elites. For detailed information see, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*, rev. ed. (New York: Pantheon, 2002).

⁵⁷ Bernard Cecil Cohen, *Press and Foreign Policy*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 13.

⁵⁸ Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The agenda-setting function of mass media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no.2 (1972): 177.

the public agenda according to this message.⁵⁹ He also argued that agenda-setting occurs as a permanent learning process of citizens through the messages delivered by the media. In fact, with citizens' relatively passive role, which is limited by reflecting the media messages, the characteristics of recipients play a small role in this learning process.⁶⁰

For some scholars such as Weaver, McCombs, and Shaw, agenda-setting theory has largely extended its range since the introduction of the concept. With this extension, the question of "what issues are emphasized by news media" is started to be examined with the question of "how these issues are reported."⁶¹ In other words, effects, evaluations, and cognitions of reporting became the subject of analyses. This so-called "second-level agenda-setting" effect has generally been associated with two recent media-effect approaches; "priming" and "framing" concepts.

At this point, the emergence of the "priming" concept as an extension of agenda-setting indicates the practical side of the agenda-setting theory. With priming, Iyengar and Kinder refer to "changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations."⁶² For them, the priming effect occurs with creating a framework for the readers by suggesting a particular issue or ignoring another issue. In this way, this act changes the norms and values used by citizens to judge political acts.⁶³ Similarly, Price and Tewksbury explain the concept as providing temporary access to a specified political issue by rendering and activating it through the media. With this temporary

⁵⁹ Maxwell E. McCombs, *Setting the agenda: Mass media and public opinion*, 2th ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶¹ David Weaver, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald L. Shaw, "International Trends in Agenda-setting Research," in *Wie die Medien die Welt erschaffen und wie die Menschen darin leben*, ed. Christina Holtz-Bacha, Helmut Scherer and Norbert Waldmann, (Opladen/Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag 1998), 190.

⁶² Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News that matters: Television and American Opinion*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 63.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 63-65.

access, they add, the specified issue may be used as a basis for making a judgment about political outcomes or administrative actors.⁶⁴

The second approach that emphasizes the role of agenda-setting in the policymaking process is the “framing” concept. In one of the early works about frames and framing concepts, Erving Goffman described frames as “the principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them.”⁶⁵ From that perspective, frames are “schemata of interpretation” to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” daily occurrences.⁶⁶ Another influential scholar in the framing literature, Stephan Reese, defined frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”⁶⁷ Finally, Robert Entman approached the framing issue from the political communication perspective and suggested that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”⁶⁸ When all these definitions considered together, it may be said about frames that systemic and intentional interpretation of the social world is the crucial element of the framing concept. Therefore, the media as a significant actor that mediates messages from reality to the audience, analysis of media frames has a primary position in the frame analysis literature.

⁶⁴ Vincent Price and David Tewksbury, “News values and public opinion: A theoretical account of media priming and framing,” in *Progress in the communication sciences Vol. 13*, ed. George A. Barnett and Franklin J. Boster (New York: Ablex, 1997): 173-212

⁶⁵ Erving Goffman, *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 21

⁶⁷ Stephen D. Reese, “Prologue - Framing public life: A bridging model for media research,” in *Framing Public: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, ed. Stephen Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. and August E. Grant (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), 11.

⁶⁸ Entman, “Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm,” 52.

Within the scope of Entman's oft-cited frame definition, four primary functions of frames are frequently used by many scholars for media frame analyses:

- Problem definition: This frame element subsumes all the aspects that the media expresses about a social problem. It may include information or statements that emphasize characteristics of the social problem and thus may contribute to the pattern of interpretation.
- Causal interpretation: This frame function focuses on the attribution of responsibility, i.e., the leading actor that is blamed for the development of the problem and the actors that were affected positively or negatively.
- Moral Evaluation: This function can also be called a constitutive element for frames or interpretation patterns because it includes the evaluation of a social problem by positive, negative, or ambivalent interpretations.
- Treatment recommendation: This frame element is benefited to understand solution proposals that are put forward by the media against a social problem.⁶⁹

In short, while the first function of a frame refers to the classification of "what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits," the second function diagnoses the factors causing the problem. The third factor, moral judgment, evaluates causal agents, and their effects. Finally, the last function proposes solutions for the problems and analyze their possible impacts. Concerning these functions, Entman argues that while a single sentence may sometimes represent all of those framing functions together, in some other cases, none of these four framing functions may be clearly performed.⁷⁰ For instance, as D'Angelo mentioned, American President George H.W. Bush's description of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as "even worse than Adolf Hitler" could easily dominate the public opinion about the American foreign policy

⁶⁹ Constanze Jecker, *Entmans Framing-Ansatz: Theoretische Grundlegung und empirische Umsetzung* (Konstanz: UVK, 2014), 81-88.

⁷⁰ Entman, "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm," 52.

toward Iraq without performing none of these mentioned frame functions explicitly.⁷¹ Entman believes that problem definition and treatment recommendation are the two most important functions as the first one generally predetermines the rest of the frame, and the other one directly promotes support or opposition to a policy. Still, these functions are not to measure the strength or spreading capacity of a frame. Instead, they are utilized to classify frames.⁷²

1.4.3. Cascading Network Activation Model

Based on the framing effect, Entman's "cascading network activation model" takes the media effect issue one step further and gives a systematic explanation about the two-way interaction between the media and political elites. Even though Entman's model was directly developed to examine the influence of foreign news in American politics, some other examples in the academic literature applied Entman's model to different Western countries such as France, Spain, and Canada.⁷³

In theory, Entman's cascading activation model is grounded on a relatively passive media perspective in the politics-media relations, regarding the news media's

⁷¹ Baldwin van Gorp, "Strategies to Take Subjectivity Out of Framing Analysis" in *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Paul D'Angelo and Jim A. Kuypers (New York: Routledge, 2010), 102.

⁷² Robert M. Entman, *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6

⁷³ See, María-José Canel, "Communicating strategically in the face of terrorism: The Spanish government's response to the 2004 Madrid bombing attacks," *Public Relations Review* 38, no.2 (2012): 214-222.; Joseph M. Valenzano III, "Framing the War on Terror in Canadian newspapers: Cascading activation, Canadian leaders, and newspapers," *Southern Communication Journal* 74, no.2 (2009): 174-190.; Elisabeth Le, *The spiral of anti-other rhetoric: Discourses of identity and the international media echo* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2006).

dependence of official sources for their news production.⁷⁴ However, unlike other passive media understandings, Entman's cascading activation model does not propose only a one-way direction from top to down, in which decision-makers drive the media according to their own needs. On the contrary, Entman considers a possible media influence from down to top with accepting its less frequent occurrence.

There are three basic premises of the cascading activation model. First, it proposes that frames and contestation occur at the various levels of the network, such as the administration, the media, and the public. Second, thanks to so-called "feedback loops," contestations are changed or expounded by the actors in each stage. Third, every actor in the network has a different amount of power to affect frames. Among them, decision-makers are, without a doubt, more effective than the other actors on both creating and contesting frames.⁷⁵

Since most of the contemporary political communication theories concerning the media-foreign policy relations, including the framing and cascading activations concepts, were either developed for the American political system or tested empirically with the case studies from the United States, both the differences and similarities between the German and the American political systems should be clarified in the first

⁷⁴ Concerning the media's passive role in politics, Lance W. Bennett's "indexing" theory deeply influenced Entman. According to this idea, the government-led or the "official" flow of information is the most important source for the daily news. In consequence, even if journalists are theoretically more likely to express liberal or opposition voices against government decisions, it would be possible only if there is a dissident among decision-makers. Only in such a scenario the "official" oppositions inside governments let the media initiate a public debate by providing necessary information. Other than those cases, the media strictly follow government's political agenda. From this perspective, Bennett describes journalists as "gatekeepers," who usually keep the news gates closed, especially about political issues that do not generally attract the attention of ordinary citizens. For more information about Bennett's indexing theory see; Lance W. Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," *Journal of Communication* 40, no.2 (1990) and Lance W. Bennett, *News: The politics of illusion*, 9th ed. (Boston: Longman, 2012).

⁷⁵ Sean Aday, "The US media, foreign policy, and public support for war," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. Kate Kenski, Kathleen Hall Jamieson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 317

place. Especially the two-party presidential system in the United States and the focus of media theories dominantly on military power-related concepts such as wars, military interventions, and use of force necessitates extra careful examination to test the validity of these theories for Germany. Moreover, the existence of a limited number of military intervention cases in German foreign policy discussions necessitates the inclusion of different foreign policy topics such as human rights, economic and political collaborations, environment, or migration in the foreign policy studies.

Furthermore, differences in journalism traditions of the United States and Germany should also be taken into consideration for a comprehensive analysis. In this regard, three significant differences between German and American media traditions should be considered. First, it is generally agreed that German journalists, in principle, have a more critical perception of journalism compared to their American counterparts, who see themselves mostly as mediators between the public and politics. Second, the American media system has a stable market-orientation and rapidly growing media ownership concentration. Accordingly, it is much more possible to see independent voices within the media sector in Germany than the American media environment. Third, the range of political orientation in the German media system is openly more comprehensive than the United States. In this broad political spectrum, each different newspaper like *Die Tageszeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, or *Die Welt* represents different political ideologies. In this way, they create an evident political diversity compared to their mainstream American counterparts, which ideologically position themselves very close to the center.⁷⁶ In this context, Figure 1 shows below the adaption of the model to German politics under the basic premises of the cascading activation model.

⁷⁶ Adrian Pohr, "Indexing im Einsatz: Eine Inhaltsanalyse der Kommentare überregionaler Tageszeitungen in Deutschland zum Afghanistankrieg 2001," *M&K Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft* 53, no.2-3 (2005): 264.

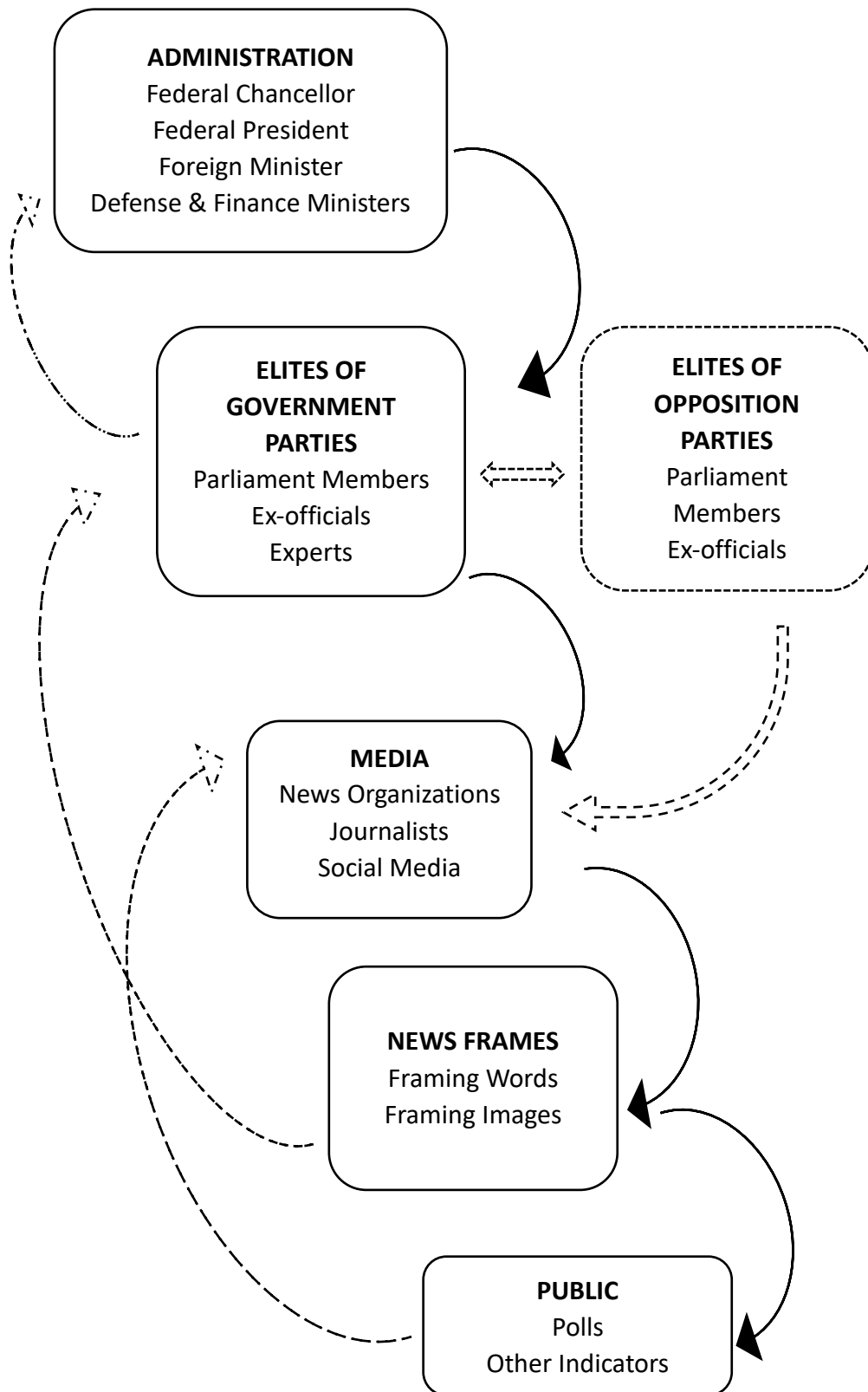


Figure 1: Cascading Network Activation in Germany

According to this model, framing usually follows a top to bottom direction like a cascading waterfall. As the primary decision-makers, heads of governments, heads of states, as well as some crucial ministers stand at the top of this model. They are the most influential and independent actors to spread their foreign policy frames to the lower levels in the system, namely, other political elites, journalists, and the public.⁷⁷

After these top-level decision-makers, Entman includes foreign policy elites of governing and opposition parties as distinctive actors in this interaction process. Elites of governing parties such as parliament members, foreign officials, and foreign policy experts have all facilities available to reach the media. Also, in most cases, the media utilizes them as primary news sources. At the same level as the elites of governing parties, the opposition party elites also have functional instruments to spread their ideas to lower levels.⁷⁸

In the third level of this model, media institutions and journalists take the role of establishing news frames through the framing of words and images. Following that, those established news frames reach directly to the public, and these news frames are activated in the minds of citizens.

In addition to its normal up-to-down influence process, this model suggests an opportunity to contest the dominant frames of elites upwardly through the news frames. However, this action necessitates a much more substantial effort, so to speak, a pumping mechanism to push the water upwards.⁷⁹

Entman believes that the hierarchy has a crucial role among actors at each level as well. In this respect, elite media institutions, for example, have a privileged position in the media level with particularly their higher impact on other elites, news

⁷⁷ Robert M. Entman, "Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11," *Political Communication*, 20, no.4 (2003): 420

⁷⁸ Robert M. Entman, "Theorizing mediated public diplomacy: The US case," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13, no.2 (2008): 92.

⁷⁹ Entman, "Cascading activation," 420.

organizations, and the public. There is also another hierarchy within each media outlet. The editorial page of a newspaper, for instance, has, without a doubt, more visibility and influence compared to a story on page sixteen. In fact, this is also the cause of politicians' more remarkable influence on dominant frames, as their policies and comments are almost always covered in the first pages of the newspaper and therefore generate more attention.⁸⁰

There are four essential variables concerning the spread of frames. Among them, two variables - "cultural congruence" and "motivations" - work inside the cascading model to spread frames towards individual elites' and citizens' minds. On the other hand, two other variables - "elite power" and "elite strategy" - function to push a frame from outside. When considered from this aspect, the first two variables may cause either a significant boosting effect for counter-frames created by the media or a reaction against it. For Entman, as "perhaps the most important determinant" among those four variables, "cultural congruence" of frames with the dominant political culture in the country plays a significant role in effectively spreading of an idea. A high congruent frame with the political culture gain very high acceptance in the society and may even be used by the vast majority in a habitual framework.

On the contrary case, culturally incongruent frames may be easily blocked in the system. To do that, just ignoring or proposing a culturally congruent alternative frame may prevent the spreading of those ideas.⁸¹ It may also cause hostile reactions from other essential actors at the same level or actors at different levels in the cascading system.⁸² Therefore, in the case that a counter-frame is entirely congruent with the political culture or culturally more congruent than the dominant administrative frame, the media has a better chance to spread its own contesting interpretation.

Along with the cultural congruence, some different "motivations" such as minimizing the cost of newsgathering, reaching more audiences, generating more advertising revenue, or advancing personal career interests for some elites could stay

⁸⁰ Entman, "Theorizing mediated public diplomacy," 92.

⁸¹ Entman, *Projections of Power*, 14-16.

⁸² Entman, "Theorizing mediated public diplomacy," 93.

behind the media frames as motivational factors. However, in order to establish a counter-frame through media institutions, “news of an event or issue must represent a truly significant threat to values or must generate so much news as such high magnitude and resonance that a distracted public actually notices.”⁸³ In such cases, monitoring the core values, norms, and principles in the society and showing a strong reaction against emerging threats targeting those core values, norms and principles give the media more chance to create a dominating counter-frame.

Unlike motivations and cultural congruency, the other frame variables – “elite power” and “elite strategy” - are mostly benefited by leaders, other top-level decision-makers, and other foreign policy elites with their feature of being primary news sources. Deliberate, strategic actions and manipulations of those elites, in some cases, allow frames to be spread very quickly and to become dominant frames through the cascading networks. On the other hand, the media and journalists have very much limited power compared to political elites. Their most critical elite powers are asking questions and, more importantly, having an ability to shape news frames with the purposefully selected words and images. Also, in the sense of following an “elite strategy,” they can go through some strategic thinking, even if their principal motivation is most of the time producing “good stories” and advance their independent “watchdog” role in the society.⁸⁴

1.5. Methodology

Since the main aim of this dissertation is to illuminate the relationship between foreign policy and the news media, this study examines the issue from two different perspectives. Above all, as foreign policy analysis, the methodological scope of the study is constructed on neoclassical realist IR theory and its “soft” positivist

⁸³ Entman, *Projections of Power*, 13.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

methodological approach. On the other hand, because it also aims to show the influence of the media on foreign policy decisions, the qualitative frame analysis method is used to determine dominant media frames in the German elite media regarding the four German foreign policy cases. In this part of the dissertation, both the “soft” positivist approach of neoclassical realism and the frame analysis method are explained separately.

1.5.1. “Soft” Positivism

Even though the positivist methodology has dominated the IR discipline for almost fifty years, especially realist IR scholars have mostly overlooked methodological questions concerning their theory. For Steve Smith, there are three widespread usages of positivism in IR theories. While the first usage equates positivism with empiricism and thus deals with the issue as an epistemological approach, the second usage sees positivism in a methodological sense, in other words, as a “set of rules for the actual practice of science and study.” The third usage, on the other hand, accepted positivism equal to behavioralism by depending solely on quantitative data and ignoring the actors’ thoughts and beliefs.⁸⁵ In essence, positivism covers both epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions and commitments. However, many scholars ignore the deep philosophical background behind the term.⁸⁶ Therefore, while developing their neoclassical realist understanding, Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell put a particular emphasis on the issue of positivism and propose a modified or so-called “soft” version of positivism approach for their neoclassical realist theory.

⁸⁵ Steve Smith, “Positivism and Beyond,” in *International theory: positivism and beyond*, ed. Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

In general, post-positivist and critical IR scholars do not accept theory testing as a worthwhile scientific effort. Still, neoclassical realists believe that theory testing is both possible and necessary for successful foreign policy analysis. Unlike natural sciences, on the other hand, they recognize human subjectivity and interpretation as a hindrance to applying pure empirical methods.⁸⁷ Therefore, “soft” positivist epistemology, defined by Macartney, is used by those scholars to “search for law-like generalizations across cases and test these generalizations with rigorous case-study analysis based on well-selected cases.”⁸⁸ In principle, soft positivism contains two essential principles; (1) the distinction between facts and values and correspondingly, the existence of theory-neutral facts and objective knowledge, (2) reliance on empirical validation for a “real enquiry.”⁸⁹ From that perspective, developing a hypothesis and evaluating its capacity to explain past events and predict future events with case studies construct the foundation of neoclassical realist analyses.

Within this framework, Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell propose five steps to construct a neoclassical realist hypothesis.⁹⁰ Since the main aim of qualitative studies in the social sciences is to explain “causes of effects” of individual cases, the first step is the selection of “dependent variable,” or the main issue to illuminate. For them, “dependent variables” have two dimensions; (1) the time frame and (2) the level of analysis. While with time frame, an observation of the dependent variable in a specified period of time is aimed, the level of analysis may change in a broader range from a unit level analysis of a specific actor to a general systemic level analysis. In that sense, a short-term foreign policy decision of a specific country in a crisis, general foreign policy patterns of a country, overall strategic choices of a regional

⁸⁷ Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 105.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁸⁹ Huw Macartney, "Variegated neo-liberalism: Transnationally oriented fractions of capital in EU financial market integration," *Review of International Studies* 35, no.2 (2009): 457; Smith, "Positivism and Beyond," 16.

⁹⁰ Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 108-129.

organization, or long-term changes in the international system may similarly be analyzed as a dependent variable.⁹¹

Apart from that, this study adds the “foreign policy involvement” as an additional dimension to the dependent variables. Although the discussion in the current academic literature about the intensity of governmental involvement is limited, there are still some valuable contributions regarding the foreign policy-media relations in Germany as well.⁹²

Long-term Foreign Policy Cases	Short-term Foreign Policy Cases
Case 1: Direct Involvement	Case 1: Direct Involvement
Case 2: Indirect Involvement	Case 2: Indirect Involvement

Table 2: Foreign policy cases classification in terms of the level of involvement

Table 2 shows above that the foreign policy involvement issue is included in the thesis concerning its direct or indirect involvement dimensions. At this stage, different forms of involvement need an explanation. In that sense, *direct involvement* refers to a state’s bilateral or multilateral relations, in which the state takes a role as an active participant. In addition to bilateral/multilateral conflicts or agreements, foreign relations within the framework of a regional economic and defense projects may be accepted as direct involvement. *Indirect involvement*, on the other hand, implies the foreign policy events that the examined state does not play a leading role in the conflict or agreement, but either regionally close or other key partner states have direct

⁹¹ Ibid., 109-110.

⁹² Kai Hafez, *Die politische Dimension der Auslandsberichterstattung: Das Nahost und Islambild der deutschen überregionalen Presse Volume 2* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013); Kerstin Schulz, "Foreign policy involvement matters: Towards an analytical framework examining the role of the media in the making of foreign policy," *Global Media Journal-German Edition* 3, no. 1 (2013).

involvement. In addition to those two types of involvement, *no involvement* may be the third dimension of a foreign policy decision. In this option, the respective state is neither a side of the conflict, nor is it affected by this external development indirectly. Ethical values in the sense of foreign policy responsibility play an essential role in this third option. Especially natural disasters or humanitarian crises may be considered within that framework.⁹³

After specifying the dependent variable, the second step for the neoclassical realist hypothesis is selecting the structural realist baseline. As it is explained in the theory chapter, neoclassical realism does not reject structural realism as a theoretical approach. On the contrary, it intends to add theoretical depth to realist foreign policy analysis with a unit-level analysis of domestic actors. Therefore, adding a structural realist baseline in the form of structural realist theoretical premises concerning the function of the international system is a significant effort for a neoclassical realist analysis, which serves on the purpose of testing the direct effect of neoclassical realist intervening variables by showing how structural realism explains the same case without those variables as well. For neoclassical realist scholars, researchers are free to choose a realist baseline, as long as they consider three conditions: an exact specification, empirical verification, and selection of the baseline for the entire scope of the study.⁹⁴

As the third step, the selection of the “intervening variable” plays a significant role. As it was already mentioned in the theory part, this study included the “state-society relations” variable in the form of the news media effects on foreign policy decisions.

Following the selection of the intervening variable, designating the scope of the hypothesis is the fourth step. Unlike natural scientists, social scientists often avoid creating universal propositions and use specific preconditions for their analyses. In addition to that, as explained in the dependent variables section, neoclassical realism pretends to explain a wide range of actors and events from a single foreign policy actor

⁹³ Schulz, "Foreign policy involvement matters," 9.

⁹⁴ Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 114.

to the international system. Therefore, a neoclassical realist hypothesis needs to specify the range and limits of its generalization explicitly.⁹⁵

The last step to complete a neoclassical realist hypothesis is identifying the foreign policy executives, namely, the key actors of foreign policy decision-making processes and their hierarchy if it exists. In addition to the top-level decision-makers such as prime ministers, presidents, foreign ministers, or defense ministers, further factors such as the regime of a country or additional administrative or bureaucratic actors, as decision-makers' primary source of information, should also be taken into consideration for this analysis.⁹⁶

1.5.2. Frame Analysis

While the soft positivism forms the general methodology of the dissertation, the qualitative frame analysis method is applied only to the media analysis part of the study.⁹⁷ After the theoretical development of the framing concept, frame analysis methodology has also developed in the literature to identify news frames and their functions. Although both qualitative and quantitative methods are frequently used in the framing literature, the design of research determines the choice between the qualitative and quantitative methods.

Like any other qualitative method based on textual analysis, frame analysis is generally criticized in terms of the subjectivity issue. Especially, the heavy dependence of analysis on the researcher's interpretation causes validity and reliability questions for the approach. However, examining a news text, which is strongly influenced by culture, values, and norms, inevitably requires a certain level of personal

⁹⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 123-124.

⁹⁷ Margaret Linström and Willemien Marais, "Qualitative news frame analysis: a methodology," *Communitas* 17, no.1 (2002): 21-38.

interpretation.⁹⁸ In fact, having a certain level of subjectivity may even open new ways for different perspectives and interpretations of an issue.⁹⁹

According to Dahinden, qualitative frame analysis, as the most commonly used method in empirical studies, has two main advantages compared to quantitative frame analysis methods. First, qualitative methods have more data proximity. Since frames are not always literally and explicitly observable in the text, they can only be identified with the help of rhetoric, symbols, and metaphors. In that case, quantitative methods lack most of the time of a necessary mechanism to illuminate implicit meanings. Second, qualitative methods provide more openness to identify news frames. Unlike deductive-quantitative studies, in which only the frames predetermined by researchers are tested, qualitative methods allow researchers to identify secondary or additional frames, which were not predicted by researchers before conducting the research.

Moreover, most of the quantitative studies solely rely on numbers of repeated words, statements, or problems. Although the salience of an issue is a powerful indicator for framing, in some cases, one unexpected frame could easily dominate the public in a short time. Therefore, framing mechanism presented by Tankard, such as the interpretations of headlines, subheads, photographs, photo captions, beginnings of news stories, selected sources or affiliations, selected quotes, emphasized quotes, graphs, statistics, charts, and concluding statements of articles, are all vital elements in this study to identify news frames.¹⁰⁰ Together with that, exact categorizations of textual frames, main questions examined in texts, coding rules, and typical examples, similar to Schusser's qualitative frame analysis, are presented as a diagram in the following section.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Van Gorp, "Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis," 90.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 104.

¹⁰⁰ James W. Tankard, Jr, "The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing," in *Framing Public: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, ed. Stephen Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. and August E. Grant (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), 100.

¹⁰¹ Christina Schusser, "Die Berichterstattung über Homosexualität: Eine Qualitative Frame-Analyse," (master's thesis, Free University of Berlin, 2014)

1.6. Research Design

In light of the above-explained theoretical approaches, this part is devoted first to the application of the soft-positivist methodological steps to the study. While the level of analysis and time frame explained at the first step, this dissertation's contribution to the neoclassical realist literature, "foreign policy involvement," issue is elaborated in this step as well. After specifying the structural realist baseline in the second step, principles of the news frame analysis are revealed with four diagrams in the intervening variable section. Finally, foreign policy executives and the scope of the whole hypothesis are stated in the following two sections.

