THE CHANGING WORLD ORDER AND GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ERA OF CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL (2005-2021)

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ABSTRACT

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Europe has left the Cold War period behind without a military clash with the Soviet Union and largely thanks to the policies of openness and re-structuring pursued by Michael Gorbachev, the eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union, witnessed a peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) seized the historic opportunity and moved to end the division of Germany, which has been a hard reality for Germans after World War II. An Agreement called the "4+2 Treaty", signed on 12 September 1990 and entered into force on 15 March 1991, laid the foundations for the re-unified Germany's foreign policy. On the other hand, successive enlargement cycles of NATO and the European Union (EU) have created buffer zones between Germany and its arch-rival Russia. Thanks to these geopolitical changes, Germany has had the luxury of focusing its efforts and resources on its development and reunification with East Germany and advancing and deepening European integration. Over the past decades, the country has

become the most robust economy in Europe and one of the largest in the world. However, many argue that its role and weight in international affairs do not correspond to its economic power. As global political realities have been evolving since the end of the Cold War, Chancellor Angela Merkel, at the helm of Germany for 16 years (2005-2021), has faced and navigated through several crises and challenges by adapting her country's foreign policy to the changing international order.

Keywords: Angela Merkel, European Union, German Foreign Policy, Liberalism, NATO.

ÖZ

DEĞİŞEN DÜNYA DÜZENİ VE
ŞANSÖLYE ANGELA MERKEL DÖNEMİNDE
ALMAN DIŞ POLİTİKASI
(2005-2021)

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Avrupa, Soğuk Savaş dönemini Sovyetler Birliği ile sıcak bir askeri çatışma yaşamadan geride bırakmayı başarmış ve büyük ölçüde Sovyetler Birliği'nin sekizinci ve son lideri Mihail Gorbaçov'un açıklık ve yeniden yapılandırma politikaları sayesinde, Sovyetler Birliği ve Varşova Paktı'nın barışçı bir şekilde sona erdiğini görebilmiştir. O dönemdeki Batı Almanya tarihi fırsatı değerlendirmiş ve Almanya'nın 2. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra ortaya çıkan ve Almanlar için kabul edilmesi zor bir gerçek olan bölünmüşlüğünü sona erdirmek için harekete geçmiştir. "4+2 Antlaşması" olarak bilinen, 12 Eylül 1990 tarihinde imzalanan ve 15 Mart 1991 tarihinde yürürlüğe giren bir anlaşma yeniden birleşmiş Almanya'nın dış politikasının da temellerini belirlemiştir. Diğer taraftan, NATO ve AB'nin art arda gerçekleşen genişleme dalgaları Almanya ile tarihi rakibi Rusya arasında "tampon bölge" olarak da görülebilecek bir coğrafi alan yaratmıştır. Bu jeopolitik değişiklikler sayesinde

Almanya çabalarını ve kaynaklarını ağırlıklı olarak kalkınmasına, Doğu Almanya ile tekrar bütünleşmesine ve Avrupa entegrasyonunu derinleştirmeye yoğunlaştırma imkanına sahip olmuştur. Böylece Almanya son on yıllarda Avrupa'nın en güçlü ekonomisi ve dünyadaki en büyük ekonomilerden biri haline gelmiştir. Ancak çok sayıda uzman, Almanya'nın uluslararası ilişkilerdeki rolünün ve ağırlığının bu ülkenin ekonomik gücüyle uyumlu olmadığını ileri sürmektedirler. Soğuk Savaş'ın bitiminden beri uluslararası siyasi gerçekler değişmeye devam ederken, Almanya'da 16 yıl boyunca (2005-2021) iktidarda bulunan Şansölye Angela Merkel pek çok kriz ve sınamalarla karşı karşıya kalmış ve ülkesinin dış politikasının değişen uluslararası düzene uyumunu sağlayarak bu süreçlerin içinden başarıyla geçmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alman dış politikası, Angela Merkel, Avrupa Birliği, Liberalizm, NATO.

To my dear mother, Fatma Çilkoparan.

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Under the challenging circumstances prevalent in March 2017, I enrolled as a special student in the Department of International Relations of Middle East Technical University (METU), which has led to the status of the registered student in September of the same year and, over time, proven to be the start of a most enjoyable educational experience up until Summer 2022. After completing my courses and finalising my thesis on Europe's Security Challenges and Transatlantic Relations, I graduated from the Master's program on October 4, 2018. In the following week, I found the opportunity to get registered again as a special student to continue my studies at PhD level on international relations focusing on foreign policy analysis and German foreign policy. As a diplomat, who likes German culture and served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, 2012-2015, and as Head of Department at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 2015-2017 in charge of bilateral relations with Germany, I have been following German foreign policy and Chancellor Angela Merkel's foreign policy discourse, orientations and actions very closely. As a result, I decided to focus my research and write my PhD Dissertation on German Foreign Policy in the Era of Chancellor Angela Merkel, also given the changing world order.

Throughout this long process covering five years and encompassing both Master's and PhD studies, the encouragement and support, which I have received from my thesis advisor Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı, have been continued, solid and most helpful. Prof. Bağcı has his unique style as Professor and thesis advisor. He keeps a perfect distance

from his student and neither interferes too much in students' research nor leaves them unguided. It is a delicate balance and hard to achieve. Thanks to this measured distance, I have always enjoyed his guidance and my freedom to determine the scope and substance of my research throughout my studies. So, he deserves a special and heartfelt appreciation for all he has done to encourage and enable me to undertake this enriching and rewarding academic journey.

Together with Prof. Dr. Bağcı, Prof. Dr. Nail Alkan, Hacı Bayram Veli University, Ankara and Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever, METU have also been generous in sharing their academic guidance with me as two other members of my PhD Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). Their feedback on all three sessions of the Committee has enlightened my path and helped me clarify and decide my next steps. Besides the distinguished members of the TAC, who also served as the members of the Thesis Jury, I am also thankful to two other jury members, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Öcal, Erciyes University, Kayseri, and Assoc.Prof. Dr. Zerrin Torun, METU, for their contributions and guidance in concluding this long and challenging process.

I have always wished to get an opportunity to undertake post-graduate studies after I graduated from the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science, University of Ankara, in July 1997. Life is interesting. It presents us with opportunities not precisely when we want them but when the circumstances are most suitable. My opportunity was given to me in February/March 2017, and as I have always believed, investing in education is the best favour that people can do for themselves.

Since my years in primary school, I have always loved reading and writing, I mean, studying and being a student. I have no doubt I will be the same in the years to come as well, maybe not registered in an educational institution, but will remain a student anyways. I have learned to draft academic articles and op-eds on specific issues during my post-graduate studies and published several articles. I will try to continue doing so. I would also hope to be able to write and publish joint articles together with my distinguished professors and friends from Turkey and other countries.

Speaking of my friends, it would be remiss if I did not thank those of them who have taken some time to chat with me on German foreign policy based on my interview questions. In this context, I thank four senior diplomats (three Turkish and one German), who were kind enough to accept my requests for an interview. Their contributions have been so substantive and valuable. Additionally, several renowned and most knowledgeable experts on German foreign policy, who publish interesting and comprehensive articles and research reports, deserve my sincere thanks for being available for interviews and making valuable contributions to my research. I wish to recognise their contributions and share their names as follows: Mr. Ulrich Speck, formerly worked at German Marshall Fund of United States (GMFUS), Ms. Nora Müller, Körber Foundation, Ms. Sophia Besch, Centre for European Reform (CER) and Ms. Jana Puglierin, European Centre on Foreign Relations (ECFR), and Mr. Kristian Brakel, Representative of Heinrich-Böll Foundation in Turkey. I have used their contributions by duly referring to them throughout my Dissertation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDU	Christian Democratic Union Party
CSU	Christian Social Union Party
CW	Cold War
DDR	Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany)
DW	Deutsche Welle
EDF	European Defence Fund
EU	European Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
RF	Russian Federation / Russia
SPD	Social Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
USA/US	United States of America/United States
WTO	World Trade Organization
WW	World War

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Based on the abstract above, the main question, which this dissertation seeks to answer, using the IR theory of liberalism is as follows: “In the era of Chancellor Angela Merkel (2005-2021), in which ways has the international system changed and how has the German foreign policy adapted and responded to these changes, some major international crisis and issues?” To this end, the following sub-questions will also be given attention throughout the dissertation: “Has Chancellor Merkel pursued a foreign policy focussing on values or interests? Has she put economic and trade interests before human rights and freedoms? In other words, has her foreign policy been cosmopolitan or communitarian? How has she tried not to be disadvantaged by Germany’s hard power gap? In which ways and times has she decoupled German foreign policy from those of her countries’ major allies and partners, and why has she done so? Which foreign policy tools and discourses has she preferred? What sort of a legacy in foreign policy has she left to her successor? Do those criticising her in her arguably softer stance towards China and Russia have a point?”

Answers to these questions have been looked for through interviews with prominent diplomats and experts, analysis of countless publications like books, academic and media articles, speeches and statements of people in the position of power and opinion

leaders in their relevant countries and international affairs. Most answers may not appear definitive and conclusive, but so is the very nature of German foreign policy.

Over the decades since World War II and especially after the reunification of two German states in 1991 after the end of the Cold War, Germany has formulated and been implementing a rather *sui generis* (specific to itself) foreign policy. German decision-makers have taken into consideration their country's international obligations and commitments, its domestic political, economic and social realities, expectations of their allies, partners and global public opinion, behavioural pattern required by the European integration process and the EU membership, limits and red lines indicated by their rivals and competitors. These and maybe some other factors have shaped the paradigm and parameters of German foreign policy, as mainly defined through specific contributions of its Chancellors based on their world view and interpretation of what is going on around the world and in which direction the international order is evolving.

The new map of Europe and regional and global geopolitical realities have rendered the 4+2 Treaty partially irrelevant. For instance, the Treaty forbids deployment of nuclear weapons and military presence in today's east Germany, the former Democratic Republic of Germany (DDR). However, following the expansion of NATO, the US security umbrella provided through the Alliance has pushed the Russian security threat away from Germany's eastern border. Relieved by this new reality, Germany has been able to reduce its military expenses significantly and focus

on its domestic affairs, economic development, international trade and European integration.

A senior German diplomat interviewed for this research[1] also underlined that the foreign policy framework, which Germany has had to adhere to since the end of WWII, has been built around certain limitations and constraints. In his view, this framework has led Germany to seek to approach international issues and crises collectively together with the international community, allies and partners, within a multilateral framework and based on legitimacy given by the resolutions of the UN Security Council (UNSC). In other words, as he put it, Germany has not taken untested, adventurous routes but preferred to stay in the mainstream, and this has more or less been the approach that all Chancellors have taken.

Germany has been attributed many adjectives like "Europe's reluctant hegemon", "baffled hegemon", "geo-economic power", "indispensable nation", "uncertain power", so on. Those scholars, who follow closely and focus on German foreign policy, have been quite innovative in defining Germany's foreign policy behaviours. Hanns Maull, Constanze Stelzenmüller, Ulrich Speck and Hans Kundnani take the first places on a list of such scholars. If such a group of scholars can be called as "(informal) German foreign policy community", it can be said that they have been impressively active, creative and productive in recent years/decades. The author of this dissertation

[1] Interviewee 3: A senior retired German diplomat, who has served at several national diplomatic and international positions. Web-based video interview, 15 November 2021

and alike may be considered the would-be members of such a scholarly community joining the centre from the periphery.

Returning to the analysis of German foreign policy, under such descriptions, determinants and realities shaping the country's European and foreign policy, Chancellor Angela Merkel has been at the driving seat of Germany and led its foreign policy for sixteen years between 2005-2021. Even though the Foreign Minister position has been assumed by a member of a junior coalition partner in all her coalition governments, Chancellor Merkel has always been interested and active in defining and implementing Germany's foreign policy. As such, the world has seen her efficiently and actively deal with the EU's internal crisis, conflicts and crises in the EU's immediate neighbourhood like Libya, Ukraine, Syria, and Eastern Mediterranean, or crises or issues of more global nature like climate change, green energy and mass and irregular refugee flows towards Europe.

Chancellor Merkel's active engagement and interest in foreign policy issues and some unexpected or undesired developments like the election of the former US President Donald Trump and his poorly considered and unpredictable approaches and decisions that have affected many outside the US as well have made the Chancellor one of the key and most influential faces in international politics, too. President Trumps' attacks on the very pillars of the liberal institutional international order and the architecture of European security based on collective security concept of the NATO, which bears a continued need for the existence of the Alliance, have got not only Germany but also

other US allies and partners deeply anxious. At such a time, Chancellor Merkel has not shied away from facing this severe challenge and thus had the respect of the European and global public opinion. As a female political leader in a men's world, she has acted decisively and left a lasting impact in many areas. Like any other political leader, she has also been criticised mainly due to her overly cautious decision-making style.

Nora Müller from Körber Foundation, Berlin,[2] said that Chancellor Merkel was confronted with tectonic geopolitical shifts and the need for Europe and Germany to adapt. In her view, the debate about Europe's strategic identity and place in a rapidly changing global order will continue, and although the US remains Europe's closest international partner, Europeans will have to invest more in their own "*Weltpolitikfähigkeit* (the ability to play a role in the world politics)", as former Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker put it.[3] In this speech, delivered in October 2019 and referred to by Müller, Juncker expressed the view that the EU must be more outspoken on sensitive issues like human rights issues in China, but due to obstructive positions of some member states and its decision-making mechanism based on consensus, it often cannot state its view as firmly as it could and should and

[2] Interview with Ms. Nora Müller, Executive Director, International Affairs, Körber Foundation, Berlin. Web-based video interview, 01 December 2021

[3] European Commission. (2019). "Speech by President Juncker at the European Policy Centre Thought Leadership Forum", October 29, 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/de/speech_19_6163 (Retrieved on 21 December 2021)

therefore, consideration must be given to making decisions by the qualified majority at least in some foreign policy areas.

Sophia Besch from Centre for European Reform (CER), Berlin, appears to share this view to some extent. In her opinion, Chancellor Angela Merkel has played critical roles in navigating Germany and the EU through several crises and thus, won a good reputation abroad as "anchor for stability", who was unpretentious. On the other hand, Besch argues, she has given the impression that she has been muddling through without much of a vision and strategy. Besch also subscribes to the view that Chancellor Merkel has shown close attention to and interest in foreign policymaking and implementation, even though Ministers of Foreign Affairs in her four coalition governments have not been from her party (CDU-Christian Democratic Union).[4]

Jana Puglierin, Head of Berlin Office of the European Centre on Foreign Relations (ECFR), pointed out that as for its major foreign policy traditions, Germany is pro-European, pro-transatlantic partnership, and favours and supports multilateralism and rules-based international order.[5] She thinks that these parameters have remained essentially unchanged during the era of Chancellor Angela Merkel. In her view, Germany is well-positioned in the international system, enjoys respect and trust around the world, yet there has been criticism towards Chancellor Merkel about Germany's

[4] Interview with Ms. Sophia Besch, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Reform (CER), Berlin. Web-based video interview, 07 December 2021

[5] Interview with Ms. Jana Puglierin, Head of Berlin Office and Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Web-based video interview, 15 December 2021

strong economic ties with China and Russia despite human rights violations and authoritarian regimes in these countries. As a concrete example, she drew attention to the fact that it is considered by many as a mistake to have developed and constructed the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project with Russia, despite criticism from some other EU member states, particularly Central and Eastern European and Baltic states.

A senior retired Turkish diplomat[6] has the view that that looking at the matter from a different angle, it can be said that the controversial natural gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 could be considered as a new tool for Germany to exert more power and influence in Europe also by boosting its economic competitiveness. In his opinion, to justify the construction of this new pipeline, Germany's well-established political, security and financial institutions have underlined the unreliable nature of the natural gas pipeline running through Ukraine and other potential pipelines that may cross Bulgaria and other Balkan countries. Considering these arguments, he thinks that successive Merkel Governments have defined and implemented energy-related foreign policies accordingly.

Despite Germany's and Chancellor Merkel's transatlantic foreign policy orientation, former US President Donald Trump (Republican) has attacked and heavily criticised the Chancellor because of Germany's general foreign policy parameters and discourses, particularly its security policy and reliance on NATO, but also directly

[6] Interviewee 4: A senior retired Turkish diplomat, who has served at the Turkish Embassy in Berlin during Chancellor Merkel's time. Face-to-face interview, Ankara, 10 February 2022

criticised some of her decisions, as was the case about Merkel's historic decision on accepting a high number of Syrian refugees in 2015. President Trump's pattern of behaviour has been unprecedented in transatlantic relations and rather undiplomatic and got Chancellor Merkel quite upset and disappointed. At some point, she even stated that the time had come for Europeans to consider taking their fate into their hands. A famous picture taken at one of the G7 Summits, when Chancellor Merkel in the company of his like-minded male colleagues was arguing against and trying to persuade the US President Trump, has once again confirmed to the German, European and global public opinion that she could stand up against irrationalities in what could be described as a "men's world". As a result, she has even been named the "Chancellor of the free world"[7], in the face of attacks by President Trump on the rules-based liberal international order.

At this point, it may be helpful to remember that due to its international commitments imposed on Germany after WWII and as a price for its reunification, Germany significantly deviates from the established definition of a "normal" nation-state, so do its foreign policy discourses and behaviours. The main reason for this is that it almost entirely relies on the US to ensure its security vis-a-vis serious external threats like possible aggression from the Russian Federation (to be referred to in this dissertation as Russia or RF). On the other hand, this unusual arrangement has offered significant economic advantages to Germany and eased the European integration process; at the

[7] Karl Vick (with Simon Shuster). (2015). "Person of the Year. Chancellor of the Free World". https://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2015-angela-merkel/ (Retrieved on 07 April 2021)

same time, however, it has given ill-intended US decision-makers like the former President Trump the possibility to criticise, even insult, Germany through undiplomatic manners. Not only President Trump but the US Ambassador Richard Grenell, whom he appointed to Berlin, has made such statements about Germany and the EU that could be interpreted as interference in domestic affairs of the host country.[8] In another context, such inappropriate actions and words could have caused the severe diplomatic crisis and might have led to declaring the Ambassador "persona non grata (unwanted person)". In the case of Germany, however, Chancellor Merkel has kept her calm and constrained her reaction. A similar calm and measured response, which Chancellor Merkel has shown, was regarding the scandal about the US intelligence services tapping into her phone communications.[9] Interestingly, this scandal broke out when the US President was Barack Obama (Democrat) and caused a deep disappointment on the side of Germany and a difficult-to-repair mistrust between the two sides as it is considered quite unusual that an important NATO member treats another ally in such a way.

If the central theme of this dissertation is to be considered in a larger context, it may be helpful to note that since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world order has been moving towards a yet-to-be-defined new shape and

[8] V.v.B. (2018). "Trump's Man in Germany". Economist, 08 June 2018. https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2018/06/08/trumps-man-in-germany (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

[9] SPIEGEL Staff. (2013). "The NSA's Secret Spy Hub in Berlin", Spiegel Online, 27 October 2013. https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/cover-story-how-nsa-spied-on-merkel-cell-phone-from-berlin-embassy-a-930205.html (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

era. It has moved from a bipolar world order to an uncertainty and multipolar order, after going briefly through a period of unipolar order with the unmatched power and massive international interventions led by the USA, particularly in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). The US' behaviour in the international arena has at times pushed the limits of legitimacy because it has not always sought the endorsement of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and bypassed it when it felt uncertain about getting a unanimous blessing of all of its members. This kind of unilateral foreign policy action, which has been poorly coordinated with its allies and partners, has caused difficulties for some of them, including Germany. During Chancellor Merkel's time, the latest example was the disorderly and even chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in Summer 2021.

In terms of assessing Germany's foreign policy under the light of a larger picture of international affairs, Jana Puglierin from ECFR Berlin[10] expressed the view that in the era of Chancellor Angela Merkel, the international order has changed significantly, and Germany, together with the rest of the world, has gone from the age of multilateralism to the age of geopolitical rivalry and power competition. In her view, Chancellor Merkel has navigated in this new era still not only through networks and dialogue but also by way of entanglement with major systemic rivals like China and Russia, by incorporating these states into the Western-dominated multilateral system (for instance, like the inclusion of China into WTO and Russia into G8). The hope, Puglierin argues, was that this kind of inclusions would help turn these rival powers

[10] Interview with Puglierin.

into good partners, based on the Western state model, respecting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, so on. This goal has not been entirely fulfilled, as it was hoped for or planned, she argues, because Russia and China have behaved in their own way, which applies to some extent to Turkey as well. Puglierin thinks that in this new environment, Chancellor Merkel has not changed gears, missed what has been coming and kept, for instance, too a positive view of China. Puglierin argues that Chancellor Merkel has acted that way, because she thought that the world functions so. Yet, in her opinion, Chancellor Merkel was not utopian, but she believed that being constructive and staying engaged in dialogue would serve everyone's interests, but maybe she has put too much emphasis on Germany's economic interests as far as China (and Russia) has been concerned.

Returning to the German foreign policy under the years of Chancellor Merkel, a senior Turkish diplomat interviewed for this research expressed the view that Chancellor Merkel has played critical roles in the European/EU integration process by expanding and deepening it. In his view, after Helmut Kohl, she has made Germany undisputedly a leading power at the EU table and her determined stance has been instrumental in managing the economic and monetary crisis in Greece and ensuring that this country has reformed its economy and its budgetary expenditures. He further argued that even though it acts in close consultation and coordination with France, Germany under Merkel's leadership has become the dominant economic and political power in Europe,

managed to keep the stability, peace and prosperity and risen to a respectable place in the international arena.[11]

John Kornblum, a former US Ambassador in Berlin, describes Germany as the natural leader in Europe thanks to its central position and economic capabilities. On this basis, he argues that U.S. President Biden is aware of this reality and treats Germany as a privileged partner while insulting France as has been seen in the case of establishment of a new grouping in the Indo-Pacific region, which included the UK as well and led to the cancellation of the submarine deal by Australia and decision on procurement of American nuclear submarines. He also underlines another development: Biden Administration has quickly reached a compromise with Germany on the controversial natural gas pipeline, Nord Stream 2, which has been constructed under the Baltic Sea to carry natural gas from Russia directly to Germany. Kornblum's arguments do not end here. He further argues that Germany can be seen as the "third important country on the planet", and regardless of the will and position of its politicians, it is destined to be a "leading global actor".[12] Kornblum's expectations from Germany and its foreign policy appear to be exaggerated, but still, it underlines a common wish that Germany should assume increasing responsibilities in world politics.

[11] Interviewee 2: A senior retired Turkish diplomat, who has served at several national and international positions. Web-based video interview, 27 October 2021.

[12] John Kornblum (2021). "What Does Germany Want?", American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Johns Hopkins University, September 29, 2021. https://www.aicgs.org/2021/09/what-does-germany-want/ (Retrieved on 09 December 2021)

Yet, at the expense of disappointing John Kornblum and those who may share his views and perceptions, Germany does not appear interested in leadership on any level of international relations, let alone hegemony, which can be described as predominance above the level of leadership, by application of various kinds of power. It is like a harmonious and good citizen in the global village, embedded in a larger entity called the European Union and happy to lead a peaceful and wealthy life without being disturbed. So, Germany does not like leading unless it must, because a crisis may be developing in a way that would hurt its national interests and/or its citizens' well-being. This attitude can not necessarily be described as irresponsible. In fact, it seems that Germany does not want to assume the responsibilities that come with leadership. It prefers sharing power and responsibilities within multilateral structures like the UN, EU or NATO. Even those strong calls made by the then senior political leadership of the country for Germany to become more active and to assume more responsibility in international affairs instead of watching the developments like a spectator, at the Munich Security Consensus in 2014, which was later named as "Munich Consensus", could not alter radically Germany's established foreign policy behaviours, discourse and orientations.[13] In this respect, it can be argued that the German foreign policy formulated and implemented by Chancellor Merkel over 16 years has largely corresponded to this established paradigm.

[13] Munich Security Conference (MSC). (2020). "Zeitenwende/Wendezeiten, Special Edition of the Munich Security Report on German Foreign and Security Policy", October 2020. https://securityconference.org/en/publications/msr-special-editions/germany-2020/ (Retrieved on 20 March 2021)

Regarding Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, Kristian Brakel from Heinrich Böll Foundation (Greens)[14] argues that this pipeline running directly from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, for instance, in Greens' view, should not have been constructed in the first place, due to various reasons, like rendering Germany overly dependent on Russian gas and subject to increased political leverage, plus undermining neighbours like Poland and Ukraine. In this respect, he points out that the view of CDU and Chancellor Merkel has been that Germany is not the US, should, therefore, pursue balanced relations with extraordinary powers and continue engaging in dialogue and doing business with Russia (and China), despite this country's aggressive foreign policy and poor human rights records. Brakel argues, however, that under President Putin's rule, Russia does not appear to be a dependable partner, but for several German industries, particularly car industry, Russia still is an important and large market. Brakel also expressed the view that besides Germany's dependence on Russia to satisfy its energy needs, another risk originating from the construction of this gas pipeline is that Ukraine would face the risk of getting blackmailed and pressurised by Russia.

In this regard, referring to specific criticism towards Chancellor Merkel's choices and actions, a senior German diplomat interviewed as part of this research,[15] pointed out the fact that assessment of Chancellor Angela Merkel's foreign policy parameters and performance is a subjective endeavour, because everyone has their opinion about it.

[14] Interview with Mr. Kristian Brakel, Representative of Heinrich Böll Foundation in Istanbul, Turkey. Web-based video interview, 24 January 2022.

[15] Interviewee 3.

He further said that German foreign policy under Chancellor Merkel has been pragmatic, trying to respond to the crisis in the best and most reasonable way possible, instead of pursuing grand visions and theoretical parameters. In this regard, he recalled that Chancellor Merkel has been known for her slow and prudent approaches to crises like the Euro crisis, irregular migration, and took decisions after weighing all pros and cons, without making any big surprises.

A senior Turkish diplomat[16] points out the observation and the view that Chancellor Angela Merkel came from Eastern Germany, therefore was from the outside of the established political system in Western Germany, yet, has adapted to the political environment in the reunified Germany so well and received the approval from the economic, political and security establishment of Western Germany and seized the opportunity to lead Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party and govern the country as its first female Chancellor for 16 years. He also mentioned that due to her background as a science person and partly thanks to the help of her Western German advisors, Chancellor Merkel has quite fast learned the well-established rules of the political game within the German federal system, never questioned these rules and accepted her boundaries within the new political system of the reunified Germany.

In the context of Germany's place and role in Europe, the inconclusive yet interesting debate about Germany's hegemony in Europe is worth considering, too. In this regard, Ulrich Speck explains well why Germany is not becoming Europe's hegemon and

[16] Interviewee 4.

emphasises the fact that German political decision-makers nor the public have the desire or enthusiasm to be a leader in international affairs unless it is necessitated to safeguard German interests, like managing crisis in Europe.[17] Alberto Cunha argues that hegemony in Germany's case refers to excessive predominance in the form of disproportionate and exaggerated influence through the EU bilaterally and the lack of credible attempt to consult with others and included them in crisis decision making.[18] Constanze Stelzenmüller comes up with her definition of "baffled hegemon".[19]

Chancellor Angela Merkel has assumed her position in 2005, at the age of 51, after seven years of SPD (Social Democrat Party)-led governments under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, which caused a severe rupture of transatlantic ties and alliance due to the opposition by the German (and French) government to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.[20]

The nature of transatlantic relations has kept changing primarily due to the foreign policy and security priorities of the next US Administrations. Bilateral US-German

[17] Ulrich Speck. (2012). "Why Germany is not becoming Europe's hegemon", FRIDE, Policy Brief, No. 126, April 2012. https://www.eurasiareview.com/18042012-why-germany-is-not-becoming-europes-hegemon-analysis/ (Retrieved on 12 December 2020)

[18] Alberto Cunha. (2021). "Europe's Hegemon? The Nature of German Power During Europe's Crisis Decade". E-International, 23 August 2021. https://www.e-ir.info/pdf/93668 (Retrieved on 25 September 2021)

[19] Constanze Stelzenmüller. (2019). "Germany: Baffled Hegemon", Brookings, Policy Brief, February 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/research/germany-baffled-hegemon/ (Retrieved on 08 December 2021)

[20] Philip H. Gordon. (2003). "The Crisis in the Alliance", Brookings, 24 February 2003. https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-crisis-in-the-alliance/ (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

ties are particularly important to Germany and any German government because Germany's security depends on its relations and cooperation with the US and its membership in NATO. This relationship denies Germany the opportunity to have its nuclear weapons. It can be argued that the same applies to Turkey as well.

Chancellor Merkel has got on well both with republican and democrat US Presidents, except President Donald Trump, who on some occasions directly targeted and personally criticised Chancellor Merkel, for instance, when she took in Germany a high number of refugees from Syria in 2015/16. Donald Trump has not paid a bilateral official visit even though Chancellor Merkel having visited him in the White House.

President Biden pays attention to mending the bilateral relations which were severely damaged by President Trump, for example, by dropping its sanctions and allowing the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, and the German government is responding to this will. The new German government will likely act in the same way.

While dealing with the German-US relationship, drawing an analogy about Germany's role in international affairs may be interesting. As it has become clear, particularly during President Trump's time and due to unpredictability, that he has brought with himself, the positioning of Germany in international relations, particularly its Western world sphere, appeared like the role of Vice President in the US political system. When the President is healthy and active, the Vice President does not have a significant role or visibility. However, if the President dies or falls sick to the extent that she or he can

perform the duties and responsibilities of the President, then the Vice President steps in to ensure stability and continuity. The important role which Chancellor Merkel has played in transatlantic relations and to some extent, in global affairs during the time of President Trump was somewhat similar to that role of the US Vice President. Because President Trump was not able to deliver what was normally expected of a US President, as his country is known as creator and protector of the liberal international system, Chancellor Merkel at times assumed had to, as much as she could, respond to the expectations and tried to hold together and lead the transatlantic alliance, allies and partners until President Trump is replaced by the next US President, who would hopefully be keen to have strong transatlantic ties, international institutions and multilateral cooperation. Then President Joe Biden got elected in November 2020 and assumed his position in January 2021, which brought a sigh of relief to US' allies and partners in Europe, perhaps with a few exceptions.