1.6.1. Level of analysis and time frame

According to the methodological steps of neoclassical realism, the first thing to determine is the dependent variables of the research: the level of analysis, foreign policy involvement, and the time frame. Starting with the level of analysis, the primary subject of the study is Germany's foreign policy towards Turkey.

Regarding the foreign policy involvement dimension, only direct and indirect involved cases are chosen. Because the relationship between Germany and Turkey has various bilateral and multilateral dimensions, Turkey is often assessed by German officials as an essential or a key partner in various political issues.¹⁰² Above all, Turkey's long-lasting EU accession process makes political developments in Turkey one way or another related to the German foreign policy as well. Therefore, no

¹⁰² Andreas Oswald, "Angela Merkel: "Türkei Schlüsselpartner der EU", " *Der Tagesspiegel*, December 16, 2015, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/newsblog-fluechtlinge-und-eu-angela-merkel-tuerkei-schluesselpartner-der-eu/12729952.html>.

involvement dimension seems irrelevant when German-Turkish political relations are evaluated.

Following the involvement issue, the studied period of the hypothesis is the next element to be determined. Since evaluating the possible influence of the news media regarding the changing time frames is one of the main aims of this study, both long-term and short-term foreign policy issues between Germany and Turkey are included in the analysis. At this point, “long-term” basically refers to the longstanding political events, which have significant historical backgrounds and reflect the country’s strategic foreign policy choices. The “short-term” means, on the other hand, political events that emerge abruptly and unexpectedly. Therefore, while predetermined foreign policy strategies are the most important elements to examine in the long-run, possibly lack of a clear governmental plan to follow in short-run cases necessitates giving attention to other domestic actors.

By taking two dependent variables and one extra dimension of involvement into account, Table 3 shows the foreign policy cases that are selected to test the hypotheses.

German Foreign Policy towards Turkey	Long-term	Short-term
Direct Involvement	Turkey’s EU Accession Process	2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement
Indirect Involvement	Kurdish Problem in Turkey	2013 Taksim Gezi Park Protests

Table 3: Foreign Policy Cases of the Study

1.6.2. Structural Realist Background

After defining the cases and the periods of analysis, in this step, the defensive realist approach is selected as the structural realist baseline of the analysis. Because, as stated by neoclassical realist scholars, the inclusion of a structural realist approach intends to add a theoretical depth to the analysis, the defensive realist assumptions are taken into consideration in this study to answer two fundamental questions regarding the international state system; (1) Is the international system inevitably conflictual all the time and (2) under which circumstances do states pursue autonomy or influence seeking-policy.

In essence, the defensive realist approach does not see the international system as an arena of permanent conflict, while accepting that the possibility of conflict always exists. In that sense, preserving its position in the international system seems the best way to keep a state secure, because an expansion of influence area or enhance in relative military power may provoke insecurity for other states. Following that, other states would initiate a balancing act by increasing their military capacity or forming new military agreements in some cases.¹⁰³ Therefore, especially when other states do not pose any external pressure, attempting to gain more influence in the international system in return for autonomy losses seems a reasonable explanation for Germany as well. After establishing a secure environment through the European integration process and in many cases influencing the regulations and institutions in its own favor, German foreign policy has been mostly shaped in that direction, particularly after the reunification.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 10.

¹⁰⁴ For a similar analysis, which successfully synthesizes realist and liberal theoretical elements for the analysis of German foreign policy see; Beverly Crawford, "German power and "embedded hegemony" in Europe," in *The Routledge handbook of German politics & culture*, ed. Sarah Colvin (New York: Routledge, 2015)

1.6.3. Intervening Variables

One of the four intervening variables of neoclassical realism, “state-society relations,” is selected for this analysis. Although the role of the news media in relations between governments and the public has been the topic of a vast number of publications in the academic literature, neoclassical realism has still no systematic explanation of the roles that the media, especially the printed press, plays in state-society relations.

As recent media surveys demonstrate, the production, distribution, and usage of newspapers are continuously declining in the whole Western world.¹⁰⁵ In Germany, also, the number of newspaper circulations has been slowly decreasing since the early 2000s. Nevertheless, the German newspaper market is still the largest in Europe and fifth in the world behind China, India, Japan, and the United States. Approximately 14,7 Million copies of 327 newspapers are sold daily together with almost four Million copies of 27 weekly and Sunday newspapers.¹⁰⁶ With more than 1,2 Million daily electronic copies sold in 2017, compared to 780,000 e-copies in 2015, the German print media is also experiencing a rapid digital transition.¹⁰⁷ Compared to television, radio, and the internet, many German teenagers consider newspapers as the most reliable news source.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it can be safely argued that print media is still one of the most important actors in societies, especially in Germany.

Without a doubt, one of the primary reasons behind the continuing importance of printed media in Germany is the prestigious position of elite media institutions in the eyes of the German public. When especially domestic politics, foreign policy,

¹⁰⁵ Hillel Nossek, Hanna Adoni, and Galit Nimrod, “Media audiences Is print really dying? The state of print media use in Europe,” *International Journal of Communication* 9 (2015): 365-385.

¹⁰⁶ Bundesverband Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (BDZV), *Die deutschen Zeitungen in Zahlen und Daten 2018* (Berlin: Bundesverband Deutscher Zeitungsverleger e.V., 2018), 4-5, https://www.bdzv.de/fileadmin/bdzv_hauptseite/aktuell/publikationen/2017/ZDF_2017.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

economy, and arts issues are taken into consideration, the national elite media outlets such as *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt* or *Der Spiegel* have a unique role in Germany's pluralist media environment.¹⁰⁹ With their "lighthouse" role in the society, those newspapers are frequently benefited by administration and business decision-makers as primary information sources thanks to their high standard, comprehensive and diverse publication policy. Furthermore, as "knowledge institutions," they contribute to the expansion, structuring, and integration of existing knowledge.¹¹⁰ According to Blum, there are five indicators of elite newspapers:

- Other journalists use extensively elite newspapers,
- Other daily newspapers often cite these newspapers,
- They set issues and trends in news reporting,
- Political and business elites read these newspapers,
- Ordinary citizens recognize them as quality media.¹¹¹

Like all other print media instruments, the elite German newspapers have to face in those days declining newspaper circulations. However, an increase in the use of digital advertisement methods, thanks to its higher efficiency to reach target groups, created new opportunities for these traditional media outlets.¹¹² Accordingly, most of

¹⁰⁹ Roger Blum, "Leidende Leuchttürme: Über die Unentbehrlichkeit von Qualitätsmedien," in *Krise der Leuchttürme öffentlicher Kommunikation: Vergangenheit und Zukunft der Qualitätsmedien*, ed. Roger Blum et. al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 7.

¹¹⁰ Michael Schenk and Frank Mangold, "Entscheider, Meinungsführer und Qualitätsmedien—Die Bedeutung der Qualitätspresse für Entscheidungsträger in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft," in *Krise der Leuchttürme öffentlicher Kommunikation: Vergangenheit und Zukunft der Qualitätsmedien*, ed. Roger Blum et. al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 239-254.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

¹¹² Katharina Heimeier, *Eigentümerstrukturen deutscher Zeitungsverlage: eine Betrachtung der Entwicklung und Organisation klassischer Familienverlage im Vergleich mit alternativen Eigentumsformen* (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2013), 44-71.

the elite newspapers started to publish their printed contents as PDF version or publish them partially on their web pages. Also, by actively using social networking instruments such as Twitter and Facebook, they can reach more readers than their traditional readers. In that way, they compensate for the loss of advertisement revenues from printed versions and diminish the printing costs.

In short, despite a fast transformation in the media sector and falling of newspaper circulation and revenues, German elite media outlets maintain their prestigious place in German society by keeping the role of being the essential information source for the German public and elites. With that characteristic, they still have the remarkable potential to influence public opinion and decision-makers.

In this context, Germany's two most circulated elite newspaper, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and Germany's most popular news magazine *Der Spiegel* were selected for this study to determine dominant media frames about Turkey.

Since the media elites deliberately construct news frames, it is much easier to identify these entities through opinion sections of newspapers than relatively neutral news reports. The editorial staff generally writes these opinion pieces, and they reflect the general position of newspapers concerning various social, political, and economic issues.¹¹³

As shown in appendix A in detail, in total, 40 articles from *Der Spiegel*, 45 articles from FAZ, and 42 articles from SZ are examined in this study. For the articles gathered from FAZ and SZ, the library portals of newspapers' online archives were accessed through the library system of the Freie Universität Berlin. The articles from *Der Spiegel* were gathered through the internet archives of the magazine, which is open to all public accession.

The library portals of the FAZ and SZ are specially designed for academic research, and they allowed extensive article-searching according to formal and thematic criteria. Accordingly, this examination used three formal criteria: (1) All

¹¹³ Heinz Pürer and Johannes Raabe, *Presse in Deutschland*, 3rd ed. (Konstanz: UVK, 2007), 278-279

samples were obtained from the printed and national editions of the newspapers, (2) all selected articles were published in the political section, and (3) only editorial, comments, and opinion pieces were included in the analysis.

In order to reach the most comprehensive results, only the word “Türkei” was searched in the library portals. After that, the results were classified according to pre-determined subjects in the library portals. As all the cases examined in the dissertation are the quite significant political issues for the German media, the so-called dossiers such as “German attitude to the possible EU accession of Turkey” (Deutsche Haltung zum möglichen EU-Beitritt der Türkei) “Germany’s relations with Turkey” (Beziehungen Deutschlands zur Türkei), “the EU’s relations with Turkey” (Beziehungen der EU zur Türkei), “Kurds in Turkey” (Kurden in der Türkei), “Demonstration in Turkey” (Demonstrationen in der Türkei), “Peace Process” (Friedenprozess), “Refugees in Germany” (Flüchtlinge in Deutschland), “Refugees in the EU” (Flüchtlinge in der EU) or pre-determined political figures like Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Angela Merkel or Gerhard Schröder helped to collect issue related articles. As a weekly magazine, the number of published articles in Der Spiegel concerning Turkey was quite limited compared to the SZ and FAZ. Therefore, all the published articles in the special “Türkei” dossier of the online archive were examined for the analysis. Moreover, similar to FAZ and SZ library portals, pre-determined subjects like “EU accession of Turkey” (EU Beitritt der Türkei), “Occupy-Gezi Protests in Turkey” (Occupy-Gezi-Proteste in der Türkei), Kurds (Kurden), PKK, Refugees (Flüchtlinge) were utilized for the classification of the articles.

As mentioned above, for the evaluation of the news texts, the qualitative frame analysis method is utilized in this study. Accordingly, the four frame functions, the questions asked to the news texts to determine these functions, coded text parts, as well as typical examples both in German and English to provide answers to these questions, are demonstrated below.

Frame Function	Frame Categories	Coded Parts of Texts	Typical Example in German	Typical Example in English	
Problem Definition	Which issue is covered?	General Mentioning of the issue	„Der Bürgerkrieg ist zurückgekehrt in den Osten des Landes.“	The civil war has returned to the east of the country.	
	What is the key problem / the key statement?	Specifying the issue	„All das ist geschehen, ohne daß in der EU eine ernsthafte Diskussion stattgefunden hätte. Die Argumente, die über den türkischen Beitritt ausgetauscht wurden, entsprangen nicht einem abwägenden Für und Wider, sondern brachten vor allem europäische Hilflosigkeit zum Ausdruck.“	All this has happened without a serious discussion in the EU. The arguments on Turkey's accession did not stem from balancing pros and cons but, above all, they expressed European helplessness.	
	Which actors exist; do they express themselves, or are they only mentioned?	Active: Actor is directly quoted Passive: Actor is only indirectly quoted or not cited			
	How are those actors described?	Neutral descriptions of the actors			
	What is the relationship between the actors?	Summary of the actors' relationship	„Selbst wenn dies gelingt, bleibt fraglich, wie verlässlich die Türkei mit ihrem Präsidenten Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ist. Er könnte die Seegrenze als Ventil benutzen, um Europa unter Druck zu setzen.“	Even if this succeeds, it remains questionable how reliable Turkey is with its President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He could use the maritime border as a valve to pressurize Europe.	

Figure 2: Identification of the Problem Definition Function

Frame Function	Frame Categories	Coded Parts of Texts	Typical Example in German	Typical Example in English
Causal Interpretation	<p>What are the causes of the existing problem and where is the responsibility?</p> <p>What are the disadvantages/dangers/negative consequences and for whom?</p> <p>Who benefits to what extent?</p>	<p>Summary and quotations</p> <p>Presenting negative facts for the mentioned actors</p> <p>Presenting positive facts for the mentioned actors</p>	<p>„Schröder und Chirac halten es inzwischen nicht einmal mehr für nötig, den Fortschrittsbericht der Europäischen Kommission im Oktober abzuwarten. Sie haben den Türken schon öffentlich ein zustimmendes Votum in Aussicht gestellt.“</p> <p>„Die Entführung verändert die Sicherheitslage in Deutschland womöglich dramatisch. Das Land könnte wieder einmal zum Nebenkriegschauplatz des Kurden-Konflikts werden.“</p> <p>„Auf eine ruhigere Spur bringt die türkische Regierung das Land erst wieder, wenn es den abgebrochenen Friedensprozess mit der PKK wiederaufnimmt. So könnte das Land zu einem inneren Frieden zurückfinden.“</p>	<p>Schröder and Chirac do not even think it necessary to wait for the European Commission's progress report in October. They have publicly promised the Turks a favorable vote.</p> <p>The abduction may dramatically change the security situation in Germany. The country could once again become a secondary stage of the war in the Kurdish conflict.</p> <p>The Turkish government brings the country back on a calmer track only if it resumes the aborted peace process with the PKK. That way, the country could find its way back to inner peace.</p>

Figure 3: Identification of the Causal Interpretation Function

Frame Function	Frame Categories	Coded Parts of Texts	Typical Example in German	Typical Example in English
Moral Evaluation	Which attitude / mindset of the author is explicitly or implicitly recognizable? How does the author evaluate the described processes or actors?	<p>Explicit or implicit evaluations of the problem</p> <p>Evaluated attributions of the actors</p> <p>Rhetorical devices (puns, hints, irony, sarcasm) as well as stereotyping text passages</p> <p>Meanings that the author attaches to the topic</p> <p>Quotations</p>	<p>„Dies war ein historischer Schritt. Erdogan wagte ihn gegen heftigsten Widerstand der Nationalisten im eigenen Land.“</p> <p>„Der Mehrheit der Bürger in der Türkei war Erdogans Despotismus lange Zeit egal. Das ändert sich allmählich. Es ist eine junge, urbane Mittelschicht, die in Istanbul, Ankara und anderswo auf die Straße geht. Sie kauft ihre Klamotten bei Zara, sie fliegt mit Billig-Airlines nach London in den Urlaub.“</p> <p>„Die Gegner eines türkischen EU-Beitritts können sich angesichts dieses "Geschenks Gottes" entspannt zurücklehnen.“</p> <p>„Außenminister Guido Westerwelle sagte, die Regierung in Ankara "sendet mit ihrer bisherigen Reaktion auf die Proteste das falsche Signal, ins eigene Land und auch nach Europa". Weiter sagte er: "Wir erwarten, dass Ministerpräsident Erdogan im Geiste europäischer Werte deeskaliert und einen konstruktiven Austausch und friedlichen Dialog einleitet."</p>	<p>This was a historic step. Erdogan dared it against the strongest resistance of the nationalists in their own country.</p> <p>The majority of citizens in Turkey did not care about Erdogan's despotism for a long time. This is changing gradually. It is a young, urban middle class that takes to the streets in Istanbul, Ankara and elsewhere. They buy their clothes at Zara; they fly with cheap airlines to London on vacation.</p> <p>The opponents of Turkish EU accession can relax in the face of this "gift of God."</p> <p>Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said that the government in Ankara "is sending the wrong message to the country and to Europe with its response to date to the protests." He continued, "We expect Prime Minister Erdogan to de-escalate in the spirit of European values and to engage in constructive dialogue and peaceful dialogue."</p>

Figure 4: Identification of the Moral Evaluation Function

Frame Function	Frame Categories	Coded Parts of Texts	Typical Example in German	Typical Example in English
Treatment Recommendation	Are there any prognoses on how the topic will evolve or hope / wishes as well as suggested solutions?	Clear policy recommendations as well as citations that contain recommendations for action	<p>„Im Kurdenkonflikt muss sich die EU einmischen“</p> <p>“Auch wenn sie sich gezwungen sehen, mit autoritären Regimes zusammenzuarbeiten, dürfen sie sich doch nie anbiedern; sie müssen Distanz wahren und die Menschen- und Bürgerrechte einfordern.“</p> <p>„Die Probleme, die sich daraus ergeben, muß sie nach Maßgabe ihrer eigenen Interessen lösen. Europa sollte ihr dabei umfassend helfen, auch im eigenen Interesse. Das wäre dann eine privilegierte Partnerschaft.“</p> <p>„Die EU sollte ihre zweckgebundenen Mittel für die Türkei erhöhen, könnte über Visaerleichterung nachdenken. Nur eines sollte sie nicht: eine Abkürzung zur EU-Mitgliedschaft in Erwägung ziehen.“</p>	<p>In the Kurdish conflict the EU has to interfere.</p> <p>Even if they are forced to cooperate with authoritarian regimes, they must never condescend; they must keep their distance and demand human and civil rights.</p> <p>The problems that arise must be solved according to their own interests. Europe should help it comprehensively, also in its own interest. That would be a privileged partnership.</p> <p>The EU should increase its earmarked funds for Turkey, could think about visa facilitation. Only one thing it should not: consider a shortcut of EU membership.</p>

Figure 5: Identification of the Treatment Recommendation Function

In addition to that, some extra frame mechanisms such as headlines, subheads, photographs, photo captions, beginnings of news stories, selected sources or affiliations, selected quotes, emphasized quotes, graphs, statistics, charts, or concluding statements of articles are also taken into consideration to determine these news frames.

1.6.4. The Scope of the Hypothesis

Like many qualitative studies in the literature, validation of this hypothesis depends on some conditional propositions. In other words, it does not intend to form a universal theory to apply to every single foreign policy case of each country. On the contrary, its generalization has some apparent limitations.

Since solely Germany and various German foreign policy cases are tested through this study, its scope is limited in principle with Germany. However, it can be presumed that this theory may be applied to some other Western countries with similar media systems. In their seminal work on the characteristics of different media systems, Hallin and Mancini distinguish three models of media systems (North/Central European Model, North Atlantic Model, and Mediterranean Model) in the Western world. The Northern/Central European or the so-called “democratic corporatist model,” which is exemplified with Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, differs from the other regional models in four main dimensions. First, in terms of the newspaper industry, this group has early developed mass-circulation press and high newspaper circulation. Second, in terms of media-politics parallelism, despite a shift toward the neutral commercial press, party press was historically an essential tradition in those countries. Also, external plurality, i.e., representing different views within separate media outlets, is a strong character in this group of countries. Third, concerning the journalist

professionalization, those countries have substantial journalist professionalization and institutionalized self-regulation system. Fourth, regarding the role of the state in the media system, state intervention in the market with strong public-service broadcasting as well as strong protection of press freedom at the same time separate those countries from the other groups.¹¹⁴

As an extension to the Mancini and Hallin's models, Pfetsch et al. separate the Northern/Central European model into two different groups: German-speaking countries (Germany, Switzerland, Austria) and Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark). In their analysis, the German-speaking countries take a middle position between the Nordic and Mediterranean countries in terms of their political communication cultures.¹¹⁵ Most importantly, the interaction culture, in other words, the professional distance between the media professionals and politicians, is the most apparent difference between the two groups of countries.¹¹⁶ Within this context, it is expected that the main hypotheses of the dissertation are most probably be valid for other German-speaking countries and, in some cases, for Nordic countries as well.

Concerning the validity of the hypothesis for Western countries outside these two groups, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, or Canada, more detailed examinations are needed because determining frames in internally pluralistic media systems may need different approaches.

Since the news media is accepted in this hypothesis as an independent actor in state-society relations, the existence of free news media is, without a doubt, the most

¹¹⁴ Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 67.

¹¹⁵ Barbara Pfetsch, et al., "Contexts of the media-politics relationship: Country selection and grouping," in *Political Communication Cultures in Europe*, ed. Barbara Pfetsch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 50-55.

¹¹⁶ Cammarano, Stephanie Schwab, and Juan Diez Medrano. "Distant north-conflictive south: Patterns of interaction and conflict," in *Political Communication Cultures in Europe*, ed. Barbara Pfetsch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 271-286.

crucial precondition. Therefore, for the authoritarian and totalitarian political systems, this hypothesis may most probably be invalid.

The second limitation of the hypothesis is Germany's bilateral relations with the EU states. As a member of a multidimensional, political, and economic union, which is based on supranational laws, regulations, institutions, and standardized relations between the member states, the bilateral relations often have different dynamics than relations with countries outside the EU. For Germany, this situation has recently become more visible. Practically acting as "embedded hegemony" in the EU, not taking responsibility and complaining about the unfair division of burden became impossible for Germany.¹¹⁷ On the contrary, taking some seemingly irrational decisions in order to preserve the existence of the union may be a necessity in some cases. On the other side, because this influence on the EU institutions and decision-making processes are becoming increasingly visible, some decisions taken by the EU under the direct influence of German governments may be added to the scope of this hypothesis. In this regard, Turkey's EU accession process and the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal, for instance, are examined from this perspective.

1.6.5. Foreign Policy Executive

In the last step, the structure and members of the foreign policy decision-making process are defined. Since different elements such as regime types, political culture, or state traditions might have various roles in the process, federal chancellors are mostly the answer to the question "who really matters" in German foreign policy decisions. In the Federal Republic of Germany, federal chancellors have traditionally been the most influential decision-makers regarding foreign issues since the first

¹¹⁷ Crawford, "German power and 'embedded hegemony' in Europe," 334-336.

chancellor Konrad Adenauer.¹¹⁸ Accordingly, two federal chancellors, Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel were at the top of the foreign policy decisions making process in that period.

Since the German party and election system makes single-party governments very hard to reach, the foreign ministry office is usually occupied by either leader of the smaller party in coalitions or politically strong figures from government parties. In that sense, as a co-leader of the Green Party and foreign minister of the SPD-Green Party government (1998-2005), Joschka Fischer gained remarkable popularity in the society during the 2003 American invasion of Iraq.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, both in her first cabinet with the SPD (Frank-Walter Steinmeier as foreign minister), second cabinet with the FDP (Guido Westerwelle as foreign minister), and third cabinet again with the SPD (Frank-Walter Steinmeier as foreign minister), Chancellor Merkel had a very dominant position regarding the foreign policy decision, and the foreign ministers were generally at the secondary level. Especially during the European debt crisis, for instance, with only the supporting roles of foreign and economy ministers, Merkel took responsibility for rescuing the Euro almost alone.¹²⁰ During the second grand coalition with the SPD, however, an informal division of labor was formed between the chancellor and foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who usually dedicated his service to issues outside Europe, the USA, and Russia.¹²¹

In addition to chancellors and other top-level ministers, federal presidents are also notable foreign policy actors in Germany. According to German Basic Law, the federal president “shall represent the Federation in international law. He shall conclude treaties with foreign states on behalf of the Federation. He shall accredit and receive envoys.”¹²² Also, they have the right to advise the federal government through formal and informal channels. Besides this so-called “informative control” function, federal

¹¹⁸ Karlheinz Niclauß, *Kanzlerdemokratie, Regierungsführung von Konrad Adenauer bis Angela Merkel*, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2015), 64-65.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 330-331.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 416.

¹²² German Basic Law, Article 59 (1).

presidents have essential symbolic functions and external impact, as the top representative of the state.¹²³ Accordingly, especially Joachim Gauck, who served as Federal President between 2012 and 2017, actively participated in discussions about the German foreign policy reconsideration process, which was officially launched by Gauck's opening speech at the 50th Munich Security Conference in 2014.¹²⁴ Also, his personal sensitiveness about the freedoms and human rights and, accordingly, his critics towards the Turkish and Russian governments triggered discussions about the role of federal presidents in Germany's foreign policy decisions.¹²⁵

¹²³ Gunther Hellmann, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Eine Einführung*, (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 52.

¹²⁴ Joachim Gauck "Deutschlands Rolle in der Welt—Anmerkungen zu Verantwortung, Normen und Bündnissen," *Zeitschrift für Außen-und Sicherheitspolitik* 7, no.2 (2014): 115-122.

¹²⁵ Stefan Berg and Marc Hujer, "Pastor Störenfried," Spiegel Online, January 31, 2015. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-131578900.html>.

2. Case Study 1: Turkey’s EU Membership Bid

This chapter of the thesis is devoted to the analysis of the dominant German media frame concerning Turkey’s EU membership bid and candidacy process. The chapter begins with the media's initial perception of the AKP in the early 2000s when the AKP was founded in 2001 and won the Turkish parliamentary election in 2002. This initial part aimed to show how the German media saw the AKP and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the new major political actors in Turkey in this very early period. After that, the media frames of two elite German newspapers and one news magazine towards Turkey's EU membership bid are presented.

2.1. Image of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the German Media

It was August 2001, when the AKP was founded by a core group of politicians, which was consisted of the former members of the Islamist “Virtue Party” such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (served later as Prime Minister and President) and Abdullah Gül (served later as Prime Minister, minister of foreign affairs, and President). At the same time, 2001 was the year of the biggest financial crisis in the history of modern Turkey, during which the stock exchange crashed, the Turkish Lira lost in one night almost %40 percent of its value, and the overnight interest rates reached almost %2300. The on-going coalition government of social democrat DSP, center-right ANAP, and nationalist MHP unsurprisingly had to face the results of the crisis by being kicked out of the parliament after the election on November 3, 2002. As a “conservative-democrat” party, as Tayyip Erdoğan defined, the AKP became the choice of many protest votes against the on-going economic crisis, long-term political

instability in the country, and hopelessness from the old parties and politicians.¹²⁶ Also, thanks to the 10% election threshold, the AKP gained a clear majority in the parliament, with only 34,28% of the popular votes.

Despite many critical questions from Turkey's secular establishment, including the mainstream media, higher judiciary, and the military, the AKP was not perceived in the German media as a traditional Islamist party like its predecessor parties. Even before the establishment of the party, on January 8, 2001, *Der Spiegel* mentioned for the first time Erdoğan's willingness to form a religion-inspired but economically liberal big tent party, like the CDU in Germany.¹²⁷ Similarly, on June 18, 2001, just before the establishment of the party, *Der Spiegel* called the core group of founders as "reform-Islamists" and repeated Erdoğan's efforts to create a moderate Islamist party based on the European Christian democracy model.¹²⁸ After the party foundation, *Spiegel's* stance towards the AKP continued in the same manner. Although Erdoğan was described as the new chef of fundamentalists, it is also emphasized that Erdoğan disassociated himself from his old rhetoric and tried to form a political party similar to European Christian democratic parties.¹²⁹

During the same period, the Christian democracy model for the AKP was mentioned by *FAZ* as well. Just after party foundation, Wolfgang Günter Lerch described this model as "CDU in Islamist framework" and considered it as an "interesting experiment," in which Erdoğan tries to combine Islamist roots and Islamic culture with the political pragmatism, instead of traditional Islamist doctrines.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Burhanettin Duran, "The Justice and Development Party's 'new politics': Steering toward conservative democracy, a revised Islamic agenda or management of new crises?" in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Ümit Cizre (London: Routledge, 2008), 80-87.

¹²⁷ "Abschied von alten Helden," *Der Spiegel*, January 8, 2001, 107.

¹²⁸ "Folgeschweres Urteil," *Der Spiegel*, June 18, 2001, 124.

¹²⁹ "Video bremmt Islamisten-Vormarsch," *Der Spiegel*, August 27, 2001, 132.

¹³⁰ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, "Islam und Pragmatismus," *FAZ*, August 15, 2001, 12.

After the financial crisis in early 2001 and a snap election held in November 2002, AKP could win the elections with a campaign which mostly dedicated to the reforming project within the EU framework. This unsurprising success was followed closely by the German media as well. Just after the election, in an article named “Experiment in Turkey,” Christiane Schlötzer approached the election results as a positive development for Turkey. After defining AKP as “CDU à la Turca,” she emphasized AKP’s election promises to accelerate the Europeanization process by initiating a democratization program. Moreover, she argued that Turkey started an unprecedented experiment with a government, which does not deny its roots in Islamic culture but also believes in democracy, and added if the synthesis succeeds, then this becomes a signal for other countries with Islamic tradition.¹³¹

Erdoğan’s first contact with his European counterparts also reflected this relatively positive stance. Described as “ambitious reformer from Ankara,” Erdoğan’s religious roots, as well as his secular vision, namely, the European Union, and his ambition to bring Turkey democratically at the same level with the European Union in the shortest possible time was explicitly mentioned by SZ.¹³²

Rainer Hermann’s article on the election day in Turkey with a subheading “Turkish CDU is about to win” remarked the skepticism from the Turkish army and other Kemalist groups in Turkey and reminded that Erdoğan had already learned where the borders of secular establishment in Turkey, especially of the army, lie exactly.¹³³

After the election, probably the most remarkable heading about the AKP’s election victory came from Der Spiegel. Although in the article “Putsch of civilians” Bernhard Zand called Erdoğan an “Islamist,” he described the election results as “landslide victory of moderate Islamists” and reminded Turkish Chief of Staff Hilmi Özkök’s meetings with US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Vice President Richard Cheney, and Security Advisor Condoleezza

¹³¹ Christiane Schlötzer, “Experiment am Bosphorus,” *SZ*, November 5, 2002, 4.

¹³² Christiane Schlötzer, “Zaudernd vor der Zypern-Falle,” *SZ*, November 20, 2002, 4.

¹³³ Rainer Hermann, “Neue Gesichter für Ankara ‘Türkische CDU’ steht vor dem Sieg,” *FAZ*, November 3, 2002, 2.

Rice. According to *Der Spiegel*, the American administration, as Turkey's "big NATO-brother" and financial supporter in the crisis through generous World Bank loans, showed its friendly stance towards the new government and sent their clear message of "no military experiment in Turkey."¹³⁴

When considering those two critical years in the political history of Turkey, it may be said that the German elite media mostly welcomed the "conservative-democracy" model of the AKP against Turkey's military-influenced Kemalist establishment. In this sense, particularly AKP's ambition to apply a radical reform program, which was influenced by EU norms and values, increased the positive stance towards the AKP.

2.2. German Elite Media Frame about Turkey's EU Membership Bid

Turkey's relations with the European Union was, without a doubt, the most central theme in the German media when the AKP came into power in 2002. After the recognition of Turkey's candidacy on equal footing with other candidate states during the 1999 Helsinki Summit, this new status emerged as a very controversial issue, especially on issues like the Greco-Turkish relations, Cyprus, or human rights problems in Turkey.¹³⁵ Accordingly, AKP's notable pro-EU stance after winning the election opened many discussions in the German media about setting an exact date for the starting of negotiations with Turkey during the 2002 Copenhagen Summit and the red-green government's open support for Turkey's EU membership.

¹³⁴ Bernhard Zand, "Putsch der Zivilisten," *Der Spiegel*, November 11, 2002, 212-213.

¹³⁵ "Helsinki Summit: Turkey must now be wooed to accept EU membership," *The Independent*, December 11, 1999, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/helsinki-summit-turkey-must-now-be-wooed-to-accept-eu-membership-1131681.html>.

Above all, the political stance of FAZ against the possible EU accession of Turkey was quite certain in this period. In the series of articles just before the 2002 Copenhagen Summit, Lerch argued that “the facts show Turkey is not only politically, but also economically far from meeting the requirements for admission to the EU,”¹³⁶ while reminding that approximately three-quarters of Germans did not want Turkey’s membership.¹³⁷ Moreover, in the article “big, expensive and influential,” Horst Bacia called attention to the effects of the size of Turkey on representation in the European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the possible membership cost around 20 billion euros a year.¹³⁸

Another key theme that FAZ used in this period was the lack of adequate public-political debate about the membership. Although Chancellor Schröder’s argument that Germany has an interest in the success of secular powers against the fundamentalization of the country was accepted as a justified reason, it was also questioned whether joining the EU is the only way to reach this goal or are there any other forms of cooperation. Furthermore, FAZ warned the government by clearly stating that the difference between Turkey and the EU was more than a reform deficit and therefore, anyone who called an exact date or time corridor for Turkey must know the result is “de-Europeanization of the EU” along with the change in the European identity. Against this problem, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger proposed particularly more fundamental debates on Turkey’s EU membership.¹³⁹

In those same days before the Copenhagen Summit, the second examined media institution Der Spiegel’s „where Europe ends” article reminded Schröder and Chirac’s willingness to call a specific date for Turkey, and it opened three questions into a discussion: (1) What holds the continent together - the Christian religion or common democratic values? (2) Do the borders of Europe derive from history and geography or the political demands of the future? (3) Would a Union whose neighbors

¹³⁶ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, “Erdogans Tempo,” *FAZ*, November 30, 2002, 10.

¹³⁷ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, “Vorschußlorbeer für Erdogan,” *FAZ*, November 22, 2002, 1.

¹³⁸ Horst Bacia, “Groß, teuer und einflußreich,” *FAZ*, December 12, 2002, 12.

¹³⁹ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, “Noch lohnt es sich,” *FAZ*, December 5, 2002, 1.

include states such as Iraq, Syria, or Iran, be able to act as it was before? The magazine answered these questions by touching the issue from many different perspectives, such as Turkey's possible influence on the EU institutions, financial burden, significant cultural differences, and human rights problems. Furthermore, it took opinions of prominent German historians such as Chancellor Schröder's favorite historian, as called by *Der Spiegel*, Heinrich August Winkler, who argued that Turkey's EU membership would cause a "geographical overstretching" and would lead the EU into a "deep crisis of its self-image."¹⁴⁰

Unlike *FAZ* and *Der Spiegel*, *SZ* approached the issue in this period, not from a cultural, but mostly from an economic perspective. Even though *SZ* accepted that it was expected in that time to see public discussions more about culture and religion, Turkey's economic and political performance is also essential, and at that moment, it was impossible to see Turkey as an EU member. Not only low living standards at the same level with Bangladesh in some parts of the country but also high inflation, high public debt, together with the lack of transparency in the administration, were mentioned by *SZ* as more critical issues than culture and religion. On the other hand, Turkey's enormously growing internal market and dynamic young population were seen as positive sides of Turkey's candidacy. In the final analysis, it is argued by Schlötzer that even if the negotiations might need more than 15 years, Turkey's complicated candidacy allowed the EU to influence Turkey.¹⁴¹

In another article from Stefan Ulrich with the subhead, "Turkey's accession endangers the completion of the European Union," however, the decision of Schröder and Chirac to send a "clear signal" to Turkey was defined as a "wrong signal." Ulrich counted first some possible benefits of accepting Turkey as a member, such as Turkey's crucial geostrategic position for the security of Europe, Turkey's need for help to strengthen democracy and human rights, and EU's ability to offer an economic perspective. In response to these reasons, the article pointed out the NATO for the

¹⁴⁰ Ralf Beste, Ulrich Deupmann und Horand Knaup, "Wo endet Europa?" *Der Spiegel*, December 9, 2002, 42-46.

¹⁴¹ Christiane Schlötzer, "Ein Anker für Ankara," *SZ*, December 7, 2002, 4.

security issue, the Council of Europe for the human rights issue, and by the CDU proposed “privileged partnership” concept as better ways to keep Turkey integrated into Europe. Therefore, Ulrich concluded, politicians should not give Turkey a false hope by secretly hoping that Turkey would never fulfill the needed conditions, and they should keep their honesty in the discussions. Otherwise, it might endanger the whole European Union project.¹⁴²

After the EU leaders’ decision that “the EU would open negotiations with Turkey without delay if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria” at the 2002 European Council Summit, discussions about the issue became less frequent until late 2004.¹⁴³ Even so, especially Turkey’s increasing reform tempo in these two years was appreciated by the German media. In early 2004, for instance, *Der Spiegel* published the article “Europe Obsession.” *Der Spiegel* emphasized in this article Turkey’s “tremendous reform pace” by mentioning the abolishment of the death penalty, from which the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan also benefited, the lifting of the state of emergency in Southeastern Turkey, the relieving of the anti-terror law, the limitations of the power of the military, the introduction of Kurdish language courses and the starting Kurdish broadcasting.¹⁴⁴

Similarly, just before the Annan Plan referendum in Cyprus for the reuniting the island in April 2004, Schlötzer from SZ welcomed Turkey’s constructive contribution to the solution of the problem and argued that Turkey proved its willingness to be a reliable partner for Europe and in case that only the Turkish side of the island accept the plan, Turkey would be honored with the accession negotiations.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Stefan Ulrich, “Vom Werk zum Werkzeug,” *SZ*, December 6, 2002, 18.

¹⁴³ Council of the European Union, *Presidency Conclusions - Copenhagen, 12 and 13 December 2002* (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2003), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20906/73842.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Bernhard Zand, “Obsession Europa,” *Der Spiegel*, February 16, 2004, 96-98.

¹⁴⁵ Christiane Schlötzer, “Die Reifeprüfung,” *SZ*, April 2, 2004, 4.

In the same period, FAZ kept his position against Turkey's EU accession and persistently advocated "privileged partnership" as a reasonable solution.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, Nonnenmacher criticized the foreign policy choices of Schröder and Fischer by claiming that although it was evident that Turkey's membership would fundamentally change the EU and force it to revisit its future perspective radically, both Schröder and Fischer recklessly dealt with a question in which the fate of Europe is at stake."¹⁴⁷

With the oncoming European Council meeting in Brussels on December 16-17, 2004, opening negotiations with Turkey became once again a hot topic in the German elite media. In this context, SZ's foreign policy editor Stefan Kornelius summarized the ongoing discussion with a question: "Does Turkey's accession benefit or harm the EU?" and counted cultural-religious and historical arguments by asserting neither the EU is a Christian club nor Turkey's Islamic orientation was excluded in secular Europe. Instead, he pointed out the impact of accession on the EU institutional framework and its capacity to act. In that sense, he believed, accession of the ten Central and Eastern European countries in May 2004 already changed the EU politics drastically, and the old equations of north and south, small and large, core and periphery were no longer applicable. Therefore, the integrative role of Germany and France also changed, and their leadership was not as effective as in the past. Moreover, the EU's capacity problem to influence different regions in the world such as Iraq, Iran, the Middle East, or transatlantic relations, according to Kornelius, would not be solved with the accession of Turkey. On the contrary, it would aggravate the problems as it was experienced with the accession of new members. He concluded, finally, even if Turkey became ready for the EU membership in the short term, the EU, as a homogeneous, constitutional entity, would not be ready for a long time.¹⁴⁸

In another article named "Farewell to Europe," Stefan Ulrich from SZ questioned the sufficiency of completing a catalog of criteria, which includes democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the market economy at the European

¹⁴⁶ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, "Schicksalsjahr," *FAZ*, January 10, 2004, 10.

¹⁴⁷ Günther Nonnenmacher, "Schicksalhafter," *FAZ*, February 16, 2004, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Stefan Kornelius, "Die überdehnte Union," *SZ*, September 8, 2004, 4.

level, to become a part of the EU. As an answer, Ulrich argued that European identity could not be created solely through a catalog of values. If it was so, even Iran or Burkina Faso could join the union one day with the corresponding reforms. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of "we-feeling," a sense of togetherness that characterizes Europe with its culture and history. Turkey's membership, in the final analysis, would transform the EU into a "continent without characteristics."¹⁴⁹

Just one day before the council meeting in Brussels on December 13, Schlötzer wrote another article about the EU leaders' decision. Above all, she believed that the timing for starting negotiations is exceptionally unfavorable, as the majority of EU citizens were suspicious about a new enlargement. Also, the fear of Islam became an issue among ordinary people. At the same time, she added, Turkey experienced many significant changes such as the awakening of civil society, breaking of political taboos, wide usage of Kurdish on the streets, or advancements in human rights issues, and the main catalyzer behind all these developments was fundamentally the EU. Therefore, starting negotiations with Turkey as a stability-exporting partner of the EU in a conflict-ridden region was perceived by Schlötzer as an act of strengthening Turkey's recent progress. For the final membership decision, on the other hand, she believed it would be the decision of future governments, politicians, and parliaments, which should be taken at least ten years later.¹⁵⁰

Despite this relatively supportive article, in his comment during the EU Council meeting, Christian Wernicke clearly described the Turkey decision of the Council as a wrong decision. Nevertheless, unlike many other comments, he approached the issue mainly from a crisis of confidence perspective between the political elites and the people. While Wernicke approved that the EU was not a Christian club and an Islamic shaped country could belong to the EU as long as it accepts the right of the EU to interfere in the domestic politics without hearing regular responses of "external interference," he criticized the German Chancellor and French President for not convincing their skeptical citizens about Turkey's membership. In

¹⁴⁹ Stefan Ulrich, "Abschied von Europa," SZ, October 26, 2004, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Christiane Schlötzer, "Der türkische Traum," SZ, December 13, 2004, 4.

response to this, he suggested “25 gentlemen in Brussels” to get out of the hall and promote on streets for what they had decided. Otherwise, it would be possible to see people’s veto on the EU constitution in many countries.¹⁵¹

Der Spiegel, in the same period, contributed the discussion with the interview of Egon Bahr, one of the most experienced foreign policy experts of the Social Democratic Party. For Bahr, even before considering Turkey’s membership, the EU needed a break for consolidation and self-discovery after the eastern enlargement and its implications. He also added that Turkey’s potential weight in the EU institutions after becoming the EU member and the impossibility of deciding against Turkey’s will should not be forgotten. In such a difficult period, therefore, it was better to formulate EU-Turkey negotiations neither in the condition of full membership nor a privileged partnership. Instead, the formulation of the negotiations as "Turkey's participation in the EU" and answering this question of fate in the future would be more logical.¹⁵²

In another article from October 2004, Der Spiegel called attention to the lack of adequate debate about the issue, not only in the government party SPD but also in the main opposition party CDU. On the one side, there was a powerful resistance against Turkey’s membership in different party organizations of the SPD, and many SPD members were afraid of being pushed into a corner as a “racist” or “Islam-haters.” Also, Gerhard Schröder did not want any interference in his foreign policy course and wanted to strengthen the party’s profile as a tolerant and cosmopolitan party, while looking at the estimated 300,000 potential voters of Turkish descent. On the other side, especially the fear of remaining in the collective memory as the anti-Turk refrained opposition leader Merkel to open a public discussion. As an alternative to expressing a clear “no” for Turkey, she followed the “privileged partnership” concept as a moderate way. Therefore, with the obscuring of public discussions, both parties aim to calm the citizens and not confuse them with “uncomfortable questions” such as “Does the 70 million people on the Bosphorus actually belong to Europe?” or “What are the consequences of the accession for the German economy?” and the “complicated

¹⁵¹ Christian Wernicke, “Das große Aber,” *SZ*, December 18, 2004, 4.

¹⁵² Egon Bahr, “Pause zur Selbstfindung,” *Der Spiegel*, September 6, 2004, 56.

answers” of these questions. Instead of those powerful politicians, *Der Spiegel* claimed, only some academics or retired politicians contributed in discussion with their anxious undertone. Finally, the article counted many problematic issues about Turkey’s membership, such as systemic use of torture, forced marriages, honor killings, the underdeveloped economy, poverty, unemployment, as well as historical and cultural differences.¹⁵³

Just a couple of days before the EU council meeting, another guest contribution, “Danger for Europe,” came from Karl Lehmann, German cardinal of the Catholic Church and chairman of the German Bishops' Conference from 1987 to 2008. According to Lehmann’s article in *Der Spiegel*, instead of “whether the EU is a Christian-club or not” discussion, social and cultural harmony between the current members of the European Union and Turkey to form a lasting, close connection should be questioned first. Moreover, while questioning this connection, the influence of religions on social coexistence, on the identity of a community, and their cultural-historical memory should especially be taken into account in the decision before opening the accession negotiations with Turkey. For Lehmann, Islam and Christianity cannot simply be equated in their socio-political development potentials, and a Europe without Christianity, Greco-Roman antiquity, Jewish heritage, humanism, and enlightenment was unthinkable. On the other hand, Lehmann believed Islam was traditionally into a combative-opposite position against Christianity. Therefore, Lehmann emphasized dangers towards the deepening of European integration and argued that EU citizens’ feeling of belonging to the EU should not be trivialized with considering the role of the same symbols and festivals, same stories, and experiences in the development of a shared identity consciousness. As a result, he concluded that the negotiations on Turkey’s EU accession were supposed to begin as “open-ended,” and the governments of the EU countries, as well as the EU institutions, should make it clear that there could be no membership just with a completing a catalog of duties.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Ralf Beste, Markus Feldenkirchen, Dirk Koch, Christoph Schult and Gabor Steingart, “Da sträubt sich etwas,” *Der Spiegel*, October 4, 2004, 24-28.

¹⁵⁴ Karl Lehmann, “Gefahr für Europa,” *Der Spiegel*, December 12, 2004, 212-214.

As seen in *Der Spiegel*, contributions of *FAZ* in the discussion criticized the lack of adequate public discussion about the issue and the supportive stance of German and French leaders even without waiting for the EU progress reports about Turkey. Relating with this issue, Busse argued in his article that Prime Minister Erdoğan's accelerated reform program and his accession rhetoric surprised European leaders and created an image that rejection of the poor, potentially threatened by terror land, which was begging rich, democratic neighbors for care and friendship. While especially the German government embraced the accession of Turkey as a strategic necessity, all skeptics were implied as those who were just against including a Muslim country in a Christian club. However, this approach, Busse believed, did not let the public ask the question, whether full membership of Turkey would be necessary and beneficial for both sides? Against many well-known pro-Turkish membership arguments, Busse asked many questions as contra arguments such as whether the admission of such a populous Islamic state would appreciably increase the risk of terrorism in the current member states, whether the EU's shared borders with countries such as Syria, Iran, and Iraq would make the EU a player in the conflict-ridden Middle East, or whether the inclusion of a fourth large Member State would shake EU's traditional policy orientation.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger's article "nice farewell" underlined the lack of public debates about questions like what would happen if the EU borders fray beyond the politically plausible and geographically comprehensible limits, when it would reach into one of the most troubled regions in the world or when Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan knock at the doors of the EU with the same arguments like Turkey. Eventually, he came up with the idea that Turkey's accession would make the EU's political dimension and world power ambitions completely obsolete.¹⁵⁶

In his article "foolish and self-forgetful" from October 10, 2004, Thomas Schmid evaluated the issue with a very critical approach. First, Schmid called the decision to open the EU's doors to Turkey without making a public debate simply as

¹⁵⁵ Nikolas Busse, "Das türkische Geschäft," *FAZ*, August 9, 2004, 1.

¹⁵⁶ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, "Schöner Abschied," *FAZ*, September 8, 2004, 1.

a scandal. Moreover, against the idea that “the EU is not a Christian-club,” Schmid argued Europe was, “of course,” a Christian club, and it actually introduced concepts like respect to human rights or tolerance for others into the European tradition. He assumed, therefore, Christian legacy in Europe was not crusade and witch-burning, but the uniqueness and inviolableness of every single person, primacy of conscience, and the acceptance of others with the Reformation or the Enlightenment. Lastly, against the widespread belief that religions had lost their importance, he asserted, the trend was the exact opposite in reality, and this situation should be taken into consideration while deciding about the future of Europe.¹⁵⁷

Even just after the EU council meeting, FAZ’s editor-in-chief Berthold Kohler described the decision of beginning negotiations as “Schröder’s risk” because Chancellor Schröder and his Foreign Minister Fischer ignored the voices that pointing to the existential risks to the EU by expanding its borders to Asia Minor. In this way, Kohler asserted, Schröder took the risk of entering German history books as the Chancellor, who abandoned the idea of a politically united Europe.¹⁵⁸

2.3. Frame Elements of Turkey’s EU Accession Bid

From the theoretical perspective, the media frame towards Turkey’s EU membership was fully developed and revealed all four functions of Entman’s frame categories.

In terms of the problem definition function, the media defined Turkey’s EU membership and its potential threat to the future of the European Union as an apparent problem. At the same time, each media outlet saw this problem from a different point of view. From the political perspective, both Turkey’s geographical position, size,

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Schmid, “Töricht und selbstvergessen,” *FAZ*, October 10, 2004, 14.

¹⁵⁸ Berthold Kohler, “Schröders Risiko,” *FAZ*, December 18, 2004, 1.

possible representation problems in the EU institutions, the EU's internal stability, and the questioning of the German leadership were the main elements covered by the newspapers. Turkey's underdeveloped economy and extra financial burdens to the EU budget were seen as the main economic problems. More important than these two factors, the social problems between Turkish and European identities were pictured as the most controversial area. In many cases, the issue of religion was excluded from debates, but both European culture, values, and history subjects were indirectly correlated with religion. Within this context, Turkey's incompatibility with the European identity and culture was the most evident controversial issue.

The second frame function, causal interpretation, was similarly apparent in those periods. The analyzed newspapers frequently cited the leading role of the German government, especially of Chancellor Schröder, as a driving force behind the developments in Turkey's EU membership process. Moreover, the lack of enough political debates in the ruling and opposition parties, as well as lack of widescale public debates, which were mostly ignored by German decision-makers, were accepted as the causes of the problem.

The media frame was quite evident in terms of moral evaluation, as well. The vast majority of the published articles approached the issue from an opposing side by using a wide range of opposition ideas from both political, social, and economic perspectives. While the journalists generally appreciated Turkey's enthusiasm for the EU candidacy and political performance of Turkish politicians in these periods, the elite media did not support Schröder's "strategic necessity" concept towards Turkey's EU membership and openly criticized the German government's supportive stance.

Finally, in terms of the solution proposals, the elite media outlets proposed first the postponement of the final decision about the beginning of Turkey's EU accession process for more comprehensive political and public debates regarding the subject. Moreover, the "privileged partnership" concept, instead of the full EU membership of Turkey, was another frequently mentioned policy proposal from the media outlets.

In terms of frame variables, the German media frame in this period was highly congruent with the political culture in Germany. Above all, significant differences

between the European-Christian identity and Turkish-Muslim identity was the main conflicting issue, and this created serious suspicions about the compatibility of Turkish culture with the social values of the European societies. Furthermore, the elite media mentioned threats towards the European economic welfare and stability as a result of the membership of an economically less developed country. In this context, bringing “the fate of Europe” and the “we-feeling” into discussion were attention-grabbing for the public, which could be easily transformed to the support for the counter media frame.

At the same time, the German media reflected a very clear motivation of warning the government against the future threats towards the political, cultural, social, and economic unity of Europe. In other words, the media functioned in that period as a “watchdog” of the official foreign policy strategy of the government. From that perspective, the motivation variable made a substantial contribution to the spread of the counter media frame in society.

2.4. German Foreign Policy and Turkey’s EU Membership Bid

Historically, the German public opinion has approached the enlargement of the EU quite cautiously. When the accession negotiations with Turkey came up for discussion in the early 2000s, large parts of the population considered the issue similarly from a critical point of view. In terms of the German political parties in the parliament, Turkey’s EU candidacy created a clear dissidence in Germany’s European policy, which traditionally aims to advance the European integration process and multilateralism.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Daniel Göler and Mathias Jopp, "Deutschlands konstitutionelle Europapolitik: Auswirkungen veränderter innen-und außenpolitischer Rahmenbedingungen," in *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*, ed. Thomas Jäger, Alexander Höse and Kai Oppermann, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 489-490.

During the last years of Kohl government, Turkey's exclusion from the other EU candidate countries - Cyprus, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Estonia – had already cut almost all ties between the EU and Turkey after the 1997 European Council meeting in Luxembourg. However, after the 1998 German Federal Election, the newly elected Social Democrat-Green Party coalition embraced a totally new Turkey policy. In that period, the September 11 attacks in the United States became a real turning point in German-Turkish relations. German foreign minister Joschka Fischer believed that Turkey could be a bridge country between the West and the Middle Eastern states, and it could create a counter-model against the rising religious fundamentalism in the Middle East with its West-orientation and moderate Islam understanding. Therefore, in that period, Turkey's EU membership issue was used as an essential element in the red-green government's policy of stabilizing and consolidating the most vulnerable south-eastern neighborhood of the EU.¹⁶⁰ From that perspective, the government correlated Germany's stance toward Turkey's EU membership with the European security perspective.

As a milestone in the process, Chancellor Schröder's closing remarks after the 1999 Helsinki Council meeting, in which Turkey was openly declared as a candidate on equal footing with other potential candidates, summarized that the EU as a community of values based on the respect of human rights, democracy, tolerance, humanity, and solidarity would not discriminate Turkey due to the religious reasons. Also, Schröder emphasized that Europe had a vested interest in turning Turkey towards Europe, not toward Islamic fundamentalism.¹⁶¹

When these developments are considered, discussions in the German media concerning Turkey's EU candidacy increased drastically, especially before the

¹⁶⁰ Heinz Kramer, "Türkei," *Handbuch zur deutschen Aussenpolitik*, ed. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007): 483.

¹⁶¹ Gerhard Schröder, *Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder zu den Ergebnissen des Europäischen Rates in Helsinki vom 10./11. Dezember 1999 vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 16. Dezember 1999 in Berlin* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1999), 5, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/975960/780366/99cd4c87f1ec74c942a6c51208f1d32c/88-99-schroeder-data.pdf?download=1>.

December 2002 Copenhagen Summit. As the media analysis indicated above, the German elite media manifested its clear opposition against Turkey's EU membership with the arguments of Turkey's non-compliance with the EU values as well as possible de-Europeanization of the EU as a result of Turkey's influence on the European institutions. In addition to the Europeanness issue, some different arguments other than cultural problems such as the possible political and economic burden of Turkey's membership to the European Union were also mentioned. Moreover, lack of public discussions concerning Turkey's candidacy and ignorance of the public opinion by the German decision-makers were some other common themes that were reflected in all three media outlets.

Against this strong media frame, however, the German decision-makers not only followed their Turkey strategy strictly during the summit but also played a decisive leading role in the persuasion of the skeptical EU leaders. Most importantly, just a couple of days before the Copenhagen Summit, Schröder met with French President Chirac, who preferred to announce the year 2008 to begin negotiations. After the meeting, they agreed on a "German-French proposal" to launch negotiations on July 1, 2005.¹⁶² In addition to that, during the Copenhagen Summit, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen also showed his clear opposition to mention a specific date for Turkey. In response to that, foreign minister Fischer proposed his "without date, without delay" formulation and prevented a possible Danish veto.¹⁶³ As a result, after the Summit, the EU leaders stated that the negotiations with Turkey would be opened without delay if Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen criteria.¹⁶⁴

Exactly two years after this summit, Turkey's EU membership issue once again came up for discussion. Unlike 2002, however, due to the possibility of mentioning an exact date to begin the negotiations, Germany experienced one of the most intense

¹⁶² Christiane Schlötzer, "Rendezvous mit der Türkei," *SZ*, December 6, 2002, 7.

¹⁶³ Burak Copur, *Neue deutsche Türkeipolitik der Regierung Schröder/Fischer (1998-2005): Von einer Partnerschafts-zur EU-Mitgliedschaftspolitik mit der Türkei*, (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2012). 159.

¹⁶⁴ Council of the European Union, *Presidency Conclusions - Copenhagen, 12 and 13 December 2002*, 5.

Turkey debates in history.¹⁶⁵ With small exceptions, all three media institutions unanimously opposed Turkey's membership during this period. While its danger to European identity and the "privileged partnership" alternative were repeated continuously, some prominent public and religious figures joined the discussions with their guest contributions. In addition to parliamentary opposition, intra-party conflicts in the SPD, as well as the ignorance of the public opinion, were also pointed out by the elite media.