Since the end of the Cold Ward, Germany has been managing its relations with the US and Russia in a balanced way. As both countries occupy an important place in German foreign policy, Chancellor Merkel has carefully continued and further developed this policy. Ulrich Speck from German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS) calls this approach the "Merkel doctrine", which is explained in detail under the relevant sections of this dissertation.[21]

[21] Ulrich Speck. (2021). "Merkel's Successor Will Have to Define Germany's Role in a World of Competition", GMFUS, Transatlantic Take, June 23, 2021. https://www.gmfus.org/download/article/14856 (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

Germany has noticed at its early stages the fast economic growth and rise of China in the international system. German scholars like Eberhard Sandschneider (Global Rivals, 2007) and Theo Sommer (China First, 2010) have drawn attention to this fact of international relations and even called the 21st century as the Chinese century. This awareness has helped Germany take a good advantage of Chinese economic development by making significant investments in this country and engaging in extensive commercial relations. This has caused a kind of interdependence between the two countries. As a result, in the case of trade disagreements/wars between the US and China, Chancellor Merkel has positioned Germany as an honest broker and rather than taking side called on the parties to exercise restraint and address their differences through peaceful means including negotiations.

In this regard, it has been widely debated, albeit inconclusively, whether Germany under Merkel's leadership has attached too much priority to its economic interests at the expense of democratic and liberal values and principles. For instance, it is often argued that Chancellor Merkel has made concessions from human rights in favour of strategic interests as showed by the construction of Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, Germany's relations with Egypt, where the current government came to power through a *coup d'etat*, arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which is engaged in a civil war in Yemen, so on. For the Chancellor of a country like Germany, whose economic welfare, political and social stability largely depend on its ability to export, it is not easy to strike a perfect balance between pursuing national interests and advocating for human

rights and fundamental values in a way that would and could satisfy all. Therefore, it seems inevitable that this debate will continue in the post-Merkel era.

On the other hand, Chancellor Merkel has, on some occasions, made a strong emphasis on the necessity of continued efforts to protect and strengthen democracy. Her speech at Harvard University can be considered like a democracy manifesto. She emphasized that "Our individual liberties are not givens. Democracy is not something we can take for granted. Neither is peace, and neither is prosperity".[22]

In the Middle East, even after the Arab Spring, Germany has been following a pragmatic policy without being insistent on democratization. In this regard, it has been cooperating well with the government in Egypt, which seized the power through a *coup d'etat* and the authorities in Saudi Arabia, the approaches and practices of which have nothing to do with democracy. Due to historical reasons, Israel enjoys a privileged priority of German foreign policy. Governments change, come and go in Germany, but this fact of German foreign policy remains unchanged. There is in a sense a unique relationship between Israel and Germany.

Germany has acted differently in the case of Libya and not actively supported the international intervention in this country by abstaining at the UNSC on its Resolution 1973. Later on, though, it has assumed a constructive role in the future of Libya, in the

[22] Christina Pazzanesse. (2019). "Merkel advises graduates: Break the walls that hem you in", The Harvard Gazette, May 30, 2019. https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/05/at-harvard-commencement-merkel-tells-grads-break-the-walls-that-hem-you-in/ (Retrieved on 22 November 2021)

efforts to achieve political compromise in this country and in its reconstruction, by hosting Libya Conferences in Berlin.

Germany has an impressive military industry and arms export. There appears, however, a serious gap between its military industrial capacity and national military capabilities. In fact, Germany keeps an army of modest size and capabilities, even below the maximum capability allowed by the international treaty, which made the reunification of two German states possible. The maximum number of troops has been defined as 180.000, however, in reality this number is barely reached. Conscription has been debated intensively, in the end it was not abolished legally, but its application has been suspended and instead of service in the army, serving in social work has been made possible.[23]

Covid-19/Coronavirus pandemic has posed serious multiple challenges globally without sparing any nation. Some states have performed poorly, some more successfully in their responses to pandemic. Fukuyama argues for instance well-organized states with strong leaderships have performed well regardless of whether they are democratic or authoritarian. He also states that relatively China has gained from the pandemic because, even though it initially covered up the pandemic and

[23] Ken Knight. (2020). "Should Germany bring back compulsory military service?", Deutsche Welle, 07 July 2020. https://www.dw.com/en/bundeswehr-military-conscription/a-54077335 (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

caused its spread globally, it has faced the situation, got it under control relatively rapidly and minimized its impact on its economic activities.[24]

Coronavirus pandemic has also exposed the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of the existing international institutions such as the UN, World Health Organization (WHO), etc. At the beginning of the pandemic, WHO appeared somewhat desperate and unsure of what should be done. Especially the disagreement and friction between the US and China as to the origin and cause of the pandemic appeared to have paralysed WHO. In the later stages of this unprecedented health crisis, WHO started becoming more active particularly in informing the global public. Fukuyama too draws attention to this particular consequence of the pandemic and highlights the relatively efficient actions taken by states as compared to revealed inadequacies of the international organizations.[25] In this context, it can be argued that Germany under Chancellor Merkel's leadership has also to some extent struggled and hesitated between national solutions and the EU-led processes to address the urgent issues such as procurement and administration of vaccines, travel regulations within the EU, so on.

On the basis of this introduction and research question and sub-questions, this Dissertation is built to have six Chapters and their sub-sections.

[24] Francis Fukuyama. (2020). "The Pandemic and Political Order". Foreign Affairs, July/August 2020. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-06-09/pandemic-and-political-order (Retrieved on 12 September 2020)

[25] Ibid. p. 30

Following Chapter 1 - Introduction, it continues with Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework: Liberal Internationalism. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework that explains the formulation and implementation of German foreign policy best, in the opinion of the author. Germany prefers to use soft power and peaceful resolution of conflicts in international relations. German people have over the decades since WWII have developed a strong anti-militarist stance. Germany puts a strong emphasis on maintenance and reinforcement of rules-based international order and multilateralism. It chooses to embed itself in international and regional organizations like the UN and the EU and act together with allies and international community, instead of going alone. Germany has positioned itself, particularly under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, as the mediator in the international system and avoided taking sides with great powers, as has been the case in the competition between the US and China and recommends caution and restraint in handling international disagreements. All these policy parameters and steps can be best explained through the liberal/liberal institutionalist theory.

Chapter 3 – Germany's Foreign Policy Parameters and Orientations builds on this theoretical basis and tries to explain the underlying parameters and discourses that define German foreign policy and determine the ways and methods of its implementation.

Chapter 4 dwells on Chancellor Angela Merkel's Personal Touches on the German Foreign Policy. Despite the fact that she has become the Chancellor of coalition

governments, in which the portfolio of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been assumed by a junior coalition partner, Chancellor Merkel has been able to play an active, visible and decisive role in formulating and implementing the German foreign policy. The fact that she has stayed in power for 16 years has helped her become a most senior and experienced leader in international and European politics, who has gone through a number of severe crises and tough times. Also, the fact that she has grown up in East Germany under the Soviet culture and become a Russian speaker has been very instrumental in handling Germany's and the EU's relations with Russia, a country which has been pursuing assertive, aggressive and irredentist policies in recent years, which has culminated in annexation of Crimea in 2014 and destabilization of eastern regions of Ukraine to keep this country from joining Western institutions like NATO and the EU. Chancellor Merkel's strong attachment to democracy and allegiance to the family of democratic nations and transatlantic ties has allowed her to function as the defender of free, liberal and democratic world, especially during the time of the former US President Donald Trump.

Chapter 5 focuses on Handling of Some Major International Crises and Issues by Merkel Governments. Under this Chapter, conflict in Ukraine and the Crimea Issue, civil war in Syria and irregular migration crisis, international intervention in Libya, Iran Nuclear Deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-JCPOA), Eastern Mediterranean issue, Afghanistan and chaotic end of international intervention are considered. These crisis and major issues in international relations show both continuity and change in German foreign policy formulations, some of which bear a

more visible mark of Chancellor Angela Merkel, as compared to others, which reflect continuity in German foreign policy behaviours.

In an interview to Deutsche Welle in November 2021, Chancellor Merkel has referred to irregular refugee crisis and Covid-19 pandemic as the most difficult crisis of her time as Chancellor. A significant section under Chapter 5 has been devoted to global impact of Covid-19 pandemic and Germany's struggle under her leadership against the pandemic.[26] Therefore, this section is titled as A Last Hurdle Before the Finish Line: Covid-19 Pandemic and Its Global Impact.

At the end of Chapters 2 - 5, there is an interim conclusion section (Chapter Conclusion) and at the very end of the dissertation, there is going to a main Conclusion Chapter drawing upon the entire dissertation.

Conclusion, as Chapter 6, is the last chapter of this dissertation, even though it has not been possible to address each and every research question in a conclusive way. This may allow future researchers to pick up and build upon certain specific areas of Merkel's foreign policy. In fact, Dr. Ahmet Bülbül has done his PhD Dissertation on Germany's Middle East Policy in the Era of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

[26] Max Hoffman and Elizabeth Schumacher. (2021). "Angela Merkel discusses climate change, refugees and legacy in DW interview", Deutsche Welle, November 7, 2021. https://www.dw.com/en/angela-merkel-discusses-climate-change-refugees-and-legacy-in-dw-interview/a-59745332 (Retrieved on 15 November 2021)

This dissertation does not focus in detail on Germany's governmental and institutional policy-making structures and processes as there are PhD dissertations explaining these areas extensively.

As a last point which is intended to make reading of this dissertation easy, it may be useful to note that some of the experts interviewed for this Dissertation have also many publications. In this respect, throughout the text, in case a reference is made to their written publication, the reader will find a footnote at the bottom of that page.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LIBERALISM

2.1. The Changing World Order and Different Views About It

This dissertation is primarily based on the IR theory of liberalism. Liberalism as an IR theory focusses on cooperation among the nations states and believes in its possibility even under the conditions of anarchy. According to liberalism, through democratic mechanisms such as elections and promotion of values and principles like protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, public choices and preferences play an important role in definition of states' foreign policy objectives and behaviours in the international realm. To this end, liberalism aims to curb the tendency of states to resort to violent means to achieve their national interests. In other words, liberalism sees no place for military in inter-state relations and tries to mitigate the risks that can be caused by the use of violent power by states. International institutions are useful tools for liberalism to constrain states and prevent them from using violent means towards one another by showing them that breaking the international law, undermining international peace and security have costs. The current liberal international order was constructed after WWII based on some international institutions and norms, which is also referred to as liberal institutionalism, defining behaviours from the international

actors, first and foremost, states.[27] Germany under the leadership of Chancellor Merkel has spared no efforts to promote and maintain this rules-based liberal international order, which enables Germany to expand its global reach and expand economic and trade ties with others around the world. On this basis, this Dissertation often refers to the concepts like liberal world order, multilateralism, international institutions, cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, democratic and authoritarian regimes, democratic peace theory, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Among the IR theories, liberalism, after realism, is considered one of the oldest and most developed theoretical school under the IR discipline. Its theoretical roots go all the way back to John Locke and Immanuel Kant. It has always had strong advocates and IR scholars who defend and promote the liberal norms and values and adherence to liberal international system.

Liberalism and realism are based on and promote fundamentally different world views. Their interpretation of world events and assumptions about what is possible and what is not in a world system, where anarchy prevails due to the absence of a higher authority over and above the states, differ substantially. Despite a fierce arms race and military build-up on both sides (The Soviet Union and the West/NATO countries), the sudden and unexpected end of the Cold War and the realist theory's plain inability to foresee its end have given liberalism and other theoretical strands under the IR an

[27] Jeffrey W. Meiser. (2018). "Introducing Liberalism in International Relations Theory", E-International, 18 February 2018, p. 1-2. https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/18/introducing-liberalism-in-international-relations-theory/ (Retrieved on 10 March 2021)

advantage to promote and advance their way of thinking about and seeing the world and international order. The mood and atmosphere after the end of the Cold War among the proponents of liberalism could be described as optimistic, even euphoric. Francis Fukuyama's renowned article, The End of History, reflects this mood perfectly.[28]

Even though liberalism and realism compete without significant concessions to explain the world order, unlike realism, liberalism represent and ideology and a vision for peaceful handling of the international relations through international institutions, co-operation, democratic regimes, adherence to fundamental human rights. In view of the liberals, there is a way to avoid conflicts and wars by constraining the military power and promoting the co-operation among the states. Democratic Peace Theory, which has come into being within the framework of liberalism and is based on a fundamental belief promoted by Immanuel Kant. By this middle range IR theory, it is foreseen and advocated that democratic states would and do not go to war against each other and with further promotion of democracy and co-operation around the world, a more peaceful global atmosphere would prevail in international relations[29].

Haass and Kupchan argue that the arrival of a multipolar and ideologically diverse world is inevitable, even though the US claims to be back on the international scene

[28] Francis Fukuyama. (1989). "The End of History". The National Interest, Summer 1989. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24027184 (Retrieved on 12 April 2020)

[29] Sid Simpson. (2019). "Making liberal use of Kant? Democratic peace theory and Perpetual Peace". International Relations, 2019; 33(1):109-128. doi:10.1177/0047117818811463 (Retrieved on 24 March 2022)

under President Joe Biden, polarization and the rise of illiberalism are curbed, and the West achieves an economic rebound under the US leadership. They also underline the geopolitical and ideological competition which leads to multipolarity and as a result in the 21st century, in their view, a global concert of great powers, based on political inclusivity and procedural informality, needs to be achieved. In such a scheme, they argue, ideological differences over domestic governance system and practices would be separated from matters that require international cooperation.[30]

In response to this article, which is an interesting food for thought, three scholars, Nicu Popescu, Alan S. Alexandroff and Colin I. Bradford, wrote an article bearing the title of "The Case against a New Concert of Powers" issued on May 11, 2021. Haass and Kupchan were given the opportunity to comment on this response. Both the original article and the reply to it confirm that this critically important issue is being debated vividly and one should expect that with the impetus given by Covid-19 pandemic to the change in the international balances and system, one can only expect it continue and become wider as more scholars, experts, thinkers, so on, would join the debate in the period ahead. The debate is currently focused mainly on the tough competition between the US and China for a world leadership, however, as Haass and Kupchan tried to highlight and accommodate, there are many other state and non-state actors who would wish to have a say in the new world order. Therefore, any new scheme that

[30] Richard N. Haass and Charles A. Kupchan. (2021). "The New Concert of Powers. How to Prevent Catastrophe and Promote Stability in a Multipolar World". Foreign Affairs, March 23, 2021. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2021-03-23/new-concert-powers (Retrieved on 25 March 2021)

would exclude these actors should be expected to be received with disappointment and rejection by them and such a broad-based rejection would lead to questioning of the legitimacy of the proposed informal order.[31]

Daron Acemoglu has come up with another form of international order, which sounds similar to that one suggested by Haas and Kupchan but with some distinct features. Acemoglu calls his model a "Quadripolar World" and makes an interesting case for it. In his global order, there are mainly four pillars, the US, China, the EU and a consortium of emerging economies like Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, South Africa and others. Acemoglu considers a multipolar order better than a bipolar one, because it offers more hope and plurality thanks to a wider range of different voices and possibility of opportunistic groupings among states.[32]

Acemoglu's proposed model is certainly a good contribution as a food-for-thought about the future shape of the world order. It appears to exclude, however, two key actors in the international affairs namely Russia and the UK, which are neither part of the EU, nor can be categorized as emerging economies. A competition of visions for a next global order is also named as multipolar, polycentric or as suggested by Acemoglu quadripolar. Whichever name the next version of global order is going to take, at this

[31] Nicu Popescu, Alan S. Alexandroff and Colin I. Bradford; Richard N. Haass and Charles A. Kupchan. (2021). "The Case Against a New Concert of Powers". Foreign Affairs, May 11, 2021. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-05-11/case-against-new-concert-powers (Retrieved on 12 May 2021)

[32] Daron Acemoglu. (2020). "The Case for a Quadripolar World". Project Syndicate, December 3, 2020. https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/quadripolar-world-better-than-new-us-china-cold-war-by-daron-acemoglu-2020-12 (Retrieved on 10 December 2020)

point, one thing appears clear, and it is that the world has left unipolar behind, a bipolar order has already become a part of history after the end of Cold War and we are heading towards a new world order, which will be based on the balance between more than two pillars of power.