In 2004, the Turkey strategy of the red-green coalition remained almost the same as the year 2002. In fact, unlike the Copenhagen Summit, during which the AKP government emerged as an unknown political actor, the leader level communication with Schröder and Erdoğan reached a very high level in 2004. With introducing Erdoğan's performance as "unprecedented reform momentum in the history of the country," Schröder once again demonstrated his unreserved support for starting of the negotiation with the goal of full membership.¹⁶⁶ In that period, even though Federal President Johannes Rau insisted that the full membership for Turkey does not come automatically and Turkey should persistently continue its reform efforts, Rau's stance towards Turkey's EU bid was generally supportive and congruent with the government's position.¹⁶⁷ In fact, Federal President Rau's support was very much appreciated by the Turkish side in those years. In this context, he was awarded the highest Turkish state order (Order of the State of the Republic of Turkey) and German-Turkish Friendship Award (Kybele) for his contribution to the German-Turkish friendship.

Despite the public surveys showed in that time that the majority of Germans oppose Turkey's accession to the EU, Schröder remained his frontrunner role in the

¹⁶⁵ Kramer, "Türkei," 491-492.

¹⁶⁶ "Schröder macht der Türkei Hoffnung," *Handelsblatt Online*, October 3, 2004, <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/preis-fuer-erdogan-schroeder-macht-der-tuerkei-hoffnung/2410818.html>.

¹⁶⁷ "Schröder sichert Türkei Unterstützung zu," *Handelsblatt Online*, February 23, 2004, <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/eu-beitritt-schroeder-sichert-tuerkei-unterstuetzung-zu/2308004-all.html>.

process.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, during several federal state elections campaigns in late 2004 and the European Parliament election in May 2004, Schröder had to face the intense public and parliamentary opposition. Nevertheless, Schröder continued to follow his Turkey strategy.¹⁶⁹ Like 2002, Chancellor defended his decision with the idea that it was in the interest of Europe that a "non-fundamentalist Islam is combined with the values of the European Enlightenment" and repeated, "if the Commission finds that the political accession criteria are met, Germany will strongly support the opening of accession negotiations."¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, after the European Commission report recommended that the negotiations should begin in 2005, the negotiations with Turkey for full membership started on October 3, 2005, just after the 2005 German federal elections and the end of the Schröder government.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter of the thesis first presented the rise of the AKP in 2001 and 2002 as a new political center in Turkey with clear EU ambition and reform agenda. In this period, the German elite media saw the AKP mostly as "Turkish CDU" by referring its similarities with European Christian democrat parties based on their commitment to democracy and religious values. Considering the September 2001 attacks and increasing religious radicalization in the Middle East, the "moderate" Islamist political movements in the region were mostly seen as potential partners for the Western world. Within this context, the red-green coalition in Germany, particularly Chancellor

¹⁶⁸ Dorothee Junkers, "Die Positionen der 25 EU-Länder im Überblick," *Spiegel Online*, December 16, 2004, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/tuerkei-verhandlungen-die-positionen-der-25-eu-laender-im-ueberblick-a-333068.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Kramer, "Türkei," 491-492.

¹⁷⁰ "Schröder würdigt türkischen Reformprozess," *Spiegel Online*, October 3, 2004, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/erdogan-in-berlin-schroeder-wuerdigt-tuerkischen-reformprozess-a-321284.html>.

Schröder, considered Turkey and its new conservative democratic government as an essential factor in his long-term foreign policy strategy. For Schröder, Turkey not only would protect the EU's external security on its southeastern borders, but it also would be a model country for the whole Muslim world as a modern, secular, democratic, and prosperous country that accepted European values and norms. In this way, the EU would directly contribute to the stability of its most vulnerable neighborhood region.

Nevertheless, the German elite media did not welcome Chancellor Schröder's Turkey perception at the same level. In the first analyzed period before the 2002 Copenhagen Summit and the EU's official declaration to open negotiations with Turkey "without delay" if Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen criteria, the media expressed its reluctance to possible membership of Turkey, even if the media mostly appreciated Turkey's reform tempo. In the second analyzed period in 2004 and before the decision of EU leaders to begin official accession negotiations with Turkey, increasing the personal relationship between Chancellor Schröder and Prime Minister Erdoğan added another dimension to the German government's long-time Turkey strategy. In the same period, the German elite media showed clear opposition to Turkey's EU membership.

As shown above, despite all fully developed frame functions and variables, any profound influence of this media frame on government decisions did not occur in this case. Against many oppositions both from their own parties, from the parliament opposition and the public, Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer, as the top foreign policy executives, followed their long-term foreign policy strategy based on the role of Turkey in the security of the EU. Despite some reservations, Federal President Rau generally supported the government's Turkish politics as well. From this perspective, it can be argued that the primary determinant of Germany's Turkey policy in this period was not the media but another intervening variable proposed by neoclassical realist theory, namely, foreign policy executives' personal characteristics, values, and beliefs.

Within this neoclassical realist context, it can also be argued with this case that long-term foreign policy strategies of governments are generally calculated very carefully and broadly at the top decision-making level. When the subject is a critical

issue like the long-term security of states, these calculations are made much more careful, and they become more resistant to external impacts. At the same time, governments produce their own political frames against the reactions from the public and the opposition from other political actors. Even though these political frames may fail to dominate the media frame as experienced in this case, it is expected that governments follow their long-term strategy.

3. Case Study 2: The Kurdish Problem

3.1. German Elite Media Frame about the Kurdish Problem

As an indirectly involved foreign policy issue, the Kurdish problem became popular in Germany in the 1980s. Since then, it has attracted the German media attention mostly after violent incidents or conflicts between the various actors of this long-lasting problem. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the AKP's taboo-breaking policies, such as allowing the speaking of the Kurdish language in public and political areas, opened new discussions in the German media in the early 2000s together with discussions on Turkey's EU membership issue.

During these early years of the AKP, *Der Spiegel's* attention to the Kurdish issue emerged mostly after some remarkable developments about the issue. For instance, after a large-scale cross-border military operation of the Turkish army in Northern Iraq, in February 2008, Daniel Steinvorth published an article by touching the issue from both Turkish and Kurdish perspectives. He saw Erdoğan's becoming the first Prime Minister in the country's history, who admitted that Turkey had a Kurdish problem, his legalizing official broadcasting in the Kurdish language, economic investments in the region, and AKP's election success in the dominantly Kurdish-populated city Diyarbakır with 42 percent of the popular votes, as positive developments from Turkey. On the other hand, Steinvorth considered immense military operations against the PKK as a part of Erdoğan's "double-strategy" to solve the problem.¹⁷¹

Another remarkable development covered by *Der Spiegel* in this period was PKK's kidnapping of three German climbers, who camped in the Eastern Anatolian city of Ağrı. On the issue, *Der Spiegel* questioned the possibility of Germany's becoming a front in the Kurdish conflict again and explained that small-scale protests

¹⁷¹ Daniel Steinvorth, "Tote Söhne in den Bergen," *Der Spiegel*, March 3, 2008, 140-141.

of Kurds in German cities would be replaced by highway blockades, hunger strikes, and self-immolations, which experienced in the late 1990s. Considering the PKK's declaration, which claimed that as long as Germany would not move away from the "hostile policy directed against the Kurdish people and the PKK," German tourists would not be released, *Der Spiegel* argued that the kidnapping case might dramatically change the security situation in Germany. Above all, the magazine asserted, the country could once again become the secondary conflict area, as Germany was home not only to a large Kurdish diaspora but also by far the largest foreign Turkish community in the world. In that sense, the writers emphasized that even if the PKK was banned in 1993, Germany was still one of the most valuable areas of retreats and recruitments for the PKK, and the yearly, around ten million euros were sent from Germany to PKK, according to estimations of German security agencies. On the other hand, the writers argued that on the Kurdish issue, Germans had only a small influence since the developments of the problem were shaped not in Berlin but in Washington and Ankara.¹⁷²

Another article by *Der Spiegel* from December 2008 criticized Erdoğan by arguing that even though Erdoğan promised to end this long-suffering dispute as being the first prime minister in the country, who called the Kurdish conflict by name, he preferred more recently to speak the language of the generals and nationalists. Therefore, Daniel Steinvorth concluded his article with a quotation from Turkish political scientist Cengiz Aktar that Erdoğan's reform program was actually continued only between 2002 and 2004, when Turkey tried to start accession negotiations with the EU, and without reform pressure from the EU, a "Turkish Bonaparte" could one day come to the political stage in Turkey.¹⁷³

Unlike 2008, Turkey experienced in 2009 some critical developments in negotiations between the Turkish government and the PKK. Also, Steinvorth saw those negotiations from a supportive point of view. In addition to the eager steps from both Turkish and Kurdish sides, the writer remarked the resistance from the right-wing

¹⁷² Andrea Brandt, et al., "Angriff am Ararat," *Der Spiegel*, July 14, 2008, 20-23.

¹⁷³ Daniel Steinvorth, "Moschee und Kaserne," *Der Spiegel*, December 8, 2008, 142-143.

opposition party MHP and other nationalists, who criticized Erdogan's Kurdish plan as "betrayal" and mentioned possible terrorist attacks that could sabotage the rapprochement process.¹⁷⁴

Following the return of 30 PKK supporters from northern Iraq as a "peace delegation," the declaration on the returning of additional PKK members and supporters from Europe was called by *Der Spiegel* as "difficult success" of Erdoğan since especially the nationalist opposition harshly criticized the developments as "surrender of Turkey to the PKK."¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, a period of stagnation concerning the solution of the Kurdish problem after this event, along with the anti-terrorism bill of the Turkish government and increasing numbers of arrestees on trial as suspected terrorists, was criticized and seen by Maximilian Popp as the loss of "revolutionist" Erdoğan's reform perception.¹⁷⁶

Similar to *Der Spiegel*, the Kurdish issue in *FAZ* from the beginning of Turkey's EU accession until the peace process emerged mostly after essential developments regarding the issue. For instance, Wolfgang Günter Lerch's article "militarily insolvable," which was published after the Turkish cross-border military operation in Iraq, analyzed the issue from two perspectives. While he recalled Erdoğan's willingness "to bring the sons home to their families" concerning the peaceful solution of the Kurdish conflict, Lerch mentioned Erdoğan's using this opportunity to demonstrate his nationalist stance and calm the military after seeing strong opposition against his recent decisions to abolish the headscarf ban in universities and giving religious minorities more freedom. Moreover, Lerch asserted that the Kurdish problem could be solved only with political means, and as long as forced assimilation policies of the state did not end, reaching a political solution would also be impossible.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Daniel Steinvorth, "Vergiftete Seelen," *Der Spiegel*, August 17, 2009, 94-95.

¹⁷⁵ "Schwieriger Erfolg," *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 2009, 106.

¹⁷⁶ Maximilian Popp, "Der maßlose Reformier," *Spiegel Chronik*, December 7, 2011.

¹⁷⁷ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, "Militärisch unlösbar," *FAZ*, February 23, 2008, 1.

Lerch's other article after the PKK kidnapped three German mountaineers in Eastern Anatolia emphasized that PKK leaders' plan to change Germany's approach to the PKK with political blackmail was a wrong decision. However, he presumed that this action could be PKK's attempt to cover his weakness against the Turkish army as well. Also, he believed that even if the political solution would be the only way to solve this long-standing problem, the Turkish government did not intend for a concrete plan.¹⁷⁸

In early 2009, Turkish State Channel TRT's beginning broadcasting in the Kurdish language was responded by FAZ very positively. While the writer Lerch saw Kurdish broadcasting as a historical step as well as a signal to those citizens who insist on European minority standards, he argued the future would show how serious Erdoğan in solving the Kurdish question.¹⁷⁹

In the article "Erdoğan's blunt power claim," written by Michael Martens before the parliamentary election in Turkey, the Kurdish issue was regarded as a time-bomb, which stood in front of Turkey before becoming a regional power, though Erdoğan repeatedly argued that there remained no Kurdish problem anymore. He believed recent developments such as abolishing bans towards the usage of the Kurdish language, TV and radio broadcastings, or reintroducing former Kurdish names of cities were alone not enough to recognize the dynamics of this minority conflict. He predicted that additional demands from Kurdish parties for a new constitution without an ethnic definition of citizenship, Kurdish-language education in schools, and regional autonomy in the Kurdish-dominated areas in the southeastern part of Turkey could even be not enough to reach a stable internal peace because the Kurdish nationalist parties would make new, broader claims at every turn. For a real solution, according to Martens, Turkey should declare Öcalan as a partner, PKK should finally put down its weapons, and a general amnesty for the PKK members should be granted.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, "Nicht erpressbar," *FAZ*, July 11, 2008, 12.

¹⁷⁹ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, "Signal," *FAZ*, January 5, 2009, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Michael Martens, "Erdogans stumpfer Machtanspruch," *FAZ*, June 14, 2011, 1.

Another article of Martens appeared after the death of 24 Turkish soldiers as a result of the PKK attack following large-scale military operations of the Turkish army in Northern Iraq in October 2011. The writer remembered Prime Minister Erdoğan's announcement that Turkey would fight anyone who hiddenly or openly supported terrorists or terrorism and his claims that "German foundations" financed the terror of the PKK and, in that way, the PKK became a tool of foreign powers seeking to split Turkey. Despite that, Martens believed Erdoğan knew the best antidote to terrorism is the further democratization of Turkey, as Erdoğan recently initiated to adopt a new constitution with a commission, which included members from the pro-Kurdish party in the parliament as well. Finally, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle's words that he was dismayed and shocked about the attack of the PKK and his call for solutions to the Kurdish conflict were referred to in the article.¹⁸¹

Reinhard Herman's article "Kurdish riot" was one of the few articles from FAZ that related the Kurdish issue with the German domestic politics. The injury of 80 German police officers during a demonstration in Mannheim, which was originally announced as "Kurdish cultural festival," was concluded by Herman with the words "the Kurds are back." Herman argued, in addition to the long-standing fight in Turkey, the side effects of the Kurds' fight with the rebels against the Assad regime in Syria reached in Germany, like in the 1990s. However, he remembered, the Kurds had aroused sympathy for their demands of more freedom and autonomy only until they blocked highways together with arson attacks in German cities. He warned finally that this violence and the violation of law and order should not be tolerated in Germany.¹⁸²

SZ's coverage of the Kurdish issue after the beginning of Turkey's EU negotiations was also similar to the other two elite media institutions. In one of the articles that covered striking incidents regarding the Kurdish problem, Kai Strittmatter argued that the Turkish government's old reflexes against the Kurdish question created a tragedy in those days. While this mutual tragedy enhanced the anger from both sides,

¹⁸¹ Michael Martens, "Heftige Kämpfe zwischen türkischer Armee und PKK," *FAZ*, November 20, 2011, 1.

¹⁸² Rainer Hermann, "Kurdischer Krawall," *FAZ*, September 10, 2012, 1.

the dialogue between the actors was also missing because the government blamed the members of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) of not distancing itself from the PKK. In response to this, Strittmatter recalled if the government continued to refrain from communicating with legal representatives in the parliament, only the PKK would be pleased about this policy.¹⁸³

In another article, Strittmatter explained in detail the rapidly changing political atmosphere in Turkey after the series of terrorist attacks. For him, instead of heated debates of last months over a new civilian constitution, a robust nationalist environment and people's eternally fear of being surrounded by internal and external enemies, which was provoked by the army, emerged in the country as it was in the 1990s. As a reflection of these developments into Germany, Strittmatter claimed, this violence reached to German and Turkish communities in Germany as well and emphasized Germans had a great interest in keeping Turkey from making the same mistake once again, namely, not to tackle the Kurdish problem at its root, but to define it solely as a security concern. Furthermore, because for the first time Turkey had the United States and many formerly skeptical European countries on its side in the condemnation of the PKK, this could be an opportunity to end the PKK by granting Kurds their dignity, identity, and above all, economic prosperity.¹⁸⁴

Christiane Schlötzer's article "a political gift for Kurds" from May 2008 welcomed the initial steps of the Turkish government to solve the problem peacefully. As she saw the hopelessness in the region as the core reason that the PKK could still quickly recruit new fighters, Erdoğan's billion-dollar investment program in the Southeastern region of the country, including schools, hospitals, technology parks as well as modern agricultural programs, would change the region fundamentally. She concluded, therefore, if Erdoğan could keep those promises, this would be a historic step for the solution of the problem.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Kai Strittmatter, "Generalprobe für den Bürgerkrieg," *SZ*, April 10, 2006, 4.

¹⁸⁴ Kai Strittmatter, "Türkische Angst," *SZ*, October 30, 2007, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Christiane Schlötzer, "Ein politisches Geschenk für die Kurden," *SZ*, May 29, 2008, 4.

After the failure of the first initiative to solve the problem, violence in the country escalated once again, especially in the summer of 2010. Strittmatter blamed both sides for the end of this initiative. For him, while the nationalist opposition sabotaged the process in every opportunity on the one side, the Kurdish politicians on the other side did not distance themselves from the PKK and the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who did not contribute in the process. More important than that, the AKP government showed goodwill, but it had no concrete plan.¹⁸⁶

A couple of months later, Strittmatter emphasized in the article “Resurrection of the demons” that after the PKK’s attack, the language of peace and reforms transformed once again into the language of war and revenge, and AKP’s courage to take some essential steps disappeared.¹⁸⁷

In the second analyzed period, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s official declaration that the government initiated a solution process and therefore started the negotiations with Abdullah Öcalan on December 28, 2012, was a significant turning point concerning the Kurdish problem. After that date, the topic became more popular for the German media as well. In the following days, the assassination of three PKK members in Paris, including one of the co-founders of the PKK, drew particular attention in the media because this incident was not only perceived as sabotage towards the solution process but also the suspected murderer lived in Germany from 2003 until 2011 and was observed by the German security service for his contact with Turkish ultranationalist groups. Even though this incident remained unresolved as the suspected murderer died weeks before the trials, *Der Spiegel*, in that period, pointed out this sabotage attempt became unsuccessful thanks to the moderate statements from both sides of the conflict.¹⁸⁸

During a state visit of German President Joachim Gauck to Turkey in May 2014, the on-going solution process was once again considered by *Der Spiegel* as one of Erdoğan’s successful policies like Turkey’s reconciliation with its neighbors,

¹⁸⁶ Kai Strittmatter, “Terror in den Köpfen,” *SZ*, June 23, 2010, 4.

¹⁸⁷ Kai Strittmatter, “Auferstehung der Dämonen,” *SZ*, October 20, 2011, 4.

¹⁸⁸ Daniel Steinvorth, “Intimer Feind,” *Der Spiegel*, January 28, 2013, 86-87.

alliance with liberals in Turkey, and diminishing the power of generals in politics. However, *Der Spiegel* argued, in line with the Gauck's criticism of the Turkish government, Erdoğan became more and more authoritarian and intolerant to critics from journalists, students, and opposition activists.¹⁸⁹

On the first anniversary of the Gezi Park protests, *Der Spiegel*'s August 2014 issue drew a very detailed Turkey picture. In addition to the front cover, "the Erdoğan State," and the subhead "Will Turkey remain free?" the magazine also published a 16-pages special chapter in the Turkish language for the second time in its history. Different topics like Erdoğan's willingness to change the state system to a presidential system, his increasing authoritarianism, harsh response to protesters, and gradual asserting of Islamic standards were critically covered in the "the new Sultan" article of Hasnain Kazim and Maximilian Popp. Nevertheless, the writers covered the solution process with the PKK as the only positive development in that period. In that context, they reminded Erdoğan's lifting the ban on the use of the Kurdish language, apologize as the first Turkish head of government for the crimes of the state to the Kurds, an amnesty law for some PKK members, and economic investments in the region.¹⁹⁰

Syrian civil war and ISIL's invasion of many cities in northern Syria, which the Kurdish minority of Syria mostly lived, had an unsurprisingly direct effect on the Kurdish question in Turkey. At the first stage, *Der Spiegel* saw mass demonstrations in many Southeastern cities targeting the government's policy of not allowing the passage of Kurdish fighters from Iraq to the Syrian city of Kobane crossing the Turkish borders as a serious threat towards the continuation of the solution process. Simultaneously, *Der Spiegel* discussed the ignorance of the EU towards the recent developments in the region. In that context, an interview of *Der Spiegel* with local people from the region asked two questions to the readers from the European countries; (1) "when will the EU finally intervene?" and (2) "whom do you want Europeans to deal with in the future: with the ISIL militia or with us, the Kurds?" Against these

¹⁸⁹ Ralf Neukirch, et al., "Paston und Sultan," *Der Spiegel*, May 5, 2014, 32-34.

¹⁹⁰ Hasnain Kazim and Maximilian Popp, "Der Neue Sultan," *Der Spiegel*, August 4, 2014, 68-77.

questions, the magazine also mentioned the call from the locals that "we Kurds are modern Muslims, not Middle Ages like those over there, we have built an autonomous, self-governing government, and yes, we even hold elections."¹⁹¹

In the following issue of the magazine, *Der Spiegel* focused once again the issue with a cover page "Alone against terror" and in the article "the abandoned people" gave very detailed analyzes of Kurds in Southeastern Turkey, on Kandil Mountain in Iraq, and in the Syrian city of Afrin. In the article, the writers Ralf Hoppe, Maximilian Popp, Christoph Reuter, and Jonathan Stock defined the PKK as the last hope against ISIL terrorism. While they reminded that it was unimaginable to cooperate with the PKK just a couple of years ago, they claimed that the disciplined, efficient, pro-Western, and secular PKK became at that time with approximately 15.000 fighters, the most powerful and only force in the region that seemed willing and able to fight ISIL. However, they wrote about this "confusing alliance in a complicated conflict" that, unlike the American government, which delivered weapons to the Syrian branch of the PKK, the YPG, Germany helped only to the ineffective Peshmerga Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Also, they remarked the possibility of a new conflict with Turkey by questioning the necessity of supplying weapons to Kurds, the possibility of the use of these weapons against Turkey, and future demands of Kurds for an independent state based on their growing political and military self-confidence. In response to these issues, the writers proposed that the Western countries' difficult balancing act must ensure the Kurdish victory in Kobane against ISIL, must save the peace process between the PKK and Turkey, and at the same time must prevent destabilization of the entire region with independence claims. Along with that, *Der Spiegel* also quoted the words of the commander of the YPG forces regarding the "senseless decision" of the German government to deliver weapons only to Peshmerga. Accordingly, they emphasized the active role of women in this organization on the front-line of the conflict and the aim of the YPG to be a friend of the West.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Fiona Ehlers, et al., "Das Drama von Kobane," *Der Spiegel*, October 13, 2014, 84-90.

¹⁹² Ralf Hoppe, et al., "Das verlassene Volk," *Der Spiegel*, October 27, 2014, 82-89.

In another article from Der Spiegel's yearly chronicle of 2014, Christoph Reuter accused the West of its passivity concerning the developments in the region and claimed that this policy made possible ISIL to become so powerful in Syria. Also, he warned that American-led Western coalition would fall apart if the PKK turned against fighting Turkey, and two potential allies would be at war with each other.¹⁹³

Similar to Der Spiegel, FAZ assessed the official declaration of the solution process very positively. In his article "overdue," Rainer Hermann argued that despite Erdoğan's lack of reform initiative on problematic issues such as the official recognition of the Alevis and their worship houses, decreasing media independence, and the state's influence on religious authority Diyanet, his call for the reviving the peace process with the PKK, promise to change the election law and introduction of Kurdish as the language of instruction in private schools could still be considered as positive news received from Turkey.¹⁹⁴

In the same month, Martens evaluated Erdoğan's reform program called "democracy package" as a small package, which still gave hope for more freedom in Turkey. Especially abolishing student's oath, which should be recited by primary school students every morning, was evaluated as a significant step, as the oath was criticized for a long time by Kurdish politicians. Like Hermann, however, Martens also pointed out the urgent necessity of further reforms.¹⁹⁵

While another article of Rainer Hermann published after the presidential election in Turkey criticized the lack of reforms to bring more freedom and more democracy to the country and the leadership style of Erdoğan, which according to him, resembled Russian President Vladimir Putin day by day, the reconciliation with the Kurds was still evaluated as only remaining success of Erdoğan.¹⁹⁶

Like the other elite media institutions, Kurdish armed groups' fight against ISIL in northern Syria attracted considerable attention in FAZ. "A new Srebrenica?"

¹⁹³ Christoph Reuter, "Ein Schwarm, rasend, schießend," *Spiegel Chronik*, December 4, 2014, 54.

¹⁹⁴ Rainer Hermann, "Überfällig," *FAZ*, October 1, 2013, 10.

¹⁹⁵ Michael Martens, "Demokratie-Päckchen," *FAZ*, October 16, 2013, 1.

¹⁹⁶ Rainer Hermann, "Präsident Erdogan," *FAZ*, August 29, 2014, 1.

article of Michael Martens in that respect called for immediate action from Europe and Turkey to help Kurds fighting ISIL. From the German perspective, he also gave the example of the Left Party, which unlike its solid anti-interventionist policy, advocated intervention in this case. For him, if both Europe and Turkey did not help Kurds, it would be possible to see a Srebrenica of the Middle East even on a larger scale.¹⁹⁷

In the next month, Turkey's decision to block the passages of Kurds from Iraq to Syria criticized by Martens with the argument that the battle for the Kurdish city of Kobane continued in the streets of Turkish cities and Turkey should at least allow Kurds to defend themselves. Moreover, he added that this kind of violence import would not affect Turkey alone. On the contrary, by referring former German defense minister Peter Struck's words concerning Germany's participation in the Afghan War, he asserted Germany's security was not only defended in the Hindu Kush but also in the German city Celle, in which violent clashes between Kurdish and Salafist groups took place.¹⁹⁸

SZ's first article, after the official announcement of the solution process, considered that there were many indications towards a peaceful solution to the Kurdish conflict. Although Schlötzer claimed that especially day by day emerging new details about the talks between the Turkish state and the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan prepared the Turkish society for further steps, there were still many hurdles such as the assassination of three PKK members, including one of the founders of the PKK. She also saw the success of the process as a real chance for Turkey to free itself from the shackles of the past. Thus, it would open the way for the further domestic reforms demanded by the EU, such as the abolition of anti-terror laws, enhancing the freedom of the press, ending the police arbitrariness.¹⁹⁹

Kurt Kister's article "Symbol policy without flushing" harshly criticized German foreign policy towards Turkey concerning the deployment of the German patriot missiles and soldiers in Turkey. For Kister, in that time, there was no serious

¹⁹⁷ Michael Martens, "Ein neues Srebrenica?" *FAZ*, September 22, 2014, 1.

¹⁹⁸ Michael Martens, "Wenn Kobane fällt," *FAZ*, October 11, 2014, 1.

¹⁹⁹ Christiane Schlötzer, "Chance auf Frieden," *SZ*, January 12, 2013, 4.

threat from Syria to the NATO member Turkey, and the real fear of the Turkish government was the strengthening of the Kurds in the Syrian war. In reality, he argued, this mission served exclusively the political goals of Tayyip Erdoğan, who had hegemonic ideas in former Ottoman regions. Moreover, threats like xenophobic protesters' attacks or degradation of the German soldiers like providing wrecked shelters without toilet flushes necessitated severe actions from the German government. In that case, he concluded, Germany should withdraw its soldiers and Patriot missiles, as this commitment was not in the German interests.²⁰⁰

Christiane Schlötzer's comments on Federal President Gauck's state visit to Turkey was another discussed subject in that period. By referring Gauck's criticism of the authoritarian leadership style, pressure on the judiciary, decreasing press freedom, the new security law, as well as praises on government's successes in economic development, reception of a large number of Syrian refugees, and the breaking of historical taboos in relation to Kurds and Armenians, Schlötzer supported the idea that Germany and the rest of the EU could not be indifferent to what was happening in Turkey. Accordingly, anyone who thought in this way should also not avoid articulating concerns and expressing unpleasant truths as it was in Gauck's case, even if it would also draw serious reactions from the Turkish side.²⁰¹

Concerning the Kurdish fight against ISIL in the border city of Kobane, an interesting article came from Heribert Prantl, a member of the chief-editorial team of the newspaper. He argued in his article that Germany's delivering weapons to Kurds was a wrong decision because the whole West was responsible for the catastrophic situation in the region with its interventionist policies.²⁰²

Similarly, Tomas Avenarius recalled the complexity of the conflict in the region by claiming that there was no one entity as "Kurds" in general but many different groups with different aims, some of whom even negotiated with Assad over autonomy in Syria. Therefore, he warned, everyone should consider the complex

²⁰⁰ Kurt Kister, "Symbolpolitik ohne Wasserspülung," *SZ*, March 4, 2013, 4.

²⁰¹ Christiane Schlötzer, "Unhöfliche Wahrheiten," *SZ*, April 28, 2014, 4.

²⁰² Heribert Prantl, "Falsch, falscher am falschesten," *SZ*, August 21, 2014, 4.

Kurdish questions before strengthening a small PKK-close group in Kobane. Otherwise, it would create further conflicts in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.²⁰³

In April 2015, the PKK's decision to apologize for the violence in Germany through the whole 1990s and the PKK's willingness to end the fight against Turkey was considered by Luisa Seeling as an indicator that the PKK went into the effort of making a rapid image change. Not only the images of Kurds suffering from ISIL in Syria but also PKK's being the only actor in the fight against ISIL contributed to this changing image. Correspondingly, she argued these developments caused to a questioning of the ban over the PKK in Germany. When PKK's changing aim from an independent state to a regional autonomy was considered with the on-going peace process, Seeling believed that there was a real hope that the PKK could renounce the violence completely and transform into a legal, political organization in Turkey. In that case, Germany could abolish the ban on the organization as well.²⁰⁴

Since pro-Kurdish HDP obtained a record-high 13,1 percent of the popular votes and entered the parliament on June 7, 2015, the AKP lost its majority in the parliament. Moreover, with a series of terrorist actions in the summer of 2015, the solution process was practically ended. In this third analyzed case after the end of the peace negotiations, rapidly increasing violence emerged with the more critical comments from *Der Spiegel*. Among them, an article from August 1 discussed German Patriot missiles deployment to southern Turkey as part of a NATO mission. Gordon Repinski mentioned in this article defense minister Ursula von der Leyen's intentions not to extend the parliament mandate for another year, as a result of increasing violence in the country. Besides, he noted the NATO officially reports that Turkey was no longer threatened by the Syrian regime, as it was before. Although Repinski did not put forward his own ideas concerning the missile deployment issue, he reflected German officials' ideas in favor of pulling the German soldiers out and their efforts to find a way to end the mission.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Tomas Avenarius, "Fragwürdige Bundesgenossen," *SZ*, October 10, 2014, 4.

²⁰⁴ Luisa Seeling, "Sie bewegt sich doch," *SZ*, April 11, 2015, 4.

²⁰⁵ Gordon Repinski, "Zittern am Bosphorus," *Der Spiegel*, August 1, 2015, 75.

When the internal security issue became more and more dominant in Turkish politics towards the October 2015 snap election, *Der Spiegel* named simultaneously reemerging conflict in Southeastern Turkey as a "new civil war." In addition to a detailed analysis of the recent incidents, the writers reflected the views of both sides. Accordingly, each side blamed the other side as the cause of escalated violence. In this situation, unlike the previous periods, the writers referred to the role of the EU in preventing the violence without proposing a concrete solution policy. However, they emphasized that the EU might steer history in a different direction if the perception of EU membership did not lose its all meaning in the country.²⁰⁶

A suicide attack of ISIL in Istanbul's historic Sultanahmet district and, as a result, the death of 12 German tourists together with six wounded attracted strong German media attention. In an article just after the incident, *Der Spiegel* emphasized Turkey's underestimation of the danger posed by ISIL and even promotion their rise against the Assad regime and Kurds in northern Syria. At the same time, they criticized Chancellor Merkel for not denouncing Erdoğan's authoritarian tendencies. However, considering the Turkey-EU negotiations on the solution of the refugee crisis, the writers argued the German government would probably cooperate even more closely with Erdoğan and often overlook the problems concerning democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of the press in Turkey.²⁰⁷

Another attention-grabbing article of *Der Spiegel* was published in April 2016, a couple of weeks after the EU-Turkey refugee deal. With the title "the wild man from the Bosphorus," 13 journalists of *Der Spiegel* made a very detailed analysis of recent problematical issues between Turkey and Germany, including the refugee crisis, visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, Erdoğan's increasing authoritarianism, press freedom in Turkey and German satirist Jan Böhmermann's satire poem about Erdoğan. About the Kurdish problem, the writers exposed a very critical position against Erdoğan and claimed that because he lost the absolute majority in the previous election, he ended

²⁰⁶ Hasnain Kazim, Maximilian Popp und Samiha Shafy, "Ein Land im Wahn," *Der Spiegel*, September 19, 2015, 88-92.

²⁰⁷ Maik Baumgärtner, et al., "Ins Herz Europas," *Der Spiegel*, January 16, 2016, 80-83.

the peace process, slipped the country into chaos, and presented himself as a savior. Against Erdoğan's "pointless civil war," on the other hand, the writers blamed Angela Merkel of remaining silent against all those problems as a result of the EU's dependency on Turkey regarding the refugee crisis. For them, especially the weakness of the EU leaders to find a joint solution against the crisis gave Erdoğan a mighty hand to provoke them and use them for his own sake. Like many other articles in that period about the Kurdish issue, however, the writers abstained from presenting a clear policy recommendation for the government.²⁰⁸

The last analyzed article of *Der Spiegel* published a couple of months before the coup attempt in July 2016, and it covered the visa-free travel for Turkish citizens inside the Schengen Area and the debacle in relations between Ankara and the EU. Since granting this right to Turkish citizens was set on condition of changing the anti-terror law and Erdoğan publicly rejected it, especially the coalition partner SPD emphasized Merkel's passivity against Erdoğan's policies regarding the dispute over Jan Böhmermann, pressure on media houses and journalists, the brutal fight against the Kurds and the human rights abuses. As an example, *Der Spiegel* quoted both SPD parliamentary group president Thomas Oppermann's words, "We must demand from Angela Merkel that the points be implemented, and we should beware of being too submissive with Erdoğan," and SPD party leader Sigmar Gabriel's claims that the Germans did not much applaud Merkel's dealings with Erdoğan. Moreover, the skeptical stand of interior minister Thomas de Maizière and CSU leader Horst Seehofer towards Merkel's Turkey politics were underlined by the writers.²⁰⁹

In the period after June 2015 election, the approach of FAZ to the Kurdish issue became more critical. In an article from July 2015, Nikolas Busse evaluated Turkey's simultaneous fight against ISIL and the YPG from American and European perspectives. For Busse, while Americans showed understanding for Erdoğan in this two-war strategy, it was criticized by both the German government and the EU. Busse believed Washington was willing to accept an escalation of violence in the Kurdish

²⁰⁸ Onur Burçak Belli, et al., "Der wilde Mann vom Bosphorus," *Der Spiegel*, April 2, 2016, 14-21.

²⁰⁹ Christiane Hoffmann, et al., "'Devoter Umgang'," *Der Spiegel*, May, 14, 2016, 27-28.

conflict as a price for a more intensive struggle against ISIL, but Europeans were generally more concerned about the effects of this war on the on-going peace process. In that respect, arms deliveries of the German government to the Peshmerga forces and forming an informal alliance with the Kurds were noted by the writer.²¹⁰

A couple of days after this article, Hermann pointed out the dilemma of Europeans in their politics toward the region. Despite the fact that Erdoğan changed his peace policy suddenly and sought to push the HDP out of the parliament with his terrorism claims, Hermann argued, Erdoğan obtained the support of Americans by binding the fight against ISIL and the fight against the PKK each other. On the other hand, although the Europeans recognized Turkey's right to fight against the PKK, they prioritized the fight against ISIL, which wanted to export its ideology and violence to Europe. In addition to that, Europeans helped the Kurds as the only successful actor in this fight, while hoping the peace process in Turkey could remain. Otherwise, Hermann emphasized, it would have consequences not only for Turkey but also for Germany, as the tensions would quickly spread to Germany like experienced before.²¹¹

In an article published just after Erdoğan's triumph on November 1 election Michael Martens discussed the "dictator" claims towards Erdoğan. He asserted Recep Tayyip Erdogan was not a dictator because a dictator determines the outcome of a presumed election beforehand, and the other candidates could join in the election only after approval of him. For Martens, however, both were not the case in Turkey, and there were three real opposition parties in parliament, at least two of whom had a fundamentally different understanding of the ideal state structure and the role of Islam in society. On the Kurdish issue, on the other hand, Martens believed suppressing policies such as the arrest of hundreds of Kurdish lawyers, local politicians, and human rights activists would sooner or later become a violent conflict once again, and this would affect not only the Southeastern part of the country but also the whole country economically.²¹²

²¹⁰ Nikolas Busse, "Türkischer Dissens," *FAZ*, July 27, 2015, 1.

²¹¹ Rainer Hermann, "Krieg gegen die Kurden," *FAZ*, July 30, 2015, 1.

²¹² Michael Martens, "Was die Türken wollen," *FAZ*, November 4, 2015, 1.

In Hermann's another article after a terrorist attack in Istanbul's Sultanahmet district, he claimed that this attack aimed at two countries: Turkey and Germany, because it could not be a coincidence that four days after the deployment of German Tornado reconnaissance aircraft in the Turkish Airbase Incirlik, the assassin targeted a group of German tourists in Istanbul. Moreover, the on-going war in southeastern Turkey, he argued, pulled Turkey in a spiral of violence, which had an effect on the whole country and beyond. In that respect, especially possible new refugees moving to Europe and fleeing jihadists to other countries could pose a serious threat to Europe. Against this mixture of threats, he believed Turkey should resume the aborted peace process with the PKK so that the stability could be restored in the country, and Kurds would fight more effectively against ISIL.²¹³

Similarly, after another terrorist attack in March 2016, Nikolas Busse discussed Erdoğan's Kurdish politics in terms of the EU. For Busse, while every country in the world has the right and duty to fight terrorism, the way of fighting in Turkey would lead to many internal confrontations, and it would divide the society sooner or later. Against this development, he reminded the widespread claims that the EU gave Erdogan a free hand against Kurds because they need his help to cope with the refugee crisis. For him, this allegation was not wholly wrong, since the criticisms of Berlin against Ankara's Kurdish policy had certainly been louder in the past. However, the refugee crisis changed Europe's both internal and external relations and the times that the EU could define itself as a great moral power were over. Accordingly, the Kurdish issue became more and more irrelevant in the negotiations between the EU and Turkey.²¹⁴

Mike Szymanski from SZ saw the June 2015 election and escalated violence in the following period as an "ended dream." For him, although both the government and representatives from the pro-Kurdish HDP agreed on a road map in early 2015, especially the death of 31 people after the terrorist attack of ISIL targeting Kurdish citizens and as a revenge killing of two police officers by the PKK, who were blamed

²¹³ Rainer Hermann, "Terror in Istanbul," *FAZ*, January 13, 2016, 1.

²¹⁴ Nikolas Busse, "Eskalation in der Türkei," *FAZ*, March 15, 2016, 1.

for helping ISIL, raised the question that “is this country really not capable of reaching a peace?”²¹⁵

In his article on the same days, Joachim Käppner reminded that against the Marxist PKK in the past 20 years, Germans were mostly in solidarity with Turkey, mainly because street battles between the PKK supporters and the German police were once quite common. Moreover, the PKK was banned in the Federal Republic and was labeled as a terrorist organization. He argued, on the other hand, it was also the PKK, which held promising peace negotiations with the government. While Turkish F-16 jets bombarded ISIL camps alongside the PKK, Käppner claimed Erdoğan’s real goal was to prevent a Kurdish state on the southern border of Turkey and to silence the Kurds in Turkey again. Therefore, he concluded, Germany should not support this Machiavellian power politics because Germany was also an essential partner for Erdoğan, and Germany could have a moderating effect on him by forcing him to return to the dialogue with the PKK. Nevertheless, Käppner added, if Erdoğan would remain on course for war, Germany should seriously consider withdrawing the German Patriots from Turkey.²¹⁶

In the following months, Mike Szymanski brought the removing the PKK from Germany’s terror organization list into question. However, his answer was “unfortunately no,” because the PKK followed once again a revenge policy, which gave Erdoğan at the same opportunity to attacks the entire Kurdish movement, including the legal parliamentary representatives.²¹⁷

At the end of 2015, Szymanski’s other article, “the candidate needs help,” approached the issue from the EU perspective. According to him, although both sides tried once to solve the problem peacefully, at the time, Turkey was unable to resolve this conflict through its own efforts. Therefore, the West must help Turkey, and

²¹⁵ Mike Szymanski, “Ein Traum – vorbei,” *SZ*, July 27, 2015, 4.

²¹⁶ Joachim Käppner, “Zwischen den Fronten,” *SZ*, July 30, 2015, 4.

²¹⁷ Mike Szymanski, “Vernunft nirgends,” *SZ*, August 3, 2015, 4.

opening a new negotiation chapter in the accession process could be a meaningful step at that point.²¹⁸

After the terrorist attack of ISIL targeting German tourists in Istanbul, Joachim Käppner asserted that asking whether this terrorist attack deliberately targeted German tourists was meaningless because this incident showed either ISIL wanted to take revenge German Tornado operation from Turkey, or could murder anyone anywhere in the world. In both cases, the increasing violence and terrorist attacks in Turkey similarly affected Germany, as the refugee plan of Merkel depended on the stability in Turkey as well.²¹⁹

Similarly, Stefan Kornelius wrote in these days that although Erdoğan's unbridled foreign policy ambitions in the Middle East, alienation from the EU, double play with ISIL, and the unnecessary civil war with the Kurds created many further problems for Turkey, it was actually the war in Syria, which caused instability in Turkey as well as in Europe, declining freedoms and also the death of nine German tourists in Istanbul. Therefore, he highlighted the question, what else should be happening to evoke a coalition to stop this war in Syria, which affected the whole world.²²⁰

Luisa Seeling's "Erdoğan's one-man-state" article from May 2016 evaluated the latest constitutional amendment of the AKP government, which deprived the parliamentary immunities of more than a quarter of the deputies and allowed potential prosecutions for the deputies of pro-Kurdish HDP. For her, Erdoğan himself made it difficult for Europeans to find a middle ground between cooperation and criticism with his current policies. Therefore, German Chancellor Merkel's meeting with representatives of Turkish civil society during her visit to Turkey was seen by Seeling as correct but inadequate action.²²¹

²¹⁸ Mike Szymanski, "Der Kandidat braucht Hilfe," *SZ*, December 30, 2015, 4.

²¹⁹ Joachim Käppner, "Unheilige Gewissheit," *SZ*, January 13, 2016, 4.

²²⁰ Stefan Kornelius, "Wurzeln des Terrors," *SZ*, January 14, 2016, 4.

²²¹ Luisa Seeling, "Erdoğan's Ein-Mann-Staat," *SZ*, May 21, 2016, 4.

In his article published a couple of days before the Coup Attempt in June 2016, Szymanski reflected the European view that unlike Turkey's fight against ISIL, the fight against the PKK was Erdoğan's own war, which could have ended by Erdoğan in 2015 with the solution process. Also, unlike bombings in Paris, Turks did not feel that there was an international sympathy with Turkey regarding the terrorist attacks in Turkey, which created a severe disappointment in Turkey as well. Nevertheless, the writer argued, the more Europeans moved away from Turks, the more benefited Erdoğan from this feeling of disappointment to realize his political plans.²²²

3.2. Frame Elements of the Kurdish Problem in Turkey

When the topic is evaluated from the framing perspective, it is clear that the German media frame concerning the Kurdish question was not fully developed. In terms of the problem definition function, the existence of the violence between the two sides of the conflict was explicitly mentioned as the fundamental problem. However, this general definition is not limited to the long-lasting armed conflict in the South-Eastern part of Turkey. Instead, ethnic tension between two large minority groups in Germany since the 1990s, political solution attempts of the Turkish government starting from 2009, Turkey's military interventions in Iraq and Syria, as well as the role of PKK-related armed groups in the fight against ISIS since 2013 were all different elements of the Kurdish problem covered by the German media in this long period.

Accordingly, the German media frame concerning the second function of the frame, the causal interpretation, was quite changeable. Description of the responsible side of violence depended mostly on recent developments and incidents. In other words, while after terrorist attacks in Turkey and illegal activities in Germany, the elite media emphasized the responsibility of the PKK behind the violence, in case of reported human rights violations in Turkey and military operation against Kurdish

²²² Mike Szymanski, "Der Zorn der Enttäuschten," *SZ*, June 6, 2016, 4.

groups outside Turkey, the Turkish government and particularly Erdoğan were blamed for the violence.

In line with the second function, the moral evaluation function of the media frame was also not constant. The first notable example of the issue was the strong support of the media for the peace process in Turkey. As the German media described the peace negotiation with very supportive ways like a “historical step” or “remarkable development,” this initiative was seen even until late 2015 as the one and only favorable policy of the Erdoğan government. An interesting point at this frame function was that when the public order in Germany came up to a discussion due to the increasing illegal activities of PKK in Germany or act of violence towards German citizens outside Germany, all these elite media outlets opposed to the PKK activities very strongly. Similarly, social tension between two immigrant groups in Germany attracted greater public attention to the issue and raised questions about both sides of the conflict. In connection with Germany’s security concerns, the fight of PKK related military groups against ISIL in Syria and Iraq changed the German media’s PKK perspective. In this period, the elite media depicted a quite positive Kurdish image with the image of secular-modern Muslims, who fight against radical Islamists and try to be friends with the West. Furthermore, the success of these Kurdish groups against ISIL was directly associated with the security of Germany.

Due to Germany’s incapacity to solve this deeply rooted, indirectly involved foreign policy issue and its possible side effects for Germany’s internal security, the elite media was quite shy about proposing radical strategy changes against the government’s Kurdish policy. Especially until 2015, only some loose policy recommendations came from these media institutions. Among them, supporting peace negotiations in Turkey and not tolerating illegal activities of PKK in Germany were frequently mentioned by the media. Also, the media called for the withdrawal of the German patriot missile system and soldiers from Turkey and for adopting a more critical stance towards Turkey concerning the human rights violations in the country. However, these suggested solutions were not framed persistently.

When the ISIL terrorism emerged as a real threat for Germany and the whole of Europe, the media's policy proposals become much more evident. Instead of the German government's support to mostly ineffective Peshmerga forces, the German media promoted governmental support for the YPG forces. Nevertheless, the media approached Germany's directly sending weapons to the YPG very cautiously, since this support might further destabilize the region.

In terms of the cultural congruence variable of frames, the proposed media frames were almost entirely congruent with the German political culture in the examined period. In this regard, first, human rights violations in Turkey met German public opinion's sensitivity to the global protection of human rights. Second, Kurdish armed groups' fight against radical terrorism in Syria and Iraq was associated with serious security threats in Europe that originated from radical terrorism. Third, opposing the use of the violence as a propaganda method, which directly threatened the German public order in this case, was another frequently used culturally congruent media frame.

The second frame variable, motivation, was not so evident in this case. Since the problem is a long-lasting dispute, and it was related to Germany in indirect ways, the public and media interest became visible only after some significant incidents. Similarly, the German government had quite a few instruments to apply for solving this complex conflict. Consequently, the media could not spread a dominant media frame about this case and could not fully perform an extra media performance except regular news reporting.

3.3. German Foreign Policy and the Kurdish Problem

Historically, Germany has not applied an independent and sustainable Kurdish policy for years. Germany's political approach towards Kurds is embedded in the country's relations with Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, where the Kurdish population is

divided. In that sense, foreign policy interests and the endeavor not to jeopardize relations with these states generally dictate Germany's Kurdish politics.²²³ In terms of German-Turkish relations, the Kurdish issue became a problem field mostly after the 1980 Military Coup in Turkey. In addition to a high number of political refugees from Turkey to Germany, continuous allegations of human rights violations in Turkey was criticized by German governments during the whole 1990s. Crises like Germany's arms trade embargo to Turkey, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's political asylum request to Germany after he was arrested in Italy as well as political actions of PKK-related groups in Germany worsened the bilateral relations drastically. In this conflictual environment, maintaining the foreign policy balance between the strategically motivated cooperation policy and politically motivated distancing policy, including value-based criticisms, became increasingly difficult for the German government.²²⁴ In the early 2000s, Turkey's increasing ambition to join the EU shifted the Kurdish problem from the bilateral level to the European level, since the democracy deficit, human right violations, and minority rights protection were the vital EU accession requirements that Turkey should fulfill.²²⁵ On the other hand, Germany's concerns over conflicts between the Turkish and Kurdish minority groups and, correspondingly, disturbance of public order and security in Germany forced German decision-makers to maintain a balancing strategy concerning the Kurdish question.

Thanks to PKK's unilateral ceasefire and the abolishment of the death sentence in Turkey in line with the EU harmonization laws, the Kurdish issue took a relatively minor interest in Germany until 2005. During the period between 2006 and 2013, on the other hand, both re-escalating conflict and, at the same time, the first signs of the solution process from the AKP government were widely covered by the German elite media.

²²³ Gülistan Gürbey, "Debatte Deutsche Kurdenpolitik: Anerkennen statt ignorieren," *TAZ*, March 21, 2018, <https://taz.de/Debatte-Deutsche-Kurdenpolitik/!5490052/>.

²²⁴ Kramer, "Türkei," 485.

²²⁵ Gülistan Gürbey, "Die türkische Kurdenpolitik im Kontext des EU-Beitrittsprozesses und der Kopenhagener Kriterien," *Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen* 44, no.1 (2004): 44-57.

In bilateral relations, the level of cooperation between the German and Turkish governments substantially increased in this period. Especially against the German Interior Ministry's decision to ban PKK-related TV channel -ROJ TV- after Turkey's accusation of being a PKK propaganda channel in 2008 as well as the extradition of some PKK members to Turkey, the PKK reacted with the kidnapping of three German tourists in the Eastern Anatolia by blaming Germany for pursuing "a hostile policy to Kurds and the PKK."²²⁶ In this period, while Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier assured that they would not tolerate being blackmailed by the PKK, Minister of Interior Wolfgang Schaeuble stated, "the PKK is banned as a terrorist organization, and it will stay that way."²²⁷

Similarly, a verdict of the German Federal Court of Justice concerning the prosecution of PKK members in Germany for being a member of a foreign terrorist organization was another significant development in German-Turkish bilateral relations in 2010.²²⁸ Unlike former decisions of the German judiciary, which classified PKK actions in Germany as "criminal activities," German Federal Court of Justice decided in this case that the PKK had no independent decision-making process in Germany and the orders of the PKK activities in the country came directly from the PKK leadership. Therefore, PKK members in Germany should be considered as members of a foreign terrorist organization. Nevertheless, since this decision also paved the way for prosecutions of simple PKK supporters in Germany for terror

²²⁶ "Kurdish Rebels: Hostage Release Requires German Policy Change," *Deutsche Welle*, July 10, 2008, <https://www.dw.com/en/kurdish-rebels-hostage-release-requires-german-policy-change/a-3474205>.

²²⁷ "Germany Rejects Demands of Kurdish Militants in Hostage Crisis," *Deutsche Welle*, July 10, 2008, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-rejects-demands-of-kurdish-militants-in-hostage-crisis/a-3475899>.

²²⁸ Ömer Yilmaz, "Germany's Kurdish and PKK policy: balance and strategy," *Insight Turkey* 18, no.1 (2016): 109.

offense, no further trials were conducted by German officials within the framework of this legal decision.²²⁹

Between 2013 and 2015, two significant developments shaped Germany's Kurdish policy; the solution process between the Turkish government and the imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan, and the PKK's fight against ISIL. In this quite favorable environment for the PKK, not only the German elite media but also two opposition parties in the parliament, the Greens and the Left Party, opened a discussion for reconsideration of PKK's legal status in Germany. This discussion was supported by the foreign policy spokesperson of the SPD, Rolf Mützenich as well. On the other hand, both CDU's interior expert Wolfgang Bosbach and the Interior Ministry made it clear that the PKK was still a threat to Germany's domestic security.²³⁰ The German government and the Federal President Joachim Gauck used at the same time every opportunity to admire and encourage the Turkish government's efforts to conclude the peace negotiations, although they criticized Turkey with concerns about the democratic deficits and limitations on freedom of press Turkey.²³¹ Even after the end of the peace process and the escalating violence in Turkey, Chancellor Merkel personally spoke on the phone with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and urged to continue to the peace process with the Kurds despite all the difficulties.²³²

Because from late 2015 until mid-2016, the refugee crisis and a possible solution for the crisis with Turkey dominated the bilateral relations between Turkey

²²⁹ Christian Rath, "PKKler als Terroristen festgenommen," *TAZ Online*, July 29, 2011, <http://www.taz.de/!5115306/>.

²³⁰ Klaus Jansen, "PKK: Von der Terrororganisation zum Verbündeten?" *Deutsche Welle*, August 30, 2014, <https://www.dw.com/de/pkk-von-der-terrororganisation-zum-verb%C3%BCndeten/a-17889168>.

²³¹ "Gauck nennt Entwicklung der Türkei erschreckend," *SZ Online*, April 28, 2014, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/bundespraesident-in-der-tuerkei-gauck-kritisiert-erdogans-kurs-scharf-1.1945909>.

²³² "Merkel urges Turkey to continue Kurdish peace process despite violence," *Deutsche Welle*, July 26, 2015, <https://www.dw.com/en/merkel-urges-turkey-to-continue-kurdish-peace-process-despite-violence/a-18608640>.

and Germany, Germany's Kurdish politics in this period mostly focused on the role of Kurdish groups in the fight against ISIL. For the German government, on the one hand, ISIL posed a severe security threat within Germany as it was experienced with the 2016 Berlin truck attack and following foiled terrorist plots.²³³ On the other hand, the existence of ISIL in the Middle East created massive instability in the region, which became one of the main reasons for uncontrollable refugee waves to Europe and particularly to Germany. Therefore, the German government considered Turkey's two-front war against ISIL and Kurds in this period as counterproductive since it could endanger success against ISIL and damage the peace process in Turkey. In this direction, the German government announced on August 15, 2015, just after the end of the peace process, that it would withdraw the Patriot missile defense system and German soldiers from Southeastern Turkey.²³⁴

At the same time, the German government was criticized by the media for ignoring violent military conflict within the Turkish borders. In this period, German decision-makers generally expressed their criticisms quite carefully as it was seen with Foreign Minister Steinmeier's encouragement to the Turkish government to be more moderate in the fight against the PKK and to give equal opportunities all the parties in the election by referring the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP).²³⁵ Chancellor Merkel likewise criticized the dissolution of the rapprochement and reconciliation process with the Kurds and remarked that without necessary amendments to the Turkish Anti-Terror Law, the visa liberalization for Turkish

²³³ Kristie Pladson, "Germany prevented 7 attacks since Berlin Christmas market atrocity," *Deutsche Welle*, October 23, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-prevented-7-attacks-since-berlin-christmas-market-atrocity/a-50947293>.

²³⁴ Michael Staack, *Deutsche Außenpolitik unter Stress*, (Leverkusen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2015), 49-50.