In an interesting analysis, Dominic Tierney considers the global liberal order in a dialectical manner. He argues that the global liberal order needs disorder or a threat that may lead to disorder, so that its proponents act to protect and maintain the global liberal order. In this context, Tierney refers to the existential threat to the liberal international order posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War period and reminds that the Soviet threat got the US into action to strengthen alliances and partnerships and to construct international institutions that will support and sustain the global liberal order. In the absence of a credible danger to the system's existence, he further argues, the liberal order may be neglected and gradually lose its importance and start decaying from within. The probability that the US, main founder and protector of the global order, gets engulfed in domestic political, economic or social problems may also pose a risk to the maintenance of the international liberal order. Tierney concludes that there must be a fine balance between the liberal order and the possibility of disorder and neither of them should be too much.[33]

[33] Dominic Tierney. (2021). "Why Global Order Needs Disorder", Survival, 63:2, 115-138, DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2021.1905981 (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

The clear change in the US approach to the international order and the shift of attention to domestic issue and other international issue particularly during the era of President Trump has been and still is a cause for concern to German policy makers. Chancellor Merkel, particularly during the period of President Trump, has made increased efforts to draw the US attention to the maintenance of the liberal international order and preservation of its stability and sustainability, despite the fact that China, as a major rising great power, has been significantly benefiting from this system. In fact, this has led to a fierce struggle between US and China, which was also called as "trade wars". A leading German think-tank, DGAP, was reminding during these times that when two powers fight, a third one loses and, on this basis, promoting the view that the EU should not become just a spectator in this fierce trade conflict between the US and China. In other words, according to this view, the EU should have become more active to protect its interests from the consequences of this major conflict.[34] It may be argued that this way of thinking seems prevalent in the minds of German policy makers as Chancellor Angela Merkel has been aiming to position her country not as a party to this conflict but more like a mediator between the two great powers, because any military conflict between them would bear disastrous consequences for the entire world, undermine international security and stability, disrupt the international trade and thus, would be undesirable for Germany, the wealth and national security of which

[34] Alexander Schuster. (2019). "Stormy-Annika Mildner / Claudia. Schmucker: Wenn Zwei sich streiten, verliert der Dritte: Die EU sollte im Handelskonflikt zwischen USA und China nicht Zaungast bleiben". Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswaertige Politik-DGAP Compact, Nr. 6, May 2019. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/sirius-2019-3014/html (Retrieved on 22 February 2021)

rest primarily on uninterrupted international trade based on global exchange and mobility, international security and stability.

In 2008, Gerry Simpson argued that the US foreign policy appears to combine a sort of normativity applicable to world order and at the same time when its national interests so require, some persistent pragmatism that would include resort to the use of violence and war.[35] The fact that Barack Obama and Donald Trump have not involved the US in any large-scale military adventure seems to confirm the perception that the US has been careful about using military option hastily. President Obama promoted the policy of "Leading from behind" and Donald Trump adhered to his motto of "America first" and focused primarily on trade issues with China and domestic economic and political matters. This non-military foreign policy adopted and pursued by the US has in a way led to relatively longer period of global peace and stability despite some local civil wars and conflicts like those in Ukraine, Syria and Libya. However, as these local conflicts have not borne global impact to disrupt the international trade, Chancellor Merkel's Germany has enjoyed the benefits of this period of relative calm.

A choice to use realism for analysing and explaining the German foreign policy under Chancellor Merkel, who has attached priority to international cooperation and multilateralism during her term of 16 years, would not be an ideal approach, because

[35] Gerry Simpson. (2008). "The Ethics of the New Liberalism". The Oxford Handbook of International Relations, 255-266, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199219322.003.0014 (Retrieved on 18 February 2021)

the basic tenets of realism are significantly different from those of liberalism. For instance, John J. Mearsheimer, a structural/neo-realist presents the perspectives of liberal international institutions as "false promise".[36] Joseph Grieco, again from a realist angle, also sees limits to the international co-operation due to the anarchy which prevails in the international system.[37]

Again, from a realistic perspective, Stephen Walt argues that committing itself to defence and maintenance of the liberal international order has not served the US interests as the events after the end of the Cold War has proven. Therefore, in his view, the US should rediscover realism, go back to a realist foreign policy which has helped it immensely. In pursuing such a policy, Walt suggests that the US should primarily focus on the preservation of the American people's security and welfare and protection of the core liberal values in the US. In this context, he further argues that the policies looking to establish a global hegemony has increased the US security responsibilities and obligations unnecessarily, because it has had to fulfil these self-ascribed obligations without getting new resources. In a way, he claims that the US has provided international security as a much-needed global commodity but the rest of the world, while enjoying the security environment kept by the Us, has not been generous to the US in terms of burden sharing. As a result, Walt recommends the US policy makers

[36] John J. Mearsheimer. (1994-1995). "The False Promise of International Institutions". International Security, Winter, 1994-1995, 19:3, 5-49, The MIT Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539078 (Retrieved on 12 February 2021)

[37] Joseph M. Grieco. (1988). "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism". International Organization, Summer, 1988, 42:3, 485-507. The MIT Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706787 (Retrieved on 17 April 2020)

that a smart US grand strategy must clearly define where, when and for what purposes the US should and would be prepared to wage a war. Apparently, he does not totally exclude the necessity for the US to wage a war as he makes a list of modern times' challenges ranging from the rise of China to new generation threats like cyberspace attacks, irregular migration, violent extremist, climate change and many others.[38]

On the other hand, Andrew Moravcsik, who is a liberal IR scholar and has important publications promoting the strengths and benefits of liberalism, argues that state preferences critically influence and shape state behaviours in the international affairs and according to a basic assumption of the liberal international theory, these preferences are formed by domestic and transnational social pressures. In this respect, Moravcsik highlights three core assumptions that play key roles in the making of state preferences, which are the nature of societal actors, the nature of the state and the nature of the international system. To further detail these assumptions, he argues that globalization leads to differentiated demands from individuals and groups in a society, the state preferences reflect these demands and shape the states' policies pursued in the international affairs and because states exist in interaction with each other, they also shape each other's behaviour. Based on these assumptions, Moravcsik concludes that liberalism is best developed to explain the theoretical foundation for a "shared

[38] Stephen Walt. (2019). "The End of Hubris and the New Age of American Restraint". Foreign Affairs, May/June 2019. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/end-hubris (Retrieved on 10 July 2019)

multicausal model of instrumental state behaviour".[39] In other words, he rejects the claim that state behaviours are shaped only by a single cause as claimed by realist, which is the anarchic nature of the international system. These assumptions and arguments mean that for a democratic state like the US, which has to consider multiple domestic and transnational social preferences in making its foreign policy, liberalism and liberal international system is the best platform to act upon.

In this light, the tension between the declining hegemonic power, USA, and the rising power, China, a country which questions the fundamentals of the existing world order, gives rise to concerns around the world, including and maybe especially in Germany. Because Germany is a country whose wealth is dependent upon the continuation of stability, exchange, and mobility in the world trade. As such, a former German Foreign Minister from the Green Party wrote in June 2019, in somehow pessimistic tone that the international order has been undergoing a fundamental change, the rules applied by the World Trade Organization on the global single market are no longer truly effective and as such, the so-called trade or tariff war between the US and China appears to have gone beyond the simple issue of bilateral trade balance and the two countries were not really engaged in result-oriented negotiations and therefore, their exchanges of threats have become a cause for concern.[40]

[39] Andrew Moravcsik. (2008). "The New Liberalism". The Oxford Handbook of International Relations, 234-254, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, published in Aug 2008. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199219322.003.0013 (Retrieved on 22 March 2020)

[40] Joschka Fischer. (2019). "The End of the World as We Know It". Project Syndicate, World's Opinion Page, Jun 3, 2019. https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-china-break-europe-by-joschka-fischer-2019-06 (Retrieved on 21 March 2021)

Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon present a very realistic picture of the struggle between those actors, who would like to change the current liberal international order and others, who would like to change it on their own terms. In this regard, they draw attention to the rise of illiberalism as a real danger facing the liberal world order. In this regard, they argue that even though Joe Biden has replaced Donald Trump in January 2021 as a result of the elections held in November 2020, threats and challenges targeting the main aspects of the liberal global order remain and a more serious crisis may be encountered in time to come. As evidence to such an argument, they refer to continued efforts by authoritarian and illiberal regimes, like China, which reject liberal democracy altogether and as such, spare no efforts to undermine the global order and replace it with an illiberal version. They also point out the view that the openness of liberal democratic societies have been abused by authoritarian and illiberal actors, which have built political and social system that is difficult to penetrate and influence from the outside, while they can easily conduct public relations campaigns in the liberal countries. As such, measures that can be taken by liberal states to curb the influence of authoritarian and illiberal states, they argue, may undermine the very liberal order, which they would like to protect. The picture, which they paint, is quite paradoxical. Like many others, they also think that the current liberal international order is changing gradually, but it is not yet certain on whose terms its final shape will be decided. What is certain, in their opinion, seems to be the fact that liberal

democracies will not be able to get back what they have already lost to rising authoritarian and illiberal states, which are led by China.[41]

When it comes to German foreign policy, liberalism has a strong explanatory power, even though it does not explain all aspects of its foreign policy. German foreign policy vis-à-vis great powers, for instance, appears to reflect an eclectic approach. Germany seems to have no objection to the US policy towards China which besides diplomatic means, is mainly carried out by deployment of more military power near China and does not appear to rule out the possibility of use of force or a military conflict in case China challenges the US beyond certain lines.

As a part of the liberal institutional world system, the EU stands for the primary international society to which Germany belongs and aligns its foreign policy behaviours with those of the EU. In other words, it is a "Europeanised Germany". At the same time, the foreign policy behaviours of Germany are influential in formulating the EU foreign policy and once formed, the EU codes of conduct also affect and shape the German foreign policy behaviours, which may be referred to some extent "Germanized Europe". In fact, Germany appears to be using the EU as a shield and leverage against great powers, namely the USA, China, and the Russian Federation, which it would have more difficulty to confront or constrain on a bilateral basis.

[41] Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon. (2021). "The Real Crisis of Global Order. Illiberalism on the Rise", Foreign Affairs, January/February 2022, 101:1, 103-118. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2021-12-14/illiberalism-real-crisis-global-order? (Retrieved on 20 December 2021)

On the other hand, despite the deep and broad set of disagreements between the US and China, Thomas Fues argues that Germany and China are on the way to build up a close partnership because their export-oriented economies motivate these two countries to develop a close relationship and dialogue on the functioning and the future of the liberal international system. As such, Fues is of the opinion that even though these two countries seem to be a mismatched pair, acting together, they are gradually forming a powerful axis and centre of gravity for promotion of international free trade inside the group of G20 and beyond (Fues, 2017).[42]

A serious debate is going on about the Chinese desire to reshape the world order. Elizabeth Economy, however, seems sceptical about the Chinese foreign policy aims about the next shape of the international system. She argues that being adequately represented in the current international system would not satisfy China, because Chinese President Xi Jinping aims to achieve much more. In this regard, she puts forward the argument that the Chinese President Xi thinks about a new and substantially changed international order that is to be built around his country's centrality and under such a system, which would not be based on liberal foundations. In her view, the new order desired by President Xi would be constructed upon institutions, legal frameworks and technologies, which do not prioritize individual freedom and rights, but instead would attach priority to strengthening state control,

[42] Thomas Fues (2017). "How Can the G20 Promote the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17)?" https://risingpowersproject.com/g20-global-partnership/ (Retrieved on 20 March 2021)

limiting human rights and freedoms and control and constrain free markets. Despite such an ambitious vision, Economy appears to believe that going down that road may not serve China's interests because the possibility of Chinese dominance and the actions, which China seems to be trying to take in that direction, has been facing a gradually increasing dislike and resistance abroad. Accordingly, in the opinion of Economy, Chinese President Xi's miscalculations about the potential backlash from the rest of the world may lead to weakening of his country's role and influence in reshaping the world order.[43] Indeed, Elizabeth Economy makes valid points. China and its President see the world through the lens of realist theory, largely based on power politics and geopolitical competition. Even though this approach may be useful for them up to some point, they tend to underestimate the impact of global civil society and non-state actors, which, thanks to the effects of globalism and availability of advanced communication technologies, have been for some time becoming better connected, stronger and more influential, and China's policies disrespecting and disregarding many hard-won human rights and fundamental freedoms and undermining the well-established and rules-based liberal international system are facing resistance and counter actions, as has been observed, like in the forms of boycotts against Chinese export products or international sport events hosted in China. In this regard, the Chinese leadership may be doing a favour to itself and a service to their countries by reconsidering their certain domestic and international policies and

[43] Elizabeth Economy (2021). "Xi Jinping's New World Order. Can China Remake the International System?", Foreign Affairs, January/February 2022. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-12-09/xi-jinpings-new-world-order (Retrieved on 10 December 2021)

actions, primarily, adhering to and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in China and abroad.

Sophia Besch argued in our interview that Germany and the EU appear vulnerable in the changing international order, which is increasingly based on geopolitical competition and military power. In her opinion, furthermore, US is getting increasingly distracted, shifting its attention to the Indo-Pacific region to counter and contain the rise of an assertive China and thus, paying reduced attention to Europe's security needs and concerns. According to her observations, Chancellor Merkel has placed a special importance on inclusivity and dialogue and maintained a strong commitment to two main pillars of Germany foreign policy, namely the EU and NATO, but she has not really made strong efforts to adapt German foreign policy to the changing realities and nature of the international order.[44]

Regarding the international system, Kristian Brakel from Heinrich Böll Foundation pointed out the view that German foreign policy spares no efforts to keep the rules-based liberal international order and refers to a recent fact that the new German Foreign Minister picked China and Russia to exercise this policy by promoting and defending democracy and liberal values. He tends to think, however, that against China, Germany's leverage is quite limited and about Russia, Chancellor Merkel has aimed to define and follow a balanced foreign policy between safeguarding business interests and criticizing human rights violations and pressure on NGOs in this country, also by

[44] Interview with Besch.

bringing an important opposition figure like Navalny to Berlin for medical treatment. Brakel further believes that it is good for German government officials to be vocal on human rights, but it may be better to prioritize by seeing where they may have real leverage and effect, because, in his opinion, despite all political statements, from a rationalist and realistic point of view, one can argue that German strategic perspective does not really focus on achieving a long-term international stability but more on keeping its business interests. The real litmus test for a values based German foreign policy, in Brakel's view, is not in China and maybe even not in Russia. In this respect, he argues that against China, Germany's leverage is limited and as for Russia, while there could be a harsher course against Putin, there is a general agreement in political circles, that Russia is a destabilizing factor and that human rights violations inside Russia are not to be tolerated. In this bleak picture, Brakel suggests that the situation in the MENA region is different, because here Germany more or less openly cooperates with some of the most authoritarian regimes and it is much more a question of "their security vs ours" i.e., in this region Germany is much more willing to sacrifice the values it hopes to promote for cooperation from corrupt leaders in the region, who in turn promise stability and more security for Europe and Germany.[45]

On this basis, it may not be wrong also to argue that Germany may be "too small" to shape the global politics, yet the side it takes in global affairs gains an important advantage against the other side. Therefore, Germany is becoming also a "balancing power" in international affairs. The prudent and well-considered foreign policy

[45] Interview with Brakel.

pursued by Chancellor Merkel may have made this feature of the German foreign policy more visible and credible and something she may be leaving behind as a part of her foreign policy legacy.

Yet, scholars like Börzel and Risse, after noting that following the Eurozone, migration and the Brexit crisis, the EU faces again a crisis of unknown proportions: the coronavirus pandemic, argue that given the structure of the European Union, the bloc as a whole and its member states have performed much better than during the migration crisis.[46]

As to the reaction and explanatory power of the IR theories vis-a-vis the Covid-19 pandemic, Oktay Tanrısever argues that in case the IR theories put at their centre of attention the problems and wellbeing of "ordinary people" around the world, as also suggested by some critical IR theorists like Ken Booth, who is a leading scholar in critical security studies and suggests that our focus should be on "individual security", in other words, on the security of "real people in real places".[47] As such, Tanrısever argues that the IR as a discipline would be able to make more sense to the global society and the existing mainstream IR theories may remain relevant also in the post Covid-19 period. Tanrısever, however, does not see it likely that the pandemic will

[46] Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse. (2020). "Here We Go Again. The EU and the Covid-19 Crisis". EU-Listco, April 7, 2020. https://www.eu-listco.net/blog/here-we-go-again-the-eu-and-the-covid-19-crisis (Retrieved on 25 March 2021)

[47] David Mutimer. (2008). "Theory of World Security by Ken Booth", Ethics and International Affairs, 08 December 2008. https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2008/theory-of-world-securityby-ken-booth/ (Retrieved on 08 June 2022)

trigger paradigmatic changes as described by Thomas Kuhn[48] and thereby paving the way to the emergence of new IR theories, because the representatives of IR theories appear to be making the case that their assumptions are more explanatory than others.[49]

It may be useful to conclude this Chapter by referring to Fukuyama's observations and predictions. Assessing possible consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fukuyama appears to think that in case the pandemic breaks down the international cooperation, in the following era, there may emerge an international commitment to address common issues and advance common interest. [50]

Fukuyama's prediction may mean the birth of a new international order, focussing on the need to ensure the cooperation of all actors concerned in handling common global issues. In such a new environment, rather than arguing about the ideological nature of the world order, perhaps its functionality and capability to address global issues like pandemics or climate change will be more important. In such an era, we may also see different spheres of political ideologies, which coexist together, but due to potential destruction, which an aggressive geopolitical competition may bring, would not

[48] Thomas Kuhn (1962). "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions". https://www.lri.fr/~mbl/Stanford/CS477/papers/Kuhn-SSR-2ndEd.pdf

[49] Oktay Tanrısever. (2020). "Koronavirüs Salgınından Sonra Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramlarında da Hiçbir Şey Aynı Kalmayacak (Mı?) (Nothing Will Be the Same Again also in IR Theories(?))", Strategic Research Centre, MFA, Turkey, "Post-Covid 19 Global System: Old Problems, New Trends", 71-75. https://hdl.handle.net/11511/93983 (Retrieved on 10 May 2020)

[50] Fukuyama. p. 30-31

fiercely compete with each other. In order to get there, the US and its allies may also need to reconsider their current policies and discourses.

2.2. Why Liberalism but not Any Other IR Theory?

The IR discipline has been quite productive in coming up with its various theories, which can be taken by researchers as academic lens to look at, interpret, explain and predict world events, behaviours of states and non-state actors in the international system, making of foreign policies and their implementation, so on. As such the choice of theory rests with the researcher and his/her perception about which theory would be most helpful in understanding and explaining the matter under consideration. This holds true also when analysing the changing world order and German foreign policy during the era of Chancellor Angela Merkel. The author of this dissertation believes that liberalism is the best developed and most suitable IR theory to interpret, understand and explain its subject matter. On the other hand, this section might be helpful to show why some other IR theories would not be best suited for the purposes of this dissertation.

Given its military capabilities, national power and international goals, one can argue that liberal international system serves Germany as a best suitable to pursue and implement its foreign policy agenda. Germany has an export-oriented economy, which is the basis of its wealth, political weight in international politics and its domestic social cohesion. Therefore, it argues so strongly for the maintenance of rules-based

international order, an international system protected and kept by several key international organizations. As such, liberalism/liberal internationalism presents itself as the best-suited IR theory to analyse and understand German foreign policy during the 16 years under Chancellor Angela Merkel's rule.

In terms of defining the nature of German power, for instance, Jakub Eberle and Alister Miskimmon state the view that the arguments about civilian power can be based on liberal institutionalism, which has common traits with constructivism.[51] They appear to come up with such an argument mainly because Germany's positioning itself as civilian power in international relations reflects the preferences of predominantly anti-militarist German people.

If we take some other IR theories like realism, critical theory and feminist theory as examples, it would not be too difficult to show why and how they would not be suitable to analyse and explain German foreign policy.

Classical realism and its modern version, structural realism, focus their vision and assumption on the concept of power. German political leadership has displayed a perpetual disinterest in investing and reinforcing the country's military capabilities. Chancellor Merkel has noticeably continued this approach and tradition.

[51] Jakub Eberle & Alister Miskimmon. (2021). "International Theory and German Foreign Policy: Introduction to a Special Issue, German Politics", 30:1, 1-13, p. 4. DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2020.184914 (Retrieved on 20 February 2021)

Critical theory, flowing from the Marxist school, Karl Marx' philosophical tradition, looks at the international relations through a critical lens and discusses the ways and means not only interpret and understand but also to change the established world order, to the benefit of human freedom and equality. German foreign policy, however, does not pursue radical changes in the liberal international order and institutional system. Instead, it sees its national interests better safeguarded under the current international order and system and looks just to secure a more privileged place and role within this rules-based international order, like a permanent seat in the UN Security Council or inclusion into the group of important actors, which conduct negotiations with Iran on this country's nuclear program.

If we turn to feminist theory, it is hard to argue that Chancellor Merkel has formed and implemented a feminist foreign policy. She has taken many women in her cabinets, gave important positions to them, including the Ministry of Defence, and ensured that her then Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, has become the first female President of the European Commission, one of the two most important top jobs in the EU. Still, it would be exaggerated if one argues that Chancellor Merkel has exclusively defined and pursued a feminist foreign policy and used feminist concepts and terminology in her speeches and statements.

Green Theory can only partially explain Chancellor Merkel's decisions about Germany's foreign policy orientations. Several arguments put forward by Kristian Brakel from Green Party's Heinrich Böll Foundation appears to justify the view that

Green Theory cannot adequately explain Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy. In this regard, Brakel argues that as far as environment friendly green policies are concerned, Chancellor Merkel has been criticized for many reasons, and in fact, she has been an excellent politician protecting and keeping *status quo*, however, when generational change was needed, for instance about climate, she has not done enough. In his opinion, even though she has a scientific background as a professional physicist, she has not pushed her governments to be much more progressive and even though her personal engagement in these matters could have been much broader and effective, her efforts have remained limited. As a result, Brakel argues, Germany has fallen behind many of its international commitments about environmental targets and despite the fact that before 2005, Germany's coalition government formed by SPD and Greens has already taken same decisions and actions in that direction, however, Chancellor Merkel has reversed some of them until the Fukushima disaster in March 2011. In this sense, Brakel claims, the Fukushima nuclear disaster was a second good reason to mobilize Chancellor Merkel towards more ambitions environmental targets, because after the Fukushima disaster, the votes of Green Party started going up significantly and seeing this trend, Chancellor Merkel felt the urge to take more effective steps regarding environment friendly policies and decided to shut down nuclear power plants in Germany within a certain time frame. In the opinion of Brakel, overall, Chancellor Merkel has proven to be an excellent crisis manager, but regarding environmental issues, she has not presented a clear agenda.[52] Indeed, Chancellor Merkel's choice to construct Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline directly connecting

[52] Interview with Brakel.

Germany to Russia even though it would increase German dependence on Russian gas and at the same time Germany's vulnerability to Russian political pressure and blackmail has been and is still controversial.

2.3. Chapter Conclusion

There appears to be an expanding consensus among IR scholars on the view that the world order is changing, even though they have not been able to come up with a commonly agreed name to call this new phase in the international system. The liberal international order has come under pressure due to both systemic and domestic factors. The rise of China in the international politics and its demand to re-order the world system based on its perspectives, values and principles cause concern in the West, because the current system has been configured on the basis of Western values such as liberal democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, fair economic competition, so on. China does not appear willing to embrace any of these, at least not in the near future. On the other hand, in the countries, known to adhere to liberal democratic principles there have been a surge in authoritarian regimes and illiberal political movements. The example of the former US President Donald Trump has been a most recent and still case, which still gives nightmare to all those, who care about democracy, rules-based international order.

Germany under Chancellor Merkel's leadership has demonstrated on every occasion the importance it attaches to the rules-based liberal international order and even

launched an initiative, together with France, which is called "Alliance for Multilateralism". As the famous Italian political theorist Antonia Gramsci put it once so eloquently "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying, but the new cannot be born. In this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."[53] The rivalry and competition between the US and China bears the potential to send the old into the annals of history and pave the way for the new. The global IR community will have to watch the process closely, try to understand and interpret it, as and when possible, influence the decision-makers to shape it, and come up with a globally acceptable name when the new order takes its final shape and proves its persistence.

In this regard, a senior retired Turkish diplomat (Interview participant no. 9) expressed the view that Germany benefits immensely from the current liberal international system and assumes its financial responsibilities by contributing to the UN and its efforts around the world. Yet, other than a few exceptions like Kosovo and Afghanistan, he further argued that Germany carefully stays out of international military interventions unlike France and the UK, which have different and more active stances and join such interventions alongside the USA. He also recalled that at the 2014 MSC, the then German President Joachim Gauck too stated that Germany needs to assume more responsibilities in international affairs but his call has not been really

[53] Marc Kidson. (2013). "The old is dying, the new could yet be born", Institute for Government, June 21, 2013. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/old-dying-new-could-yet-be-born (Retrieved on 21 September 2021)

reflected in German foreign policy behaviours. He also pointed out the fact that Germany continues to benefit from the nuclear umbrella provided by NATO/USA and does not wish to significantly increase its military spending despite the US' insistence.[54]

[54] Interviewee 4.

CHAPTER 3

GERMANY'S FOREIGN POLICY PARAMETERS AND ORIENTATIONS

3.1. Overview

Since the reunification of two German states in 1991, the Federal Republic of Germany appears to have been in a never-ending soul-searching process. The German political leaders and opinion makers, as well as foreign leaders and scholars, have been giving a lot of thoughts to the role and place of Germany in the world politics. In this regard, Germany has often been called upon and expected to assume more responsibility in the international affairs, for the maintenance of international security and stability and European defence, although a full and clear definition of this "responsibility" is yet to be made. Despite such expectations and calls, however, since the end of the Cold War and the reunification of two German states, the enlarged Federal Republic of Germany has been carefully constraining itself and resisting the temptation to acquire more military power, even though its vast economic resources would allow it to pursue this kind of state behaviour on the global scene. So, why has Germany been acting this way? What holds Germany back or prevents it from assuming increased roles and

responsibilities in the international politics? The answers to these questions are considered in the relevant chapters of this dissertation.

Ulrich Speck argued in our interview that the decision, which Germany needs to make, is clear, and it is about either becoming a normal sovereign state like France, Turkey and others, or continuing to hide in the international system and just follow and support the US in its strategic decisions. In his view, while her predecessor Gerhard Schröder was defending the approach that "strategic decisions must be made in Berlin", Chancellor Merkel has embraced a more transatlanticist approach, letting the US continue to take the lead. He thinks, however, that Germany needs to become increasingly more aware of the fact that geopolitics is back and nation states pursue their own national interests by using all national capabilities. In his view, despite all security threats and challenges facing Europe, Germany has over the years developed its own foreign policy parameters, is not interested in having its own nuclear weapons and can even accept a degree of Russian dominance in Europe, instead of having nuclear weapons.[55]

Indeed, Speck makes some important points which are worthy of further consideration. In fact, as they are currently what they are, France and Germany appear to be complementing each other in terms of their economic and military capabilities. In case Germany decides to be militarily strong too, it may affect internal balances within the EU negatively and this may reflect adversely on the German - French partnership and

[55] Interview with Mr. Ulrich Speck, Foreign Policy Analyst and Columnist, formerly worked, amongst others, at German Marshall Fund of United States (GMFUS), Washington and Carnegie, Brussels. Web-based video interview, 09 November 2021

cooperation. Such a step from the German side may even be the end of the EU and European integration as we know of it. Therefore, those, who asking for a militarily strong Germany with the increased and modern capabilities, need to be careful about what they are asking for.