²³⁵ "Türken und Kurden geraten in Deutschland aneinander," *Welt Online*, September 14, 2015, <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article146372419/Tuerken-und-Kurden-geraten-in-Deutschland-aneinander.html>.

citizens would not be granted.²³⁶ At this point, Germany also actively supported the Iraqi Kurdistan government against ISIL by sending weapons, military equipment together with training activities. Unlike the United States government, which cooperated with the PKK-related groups in northern Syria, namely, the PYD (Democratic Union Party) and the YPG (Women's Protection Units), the German government did not prefer to establish an official relationship with those groups in the region.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter of the thesis examined Germany's Turkey policy regarding the Kurdish problem in three different periods. In the first analyzed period between 2006 and 2013, thanks to Turkey's increasing EU ambition, the Kurdish problem became one of the vital elements of Turkey's EU accession process. Still, in the German public opinion, the issue mostly came to the agenda of the elite media only when striking incidents such as terrorist attacks, cross-border military operations, or human rights violations occur. In such cases, the media almost always considered these issues in accordance with the general German political culture. In fact, the German strategic culture generally guided the government policies in this period as well. While the German government expressed support for Turkey's fight against PKK after the terrorist attacks, it also criticized Turkey for any anti-democratic actions. From this perspective, the German government approached the issue by considering the balance between both sides of the conflict. When the conflict reached Germany and endangered the German public order, however, the government took all necessary

²³⁶ "Merkel sieht Erdoğan's Durchgreifen 'mit großer Sorge'" *Zeit Online*, Mai 22, 2016, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-05/tuerkei-angela-merkel-recep-tayyip-erdogan-kurden-kritik>.

measures without hesitation to hinder conflicts between the countries' two largest immigrant groups.

In the second analyzed period between 2013 and 2015, the peace negotiations between the Turkish government, imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan and the Kurdish political movement in the parliament dominated the media and the political agenda. Similar to the previous period, the strategic culture became the most significant element both in media perceptions and government policies. Accordingly, the elite media and the government fully supported dialogue, negotiations, and other non-violent instruments of conflict resolutions in this case. Within this context, even if the media and the German government criticized the Erdoğan government for many other problematical issues, the peace process kept its positive influence on the media frame and bilateral relations until mid-2015.

Finally, in the third analyzed period, the end of the peace process and the PKK-related armed groups' fights against ISIL terrorism in Syria and Iraq were two dominant political issues. During this period, the elite media seriously criticized the military operations of the Turkish government and the German government's reluctant stance towards Turkey. Also, Turkey's unwillingness in the fight against ISIL and the need for providing support for armed Kurdish groups were another frequently mentioned subjects. Nevertheless, Germany's carefully practiced Kurdish policy was evident in this period as well. On the one hand, the German decision-makers continued to encourage the Turkish government to return peace negotiations with Kurds. On the other hand, both Chancellor Merkel, Foreign Minister Steinmeier, and President Gauck criticized the anti-democratic activities in Turkey publicly. Concerning the expectations to support armed Kurdish groups in Iraq, potential side effects of this decision, such as creating new conflicts in the region or in Germany, deterred German decision-makers establishing a formal relationship with these groups. They preferred closer cooperation with the Iraqi Kurdistan Government.

Eventually, in terms of the media-politics relations, no specific media influence over the dominant political frame of the German government appeared in this indirectly involved problematical long-term issue. Instead, the German government

embraced a balancing strategy, which was generally guided by the German strategic culture. As neoclassical realist theory defined, this strategic culture combined the deeply rooted beliefs, expectations, and worldviews in politics, and when a change for a policy was required, the German decision-makers utilized these principles.

4. Case Study 3: 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Deal

4.1. German Elite Media Frame about the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal

Germany's decision to open its borders to refugees from Syria on the night of September 4, 2015, became in a short time a political and social crisis, which influenced German politics and public opinion very profoundly. In addition to the pressure from other European states, coalition partners, and her own party, the media and the public opinion also forced Chancellor Angela Merkel to take the initiative against the rapidly deepening crisis as soon as possible. In response to this problem, the first draft of the Merkel's plan to reach an agreement with Turkey came to light in October 2015.²³⁷

Der Spiegel initially called this early version of the plan as a "risky deal," and emphasized the use of such a deal by Erdoğan as a blackmailing instrument. Moreover, the article criticized the intention of the EU to declare Turkey a "safe third country" to send illegal refugees. In this context, the author of the article Mathieu von Rohr claimed that Turkey moved day by day towards an authoritarian regime, in which the human rights, minority rights, and press freedom remained only with limitations. For him, the EU's decision to postpone Turkey's yearly progress report, in which Turkey was harshly criticized because of political pressure on judges and journalists, was a shameful act. Also, Erdoğan's policies were central destabilization factors in the region, in which the EU wanted to stabilize the situation to stop refugee waves. Finally, he concluded that under no circumstances should the EU agree on a unilateral deal that serves to destabilize the situation in Turkey and in the region and, the EU must set clear conditions for Erdoğan, such as stopping the repression against his political

²³⁷ Ian Traynor, "European leaders offer Turkey 'action plan' on migration crisis," *The Guardian Online*, October 16, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/15/big-decisions-unlikely-migration-summit-eu-leaders>.

opponents and stabilizing the country including the resumption of the peace process with the PKK.²³⁸

In another article from December 2015, Peter Müller, Ralf Neukirch, and Andreas Ulrich called attention to another side of the deal, i.e., the distribution of the refugees in the EU. For them, even if Turkey would accept readmission of the illegal refugees from Greece, it was still unclear under what principles the distribution of the refugees would take place. Against Chancellor Merkel's plan to form a "coalition of the willing," the authors gave an example of the failure to distribute 160.000 refugees from Italy and Greece. Also, they emphasized the diminishing interest of countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands to admit more refugees.²³⁹

An early effect of the refugee deal was also mentioned by Peter Müller, Maximilian Popp, and Christoph Schult in January 2016. With a long personal story of a Syrian refugee in Turkey, who left his family in Syria with hoping to bring them to Turkey soon, the authors drew attention to Turkey's decision to close its borders to new refugees from Syria and to build a boundary wall along its Syrian borders to prevent illegal entries to the country. Thus, they emphasized, Merkel's Turkey plan could lead to the denial of necessary protection for those who were fighting for survival in the Syrian civil war. At the same time, it would become relatively ineffective to stop illegal passages of economic migrants from Africa and Asia, since Turkey did not intend to create tight controls in the Aegean Sea. On the issue, they reminded recent reports of Amnesty International about the illegal repatriation of refugees from Turkey to Syria and Iraq as well. Furthermore, the authors criticized Merkel's policy by arguing that it caused a dependency on a man who waged a brutal war against the Kurds in his country and systematically undermined the freedom of the press.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Mathieu von Rohr, "Gefährliche Deals mit Erdoğan," *Der Spiegel*, November 7, 2015, 110.

²³⁹ Peter Müller, Ralf Neukirch und Andreas Ulrich, "Koalition der Unwilligen," *Der Spiegel*, December 5, 2015, 26-28.

²⁴⁰ Peter Müller, Maximilian Popp and Christoph Schult, "Gefangen im Krieg," *Der Spiegel*, January 30, 2016, 34-36.

In addition to those various perspectives, *Der Spiegel* approached the issue regarding international law as well. In the article “and you are out,” the agreement was named legally problematic for two reasons. First, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union requires an individual examination of asylum applications, and second, Turkey is not a "safe third country" in which refugees can be deported.²⁴¹

In another article published on February 13, 2016, the writers claimed that Merkel's plan depended on the willingness of the Turkish police to stop the human traffickers. They recalled at the same time Erdoğan's words, “We can open the Greek and Bulgarian border gates at any time and put the refugees on buses,” which were said during Erdoğan's meeting with President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and President of the European Council Donald Tusk.²⁴²

Even just after six days before reaching an agreement with Turkey, *Der Spiegel* continued to contribute to the discussion from a critical perspective. In the article named “stooped posture,” Mathieu von Rohr started his article with a very clear sub-heading: “Merkel's refugee policy strengthens the authoritarianism of Turkish President Erdoğan.” In addition to that, he announced Erdoğan as the biggest winner of the EU special summit regarding the refugee issue because Erdoğan was likely to get almost everything he wanted, like billions of euros to care for the refugees, the EU accession talks, and the visa-free regime for Turkish citizens. Apart from that, the EU would refrain from criticizing Erdoğan for his undemocratic behaviors. He believed that a few days before the summit, Erdoğan purposefully made operation against the country's biggest newspaper *Zaman* and wanted to repeal the immunity of deputies of the pro-Kurdish party HDP. Also, von Rohr made it clear that Erdoğan would not accept the releasement verdict of the Constitutional Court regarding Can Dündar, the editor-in-chief of the government-critical newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, who had been previously imprisoned. Also, he asked that with which right the EU could criticize the restriction of freedom of the press in countries like Hungary or Putin's "managed democracy" after this immoral stance. In addition to the moral perspective, von Rohr

²⁴¹ Giorgos Christides, et al., “Und raus bist du,” *Der Spiegel*, February 6, 2016, 84-86.

²⁴² Horand Knaup, et al., “Der Riss,” *Der Spiegel*, February 13, 2016, 18-20.

emphasized the practical consequences of this deal for Turkey, such as weakening of the opposition in Turkey, enabling Erdoğan to change the constitution, weakening democratic institutions, and rekindling the conflict with the PKK. Therefore, he concluded that this deal would help Erdoğan further destabilize his own country and the region. From the European side, he asserted an agreement with Turkey would not be a sustainable solution and only give the European heads of government a temporary relief because it was still uncertain whether the deal would work as hoped, whether refugees would really be deterred from crossing the Aegean Sea, whether Europe would carry out mass deportations even though they contradict the Geneva Refugee Convention, whether the reception of Syrian refugees from Turkey would work and whether migrants would in the future use the route through Libya and the Mediterranean. In the final analysis, von Rohr asserted Europeans were becoming dependent on Turkey because they could not agree on solutions that they could decide on their own. Therefore, the EU should act more self-confident, and by setting strict conditions including respect for the freedom of the press and human rights, it should prevent Erdoğan create a victory from this deal ²⁴³

A deal with Turkey regarding the illegal refugee problem was discussed by FAZ from many different perspectives as well. In one of the early articles named “Turkey is part of the problem,” Michael Martens agreed with the idea that solving the problem without help from Turkey was not possible. However, he asserted, a deal that required Turkey’s readmission of illegal refugees in return for financial help from the EU would not change the absolute determination of refugees to leave the country for Europe because Turkey could not give them a life perspective both legally and practically. In this respect, Turkey’s legal regulations to give official asylum seeker status only to European refugees, the difficult and “partly inhumane” living condition of Syrian refugees outside of the refugee camps, and the unclear regulations of Turkish labor laws regarding the refugees forced those people to create a life perspective in another country. Moreover, Martens added, Erdoğan had been lately not a reliable partner for Europeans, and on top of that, with “war-like conditions” against Kurds in

²⁴³ Mathieu von Rohr, “Gebückte Haltung,” *Der Spiegel*, March 12, 2016, 6.

the Southeastern Anatolia, Turkey would even provoke its own refugee waves. Therefore, Martens proposed that before negotiations about issues such as more border controls or readmission deal, whether Turkey was prepared to become an immigration country should be asked in the first step.²⁴⁴

Nikolas Busse, similarly, questioned Turkey's willingness to stop refugees for the EU by quoting Turkish Prime Minister Davutoğlu's words that Turkey could not guarantee to prevent illegal passages because it was still not clear how the situation in Syria would develop. Accordingly, he suggested Germany as well as the other EU officials for not setting too high hopes on Turkey. At the same time, he evaluated Turkey's requirement of three billion Euros as a worthwhile investment since this money would be spent on education and health services for the refugees, which was one of the main reasons why they wanted to move to Europe. Furthermore, Turkey's other requirement, the revival of the EU accession process, was seen as a small concession. Eventually, Busse believed, Turkey is in reality far from a real accession prospect, and without a solution to the Cyprus conflict, the membership would be impossible as well. On the other hand, the misusing possibility of the visa-free travel program by Turkish citizens was assessed by Busse as a dangerous element, which the EU should keep in mind.²⁴⁵

In that period, foreign policy editor of FAZ, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, contributed the discussion with many articles, in which he evaluated the issue more from a realpolitik perspective. In one of those early articles published on October 5, for instance, he defended that in order to solve the crisis that shook the European politics and society very deeply, all possible requirements from Turkey should be discussed without taboo, such as financial aid, visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, restraint from criticizing Turkey's Kurdish politics and other internal developments, the EU negotiations or a joint action in Syria. Otherwise, as the worst-case scenario, the EU would be obliged to use military means in the region.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Michael Martens, "Die Türkei ist Teil des Problems," *FAZ*, September 28, 2015, 1.

²⁴⁵ Nikolas Busse, "Auf der Suche nach einer Lastenteilung," *FAZ*, December 1, 2015, 1.

²⁴⁶ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, "An der Außengrenze," *FAZ*, October 5, 2015, 1.

Similarly, in another article, he called the refugee crisis as “perhaps the hardest test in the history of the European Union” and to solve it before it was spread in the continent and became a legally, politically, and morally more challenging issue, the EU should make necessary offers to Erdoğan, who hold one of the keys to cope with the crisis.²⁴⁷

Unlike his early articles, on the other hand, Frankenberger embraced a more critical approach towards the EU-Turkey deal in the next months. In his two articles from March 2016, for example, he wrote Ankara demanded a lot for his help in the Aegean Sea, and many questions remained open. For him, especially questions like which country would take how many Syrians from Turkey, would all EU members or only a small coalition of willing participates, who would select the resettles, or where would this selection take place were still not answered. Also, he believed it was still early to see whether Turkey is a safe third country, especially when considering internal developments in Turkey. Therefore, he concluded in the end; it is too early to celebrate the deal as a breakthrough plan, which would become a turning point and reduce the flow of refugees to Europe. Moreover, he believed, even though the remilitarization of the Kurdish conflict and more authoritarian policies of Erdoğan did not allow trust in Turkey very easily, concluding an agreement that serves the EU interests is possible, only if the EU would not allow being blackmailed by Turkey and would not sweep everything “under the carpet of Realpolitik.”²⁴⁸

Like Frankenberger, critical comments increased in FAZ, especially in February and March. Chief editor Berthold Kohler’s “In honor of Europe” article criticized not only the deal with Turkey but also the unwillingness of the EU countries to share the burden of the crisis. For Kohler, regarding the agreement with Turkey, the willingness of the EU countries to accept a substantial number of refugees from Turkey was the vital element for the success of the agreement, since it was not reasonable to think that Turkey could keep so much burden for a long time. Moreover, he emphasized an additional point that even after the deal and relocation of the refugees,

²⁴⁷ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, “Der große Strom,” *FAZ*, October 24, 2015, 1.

²⁴⁸ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, “Schwieriger Partner Türkei,” *FAZ*, March 8, 2016, 1.

not all problems would be solved because the refugees had not dreamed of living in eastern Poland or northern Romania. It would be later also not possible to prevent them from running on the highways to Germany.²⁴⁹

Similarly, Rainer Hermann wrote a very critical article named “Erdoğan’s Despotism” and explained how the “Erdoğan system” worked. For him, first, Erdoğan appointed a few dozen devoted judges, installed them in the prosecutor's office, and made their sentences indisputable. Also, since Erdoğan liked to declare any opposition as terrorist or spy, he could get them out of the way very smoothly with his judges. In this way, he added, the Erdoğan system leveraged the rule of law and overrode freedom of expression in the country. He concluded in the end, Erdoğan did not seem like a reliable partner for Europe, even if the refugee crisis had made him an indispensable actor.²⁵⁰

Among the three analyzed media outlets, SZ had a relatively more supportive discourse towards a deal with Turkey in late 2015, while many critical comments towards the EU-Turkey deal emerged as well. In one of those early articles, Turkey correspondent Mike Szymanski approached the deal very positively by conforming every side of the deal could benefit from such a plan, especially the refugees that had to risk their lives in inflatable boats on the Mediterranean. However, he believed, because of many historical reasons, there was no mutual trust between Turkey and the EU.²⁵¹

While foreign policy editor of the newspaper Stefan Kornelius agreed in another article that Turkey demanded a high price for the refugee deal, this price would force Germany to follow a new political realism, which could then lead to further domestic conflicts in Germany. Therefore, the real question to be answered at that point was the size of the price that Germany willing to pay in order to know that Turkey is by its side. When particularly the possibility of opening the borders and ignoring the smugglers is considered, Turkey would create new problems to attract EU attention.

²⁴⁹ Berthold Kohler, “Bei der Ehre Europas,” *FAZ*, March 17, 2016, 1.

²⁵⁰ Rainer Hermann, “Erdogans Willkür,” *FAZ*, March, 7, 2016, 10.

²⁵¹ Mike Szymanski, “Nötiger denn je,” *SZ*, October 5, 2015, 4.

In this position, he claimed, Germany could either refuse this “cynical game” and continue to take refugees or follow a rational refugee policy by financing and caring for the camps, distributing refugee quotas to the EU states, and curbing the smuggling. As the price of the second scenario was visa-free travel for Turkish citizens as well as the recognition of Turkey as a safe third country despite the political instability in Turkey, Kornelius advised that Merkel should keep in mind that in no way Germany should be in a position that strengthens Erdoğan in coming elections. Also, she should clearly express that Turkey needs to end the political repression and reconciliation with the Kurds before declaring Turkey as a safe third country.²⁵²

In another article named “no stinginess” from October 2015, Daniel Brössler argued the EU should not forget the European values just in order to satisfy Erdoğan’s recommendations, but at the same time, this deal should not fail just because of the money, as three billion Euros would not be too high for real relief in Europe.²⁵³

Similarly, in late 2015, the deal was discussed by Stefan Ulrich from a perspective of realpolitik- EU values dichotomy. For Ulrich, the conflict between pragmatism and principles often challenged the West, not only in the refugee deal but also in relations with many other countries such as China, Russia, Iran, or African states because Western countries should deal with the autocrats. In this situation, they must find proper ways to deal with them, in most cases, based on common interests. At the same time, the EU should not easily sacrifice its values, should keep its distance to autocrats, and should continue to demand human and civil rights. Otherwise, the EU would make itself untrustworthy and would lose its self-esteem. Therefore, he concluded, although Turkey under Erdoğan was in danger of reverting to an authoritarian state instead of moving closer to the EU, it was necessary to keep Europe’s door open to Turkey, as long as some red lines were drawn.²⁵⁴

Unlike his one of the early articles from October 5, Mike Szymanski wrote two months later that since Europe was driven by the refugee crisis and fear of terror, it

²⁵² Stefan Kornelius, “Europa als Bittsteller,” *SZ*, October 14, 2015, 4.

²⁵³ Daniel Brössler, “Kein Geiz,” *SZ*, October 17, 2015, 4.

²⁵⁴ Stefan Ulrich, “In einer schmutzigen Welt,” *SZ*, November 5, 2015, 4.

rewarded recent policies of Erdoğan, which were actually incompatible with the EU standards, especially regarding the freedom of the press and Kurdish conflict issues. Therefore, pretending Turkey was a normal democracy and offering a visa-free regime for Turkish citizens, along with three billion Euros, was seen by Szymanski as a very high price. He asserted, on the other hand, the price Europe should pay was too high not because of three billion Euros, but because the EU overlooked the Turkish citizens who were unwilling to endure human and fundamental rights violations.²⁵⁵

Luisa Seeling discussed the issue after a meeting between the EU and Turkey on November 29, in which acceptance of 250.000 refugees from Turkey and distribution within a willing core group was proposed. As a response, she saw the plan risky and quite overbearing for Turkey since the majority of Turks considered the remaining more than 2 million Syrians as a burden and a security risk. For her, without social acceptance, it would be impossible to integrate those people into Turkish society. Moreover, the Turkish government, she believed, stuck to the illusion that the Syrians would soon return to their homeland and the government instrumentalized the refugees to put pressure on its Western partners. On top of that, it could not sufficiently protect the maritime borders and stop smugglers. Despite all, she clarified that it would still be fair and reasonable to relieve Turkey financially and by accepting a reasonable number of refugees.²⁵⁶

Stefan Ulrich's more recent article published just before reaching the agreement questioned the plan both from theoretical and practical perspectives. According to Ulrich, Merkel's argument that the EU should agree with Turkey to stop the illegal migration to Greece by returning refugees who get there and by taking refugees directly from Turkey seemed theoretically reasonable because it could block the smuggling business on the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, he believed there were some reasons why it would fail in practice. First of all, according to international law, Greece would have to accept asylum applications of arriving people and decide after that who could be returned to Turkey. However, in reality, this would quickly

²⁵⁵ Mike Szymanski, "Europa macht sich mickrig," *SZ*, December, 2, 2015, 4.

²⁵⁶ Luisa Seeling, "Hinten, weit, in der Türkei..." *SZ*, January 1, 2016, 4.

overwhelm the Greek administrations. EU's taking those responsibilities from Greece by sending its own staff could be rejected by Greece by virtue of interference in its sovereignty. Even if this plan succeeded, Ulrich saw the reliability of Turkey very questionable because Erdoğan could use the deal to pressurize the European Union. Besides, Ulrich regarded it quite unlikely that refugees would just sit and wait in Turkey for a quota in Europe. Instead, they most probably would search for alternative routes to reach Europe like Italy or Libya. Therefore, he called for a politically and morally acceptable solution, which could only be reached by accepting it as a common task for Europe. Otherwise, after reaching Germany's maximum limits to accept refugees, hundreds of thousands of refugees would be trapped in countries like Greece and Italy, probably in terrible conditions. This situation could cause, he concluded, many incalculable consequences for the entire European Union.²⁵⁷

4.2. Frame Elements of the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal

Unsurprisingly, the media frame of the German newspapers about such a vital domestic and foreign issue was very solid and fully developed. Nevertheless, since causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and particularly proposing a straightforward solution for this complex issue required careful consideration of many domestic and international actors as well as many unexpected developments at the same time, the elite media institutions used in this period various political and social perspectives.

In terms of the problem definition function, all three media institutions saw the partnership with Turkey and the content of the refugee agreement problematic. Chancellor Merkel was named as the main responsible actor behind this agreement, and the lack of a joint European refugee policy was also noticed in the dominant media frame as a part of this problem.

²⁵⁷ Stefan Ulrich, "Die Zeit läuft aus," SZ, March 11, 2016, 4.

The second frame function - causal interpretation - drew attention to the causes of the refugee deal as well its possible negative consequences not only for Germany but also for the whole continent. About the causes of the problem, all the European leaders, including Merkel, were criticized because they failed to establish credible mechanisms to prevent the enormous refugee wave before it became a crisis. Since, in most cases, the primary aim of the refugees was reaching Germany one way or another, the negative consequences of the deal were mostly associated with Germany.

The vast majority of the published articles opposed this plan, and they grounded the moral evaluation of the media frames on many different problematical issues with Turkey. First, the elite media considered President Erdoğan an unreliable partner for the EU since he might use this deal for blackmailing the EU by threatening to open Turkish borders for the refugees. Second, due to this dependency on Erdoğan, the European leaders may shut their eyes to human and fundamental rights violations in Turkey. Third, the elite media argued that the political tension in Turkey made the “safe third country” status of Turkey questionable. Fourth, this deal could strengthen authoritarianism in Turkey since the EU provided a substantial financial resource for Turkey, allowed visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, and opened a new accession chapter. In addition to the issues related to Turkey, the disputed characteristic of the deal in terms of international law resulted in the clear opposition of the media frame against the agreement.

The last frame function, treat recommendation, was established on the idea of a comprehensive European solution. The elite media emphasized that the deal is a precarious and an ineffective solution attempt. Therefore, the member states should not sacrifice all fundamental European values and norms for such a risky, temporary agreement. Instead, they should come together and find a joint European solution. Also, the EU leaders should not ignore the political instability and increasing authoritarianism in Turkey for a refugee deal, since Turkey was still an EU candidate country.

When the frame variables are considered, the spreading of the dominant media frame was generally challenging for the elite media. On the one hand, the refugee crisis

influenced the majority of the ordinary German citizens and the feeling of insecurity among Germans, which originated from the incidents involved by the refugees, forced German decision-makers to find a solution at any cost. This situation thus became a substantial obstacle for the spreading of the elite media frame, which argued that a deal with Turkey is not the right way for the solution. On the other hand, the argument of the elite media that the EU became overly dependent on Erdoğan in the refugee crisis and it disregarded all its humanitarian values and standards in exchange for the refugee deal found support from the public opinion since the protection of these values had always been an essential element of the German foreign policy culture. Therefore, it can be said that the dominant media frame in this period, which opposed a joint solution with Turkey, was congruent with the German political culture, but the feeling of insecurity and need for restoring public order did not allow the media frame to be a dominant political factor.

Concerning the motivation variable, the elite media approached the deal mostly in terms of the relations with Turkey. Also, it assumed a prominent defender role of European values and norms by emphasizing the increasing authoritarianism and human rights violations in Turkey. At the same time, the media promoted a permanent European mechanism for refugees encouraged the European governments for that purpose. Therefore, the elite media performed in this case, an apparent watchdog motivation.

4.3. German Foreign Policy and the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal

As mentioned earlier, the problem of illegal migration to the European countries has been, for a long time, perceived as a crisis for the southern coastal EU states, mostly for Greece, Italy, and Spain. With the Lampedusa boat tragedy in 2013, the issue attracted for the first time remarkable attention. However, especially after the rapidly worsening political situation and the outbreak of a civil war in Syria, the third Merkel cabinet, in which Frank-Walter Steinmeier served as the foreign minister, had

to face one of the biggest political crises in the history of the European Union. At the first stage of the crisis, Chancellor Merkel's decision to open Germany's borders for refugees from Syria without consulting any cabinet or party member triggered many intense discussions both in the government parties, in the parliament, and among public opinion.²⁵⁸

In this politically unstable environment, Merkel tried to stand behind her decision in the sense of European moral values and sometimes of the Christian responsibility. Also, her famous "*Wir schaffen das*" (We can do it) discourse received a mixed response from German society. However, mass sexual harassment incidents involved by refugees during the 2016 New Year's Eve forced Merkel to change her "open-door" policy and find a rapid "European solution" against the refugee problem.

In the same period, the German public expressed its dissatisfaction with the ongoing Merkel administration. While during the seven months between August 2015 and March 2016, the ruling CDU/CSU faction lost 7 percent of its popular support in the election polls, only half of the population backed Merkel's refugee policy.²⁵⁹ Also, the possibility of an increase in the number of illegal refugees with the end of winter and the reopening of illegal smuggling ways in the Aegean Sea revealed the urgent need for a joint solution with Turkey.²⁶⁰

Although a joint solution with Turkey had already been discussed before the incidents in mid-2015, Chancellor Merkel mentioned for the first time in her interview with journalist Anne Will the importance of Turkey for the protection of EU's external borders.²⁶¹ For Merkel, Turkey was playing a "key role" in this situation, since most

²⁵⁸ Robin Alexander, *Die Getriebenen: Merkel und die Flüchtlingspolitik: Report aus dem Innern der Macht* (Munich: Siedler, 2017), 11-61.

²⁵⁹ "Politbarometer März 2016," *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen*, March 18, 2016, https://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Umfragen/Politbarometer/Archiv/Politbarometer_2016/Maerz_2016/

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 178-188.

²⁶¹ Naemi Goldapp, "Angela Merkel bei Anne Will – 'Ich habe einen Plan,'" *Welt Online*, October 7, 2015, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article147353050/Angela-Merkel-bei-Anne-Will-Ich-habe-einen-Plan.html>.

civil war refugees who come to Europe travel via Turkey and the EU would not be able to order and stem the refugee movement without working together with Turkey.²⁶²

As it was named “Merkel Plan” in the first place, this new refugee policy was created as a German initiative, in consequence of the failing EU plan to relocate 160,000 refugees from Italy and Greece. It involved three principles: the regulated acceptance of refugees from Turkey, providing financial aid, and visa-free travel for Turkish citizens.²⁶³ In order to adopt this policy with the participation of the other EU member states, Chancellor Merkel wanted to transform the “Merkel-Plan” into a “European Plan” with the approval of the other EU countries. At this point, the holder of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, participated in the process to realize this aim at the European level.²⁶⁴ In fact, with the support of Rutte, Merkel led the negotiations phases and even conducted private talks with Turkey without informing European Council president Donald Tusk and other EU leaders.²⁶⁵ However, contrary to the expectations of Merkel, this plan was backed by only several EU countries as it was clear for others that Europe's agreement with Turkey was actually a “German agreement.”²⁶⁶

As mentioned above, issues such as Turkey’s being unreliable partner, dependency on Erdoğan, human rights violations in the country, compliance of the deal with the international refugee law, Turkey’s disputable “safe third country” status or visa liberalization for Turkish citizens as the cost of the deal were heavily criticized

²⁶² Paul Carrel and Michael Nienaber, “Merkel says Turkey key to solving Europe's refugee crisis,” *Reuters*, October 15, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany-turkey/merkel-says-turkey-key-to-solving-europes-refugee-crisis-idUSKCN0S90N520151015>.

²⁶³ Gerald Knaus, “Ein Plan B für Merkel,” *SZ Online*, January 22, 2016, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/aussenansicht-ein-plan-b-fuer-merkel-1.2828636>.

²⁶⁴ Alexander, *Die Getriebenen*, 205-211.

²⁶⁵ Vanessa Thorpe, “When Angela Merkel upset Donald Tusk over immigration,” *The Guardian Online*, February 10, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/10/tusk-merkel-immigration-bbc-documentary>.

²⁶⁶ Daniel Brössler, “Deutschland - einsam in Europa,” *SZ Online*, January 20, 2016, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/fluechtlinge-einsam-in-europa-1.2826362>.

by the politicians from the government, the opposition parties, and the media. Moreover, the vast majority of the German public (79 percent) doubted that Turkey would be a reliable partner for the EU in refugee policy, and only 27 percent supported a joint solution with Turkey.²⁶⁷ Despite all these strong oppositions, the German government followed its initial plan since, as the German Minister of Interior Wolfgang Schäuble confirmed, this plan was needed for Germany at any cost.²⁶⁸

In the end, as a response to the German government's request before reaching an agreement, Turkey's decisions to issue a special work permit for Syrians in Turkey and to impose visa for people coming from Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq showed in that period Turkey's increasing cooperation willingness with Germany concerning the refugees in Turkey.²⁶⁹ Finally, the EU and Turkey agreed on a joint plan on March 6, 2016, and the deal formally came into effect on March 20.

4.4. Conclusion

The third chapter of the dissertation analyzed the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement as a short-term, directly involved foreign policy decision. Even though this deal was concluded between the leaders of the EU countries and Turkish Prime Minister Davutoğlu in the March 2016 European Council meeting, Chancellor Merkel played, without a doubt, a pivotal role in this process, as the leader of Europe's most affected country by the refugee crisis. In fact, in the days after she decided to open German borders for refugees from Syria, Chancellor Merkel had to face not only parliamentary opposition but also conflicts with her coalition partners as well as intra-party disputes. Moreover, the German public also showed evident dissatisfaction with the refugee policy of Merkel.

²⁶⁷ "Politbarometer März 2016," Forschungsgruppe Wahlen.

²⁶⁸ Alexander, *Die Getriebenen*, 216.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

In this politically unstable environment, Chancellor Merkel designated Germany's refugee policy, including both the decision of opening borders and the EU-Turkey deal, without consulting her European partners and the German parliament. Even though the German elite media did not categorically reject the government's refugee policy, they openly denied a joint solution with Turkey. The conducted frame analysis demonstrated that especially the lack of a common EU refugee policy, Turkey's controversial relations with the EU, too much dependence on Turkey, and the possibility of supporting Erdoğan through this deal were strongly represented in the media. As a result, the media preferred a stable "European solution." Despite this solid media frame, the elite media had no evident effect on Merkel's decision on the EU-Turkey joint solution against the refugee crisis.

In terms of the neoclassical realist perspective, the "leader images" intervening variable explains best the German foreign policy choices in this period. In other words, the core values, beliefs, and policy perceptions of the foreign policy executive appeared as the most decisive determinant. As the foreign policy analysis showed above, Chancellor Merkel's perception of the crisis and the belief in Turkey's key role in preventing illegal entries at the EU borders resulted in Merkel's personal political struggle to finalize an agreement with Turkey.

5. Case Study 4: 2013 Gezi Park Protests

5.1. German Elite Media Frame about the 2013 Gezi Park Protests

As a weekly news magazine, *Der Spiegel* could report this one of the largest mass protest waves in the history of modern Turkey first in its issue published on June 10. Therefore, in order to see how *Der Spiegel* perceived the protests at the first stage, an additional three articles from the “*Spiegel Online*” website were added to the frame analysis. Correspondingly, the first article relating the demonstrations was written by Maximilian Popp and Oliver Trenkamp on May 31, which saw the protests as a “civil revolt against state despotism and police violence.” The authors first explained that peaceful environmentalist protests became a massive demonstration against the authoritarian style of the Erdogan government in a short time, and the police reacted protesters very harshly with water cannons and tear gas. Moreover, they reminded that before these protests, students protesting tuition fees were arrested, journalists criticizing the government was suspected of terrorism, which caused more journalists in prison than any other country in the world, and the parliament decided to banish alcohol virtually. For the writers, all those developments actually brought liberals, leftists, and seculars together in these protests.²⁷⁰

The next day, likewise, Popp and Trenkamp described the events as “Turkish spring” by referring protests against Al-Mubarak in Egypt, and they noted the uprising against Erdoğan’s increasingly authoritarian and neo-liberal policies was also supported in German cities like Berlin and Köln with solidarity rallies.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Maximilian Popp and Oliver Trenkamp, “Mit Knüppeln gegen die Wutbürger vom Gezi Park,” *Spiegel Online*, May 31, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/polizeigewalt-in-istanbul-a-903173.html>.

²⁷¹ Maximilian Popp and Oliver Trenkamp, “Türkischer Frühling,” *Spiegel Online*, June 1, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/aufstand-gegen-premier-erdogan-tuerkischer-fruehling-in-istanbul-a-903257.html>.

On the following day, once again, Turkey correspondent Maximilian Popp quoted President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz's condemnation to police action as "totally inappropriate" and U.S. Department of State's demand for "guarantees of freedom of expression and assembly."²⁷²

The first article in the printed version of the magazine was published on June 10 and focused on press freedom in Turkey. In this article, Michael Sontheimer mentioned again nowhere in the world there were more journalists in jail than in Turkey, and this was, in fact, an embarrassing world record for an EU-candidate country.²⁷³

In another article named "the freedom of others" in the same issue, Steinvorth described the protests as the rebellion of youth, who was fed up with Islamic philistinism and wanted to decide how they live on their own. Also, he emphasized Erdoğan's ignorance of several calls from the United States and the European Union, as well as the urging of American Secretary of State John Kerry and German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle to have a moderate stance against the protesters.²⁷⁴

In the next issue of *Der Spiegel*, two articles were published regarding the Gezi Park protests. The first one from Özlem Gezer focused on many different personal stories of protesters to show how people with different social identities such as Kurds, anti-capitalist Muslims, socialists, feminists, or football club supporters came together.²⁷⁵ In addition to that, Steinvorth, with his article "Rambo from Kasimpaşa," pointed Erdoğan's on-going polarization policy between "we," the oppressed, the religious, the simple, and "they," the oppressors, the decadents, also the Europeans, the financial markets, and the "interest lobby."²⁷⁶

²⁷² Maximilian Popp, "Revolt gegen den Sultan von Ankara," *Spiegel Online*, June 2, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/revolte-in-der-tuerkei-machtkampf-auf-der-strasse-und-in-der-partei-a-903315.html>.

²⁷³ Michael Sontheimer, "Alle haben Angst" *Der Spiegel*, June 10, 2013, 136-138. sayfalar

²⁷⁴ Daniel Steinvorth, "Die Freiheit der anderen," *Der Spiegel*, June 10, 2013, 88-89.

²⁷⁵ Özlem Gezer, "Labor der Demokratie," *Der Spiegel*, June 17, 2013, 84-85.

²⁷⁶ Daniel Steinvorth, "Der Rambo aus Kasimpaşa," *Der Spiegel*, June 17, 2013, 82-83.

The cover topic of *Der Spiegel*'s next issue was Gezi Park itself. While on the cover page of the issue, a woman was pictured, who holds a banner inscribed with the words "do not bow down" (*Boyun Eğme – Beugt euch nicht*) both in Turkish and German, a ten pages special chapter in the Turkish language was also added to the magazine. As an explanation, the magazine shared that a title story was also published in Turkish for the first time, not because the almost three million German-Turks lack German language skills, but to give a message that what happens in Turkey are all about Germans, Turks, and Europeans. Steinvorth and Zand's article after this explanation touched on the subject in terms of the extreme polarization in Turkish society between the progressive, urban, Europe-oriented part of the society and the conservative, rural, deeply Islam-driven part of the society. In addition to that, the authors remembered that during Erdogan's first term, when an overwhelming pro-European majority supported him, it seemed that a pluralistic democracy was emerging in Turkey. Although the EU opened accession talks with Turkey thanks to these developments, the current incidents in the country refuted this decision of the EU. At the same time, the authors referred in their article to German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle's statement that the reaction to the protests was not very European, especially regarding the extremely sharp political rhetoric. Moreover, the article added Westerwelle's claim that who sees himself as part of the European community and its values should not perceive peace protests as a threat but should defend them. As a response to these comments, the magazine also quoted Turkish EU Minister Egemen Bağış's recommendation that Merkel should withdraw their concerns from Turkey's EU accession process until the next Monday; otherwise, it would have consequences for Germany.²⁷⁷

The Gezi Park protests were mentioned in the opinion pages of the FAZ first time by Michael Martens on June 3, with his "the call of Turkey" article. Martens analyzed the protests in terms of Erdoğan's increasing authoritarianism and its damage to Erdoğan's reputation in the region. Moreover, he noted the early announcement of

²⁷⁷ Daniel Steinvorth and Bernhard Zand, "Weiße Türken, schwarze Türken," *Der Spiegel*, June 24, 2013, 78-85.

the Turkish Ministry of the Interior for a comprehensive investigation of the excessive use of force against protesters.²⁷⁸

In the next day, Hermann compared the demonstrations in Istanbul with Arab Spring protests in Cairo and argued that the Turkish protests were not directed against a regime, but only against the charismatic, confrontational, authoritarian Erdoğan. Also, he claimed Erdoğan was not a dictator, but a democratically elected head of government, who would presumably win every election on that day. On the other hand, for Hermann, these protests showed that in Turkey, a vibrant civil society had grown, which could be no longer dictated from above. Thus, Erdogan should learn that democracy does not measure itself by what it brings to the majority, but also by how it deals with the minorities.²⁷⁹

Klaus Dieter Frankenberger's short comment on June 11 criticized police officers' use of excessive force to end the protests and Erdoğan's intolerance to environmental protest and civil disobedience. Considering the increasing authoritarianism, he described the EU's plan to opening a new chapter in the accession negotiations as a quite ignorant action.²⁸⁰

In the next day, Busse and Martens drew attention to the crackdown by the Turkish government on demonstrators in Istanbul and rising of significant criticisms in many European capitals, which could lead to the EU not opening another chapter in the accession negotiations with Turkey at the end of the month, as it was planned before. Similarly, while the newspaper quoted Foreign Minister Westerwelle's words that the Ankara government sent the wrong signal to its own country and also to Europe with their reaction to the protests so far, Chancellor Merkel's demand of constructive talks by the prudence of all sides was remembered by the writers. Moreover, a call from Socialist Group leader in the European Parliament, Hannes Swoboda, for opening two additional negotiation chapters to talk about freedom of expression in Turkey more intensively was noted by the writers as well. Regarding the skeptical German attitude,

²⁷⁸ Michael Martens, "Der Ruf der Türkei," *FAZ*, June 3, 2013, 1.

²⁷⁹ Rainer Hermann, "Aufstand gegen Erdogan," *FAZ*, June 4, 2013, 1.

²⁸⁰ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, "Geräumt," *FAZ*, June 12, 2013, 8.

they concluded, the accession conference scheduled for June 26 was seriously under risk.²⁸¹

In his article “Erdoğan has the choice,” one of the editors of the FAZ, Günther Nonnenmacher, claimed that the way that Erdoğan deals with the protesters in Gezi Park and the way he overcomes and ends this political crisis would decide the future path of Turkey. For Nonnenmacher, the exemplary role of Turkey for the Arab world could only be successful when social and political progress could follow economic growth. If Erdoğan did not follow this path, on the other hand, Europe’s connection with an authoritarian-Islamic regime in Ankara would eventually come to an end.²⁸²

Michael Martens’s article, published on June 17, approached the statements of Erdoğan towards protesters very carefully and called the way the Turkish police used tear gas and water cannons as embarrassing action for a state whose rulers still claim to seek the EU membership. According to Martens, with those actions, Erdoğan either lost or scared many of its allies in Europe these days. Therefore, he argued, Erdoğan’s condemnation to the cautious resolution by the European Parliament on the events in Turkey and his claim that the EU interfered in the domestic affairs of the country could only be profited by the opponents of Turkey’s EU accession.²⁸³

Nonnenmacher’s other article, published nine days before the EU meeting, drew attention to the unnecessary of discussion over Turkey’s EU membership at that time. He believed that it was shocking to see how the police used disproportionate force against protesters in Gezi Park and also it was terrifying and treacherous which formulations were used by Prime Minister Erdoğan to legitimize the actions such as “terrorists” claims, which was used by Assad as well to justify his war against the armed opposition in Syria. Moreover, he emphasized how Erdoğan’s claims of “interference in the domestic affairs” about the resolution of the EU parliament were senseless since Turkey’s wish to become an official member means that the EU should

²⁸¹ Michael Martens and Nikolas Busse, “Westerwelle sieht Beitrittsgespräche mit der Türkei gefährdet,” *FAZ*, June 13, 2013, 1.

²⁸² Günther Nonnenmacher, “Erdoğan hat die Wahl,” *FAZ*, June 14, 2013, 1.

²⁸³ Michael Martens, “Erdoğan’s Pyrrhussieg,” *FAZ*, June 17, 2013, 1.

permanently interfere in the domestic affairs of all member states in order to comply with common legal norms and civilizational standards. In that situation, he questioned the continuation of accession negotiations with Ankara and the opening of new accession chapters.²⁸⁴

Frankenberger, after a couple of days, recalled Turkish EU Minister Egemen Bağış's blaming of Merkel for interfering in Turkish domestic politics and his words that if Merkel used the membership issue for her election campaign, her end would be like former French president Nicolas Sarkozy. In response to this, he stated that the Turkish understanding of politics was totally incompatible with European practice, and therefore it would be a mistake to think Turkey would "central-Europeanize" itself when it became the EU member.²⁸⁵

Along the same line, Reiner Hermann argued in the article "on different paths" that whether or not the EU would open a new negotiating chapter with Turkey in the oncoming meeting would change little about the situation in Turkey because both sides did not have any interest in the long-term full membership perspective for Turkey. Especially in this time period, Turkey did nothing to even appear as a willing country to meet the European democracy standards. Therefore, Hermann believed that, if the Turkish government had a real interest to open a chapter, it could show this intention alone with the way it treated demonstrations in the country.²⁸⁶

The first opinion article in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* concerning the Gezi Park protests emerged one day after FAZ on June 4. In this article, Christiane Schlötzer analyzed the brutality of the Turkish police force and Erdoğan's policy of polarization in the society, which provoked anger and counter-violence at this first stage.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Günther Nonnenmacher, "Gegen die Wand," *FAZ*, June 18, 2013, 1.

²⁸⁵ Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, "Das alte Lied," *FAZ*, June 22, 2013, 10.

²⁸⁶ Rainer Hermann, "Auf anderen Wegen," *FAZ*, June 25, 2013, 8.

²⁸⁷ Christiane Schlötzer, "Diener seiner Macht," *SZ*, June 4, 2013, 4.

Three days after this article, she pointed out that the protest movement in Turkey was young, party-free, and consisted of people from various identities such as Armenians, Kurds, Turks, Alevis, and Sunnis all together.²⁸⁸

Schlötzer's third article, "Atatürk and Sultan at the same time," covered the protests from a historical perspective on June 10. In her article, she asserted that Atatürk created an authoritarian state to break the Ottoman tradition radically and to create a new nation-state. However, while Erdoğan also used the centralist, authoritarian system that created by Kemalists, Erdoğan had not decided whether he wanted to be a second Atatürk or a sultan until his last policy decisions showed his ties with the Ottoman history.²⁸⁹

After those series of articles from Schlötzer, in his article "Last Stop Autocracy," Stefan Kornelius suggested that although the fear of Islamization marked his ten-year reign, the Gezi Park protests made it clear that not Islam but the power itself attracted Erdoğan. For him, the once pious democrat became an autocrat over the years, and he reminded Erdoğan's word from the past that democracy was like a train, and when it arrived at the station, you could get off. In the final analysis, Kornelius asked whether the democracy train in Turkey reached the end station for Erdoğan. As an answer, he claimed that there was no space for democracy and respect for other opinions in Erdoğan's world because, at the most critical moment in his reign, Erdoğan decided to become an autocrat, and protests and dissenter opinions were met with tear gas and police forces.²⁹⁰

The first article concerning the results of the protests on the EU-Turkey relations came from Martin Winter. Winter claimed first that the "warlike attack of the Turkish police on the protesters in Istanbul" made it clear that believing in the idea of coming together with Turkey at the accession table was both political blindness and a sin against the democrats in Turkey, who were fighting for their freedom. For him, the protests showed that it was an illusion of the EU that hugging authoritarian Turkey

²⁸⁸ Christiane Schlötzer, "Reif für eine neue Partei," *SZ*, June 7, 2013, 4.

²⁸⁹ Christiane Schlötzer, "Atatürk und Sultan zugleich," *SZ*, June 6, 2013, 4.

²⁹⁰ Stefan Kornelius, "Endstation Autokratie," *SZ*, June 6, 2013, 4.

hard enough could get it on the right path. Also, although the military was overthrown, the Kemalist establishment was smashed, and the Turkish economy boomed in the last ten years, state pressure on the independent media and minorities reached a dangerous level in the same period. Therefore, he proposed the EU should stop being too naïve and ignorant about the severe democratic deficits of Turkey and should focus on more serious subjects such as justice, human and minority rights, instead of losing time in minor accession issues such as the regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.²⁹¹

Christiane Schlötzer's other article, "Gezi Generation, needs the EU" from June 24, similarly focused on EU-Turkey relations. According to Schlötzer, the fate of the democracy movement would be decided not only in Istanbul but also in the conference halls in Brussels and Berlin. For her, so many appeals, letters, and requests from the European politicians caused a fear in Turkey that the "European sanctions" would hit the wrong people. Besides, she believed that it would be wrong to simply claim that Turkey did not belong to Europe and would never belong to it; therefore, any effort of further negotiations was unnecessary. She argued; instead, the EU should open justice and fundamental rights capitals with Turkey and should not let Turkey move away from Europe since the permanent conflict in the EU-Turkey relations would only deteriorate the situation in Turkey.²⁹²

In his article "reasonable answer," Stefan Kornelius claimed likewise that even if neither the Turkish government nor the majority of EU states considered Turkey's accession to the EU very seriously, it would be foolish to cut all ties since both sides had mutual interests. Despite this, Kornelius saw Turkish EU Minister Bağış's threatening that the German government should give up its reservations until the EU meeting; otherwise, it would have consequences for Germany, as an unacceptable threat, which aimed to intervene in German politics. Therefore, he asserted that the federal government must respond and, in this context, freezing the negotiations until the violence against protesters ended would be a reasonable answer. Furthermore,

²⁹¹ Martin Winter, "Ende der Samtpfötigkeit," *SZ*, June 17, 2013, 4.

²⁹² Christiane Schlötzer, "Die Generation Gezi braucht die EU," *SZ*, June 24, 2013, 4.

when the negotiations started again, crucial issues such as the rule of law, justice, and human rights should be brought to the table.²⁹³

5.2. Frame Elements of the Gezi Park Protests

When the issue was considered from the framing perspective, the media frame was fully developed in this period. In terms of the problem definition, the elite media saw the Turkish government's response to protests with disproportionate use of police force as the key problem. Besides that, the general responses of Germany and the EU against the incidents were defined as a secondary problem.

In the causal interpretation function of the elite media frame, the Turkish government and especially Prime Minister Erdoğan, was presented as the major responsible actor behind the incidents. As the cause of the problem, the German elite media counted Erdoğan's greater tendency to authoritarianism, intolerance against any dissent towards his way of conducting politics, and accordingly, increasing polarization strategy between his supporters and opponents.

The elite media made its moral evaluation based mostly on Erdoğan's responses to the protests. Within this context, all three media institutions openly and strongly opposed Erdoğan's methods of managing the incidents. For the elite media, the heavy-handed police response was not only the representation of Erdoğan's despotism, but it also transformed peaceful protest over a small park into a massive unrest wave against the government across the country. On the other hand, all three media institutions had a very supportive stance towards the protesters from the very beginning to the end of the protests. This support was based on the characteristics of the protesters. In that sense, the protesters were depicted as youths of the modern side

²⁹³ Stefan Kornelius, "Angemessene Antwort," SZ, June 25, 2013, 4.

of Turkey from various ethnic, religious, and ideological groups coming together to defend their fundamental rights against an anti-democratic government.

Regarding the proposals for German decision-makers, both freezing Turkey's EU accession process and intensifying the negotiations with more critical negotiation chapters were equally discussed before the EU Council meeting. For advocates of freezing the accession process, the response of the Turkish government to peaceful protests showed that Turkey was at that moment not compatible with European democracy standards. Also, continuing accession negotiations with the Turkish government could create an image that the EU ignores the incidents in Turkey. Therefore, the negotiations should not continue at that time, and when it started again, more crucial issues than the regional policies should come to the table. According to the advocates of intensifying the negotiations with Turkey by opening a new chapter, the EU leaders should open a new accession chapter, but they should quickly extend the negotiations to issues like justice and human rights as well. Thereby, the EU would show its support to the other part of Turkey.

The media frame during the protests was utterly congruent with the political culture, as the protesters were described as progressive, urban, and Europe-oriented youth who protest the authoritarian regime in the country with peaceful protests. Accordingly, the media established a stronger bond with the protesters, who fight for their democratic rights, and the German public, which is generally very sensitive regarding democratic rights. In addition to that, frequently reported brutal police responses strengthened this sensitivity bond.

Correspondingly, media motivation was, in that case, not being merely the watchdog of government policies. Instead, the elite media extraordinarily engaged in the incidents and sided with the protesters. In that way, the elite media established a successfully spread, solid media frame, and forced the German government to take action as soon as possible.

5.3. German Foreign Policy and the Gezi Park Protests

Defined as “the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world” in Article 1 of German Basic Law, Germany’s commitment to human rights is not limited to its domestic politics. On the contrary, it is the basic tenet of German foreign policy that obliged Germany to be the global champion of human rights protection across the world. In addition to this moral and legal obligation, Germany’s foreign trade-oriented national interests support this leading role as well, since the protection of the human dignity is one of the significant factors behind the sustained development and economic prosperity.²⁹⁴ Therefore, any human rights problems that emerge in one of Germany’s closely linked partners like Turkey, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran, Morocco, and Indonesia attract the attention of German politics and public opinion similarly. However, human rights violations in these countries are particularly criticized on a case-by-case basis, and severe political pressure is generally not considered by the German government since economic and security interests have mostly gained priority over human rights engagements.²⁹⁵

Among those partner countries, Turkey has, without a doubt, a unique position because, unlike the other example countries, the protection of fundamental rights is a vital element in Turkey’s EU accession negotiations. When considered from this perspective, the influence of the fundamental rights on Turkey’s EU accession negotiations became evident during the 2013 Gezi Park protests.

Since during his presidential term French President Nicolas Sarkozy vetoed many negotiation chapters, the EU-Turkey relations were almost completely frozen in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Moreover, the ongoing European debt crisis dominated

²⁹⁴ Federal Foreign Office, “Human rights – a cornerstone of German foreign policy,” *Foreign & European Policy*, last modified December 10, 2018, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/menschenrechte/-/229074>.

²⁹⁵ Wolfgang S. Heinz, “Menschenrechtspolitik,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Aussenpolitik*, ed. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 698-699.

the political agenda in the EU, and the European decision-makers did not even consider any possible enlargement project in this period. Accordingly, the number of public and political discussions on Turkey was severely diminished in Germany during those years.

When after the 2012 French Presidential election, Socialist Party candidate François Hollande became the President, he decided to withdraw the French veto on the chapters of Turkey's EU accession negotiations starting from the Chapter 22, "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments."²⁹⁶ In line with her primary strategy in Turkey's EU talks, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also supported publicly the opening of a new chapter in order to move forward in negotiations, while she kept her overall skepticism about Turkey's final EU membership.²⁹⁷ After a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu on May 12, 2013, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle also demonstrated Germany's open support by saying that "We want to overcome the standstill in the membership negotiations" and "there is a realistic chance for progress" in Turkey's EU negotiations.²⁹⁸

In addition to that, in May 2012, European Union Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle and the Turkish Minister for European Affairs and Chief EU negotiator Egemen Bağış launched the "Positive Agenda" process to "bring fresh dynamics and a new momentum" into the EU-Turkey relations. According to this new initiative, both Turkey and the EU decided to put more efforts concerning the reforms in the areas such as the alignment with the EU legislation, fundamental rights, visa, mobility, migration, trade, energy, counter-

²⁹⁶ "Liebesgrüße aus Paris," *Der Spiegel*, February 18, 2013, 80.

²⁹⁷ Ebru Turhan, "Europe's crises, Germany's leadership and Turkey's EU accession process," *CESifo Forum* 17, no.2 (2016): 27.

²⁹⁸ "German Foreign Minister Westerwelle backs talks for Turkey EU bid," *Deutsche Welle*, May 12, 2013, <https://p.dw.com/p/18WYg>.

terrorism, and dialogue on foreign policy, especially after the end of rotating EU Presidency of Cyprus in December 2012.²⁹⁹

Within this context, it was decided during the Turkey-European Union Association Council, just one day before the beginning of the Gezi Park protests on May 27, that Chapter 22 would be opened before the end of the Irish rotating Presidency in July 2013.³⁰⁰ Within this context, all these developments showed that both Turkey and the EU leaders were ready to open a new chapter in this period. Similarly, Chancellor Merkel and her government were also in favor of reviving the de facto frozen negotiation talks.

Although the protests in Gezi Park emerged on May 28, the German government waited until June 3 to show its initial reaction concerning the protests and the response of the Turkish government. In his first comments on the incidents, the spokesperson of the government, Steffen Seibert, stated that Chancellor Merkel followed the police crackdown on the protesters with concern. In addition to that, when asked how Merkel assessed the situation in Turkey, Seibert mentioned her call for de-escalation and dialogue. Also, he emphasized that at that moment, he did not see any impact of protests on EU accession talks with Turkey.³⁰¹

After the increasing tension in Turkey in the following days, Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle described the images from Turkey as “disturbing” and reminded that “the Turkish government is sending the wrong message to the country and to Europe with its response to date to the protests.” Also, he suggested Prime Minister

²⁹⁹ European Commission, *Positive EU-Turkey agenda launched in Ankara* (Brussels: European Commission, 2012), [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-12-359 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-359_en.htm).

³⁰⁰ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Press Release Regarding the 51st Meeting of the Turkey-European Union Association Council* (Ankara: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-153_-27-may-2013_-51-press-release-regarding-the-meeting-of-the-association-council.en.mfa.

³⁰¹ “Botschaft der Proteste ist verstanden worden,” *Spiegel Online*, June 6, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/tuerkischer-praesident-guel-zu-protesten-in-istanbul-a-903476.html>.

Erdoğan “to de-escalate the situation in the spirit of European values and initiate constructive exchange and peaceful dialogue.”³⁰²

During those days, the co-chair of the German Green Party, Claudia Roth, joined the protests in Istanbul as an observer and was severely affected by the tear gas fired by police forces. After the incident, Roth called the German government for a harsh response to the Erdoğan government, like the other political parties in the German parliament.³⁰³ A number of German artists, film and theater directors, actors, and authors also called on Chancellor Merkel in an open letter, with a message “Please do not watch,” to work with the other European leaders to move the Turkish government to end the violence against protesters.³⁰⁴

On June 17, after seriously violent images from Turkey, Chancellor Merkel made a statement that she was "shocked, like many other people" by the horrible images and asserted that developments in Turkey did not reflect European understanding of freedom of demonstration and freedom of expression. Against the implications of protests over the EU-Turkey relations, on the other hand, she did not comment, unlike the leader of the Christian Social Union and Minister-President of Bavaria, Horst Seehofer, who said, "I can only speak for myself: We are against Turkey's full membership... and I believe that the pictures and information we have received in recent days only serve to support this further."³⁰⁵

³⁰² “Germany's Westerstelle urges Turkish change of tack,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 12, 2013, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-westerwelle-urges-turkish-change-of-tack/a-16876491>.