Kristian Brakel, Representative of (Green Party's) Heinrich Böll Foundation in Turkey, argues that in terms of its foreign policy orientation, Germany is still at a weird crossroads and maybe the most important country in Europe, but in any assessment, together with France, it is considered one of the two major leading powers in the EU.[56]

On the other hand, as Annegrette Bendiek and others also observe, today a variety of major challenges face the German foreign policy. There are no easy answers or solutions to the most of these challenges. Sometimes one simply must learn how to live with some long-term issues and challenges. For decades, Germany has been doing that in many ways quite skilfully despite its under-resourced military. Since the end of the Cold Ward, Germany has geographically expanded and gotten economically stronger. So, as argued by Bendiek, it does not have to be satisfied with "its former role as France's political junior partner in Europe or the United States' junior partner in the world". In her view, Germany, however, suffers from the lack of the necessary strategic perspectives and military tools to rise to and play the expected role. Therefore, she argues, even if it wishes to play such a role and assume increased responsibility at the international scene, it must indeed first prepare for it and devote

[56] Interview with Brakel.

significant resources to that end. Further, she makes the following points. In Germany, as mentioned earlier, political leaders and elites, opinion leaders including those in media, a vast majority of the society have no clear vision of what kind of a global role Germany can play other than defending human rights and fundamental freedoms. Even promoting international peace, security and stability appears to go beyond Germany's current international political standing, influence and existing military capabilities. Thus, it appears to suffice for Germany to support US and its allies in some cases like the limited international intervention in Syria and join the EU missions deployed under its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In short, there seems to be a clear lack of ambition. The German political elite/leadership has in recent years appeared to be more aware of this reality as compared to how this matter was approached in the past. In this regard, even though with limited success, they have been making some consistent efforts in recent years. For example, in 2013 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, the incumbent President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier initiated a process of "self-reflection on the perspectives of German foreign policy", which resulted in the "Review 2014 - *Außenpolitik Weiter Denken* (Further Thinking about the Foreign Policy)" project. This initiative could be seen as a good starting point and a good basis upon which further efforts and thinking could be and in fact, to some extent, has been built.[57]

[57] Annegret Bendiek. (2015). "The "2014 Review": Understanding the Pillars of German Foreign Policy and the Expectations of the rest of the World". Working Paper RD EU/Europe, 2015/05, May 2015, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik-SWP Berlin. (Retrieved on 18 March 2021)

In the interview for this research, Ulrich Speck recalled the fact that that thanks to pax-Americana, the international peace and security maintained largely by the USA, since 1990s Germany has been able to freely pursue its economic and trade/business interests around the world and as such benefited greatly from the American security umbrella, because it did not have to pay any significant price for its global outreach and success. He also drew attention to the possibility that recently, largely due to the changing priorities of the US, Germany to seems to be having more problems with states like Russia and China.[58]

German political elite and decision-makers appear to be devoting some more time and attention to the role that Germany should play as a responsible actor on the world stage. The statements delivered by the highest German state officials at the 2014 Munich Security Conference (MSC), a major international event held annually, and subsequent debates, may, in some ways, be regarded and interpreted in connection with what the then Foreign Minister Steinmeier launched a year ago, which is a comprehensive review of Germany foreign policy, with a view to charting its new course in the 21st century. These calls and debates represented a major strategic thinking and search among Germany political elite and opinion makers for a new soul and purpose in German foreign policy. President Joachim Gauck's call has received a particular attention. He called on Germany to take on a bigger role in international affairs. Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed a view supportive of

[58] Interview with Speck.

that of President Gauck and underlined the opinion that "Germany's culture of restraint must not turn into culture of refraining from engagement, because Germany is too big to comment on global policy from the side-lines". In a similar way, the then Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen, who later became the first female President of the EU Commission, confirmed that she shared the President's sentiments and stated that "Germany's position in the world gives it a responsibility to intervene where necessary in conflicts." In her view, Germany could not just sit and wait to see what others will do, but because it has the means, it could have the necessary capabilities and live up to its obligation and responsibility to engage in international issue as a credible actor together with other Europeans.[59] Because the position expressed by German political leaders seemed to represent a coordinated common understanding about how Germany should redesign its foreign policy perspectives, what emerged in the 2014 MSC was later described and referred to as "Munich Consensus".[60]

Sophia Besch from CER pointed out in our interview, however, that Chancellor Merkel was not among those senior German policy makers who spoke at the MSC 2014 and tried to suggest and define some new foreign policy parameters and behaviour patterns for Germany. Much later and only after the former US President Donald Trump has attacked on the European security architecture, its burden sharing aspect and the role

[59] "Gauck opens Munich Security Conference with call for more German engagement". Deutsche Welle. January 31, 2014. https://www.dw.com/en/gauck-opens-munich-security-conference-with-call-for-more-german-engagement/a-17399048 (Retrieved on 12 April 2021)

[60] Bastian Giegerich & Maximilian Terhalle. (2016). "The Munich Consensus and the Purpose of German Power", Survival, 58:2, 155-166, DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2016.1161909 (Retrieved on 15 January 2021)

of NATO, Merkel made strong remarks in a speech delivered on May 28th, 2017, in Munich. She told that "the era in which Europe/Germany could fully rely on others is over to some extent, Europe needs to take its fate in its own hands and it is a task for future"[61]. In the opinion of Besch, one can argue that Chancellor Merkel has not eagerly and concretely followed up to this statement later.[62]

In this vein, Jana Puglierin from ECFR Berlin also argues that as its major security partner, the US, has shifted its attention to Indo-Pacific region to counter and contain China, and as a result of this shift, Europe has somehow been left on the periphery. She further notes that that as a result, as also expressed by Chancellor Merkel, there is an increasing awareness and acceptance in Europe that European states need to do more to provide for their own security and devote more attention and resources to this area.[63]

It appears that, as far as the possible use of the German military force is concerned, Annagret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the last Defence Minister in Chancellor Merkel's cabinets of ministers, expressed the clearest view about the use of military power in

[61] Giulia Paravicini (2017). "Angela Merkel: Europe must take 'our fate' into own hands", Politico, May 28, 2017. https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-europe-cdu-must-take-its-fate-into-its-own-hands-elections-2017/ (Retrieved on 07 December 2021)

[62] Interview with Besch.

[63] Interview with Puglierin.

advancing and safeguarding Germany's national interests, as she stated that "Germany should be prepared to use force to protect its interests".[64]

Yet, despite the further debates undertaken since 2013 Steinmeier Review Process and 2014 Munich Consensus, and despite the experience of the policies pursued by the previous US President Donald Trump, fundamental changes and re-orientations are hardly visible in German foreign and security policy, other than some efforts and few initiatives of limited scope launched within the EU framework, such as the development of the concept of strategic autonomy, Permanent Structured Defence Co-operation (PESCO) and European Defence Fund (EDF). This is an interesting fact and deserves some in-depth analysis based on the question of what holds Germany back or what prevents it from taking bolder steps. Is it the sense of security offered by the continued existence of NATO? Or is it because of the sense of geographical distance which somewhat entered between Germany and Russia thanks to Poland and Baltic and Eastern European states after the collapse of the Soviet Union?

On the other hand, the concept of power remains a sensitive issue in the context of German foreign and security policy due to the historical burden which today's democratic Germany is still expected to carry. In fact, mainly because Germany has steered successfully through several crisis during Chancellor Merkel's term including

[64] Oliver Moody. (2021). (2021). "Great expectations: why the West is looking to Germany to counter Russian aggression", The Times, December 03, 2021. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/great-expectations-why-the-west-is-looking-to-germany-to-counter-russian-aggression-rdldx6pds (Retrieved on 05 December 2021)

the 2008 financial crisis, it has undisputedly become economically and politically the most powerfully country in Europe. Yet there is no Europe-wide consensus on whether this is a fact to be welcomed or something to be wary and feared of. The debate inside and outside Germany primarily focuses on the purpose of the German power. To what end should Germany use its increased power? In this regard, for example, Berensköttel and Stritzel come up with three distinct conceptualizations of Germany's power, namely, "constrained power, civilian power and hegemonic power" and then add a recent concept of "shaping power". On this basis, they discuss how and why these concepts have come into existence to explain Germany's place in international affairs, what they mean in terms of their normative and political effects, and whether they explain how much power Germany exercises in its international interactions.[65]

A senior German diplomat interviewed for this research reminded the fact that there are constitutional checks and balances on Germany's international relations and its participation in international interventions and German governments are bound by constitutional constraints whenever deployment of German military personnel abroad is considered and must seek the approval from Federal Parliament. He further added that the international legitimacy given by the UNSC Resolutions is another major precondition for such deployments.[66]

[65] Felix Berensköttter & Holger Stritzel. (2019). "Welche Macht darf es denn Sein? Tracing 'Power' in German Foreign Policy Discourse". German Politics, July 01, 2019, 30:1, 31-50, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2019.1631808 (Retrieved on 20 April 2021)

[66] Interviewee 3.

Similarly, Nicole Koenig draws attention to the fact that Germany usually prefers to adopt a cautious approach to international military interventions and the concept of civilian power serves a useful purpose in describing this approach. In line with this attitude, Germany attaches priority to diplomacy and resolution of international disagreements and conflicts through peaceful means, not using force or war. Even in execution of such a strategy, Germany is usually reluctant to endorse an international military intervention, let alone taking part in it, and choses to act in a disengaged manner and expect others to do the hard work and tackle the international issue under consideration. Koenig notes that even such a limited behavioural change is considered a big step and a major shift in the conventional anti-militaristic discourse. Yet, as observed and explained by Koenig too, some of its allies and partners, primarily the USA still expect Germany to shoulder more burden and undertake increased responsibilities in the international affairs, a demand which cannot be met by sticking to the role of civilian power[67].

On the other hand, regarding the concept and role of civilian power, Weiss and Dettke argue that even though it is not easily noticeable at a first glance, Germany has been increasingly assuming active involvement and leadership roles, which have grown from one crisis to another. According to this interpretation, Germany's "self-imposed culture of restraint" and the civilian power discourse had been put aside during the wars in Balkans following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. As a result, it is argued that the change in the German foreign policy discourse and civilian power paradigm has

[67] Nicole Koenig (2018). "Leading Beyond Civilian Power: Germany's Role Re-conception in European Crisis Management". German Politics. DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2018.1496240 (Retrieved on 16 April 2020)

not been merely a short-lived shift in behaviour, but a fundamental deviation from the civilian power culture.[68]

On a similar note, a senior Turkish diplomat shared the view that Chancellor Merkel has been criticised for neglecting the European defence, not being able to reassure the Baltic states, Poland and other Eastern European states for their security and instead viewing them as a buffer zone between Germany and Russia. He further argued that she has been less than impressive in the Brexit process as she has failed to take effective steps or to show strategic leadership to prevent Brexit, which was unique in the history of European integration.[69] In fact, the Brexit has been a single most dangerous blow to the European integration process and it is debated widely in Europe and Germany whether Germany has done everything it could to prevent such a departure from the EU. The Brexit has even triggered also academic thinking on the potential disintegration of the EU, which Schmitter and Lefkofridi tried to explain by employing the theory of Neo-functionalism.[70]

In fact, by transcending the boundaries of narrow concept of national interests, Merkel has at times been able to pursue cosmopolitan diplomacy. This observation

[68] Moritz Weiss. (2011). "Review: Germany Says "No": The Iraq War and the Future of German Foreign and Security Policy by Dieter Dettke". International Studies Review, September 2011, 13:3, 482-487. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23016720 (Retrieved on 22 February 2021)

[69] Interviewee 1: A senior Turkish diplomat, who has served at the Turkish Embassy in Berlin during Chancellor Merkel's era. Face-to-face interview, Ankara, 25 October 2021

[70] Philippe C. Schmitter & Zoe Lefkofridi. (2016). Neo-Functionalism as a Theory of Disintegration. Chinese Political Science Review, 1, 1-29. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs41111-016-0012-4.pdf (Retrieved on 27 January 2021)

corresponds perfectly to the description of cosmopolitan diplomacy offered by Seçkin Barış Gülmez.[71] Her outspoken advocacy of human rights against the violations around the world and unique and exceptional policy line, which she took on Syrian refugees despite fierce and broad public opposition for which she and her party has had to pay political price, can be seen as concrete examples of her cosmopolitan diplomatic approach. Given the realist foreign policy followed by US President Trump focusing primarily on the US national interests, Chancellor Merkel has even been referred to as the "leader of the free world".[72]

3.2. German Foreign Policy Discourse Towards Europe/the EU

The debate on "Europeanized Germany" vs. "Germanized Europe" and Germany's choice for a Europeanised Germany also often appears as a main theme in the publications on Germany, its foreign policy and standing in the international arena. On this point, this dissertation will argue that even though Germany has preferred to become Europeanised, this has not meant that it has put all its national resources, particularly its financial assets, at the disposal of other members of the EU unconditionally. Even at times of dire crisis situations, like the one experienced in 2008, Germany has attached serious strings to its financial generosity, such as financial

[71] Seçkin Barış Gülmez. (2018). Cosmopolitan Diplomacy (Book Chapter). Routledge International Book of Cosmopolitan Studies, 2nd Edition, pgs. 430-439. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781351028905-38/cosmopolitan-diplomacy-seckin-baris-gulmez (Retrieved on 21 February 2021)

[72] Timothy Garton Ash. (2016). "Populists are out to divide us. They must be stopped.", The Guardian, 11 November 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/11/populists-us (Retrieved on 07June 2022)

discipline and increased budgetary transparency, accountability and even international monitoring as was the case in the bailout packages crafted for Greece. This can be best analysed through Germany's foreign policy discourse vis-a-vis other EU members. As a result, it may be claimed that Germany may have been Europeanised and pursues a cosmopolitan approach in terms of the norms, values and principles promoted by of liberal democracy as promoted by its foreign policy, when it comes to financial and economic crisis caused by the internal poor or mismanagement of the other EU members, it seems quite concerned about the unconditional and limitless use of its national wealth. There has been no blank cheque given by Merkel Governments like in the form of debt mutualization, a system that would make German taxpayers liable for the debts of other EU members.[73]

On the other hand, the fact that Germany works to multiply its power by entering and setting up formal and informal multilateral arrangements is recognized also by Flemes and Ebert. By referring to the role attributed by many to Germany as "Europe's current hegemon", they note that multilateral networks help Germany strengthen its negotiation position in the international affairs. In their opinion, as one of the "world's most connected states", Germany, as a consistent foreign policy discourse, takes part in and plays roles in shaping multiple international structures. From this picture, they draw the conclusion that Germany's foreign policy effectiveness is to a large extent dependent upon its "network power". In fact, several factors pave the way for Germany

[73] Sophia Besch and Christian Odendahl. (2018). "The good European? Why Germany's policy ambitions must its power". Center for European Reform, February 2018. https://cer.eu/sites/default/files/pbrief_german_agenda_21.2.18.pdf (Retrieved on 13 March 2020)

to play more active and effective roles in global politics. Flemes and Ebert list some of them as "its political system, European socialization and increasing international demands for German diplomatic leadership".[74] In this context, one needs to recognize the fact that this discourse appears at least partially as a result of Germany's lack of military power to influence the behaviour of other major actors in the international politics.

Chancellor Merkel's contributions to European integration and her legacy appear to receive both positive and critical comments. In this regard, a policy brief published by Piotr Buras and Jana Puglierin in September 2021 offers some interesting observations and findings. They draw attention to a poll conducted by the ECFR, which indicated that Germany is considered by EU citizens as a trustworthy and pro-European member and Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has spared no efforts to broker difficult compromises between competing or conflicting interests, appears to be a major source of such a positive image. Buras and Puglierin elaborate on the concept of Merkelism, which is an interesting contribution to the Merkelian literature. According to a poll, they assess that Chancellor Merkel's approach has diminished the fear about her country's dominance in Europe. Another conclusion of their assessment is that the most Europeans do not negatively regard the fact that President of European Commission is a German and in fact, a high number of people express trust in Germany to lead the EU, particularly as far as financial/economic matters, democracy and the

[74] Daniel Flemes and Hannes Ebert. (2017). "Bound to Change: German Foreign Policy in the Networked Order". https://risingpowersproject.com/quarterly/bound-change-german-foreign-policy-networked-order/ (Retrieved on 18 March 2021)

rule of law are concerned. However, they discover a paradox at this point. It is that Germany needs to change its policies, in their conception, Merkelism, that have gained European citizens' trust so that other expectations, which require Germany to act differently and assume more responsibilities and leadership role, can be fulfilled. The two scholars consider this policy adjustment necessary for Germany to be able to lead the EU in addressing two key challenges. These are, in their view, a backsliding of the rule of law within the EU and the need for the EU to be able to defend its interests around the world more effectively.[75]

It is clear that Germany would not act alone in leading the EU on the global stage without consulting and acting together with France, its major partner in the EU. They have been demonstrating a good example of such a cooperation in handling the international efforts to defuse the tension in Ukraine and focussing the attention on developing a peaceful solution of the conflict. Considering the fact that a major party to the conflict in Ukraine is Russia, one can argue that in fact, they have been doing quite a good job so far. On the other hand, as expressed on several occasions by the new Foreign Minister, Germany uses the EU as a power multiplier in international affairs, Chancellor Merkel has also done that and there are signs that this policy will be maintained by the new German government as well. This is another example of continuity in Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy discourses.

[75] Piotr Buras and Jana Puglierin. (2021). "Beyond Merkelism: What Europeans Expect of Post-Election Germany", European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), Policy Brief, September 2021. https://ecfr.eu/publication/beyond-merkelism-what-europeans-expect-of-post-election-germany/ (Retrieved on 25 October 2021)

The European security as a sub-item of German foreign policy has also a key importance in the eyes of German policy makers. Koenig and Walter-Franke argue that the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has for some time been serving the European integration as a most dynamic field. The developments in the EU's periphery that has the potential to trigger destabilization, the Brexit and its wide-ranging consequences and the seeds of suspicion and mistrust sown in the transatlantic partnership for Europe's security have been moving the CSDP as a revitalized area in the EU integration process. In this regard, even though they recognize the efforts of France and Germany to move forward the "vision of a European Security and Defence Union", these two scholars still describe the CSDP is as a policy area which represents "a gap between vision and action".[76]

On the other hand, the EU does not yet appear prepared and ready to assume full responsibility for its security, and the US does not yet seem prepared to grant full strategic autonomy to quasi-sovereign EU, which it keeps under its hegemonic influence mainly through NATO.

When it comes to the civilian nature of Germany foreign policy and the distance it takes from the use of military force, Eva Gross argues that the process of

[76] Nicole Koenig and Marie Walter-Franke. (2017). "France and Germany: Spearheading a European Security and Defense Union?", Jacques Delors Institute, Policy Paper 202, July 19, 2017. https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/franceandgermanyspearheading aeuropeansecurityanddefenceunion-koenigwalter-jdib-july2017.pdf (Retrieved on 22 March 2021)

Europeanization of German foreign policy is overstated. Her argument is based on the observation that in the final analysis, NATO and domestic factors still have a determining influence on the policy outcomes regarding the use of military force (Gross, 2007).[77] In other words, Germany still avoids using military force, not only because its military does not have the necessary capabilities, but the existence of NATO and preferences of German public do not leave much room for Germany to resort to the use of military force as a foreign policy tool to advance its national interests.

A senior German diplomat interviewed in the context of the research for this dissertation reminded that NATO is there and stands on strong pillars as a main guardian of the European security and vehicle of transatlantic partnership. Therefore, in his view, new initiatives like AUKUS should not be seen as detrimental to European security or transatlantic cooperation, but as complementary in ensuring international peace, stability and security. He also drew attention to the fact that besides France, the unexpected change of mind on the side of Australia about the submarine purchase deal disturbed Germany as well, because Germany and France are two close partners within the EU. In this regard, he expressed the view that Germany has been pleased to see that through common sense and in a spirit of alliance, the issue has been taken care of

[77] Eva Gross. (2007). "Germany and European Security and Defence Cooperation: The Europeanization of National Crisis Management Policies", Security Dialogue, December 01, 2007; 38(4):501-520. DOI:10.1177/0967010607084998 (Retrieved on 15 March 2021)

without bearing any further unpleasant consequences on the friendly relations and cooperation among all sides concerned.[78]

On the other hand, a senior Turkish diplomat argued that Chancellor Merkel has not been in favour of revolutionary or reformist changes, but rather preferred to maintain status quo and favoured stability and continuity. In his view, Angela Merkel has been able to remain in power for so long because international circumstances allowed it, despite the fact that her party has steadily lost its votes and support in next elections since 2013. Additionally, he argued that Chancellor Merkel has not been able to leave a historic stamp on the German foreign policy like her predecessors Willy Brandt's Eastern Policy (Ostpolitik), Helmut Kohl's success in reunification of two German states and Gerhard Schröder's opposition to US invasion of Iraq.[79]

Regarding a deeper European integration not only by managing the crisis and addressing their consequences, but also through well-planned visionary actions, Chancellor Merkel is often portrayed and criticized as not being as "revolutionary" as she could. Demesmay appears to be among those who share this argument. In her article about the German Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2020, she writes that she does not expect Chancellor Merkel to suddenly become "EU's revolutionary force", but instead the Chancellor could be expected to continue acting in a prudent and inclusive manner to find compromises wherever necessary.

[78] Interviewee 3.

[79] Interviewee 1.

Demesmay also underlines a broadly shared observation that Chancellor Merkel has not had strong ambitions to go into the history books by taking revolutionary steps to further deepen the European integration. She also refers to the debate on whether the EU has missed the "Hamiltonian moment"[80] to leap forward towards a federal structure.[81] Chancellor Merkel has in fact acted in many cases such as achieving a compromise on the EU budget by overcoming the obstacles from Hungary and Poland, but in the end, unexpectedly, without waiting for the new US President Joe Biden and his team to assume the US Administration on 20 January 2021, led the way for signing of a Comprehensive Investment Agreement (CAI) with China.[82] Even though this Agreement got stuck in the European Parliament at a later stage, the decision to have it signed has once again proven how Merkel's Germany has been struggling to strike a fine balance in its relations with Great Powers, the US and China, with both of which it has comprehensive relations.

Chancellor Merkel's reluctance and hesitation to lead a deeper integrating in the EU seems to have primarily to do with the economic and financial situation in other member states and the EU's unique and *sui-generis* structure. German decision-makers

[80] George Calhoun. (2020). "Europe's Hamiltonian Moment-What Is It Really?". Forbes, May 26, 2020. https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgecalhoun/2020/05/26/europes-hamiltonian-moment--what-is-it-really/?sh=78e1f5a51e1a (Retrieved on 12 April 2021)

[81] Claire Demesmay. (2020). "Capitaine dans la tempête : défis et enjeux de la présidence allemande du Conseil de l'Union européenne", June 29, 2020. https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/notes-cerfa/captain-storm-challenges-and-opportunities-german-council (Retrieved on 17 March 2021)

[82] Didi Kirsten Tatlow. (2021). "The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), One Deal, Two Realities", German Council on Foreign Relations-DGAP, Online Commentary, 19 January 2021. https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/eu-china-comprehensive-agreement-investment-cai (Retrieved on 08 June 2022)

do not wish to give a blank cheque to all other member states by putting Germany's financial resources at their disposal, without first adjusting the EU structure and setting up the necessary monitoring and intervention mechanism as to public finances, banking system, etc. Looking at the current formation and decision-making mechanisms of the EU and the keenness of its member states about their independence and sovereignty, it appears to be highly unlikely for the EU to seize its "Hamiltonian moment" any time soon and achieve a move towards a federal structure. The external developments like the rise of China and global competition seen between China and the US are somehow pushing the EU leaders to be more visionary and pool their resources and power more wisely. The time will show to what extent endogenous and exogenous factors will work like driving forces in further and deeper integration in the EU.

In this regard, a policy brief published by Mark Leonard and Jana Puglierin in June 2021 offers interesting observations and policy recommendations. The two authors of this interesting document take a critical look at Germany's EU policies in the past as defined and implemented by Chancellor Merkel, argue that in order to counter effectively face new challenges of international nature such as Covid-19 pandemic, Germany needs to go beyond traditional foreign policy approaches and suggest that for being able to restore the confidence of German public in the EU, Germany should change and adopt more outward looking and pro-EU foreign policy approaches. To this end, they put forward the idea that German foreign policy needs to be built on a progressive national identity, which is to be defined anew, based on the realities of a changing world, putting a narrower emphasis on national interests and rejecting

isolation and exclusion. In their view, Germany must enter this path of reshaping its national identity and foreign policy parameters, otherwise its foreign policy will look inadequate and lose public support. Considering the fact that Germany relies on the EU to augment its regional and global influence and this reflects positively on the country's wealth and security, the authors suggest that policymakers explain this key aspect of Germany's benefits from the EU to the German public. In the context of Germany's constructive role in the EU, they also refer to Chancellor Angela Merkel's ability to forge workable compromises among the EU members, like a recent compromise she brokered to ensure the adoption of EU's 2021-2027 financial framework and recovery fund.[83]

Kristian Brakel argues that in terms of Germany's policies about Europe and European integration process, one can observe mixed outcomes, and gives as an example, the co-ordination within the EU in the face of COVID-19 pandemic and procurement of vaccines and points out his observation that despite the critical reaction from the German public, Chancellor Merkel and her governments have preferred and paved the way for EU-based approaches and solutions. According to his observations, in the case of pandemic, German public reacted to the delay in procurement of vaccines, however, during the Euro/debt crisis, Germany has been criticized by some other EU members for imposing its unilaterally defined policies.[84]

[83] Mark Leonard and Jana Puglierin. (2020). "How to Prevent Germany from Becoming Eurosceptic", European Council on Foreign Relations-ECFR, Policy Brief, June 2021, p.1 and 24. https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/How-to-prevent-Germany-from-becoming-Eurosceptic.pdf (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

[84] Interview with Brakel.

3.3. German Foreign Policy Discourse Towards the External Realm: Relations with Major Partners and Great Powers

3.3.1. Overview

Referring to Chancellor Merkel's personal background as a person, who has grown up in East Germany and seen historical processes and peaceful changes in the political landscape of Europe, Ulrich Speck argues that Chancellor Merkel has failed to see or chosen to see or chosen to ignore the fact that the world has been moving in the direction of increased geopolitical competitions, power politics and conflicts, rather than achieving more global cooperation and harmony, as predicted by the theorists of liberal world order. In this regard, Speck refers to Russia's certain foreign policy actions such as invasion and occupation of some regions of neighbouring countries, threatening others, efforts to undermine coherence within the EU, intervention in Syria and insistence on keeping a brutal dictator in power, all of which have not been given commensurate reactions by Germany. On the other hand, Speck draws attention to China, a rising power, which defies the established international order in the Asia-Pacific region, treats European countries not as equals but like subordinates, even at times by employing harsh rhetoric and certain sanctions. Under such circumstances, Speck criticizes Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy discourse, which he defines as the "Merkel doctrine". According to his definition, this doctrine foresees treatment of the US, France, Russia, and China like partners, tries to strike a balance between making concessions to them on some issues and frustrating them on some other matters. Speck

thinks that such a doctrine for Germany is neither sustainable nor compatible with the new international realities, increasingly based on geopolitical competition, thus, Germany's unclear foreign policy approaches irritate not only its friends, but also rivals and competitors, because they would like to see clearly where Germany stands.[85]

In fact, what Speck describes as the "Merkel doctrine" could very well be applied to the foreign policy behaviours of those states, who could be classified as middle-ranking powers in international politics. Because these states aspire to become more influential actors in global affairs but their material power and economic and military scale do not suffice for achievement of these high aims, they often have to navigate in their relations in a balanced way with great powers like the US, Russia and China. A similar discourse has indeed been pursued by Turkey, another middle-ranking regional power in its relations with these great powers.

A senior retired Turkish diplomat expressed the view that in terms of international geopolitical balances, the long-term objectives of the US require it to work closely with Germany and France. He also argued that despite Brexit, the UK is still an important actor for the EU and the two sides would need to develop effective ways of cooperation on issues of common interest, Poland and Ukraine need to be included in the transatlantic schemes as well.[86]

[85] Speck. (2021). "Merkel's Successor Will Have to Define Germany's Role in a World of Competition", GMFUS, Transatlantic Take, June 23, 2021.

[86] Interviewee 2.

Ulrich Speck reminded in our interview that Germany (West Germany) which was designed and constructed in 1949 under the post-WWII circumstances stayed away from power politics. The US has been taking and exercising the strategic lead and this has given Germany a large space to pursue its own economic interests. In fact, in 1991 most people in West Germany did not want to reunify with East Germany but because of the US push, the reunification has taken place. In his view, now, three decades after the end of the Cold War and reunification, the world has changed a lot. The European integration has further progressed, deepened and got stronger also largely to many crises. The US has been gradually shifting its attention to far east to confront and contain an aggressive competitor, China.[87]

Speck further suggests that under these circumstances, Germany must build its "strategic identity". He is of the opinion that when Germany sends troops somewhere abroad, it has to be behind it, in other words, it has to have its own strategic objective, however Germany currently cannot do such things, rather than just supporting the US. He is critical of Chancellor Merkel policies by pointing out the view that she has paid a lot of attention to having good relations with the US and thus kept the conventional accommodating German approach to American requests and decisions.[88]

With regard to Germany's relations with great powers, another senior retired Turkish diplomat argues that a traditional approach and tool of German foreign policy has been

[87] Interview with Speck.

[88] Interview with Speck.

"*Wandel durch Handel* (Change through trade)", but it has proven to be ineffective vis-à-vis great powers with authoritarian regimes like Russia and China. In his view, despite this reality, Germany has maintained its trade and economic relations with these countries, even further deepened and expanded these relations, and that is why it can be argued that the policy of *"Wandel durch Handel"* has been converted into an approach of *"Handel und mehr Handel* (Trade and more trade)", largely by giving up on democratic norms and values like human rights.[89]

Kristian Brakel from Heinrich Böll Foundation argues that German political elites are still struggling to define a most suitable place for Germany in international affairs and in handling crisis situations. For instance, in his opinion, regarding the crisis between Ukraine and Russia, Germany has been eager to be involved in the diplomatic processes, however, it has not been fully clear what role it could and should play, independent of the US and NATO, because at the national level, it is often quite unsure of itself. He further argues that American views on European affairs still shape German foreign policy as well, at least to some extent and as a result, Germany appears to be focusing on safeguarding its national interests, even though it somewhat wishes to contribute more to resolution of international crisis and issues and to play more active role in promoting liberal democratic values around the globe.[90]

[89] Interviewee 4.

[90] Interview with Brakel.