³⁰³ Claudia Roth, "Diese staatliche Gewalt ist nicht die Türkei," interview by Lenz Jacobsen, *Zeit Online*, June 16, 2013, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2013-06/claudia-roth-traenengas-interview/komplettansicht>.

³⁰⁴ “Erdogan schart seine Anhänger um sich,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 16, 2013, <https://p.dw.com/p/18qsT>.

³⁰⁵ “Merkel 'shocked' by Turkish response to demonstrations,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 17, 2013, <https://www.dw.com/en/merkel-shocked-by-turkish-response-to-demonstrations/a-16887172>.

At the same time, Chancellor Merkel's "unusually clear" engagement in the crisis, as another influential weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* argued, caused a strong reaction from the Turkish side.³⁰⁶ As a response to Merkel, Turkish EU Minister Egemen Bağış made a very harsh criticism by saying, "if Ms. Merkel is looking for domestic political material for her elections, that material should not be Turkey." He also added, "if Ms. Merkel takes a closer look, she will see that those who mess about with Turkey do not find an auspicious end." On June 21, the German government showed once again its clear stance by summoning the Turkish ambassador over sharp criticism from Bağış just four days before the EU meeting. On the same day, the head of the parliamentary group of CDU, Volker Kauder, claimed that the EU accession negotiations would have to be suspended if the Turkish government deployed its military against the protesters. Against many political debates over whether Turkey's EU negotiations should be continued, Foreign Minister Westerwelle emphasized that "this issue has not yet been decided."³⁰⁷

In this context, the elite media institutions approached the issue very intensively by proposing, on the one hand, ending or freezing Turkey's EU negotiation process and, on the other hand, by intensifying the negotiations, including the opening of "justice and fundamental rights" chapter. While in those days, the strong media attention to the incidents reached its peak, particularly with *Der Spiegel*'s special issue in the Turkish language, the media frame, along with the images of brutal police attacks, aroused in German public an evident sympathy for the demonstrators.³⁰⁸

A Politbarometer survey, published by the ZDF channel on June 28, reflected negative views in the German society concerning Turkey's EU accession as well. In that sense, interviews conducted over the period between June 25 and 27 showed that

³⁰⁶ "Merkel erschrocken über türkischen Polizeieinsatz," *Zeit Online*, June 17, 2013,

<https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2013-06/merkel-tuerkei-kritik>.

³⁰⁷ "Berlin Summons Turkish Ambassador over Merkel Criticism," *Spiegel Online*, June 21, 2013,

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/harsh-criticism-of-merkel-berlin-summons-turkish-ambassador-a-907122.html>.

³⁰⁸ Alexander, *Die Getriebenen*, 203.

a clear majority of German voters (68 percent) with majorities among each party supporters were against Turkey's admission to the EU.³⁰⁹

Along with these two developments, the oncoming German federal election, which was set on September 22, forced the German government into reacting to the incidents in Turkey and into finding alternative ways to prevent any political message, which seems to support the Turkish government against the protesters.³¹⁰ At the same time, in line with Germany's general Turkey strategy, the government wanted to maintain Turkey's EU accession process.

Accordingly, the meeting of Foreign Minister Westerwelle and his Turkish counterpart Davutoğlu just before taking the final decision concerning the fate of the accession chapter was another considerable development in the process. Finally, despite concerns from some EU countries, the German proposal to postpone the opening of Chapter 22 until the release of the EU's annual progress report about Turkey in October was accepted by the EU states. While after this decision, Davutoğlu emphasized that the important issue was the opening of Chapter 22, and with this decision, "this matter is over," Westerwelle said it was a "good decision in a difficult situation."³¹¹ In an interview after a couple of days, Westerwelle also explained the intended message with this decision as:

"Europe has a strategic interest in closer ties with Turkey. The EU has therefore given the go-ahead for accession negotiations to be continued. We even want to accelerate the talks about the rule of law and democracy, which are core issues. At the same time, we couldn't ignore the events of the last few weeks.

³⁰⁹ "Politbarometer Juni II 2013," *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen*, June 28, 2013,

https://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Umfragen/Politbarometer/Archiv/Politbarometer_2013/Juni_II_2013/

³¹⁰ "Merkel'in zor kararı," *Deutsche Welle Turkish*, June 23, 2013, <https://p.dw.com/p/18udn>.

³¹¹ "EU delays accession talks with Turkey, path still open," *Deutsche Welle*, June 25, 2013, <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-delays-accession-talks-with-turkey-path-still-open/a-16906721>.

It's therefore only right to wait for the European Commission's annual progress report. On that basis, we can then tackle the next steps in the autumn."³¹²

At the same time, especially Sweden and Britain criticized the German government for postponing the negotiations until after the federal election in September and for turning Turkish EU membership into "a political football in German elections."³¹³ In the end, along with the German proposal, the European Commission issued Turkey's annual progress report on October 19, and despite severe criticisms from the EU concerning Gezi park protests in this report, Chapter 22 was officially opened on November 5.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented a short-term indirectly involved foreign policy case in German-Turkish relations, the 2013 Gezi Park protests. These protests emerged initially as a small-scale protest against an urban development project, which covers one of the smallest parks in the district just near to Istanbul's Taksim Square. Within a couple of days, the protests transformed into vast waves of demonstrations and civil unrest throughout the whole country like never before in the history of modern Turkey.

Even though, as a close partner country and an EU candidate, any significant political development in Turkey gets a reaction from the German government very quickly, simultaneous political developments in Turkey's EU accession process following a couple of stagnant years transformed the protests into a more complicated

³¹² Federal Foreign Office, "We hope Turkey has the courage to continue along the path of democratization," *News & Service*, July 07, 2013, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/130707-bm-huerriyet/256602>.

³¹³ Bruno Waterfield, "EU delays Turkish membership talks amid protests," *The Telegraph*, June 25, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10141579/EU-delays-Turkish-membership-talks-amid-protests.html>.

issue for the German decision-makers. On the one hand, after the removal of the French veto, the EU countries decided to intensify the EU-Turkey relations by launching a “Positive Agenda” initiative and opening a new accession chapter. On the other hand, initial news and images from Turkey earned considerable attention among the German media institutions. Especially development such as Green Party leader Claudia Roth’s personal involvement in the protests and the frequent and intensive coverage of the incidents in the media, as well as Der Spiegel’s special Gezi-Park volume with a special supplement in the Turkish language, raised substantial public awareness.

As the media analysis demonstrated above, the German elite media covered the protests in Turkey very extensively. In terms of the framing concept, the elite media frame was fully developed with a clear statement of problems and responsible actors, apparent support for protesters, and policy recommendations for the German government. The congruence of the media frame with the German political culture was identically very strong. However, media motivation, in this case, was much more than just monitoring government policies. On the contrary, intensive coverage and active support of the elite media guided the public opinion and, at the same time, forced the German government to demonstrate its opposition to the Turkish government.

On the first days of the protests, the German government called for dialogue between the government and the protesters. Nevertheless, after rapidly increasing public and media interests in Germany, Chancellor Merkel referred to the protests and police responses in Turkey as “shocking” and “horrible” in the following days. At this stage, the German decision-makers worried about being in a supportive position to the Turkish government due to the coincidence of the protests with the EU meeting regarding Turkey’s opening new accession chapter.

In this politically complicated situation, the German foreign policy executives decided to veto the opening of a new accession chapter. In fact, the German government blocked for the first time the opening of a negotiation chapter in Turkey’s long-lasting EU accession process. As the words of Foreign Minister Westerwelle clearly demonstrated, this decision of Germany was not a radical shift in Germany’s

Turkey policy concerning the EU membership. Instead, it was a message mostly for the German public to show Germany's discontent with the Turkish government's approach to the protesters. At the same time, taking the final decision after consulting with Turkey and postponing the negotiations until right after the German federal elections showed that this short-term, indirectly involved foreign policy decision of Germany was considerably influenced by the media pressure and the public opinion.

6. Conclusion

The final chapter of the dissertation concludes the main findings of the research from the media frames and neoclassical foreign policy analysis perspectives. In the introduction chapter, this project addressed three main research questions:

- What were the media frames used by the German newspapers to represent the image of Turkey concerning Turkey's EU accession process, the Kurdish problem, the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal, and the Gezi Park protests?
- When and how these media frames influenced foreign policy preferences of German decision-makers toward Turkey?
- What were the roles of "time periods" and "levels of foreign policy involvement" dimensions on the neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis?

In order to answer these research questions with the main findings of the dissertation, the conclusion chapter is divided into two parts. The first part covers the media frame used by the German elite media to frame four problematical issues in German-Turkish relations in terms of Robert Entman's framing approach. The second part contains final considerations on neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis, Entman's cascading activation model, and German foreign policy decisions towards Turkey. Finally, the potential for further research is discussed in the conclusion chapter.

6.1. German Media Frames about Turkey

In this dissertation, American scholar Robert M. Entman's framing concept was benefited to explain the functions of the media frames in political issues. According to this concept, a media frame may have four main functions: defining a problem, putting a causal interpretation, assessing the problem morally, and finally

providing a solution proposal. While all these four functions may affect the strength of media frames, it is not enough to create a dominant media frame that challenges the foreign policy decisions of foreign policy executives. For that purpose, cultural congruence and motivations are the most useful variables that play a crucial role in the spreading of a dominant counter-frame in society.

According to the conducted media frame analysis based on the Entman's framing approach, the first analyzed case concluded that Turkey's EU membership was a very controversial issue in terms of its political, social, economic, and cultural impacts on the EU as an organization and the Europeanness as an identity. A notable feature of this issue was, without a doubt, the changing security perceptions across the world with the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, as a Western-oriented country with a majority Muslim population, Turkey's position in the future of Europe dominated the foreign policy discussions in the early 2000s. In the eyes of the German elite media, Turkey was neither politically nor economically could meet the EU requirements. Moreover, cultural and religious differences made Turkey an unfavorable candidate for the EU. Within this context, the media frame was fully developed and clearly against the beginning of accession negotiations with Turkey. Despite all these negative evaluations, however, Turkey's ambition to join the EU by strengthening democracy and developing its economy was appreciated by the elite media.

The second examined case, the Kurdish question, was indirectly related to German politics. Therefore, this problem did not regularly attract German media attention. Still, in line with the German strategic culture, the sensibility of the German media and the German public opinion about the fundamental human rights and non-violent solutions of conflicts were two main elements of Turkey's image concerning the Kurdish problem. Accordingly, significant steps taken by the Turkish government towards the peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem influenced the German media frame until 2015 quite positively. Nevertheless, the framing analysis demonstrated that with the end of the peace negotiations and re-escalating military operations in 2015 and at the same time active contribution of the Kurdish armed groups to the fight against ISIS in Syria and Iraq deteriorated the German media frame towards Turkey regarding the Kurdish problem.

The third analyzed case was the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Deal. As one of the deepest political crises in the history of the EU, these unexpected refugee waves influenced Germany very deeply. Against rapidly increasing political and social uncertainties in Germany and other EU countries, Chancellor Merkel's response was reaching an agreement with Turkey and stopping mass refugee waves at the EU's external borders. As the media analysis showed, however, the German elite media created a negative media frame about Turkey, and mainly President Erdoğan was considered as an inappropriate partner for the EU. Also, Erdoğan and his authoritarian tendencies were considered as a potential threat to the EU. Accordingly, any solution plan with Turkey was assessed as a temporary and ineffective attempt.

The last case analyzed in this dissertation was the 2013 Taksim Gezi Park protests. Even though these massive protests were not directly connected with Germany, they became a controversial subject in Germany in a short time thanks to the extraordinary interest and frequent coverage of the German media, and the traditional moral sensibility of the German public about human rights violations. Within this perspective, the media framed two contrasting Turkey images in this case. The protests as a call from Western-minded, progressive, new generation of Turkey for more democracy were described against the authoritarian regime of President Erdoğan, which oppresses all kinds of different voices with a brutal police force. Within this framework, the German elite media institutions revealed its apparent support for the protesters in their articles and comments.

When these four cases are combined, this study reached three more comprehensive results by comparing its findings with the previous studies about the Turkey image in the German media.

First, this study showed that each examined case presented a very detailed Turkey analysis. Therefore, unlike previous works that claimed the German news media generally use the same news sources and therefore presented similar arguments, the conducted media analysis demonstrated their coverage was not dependent on the comments of politicians or secondary sources such as international news agencies. On the contrary, each analyzed elite media institution had their special correspondents in

Turkey, and in most cases, they reported directly from the field. Within this context, each media outlet framed their Turkey news from many different perspectives.

Second, the moral evaluation criteria of the German elite media concerning the news from Turkey were generally based on the democracy and human rights issues in the country. In other words, both in the cases of Turkey's EU negotiations, the Kurdish problem, the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal, and the Gezi Park protests, either progress or deficits in human rights and democracy issues were the fundamental elements of the news frames. As an only exception, the Muslim identity and economic development of Turkey were two salient elements of news frames about Turkey's EU membership in the early 2000s.

Third, according to the media analysis, it is hard to reach a general conclusion about the Turkey image in the German media. As it was discussed in the introduction chapter, most of the previous works in the academic literature argued that the German media had mostly negative Turkey image starting from the 1950s until the 2000s. However, in line with the second point above, the media frame about Turkey was not constantly negative. In fact, developments and political initiatives from the Turkish government in the democracy and human rights issues were, most of the time, appreciated and supported by the German elite media. At the same time, when Turkey's democracy or human rights problems increased, the German media coverage became very critical. The most obvious example of this issue was the Kurdish problem. While the German media had mostly criticized Turkey's methods of fighting PKK since the 1980s, even the initial steps towards the peaceful solution of the conflict were considered from a very positive point of view. Similarly, even though the elite media criticized the Turkish government for many other issues as it was experienced in the 2013 Gezi Park protests, it kept its supportive approach towards Turkey regarding the solution process until the end of the peace talks in mid-2015.

6.2. Media Frames and Neoclassical Realist Foreign Policy Analysis

The second part of the conclusion section discusses the influence of the media frames on foreign policy preferences of German decision-makers toward Turkey. For that purpose, the roles of “levels of foreign policy involvement” and “time periods” dimensions on the neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis are included in this section.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the role of the news media in foreign policy decision-making processes remains as *terra incognita* for neoclassical realist scholars. As a more recently developing IR approach, it offers only some hypothetical premises, instead of a detailed media effect analysis. Accordingly, neoclassical realists argued that top-level foreign policy decision-makers might be more willing to consider the expectations of domestic actors when the state is in a low-threat environment, and the cost of this decision is marginal.

Although this general argument provides a useful starting point for further analyses, neoclassical realism does not define the “low” and “high” threat environments. In that case, it is not clear whether it mentions only traditional national security understanding with focusing on military security or non-military ideas like economic security, energy and natural resources security, and environmental security. Therefore, instead of measuring security, this work focused on the foreign policy involvement issue with the following hypothesis: foreign policy executives may be more willing to change their preferences according to expectations from the domestic actors in indirectly involved cases, in other words, when their decision does not have a direct influence on the country either internally or externally.

Besides, it was also hypothesized that it might be easier to influence foreign policy executives in the short run, as long-term foreign policy strategies of governments are generally calculated very carefully and closer to the external influences. Also, neither the media nor the public could maintain their attention for a long time to a foreign policy issue that has practically quite a limited effect on people’s

daily routines. In brief, this thesis summarized that indirectly involved, short-term foreign policy decisions of governments may be more open to the media influence.

After answering the “when” question, the question of “how can the media influence foreign policy decisions?” was the second important issue to clarify. For that purpose, this study utilized from the political communication model of Robert Entman to synthesize the neoclassical realist foreign policy theory with a media influence perspective. Based on his “media frames” approach, Entman’s media-politics model proposes a cascading flow of influence like a real waterfall, which connects different levels in the system: government officials, other influential foreign policy actors, the media, media frames, and the public opinion. According to this model, foreign policy executives can easily influence this downward flow of information, as they stand at the top of the waterfall. The media, on the other hand, can influence the decision-makers by contesting the frames of political elites through strong media frames. For Entman’s model, selecting some aspect of a political issue and making them more salient in news texts is the main instrument of the media to create contesting media frames. In this respect, this model puts particular emphasis on shaping public opinion with media messages and creating pressure on decision-makers through strong public opinion.

In successfully spreading of the contesting frames in public, cultural congruence of the news frame plays an important role. With cultural congruence, it is meant that when the media frame complies with the existing political culture of the country, the society may accept it more easily. Therefore, in a case that a political decision that does not comply with the dominant political culture, a counter-media frame may emerge more easily. Moreover, unlike the general motivations of the media, such as having more audiences and generating more revenue, demonstrating governments’ ignorance regarding significant values and norms in the society as well as threats towards those principles may create more influential media frames.

When seen through the prism of neoclassical realism and cascading activation model, the findings of this study showed that in each analyzed case, the dominant political frame was contested by the strong media frames.

As a directly involved, long-term foreign policy case, Turkey's EU candidacy was the first examined case. Despite the fact that the German media was clearly against Turkey's EU candidacy, the German government in this period was not influenced by the intense media frame. On the contrary, the government followed its long-term Turkey strategy based on security threats towards Europe and played a leading role in the EU for Turkey's EU candidacy status.

The second examined case was a long-term, indirectly involved foreign policy issue, the Kurdish problem. Since respecting fundamental human rights and avoiding military conflicts are some of the most vital elements in the German political culture, this issue was occasionally discussed in the German media. However, German foreign policy on this issue was similarly part of the government's long-term strategy and was relatively closed to outside influences.

As a directly involved, short-term foreign policy case, the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal was probably the most intensely discussed issue among these four cases because the seemingly uncontrollable influx of refugees endangered the public security and order feelings in the society. Also, finding a solution to this acute issue with a disputable partner like Turkey raised the discussions to a very high level in the media. However, the strong negative media frame towards Turkey was not followed by the German decision-makers, and they concluded a solution plan with Turkey, which was drawn at the very top level of the German administration.

The last case analyzed in this study was the only one in which observing a media effect was expected, according to the main hypothesis of the dissertation. Gezi Park protests in Turkey against the Erdoğan government, in that case, was a short-term political crisis in which Germany engaged with concerns for human rights violations and disproportionate use of force against the protesters in a key partner country. About this political issue, a culturally congruent, solid media frame was constructed by the elite media, and the salience of the incidents had tremendously increased in a very short time. Accordingly, the German government decided to apply a temporary veto to Turkey's EU accession process and gave a message to the German public that Germany did not support the Turkish government. Relating to the political cost issue,

this decision of the German government did not produce any intolerable political results. Above all, this decision was taken after consultations with Turkey. Therefore, apart from criticisms from some EU countries that Germany politicized Turkey's EU membership issue in domestic politics, there were no uncalculated political costs. On the contrary, the German government profited domestically from this decision before the federal election as the German media constructed a solid Turkey frame, which rebuked the Erdoğan government and the German public opinion was clearly against Turkey's EU membership.

Taking everything into consideration, the findings of this study confirmed the main hypotheses of the dissertation that media influence on foreign policy decisions is expected in an indirectly involved short-term foreign policy cases. Accordingly, Germany's foreign policy choices towards Turkey's EU membership, the Kurdish problem, and the Refugee Deal were a vital part of Germany's foreign policy strategies, and any radical change or different choice may cause unexpected political results in terms of its domestic or foreign politics. On the other hand, in response to the well-developed German media frame in the Gezi Park case, the "temporary veto" solution of the German government emerged as a message for the German public as a result of the media frame, which was shaped by the German elite media by making the issue salient in the news productions.

6.3. Implications for Future Research

The hypothesis proposed in this study initially aimed to explain the role of the media in German foreign policy decisions. Turkey was chosen for analysis due to two primary reasons. At the multilateral level, Turkey, as a NATO member and an EU candidate state, shares with Germany many common political, social, and security interests. At the bilateral level, on the other hand, Turkish immigrants in Germany as the largest immigrant community in the country and intense trade relations between the two states added another dimension to German-Turkish relations. Therefore,

Germany's relations with the key partners of regionally close states, such as the United States, Russia, China, Canada, Ukraine, or non-EU member Balkan states, may be studied with this hypothesis. At the same time, the foreign policy decisions of the EU that were taken under the direct influence of Germany, such as the European debt crisis and the refugee crisis, may be studied in the scope of this hypothesis as well.

At this point, it may be more logical to exclude the bilateral relations of Germany with other EU member countries. Since the EU, as a supranational entity, force the member states to follow formal and procedural relations among them, totally different dynamics and variables should be taken into consideration to analyze these relations. Moreover, the EU member states, particularly Germany, as the driving force of the EU, may ignore its national interest in some cases and act in favor of the union to keep the union together.

As it was mentioned in the scope of the thesis in the introduction chapter, this model of foreign policy-media relations may be applied to countries with similar media systems with Germany, especially in Western and Northern Europe. Above all, because the freedom of the press is a deep tradition in such societies and strongly protected by laws, the media in these countries has its autonomous power vis-à-vis politics. In addition to that, the representation of different ideologies in different media institutions allows the media to participate actively in political processes with more opinions and even with policy proposals, unlike information-oriented commercial journalism, which most generally stands politically at the center.

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APPENDIX A: News Articles

Der Spiegel		
Article Name	Author	Date
Case 1: Turkey's EU membership bid		
Abschied von alten Helden	Editorial	08.01.2001
Folgenschweres Urteil	Editorial	18.06.2001
Video bremst Islamisten-Vormarsch	Editorial	27.08.2001
Putsch der Zivilisten	Bernhard Zand	11.11.2002
Wo endet Europa?	Ralf Beste, Ulrich Deupmann und Horand Knaup	09.12.2002
Obsession Europa	Bernhard Zand	16.02.2004
Pause zur Selbstfindung	Egon Bahr	06.09.2004
„Da sträubt sich etwas“	Ralf Beste, Markus Feldenkirchen, Dirk Koch, Christoph Schult and Gabor Steingart	04.10.2004
Gefahr für Europa	Karl Lehmann	14.12.2004

Case 2: The Kurdish Problem		
Tote Söhne in den Bergen	Daniel Steinvorth	03.03.2008
Angriff am Ararat	Andrea Brandt, Conny Neumann, Marcel Rosenbach and Daniel Steinvorth	14.07.2008
Moschee und Kaserne	Daniel Steinvorth	08.12.2008
Vergiftete Seelen	Daniel Steinvorth	17.08.2009
Schwieriger Erfolg	Editorial	26.10.2009
Der maßlose Reformier	Maximilian Popp	07.12.2011
Intimer Feind	Daniel Steinvorth	28.01.2013
Pastor und Sultan	Ralf Neukirch, Paul Middelhoff, Maximilian Popp, Christoph Schult and Oliver Trenkamp	05.05.2014
Der neue Sultan	Hasnain Kazim and Maximilian Popp	04.08.2014
Das Drama von Kobane	Fiona Ehlers, Katrin Elger, Juliane von Mittelstaedt, Maximilian Popp and Christoph Reuter	13.10.2014
Das verlassene Volk	Ralf Hoppe, Maximilian Popp, Christoph Reuter and Jonathan Stock	27.10.2014
„Ein Schwarm, rasend, schießend“	Christoph Reuter	04.12.2014

Zittern am Bosphorus	Gordon Repinski	01.08.2015
Ein Land im Wahn	Hasnain Kazim, Maximilian Popp und Samiha Shafy	19.09.2015
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Koalition der Unwilligen	Peter Müller, Ralf Neukirch und Andreas Ulrich	05.12.2015
Gefangen im Krieg	Peter Müller, Maximilian Popp and Christoph Schult	30.01.2016
Und raus bist du	Giorgos Christides, Juliane von Mittelstaedt, Peter Müller and Maximilian Popp	06.02.2016
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Atatürk und Sultan zugleich	Christiane Schlötzer	10.06.2013
Endstation Autokratie	Stefan Kornelius	12.06.2013
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Die Generation Gezi braucht die EU	Christiane Schlötzer	24.06.2013
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APPENDIX B: Summary

This dissertation aimed to examine the effects of the German news media on foreign policy decisions of the Federal Government. In the study, relations between Germany and Turkey were examined in terms of the foreign policy engagement of the German government and society in different foreign policy issues as short and long-term problems. The impact of the media on these decisions were assessed through the neoclassical realism and "framing" approach.

This study defined four foreign policy cases according to two changing dimensions: Time period and foreign policy involvement. Based on Germany's multilateral relations with Turkey, Turkey's accession negotiations with the European Union, the Kurdish issue in Turkey, the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement, and the Gezi Park protests that took place in 2013 were selected for the analysis. For the analysis, the leading weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* was used together with the most important elite newspapers in Germany, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

As a result of the media analysis conducted in this context, it was concluded that the influence of the news media on short-term foreign policy decisions, which the German government indirectly involved, was more significant. Although some actors, such as heads of government, foreign ministers, defense and finance ministers, members of parliaments, and foreign policy experts, had gradually more influence than the media in shaping the frames of foreign policy issues, in some limited cases, the media can increase their relative influence against these actors. In cases where the dominant political culture of the country and the fundamental values, norms, and principles of society are open to debate, the media has the opportunity to create a counter-frame against these foreign policy elites through the development of a strong reactionary discourse.

APPENDIX C: Zusammenfassung

Das Ziel dieser Dissertation war es, die Auswirkungen der deutschen Medien auf außenpolitische Entscheidungen der Bundesregierung zu untersuchen. In der Studie sind die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und der Türkei, nach dem außenpolitisches Engagement der deutschen Regierung und der Gesellschaft in verschiedenen Außenpolitische Probleme, als kurz- und langfristigen Probleme untersucht worden. Die Auswirkungen der Medien auf diese Entscheidungen wurden im Rahmen des neoklassischen Realismus und des ‚Framing‘ Ansatzes bewertet.

Diese Studie definierte vier außenpolitische Fälle nach zwei sich ändernden Dimensionen; Zeitspanne und außenpolitisches Engagement. Ausgehend von Deutschlands vielseitige Beziehungen mit der Türkei, die Beitrittsverhandlungen der Türkei mit der Europäischen Union, die Kurdenfrage in der Türkei, EU-Türkei-Flüchtlingsdeal und die in 2013 stattgefundenen Gezi Park Protesten, wurden als die Fälle von dieser Forschung ausgewählt. Für die Analyse wurde das führende wöchentliche Nachrichtenmagazin Der Spiegel zusammen mit den wichtigsten deutschen Elitezeitungen, die Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung und die Süddeutschen Zeitung, verwendet.

Als Ergebnis der in diesem Zusammenhang durchgeführten Medienanalyse wurde der Schluss gezogen, dass der Einfluss der Nachrichtenmedien auf die kurzfristig außenpolitischen Entscheidungen, die die deutsche Regierung indirekt intervenierte, größer war. Obwohl einige Akteure wie Regierungschefs, Außenminister, Verteidigungs- und Finanzminister, Abgeordnete und Außenpolitikexperten allmählich mehr Einfluss als die Medien bei der Gestaltung des Rahmens außenpolitischer Fragen in der Öffentlichkeit hatten, können die Medien in einigen begrenzten Fällen ihren relativen Einfluss gegen diese Akteure verstärken. In einigen Fällen, in denen die vorherrschende politische Kultur des Landes und die grundlegenden Werte, Normen und Prinzipien der Gesellschaft zur Debatte offen stehen, haben die Medien die Möglichkeit, durch die Entwicklung eines starken reaktionären Diskurses einen Gegenrahmen gegen außenpolitischen Eliten zu schaffen.