Former US President Donald Trump, however, has caused a radical change in her attitudes and her perception of and feeling about the US. During President Trump's time, Chancellor Merkel became aware of the necessity that Europe must take its destiny in its own hand and Germany must work more closely with France and other EU members to develop the necessary military capabilities that Europe needs. At this point, however, another challenge comes, which is the fact that France wants to be the security leader within the EU, especially after the Brexit, the UK's departure from the EU and expects Germany to be generous and cover the bill of its military operations, particularly in its sphere of influence like some parts of Africa.

3.3.2. Relations with Major Partners

3.3.2.1. Overview

Germany as an economic giant and a political leader in the EU plans and implements a multi-faceted foreign policy and as such has close and strong relations with many countries around the world. As examples in the context of this dissertation, its relations with France, the UK, Poland, Turkey and Israel will be considered and analysed. Its relations with these five countries are remarkably close and intensive in several fields due to historical, geographical, economic and trade and social ties.

France and Germany are two big and powerful neighbours and as such, share a long and eventful history. Currently they are considered the axis, which shapes the EU and

determines the pace and depth of European integration. Without any of these two states, the EU would lose its purpose and almost be reduced to the level of purposelessness and meaninglessness.

Germany and UK are also two major players in Europe and in the world. They have their differences and complementarities. The painful process of Brexit has left a bitter taste in the mouths of both sides. Yet, they are careful about not burning the bridges and maintaining a result-oriented and case-by-case cooperation to address the common challenges they face.

Poland has a special place in the list of German foreign policy priorities. Due to what was done to Poland in the WWII has been considered by German political leadership, regardless of their political parties, something to be undone to the extent possible. The historical apology extended by the then German Chancellor Willy Brand (SPD)[91] has been followed up with Poland's membership in the EU in 2004 under another Chancellor from SPD, Gerhard Schröder. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, and membership of Poland in the EU, Germany has gained a vast buffer zone between its arch-rival Russia and itself. It has also been revealed that Chancellor Merkel's family tree has some Polish branches as well from her mother side.[92] As such,

[91] Euronews with DPA. (2020). "It's 50 years since Willy Brandt fell to his knees in Warsaw to apologise for Nazi-era crimes", Euronews, 07 December 2020. https://www.euronews.com/2020/12/07/it-s-50-years-since-willy-brandt-fell-to-his-knees-in-warsaw-to-apologise-for-nazi-era-cri (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

[92] Rosalia Romaniec. (2013). "The German Chancellor's Polish roots", Deutsche Welle, 26 March 2013. https://www.dw.com/en/the-german-chancellors-polish-roots/a-16698783 (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

Poland has received particular attention from Merkel Governments. Yet, Poland has demonstrated its need to further develop to become a full-fledged liberal democracy. Chancellor Merkel has been quite patient against illiberal tendencies in this country and not left the road of dialogue in managing the crisis between Poland and the EU. As a common point, both Germany and Poland attach a high importance to their relations with the US as both countries rely on NATO and US engagement in Europe for ensuring their territorial security.

Despite the fact that they do not share a common territorial border, Turkey and Germany have and keep remarkably close and multi-faceted relations due to a variety of reasons. They have close historical ties as two allies (Germany and Ottoman Empire) in the World War I. They are members of all Euro-Atlantic institutions. Turkey is not a member of the EU but conducting membership negotiations and in this regard would like to have continued German support in this process. The two countries have close relations and cooperation in many areas from security to economy and trade, from handling regional crisis to migration management, so on. More than three million people with Turkish origin who live in Germany form a strong human bond between two countries. As such, despite their differences and ups and downs in their relationship, Turkey and Germany appear destined to remain close partners.

Last but not the least, Israel is a country that is particularly important for Germany mainly due to historical reasons. Because of inhumane treatment faced the Jewish population in Europe during the WWII, Germany feels a strong responsibility to

support Israel, despite its wrongful and aggressive policies and actions against Palestinians, so that it becomes a viable state and remains a safe home for the Jewish people around the world. At every proper occasion, German political leaders emphasize Israel's right to exist. Israel's existence is considered also among Germany's reasons for existence. Germany is Israel's number one trade partner in the EU. This underlines the importance of Israel's wellbeing for Germany.

The next sections follow the order of countries as listed above and looks deeper into their relations with Germany.

3.3.2.2. France and the Franco-German Axis in the EU

Germany and France are known as the two engines, main driving forces of the European integration process. The balance and special relationship that has been established between these two countries, continue to define the political landscape in Europe. Both countries have critically important roles in European security, stability and welfare, and they need to play these roles in close co-ordination and harmony with each other. The UK, as will be dealt with in the next section, has played its role in the EU and made its contribution to certain processes, obstructed or slowed down integration in some other areas like common security and defence policy, left the EU in 2020, as a result of a painful process initiated by a referendum held in the UK on 24 June 2016, under the leadership of the then Prime Minister David Cameron.

Turning back to the relationship between France and Germany, their relations and co-operation have peculiar features. During Chancellor Merkel's time in office, French leaders have usually been keen to develop progressive visions about the future European integration; whereas Chancellor Merkel has remained distant to hasty decisions, preferred to take her time to fully consider all pros and cons of each and every idea, also partly because Germany would be the one who would have to bear most of the cost for implementing new visions.

A senior Turkish diplomat interviewed as part of this research argued that in coordination and consultation with her French counterparts, Chancellor Merkel has pursued a pro-American and transatlanticist political vision. In his view, particularly with the then French President Nicholas Sarkozy, Chancellor Merkel has achieved a good level of harmony, which was coined as "Merkozy". Even though military capabilities of France and Germany appears to be not comparable, the interviewed diplomat argued that Germany makes a conscious choice by not acquiring advanced military capabilities, and in making this choice it considers the matter both from an economic point of view and in terms of positioning Germany as a peace-loving mediator and actor in the scheme of international balances of power.[93]

President Emmanuel Macron has perhaps been the most innovative and enthusiastic one who has come up with several ideas and projects about the future course of the EU

[93] Interviewee 1.

integration, including "EU's strategic autonomy" as far as the European defence and security is concerned.[94]

Ulrich Speck pointed out his view that French President Emmanuel Macron appears more inclined to formulate and pursue foreign policy discourses and orientations based on geopolitical competitions and drag the EU along, but Merkel's Germany has not been keen on cooperating with Macron on this line.[95]

Regarding the EU integration, France appears to favour big leaps forward, while Germany prefers small, well-calculated steps, and only when they are really required and would not cost too much to German taxpayers. Moreover, in view of Ulrich Speck, while France uses a kind of "federalist language", as evidenced in President Macron's famous Sorbonne Speech delivered in September 2017 (titled as "Initiative for Europe. A Sovereign, united, democratic Europe), Germany is cautious and reluctant about transferring more control and authority to the EU's supranational bodies and seems to prefer to keep certain areas of competencies in the hands of national authorities.[96]

[94] Judy Dempsey. (2018). "Macron's Call for European Boots". Carnegie Europe, Strategic Europe, November 13, 2018. https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/77703 (Retrieved on 20 February 2021)

[95] Interview with Speck.

[96] Ulrich Speck. (2017). "Germany and France: ready to tango?", Expert Comment 46/2017, Elcano Royal Institute, October 23, 2017. www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/commentary-speck-germany-and-france-ready-to-tango (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

France has, because of its policy of national self-reliance in terms of its national security, keeps a strong military, owns nuclear weapons, keeps somehow close ties with its overseas former colonies and a permanent member in the UN Security Council. Germany, on the other hand, economically most powerful state in Europe, but with a weaker military power, its armed forces are under resourced to put it mildly, its population is the largest in Europe, it is a leading export champion, year-on-year it accumulates the highest trade surplus in the world, around 250 billion USD yearly, despite its economic power, however, it does not have an influential place in the world politics, it is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council and keeps making continued efforts to stay in the Security Council as a non-permanent member.

In the field of military capabilities, Germany and France seem to be pursuing divergent paths. France is working on an idea called European Intervention Initiative (EII) launched by President Emmanuel Macron to develop an informal tool outside the EU structures so that it can include the UK as well after the Brexit.[97] On the other hand, however, Germany has been leading a process under the NATO called Framework Nations and has already brought some EU members under its military leadership despite its under-resourced military.[98]

[97] Nick Witney. (2018). "Macron and the European Intervention Initiative: Erasmus for soldiers?", European Council on Foreign Relations-ECFR, 22 May 2018. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_macron_and_the_european_intervention_initiative_erasmus_for_soldier/ (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

[98] Claudia Major & Christian Mölling. (2014). "The Framework Nations Concept. Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence", German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Comment 2014/C 52, 01.12.2014. https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/the-framework-nations-concept/ (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

A senior German diplomat interviewed also confirmed that the bilateral relations and cooperation between Germany and France are important for the smooth functioning of the EU and for international stability and security as well. Therefore, in his view, the two neighbours spare no efforts to find common ground on as many issues as possible, even though some differences remain, like deepening of the EU integration on security and defence issues.[99]

With regard to French ambitions about European integration and leading Europe, Kristian Brakel argues that Chancellor Merkel has not always been forthcoming and has not let France go ahead with its agenda, the Treaty of Aachen (Treaty on Franco-German Cooperation and Integration, signed on 22 January 2019 and entered into force on 22 January 2020)[100] has been a positive landmark in German-French relations, yet France has not been able to find the opportunity to implement all of its assertive ideas regarding European integration, because Chancellor Merkel has often held back at opportunities of deepening the union.[101]

Looking at this broad array of views and arguments, it may not be wrong to argue that these two countries have specific features that in some ways complement each other. Enhanced complementarity, however, particularly in the field of security policies and

[99] Interviewee 3.

[100] Jane Mcintosh. (2019). "What's in the Franco-German Treaty of Aachen?", Deutsche Welle, 22 January 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/whats-in-the-franco-german-treaty-of-aachen/a-47178247 (Retrieved on 25 January 2022)

[101] Interview with Brakel.

common European defence, requires increased German financial generosity, which at this moment does not seem to meet the understanding and support of the German public. This is certainly an issue which the German political leadership needs to think about and devise strategies to persuade Germany's anti-military public. It can hardly be claimed, until the presidency of Donald Trump in the US, Chancellor Merkel has taken bold steps to reciprocate France's willingness and initiatives in this area. Some recent initiatives launched after drawing lessons from Donald Trump's irritating attitude and policies like Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO)[102] and European Defence Fund (EDF)[103] have been developing and implementing some projects, but it does not seem likely that they are going to bear tangible fruits before the end of the fourth and final term of Chancellor Merkel.

The senior German diplomat interviewed also noted that the EU military and defence initiatives like PESCO are moving forward rather slowly, European defence sovereignty or "strategic autonomy" has been under discussion for a rather long time, but when taking concrete steps, compatibility and complementarity with NATO is important to Germany so that the sound basis of the Alliance is not undermined. In his view, it would not be reasonable separate capabilities which are not interoperable with NATO and the EU capabilities need to be complementary to those of NATO, which is

[102] The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/permanent-structured-cooperation-(PESCO) (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

[103] European Defense Fund (EDF). https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

the main pillar of the European defence.[104] On this point, France and Germany appear to have diverging views as France favours and make a stronger case for the EU's strategic autonomy and would like to achieve a faster progress in that direction; whereas Germany pays more attention to the US position and the existence of NATO, which serves as security umbrella for Europe.[105]

At this point it may be useful to consider the views of Jan Techau, Senior Fellow and Director of Europe Programmes at the GMFUS. Techau draws attention to the troubles that are caused or may be caused in the future by the so-called "German-French engine" for the EU. He argues that France and Germany lead and shape the EU not on the basis of what is necessary, but what is possible and attainable. He further states that the two countries strategic perspectives are so different as if they come from different planets. He also sees deep differences in their understanding of national identity, sovereignty and greatness. In his view, while France attaches great importance to all these concepts, Germany has transferred part of its national identity into the European integration project and does not really give priority to national greatness. Similarly, Techau argues that Germany favours a European politics, France favours power politics, wherever and whenever it can. Against this background, Techau concludes that the German – French engine in the EU bears the potential to

[104] Interviewee 3.

[105] Ronja Kempin & Barbara Kunz. (2017). "France, Germany, and the Quest for European Strategic Autonomy: Franco-German Defence Cooperation in A New Era", Notes du Cerfa, No. 141, Ifri, December 2017. https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/notes-cerfa/france-germany-and-quest-european-strategic-autonomy-franco (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

damage the European integration project, rather than supporting and deepening it.[106] Techau makes valid points and observations. However, despite all their differences and diverging views, Germany and France have so far managed to lead the European integration process quite well and today the EU is considered a most successful regional integration project in the world. It may be because considering their common and painful history, both countries see that there is no better alternative to the EU under today's circumstances. Still, one cannot but share most of Techau's views and observations.

In fact, a retired senior Turkish diplomat interviewed argued that the concepts like "strategic autonomy" are not liked by US and in dealing with such sensitive issues, Germany treads more carefully than France, as it is more dependent on the US security umbrella as compared to its important neighbour and key partner in the EU. On a broader picture, he also shared the view that, when they look at Europe, the Americans attach priority to their relations with the UK, however, in recent years they appear to be listening to Germans more carefully than the past.[107]

Apart from their places in the international order and their divergences about security and military issues, in the last years of Chancellor Merkel's term in office, Germany and France, largely again as a reaction to US President Trump's attacks on the established rules-based international order, have become commonly aware that they need to work together to protect and maintain the existing rules-based liberal

[106] Jan Techau. (2020). "Der deutsch-französische Motor". Internationale Politik, January 1, 2020. https://internationalepolitik.de/de/der-deutsch-franzoesische-motor (Retrieved on 15 February 2021)

[107] Interviewee 2.

international order.[108] In the end, they are both industrialized and advanced economies and their continued welfare is dependent on a liberal international order and freely flowing international trade without isolated countries and spheres of influence.

On this particular point, protecting the multilateralism, Demesmay and Kunz draw attention to the fact that Germany and France have common positions and concerns on a number of issues such as trade, conventional arms control, and climate change and therefore, these areas offer opportunities for closer cooperation and joint initiatives. When it comes to practical steps, however, the two countries often have different opinions and approaches, as recognized by Demesmay and Kunz as well, and therefore, these two scholars suggest that these countries consider their cooperation on a case-by-case basis and when necessary and possible outside the EU structures.[109] It is highly improbable, however, that Germany would approach the idea of cooperating outside the EU favourably as this may set precedent for other EU members as well and over the time may undermine the EU integration and coherence. On the other hand, the multidimensional relationship and partnership between France and Germany inside the EU appears to facilitate the europeanization of crisis management and incentivizes Germany to favourably approach to the EU crisis management missions.[110]

[108] Jean-Yves Le Drian & Heiko Maas. (2019). "An Alliance for Multilateralism", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 14 February 2019. https://uk.ambafrance.org/France-and-Germany-to-lead-way-in-promoting-multilateralism (Retrieved on 12 June 2022)

[109] Claire Demesmay and Barbara Kunz. (2019). "Sustaining Multilateralism in a Multipolar World. What can France and Germany Do to Preserve the Multilateral Order". French Institute of International Relations, June 3, 2019. https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/notes-cerfa/sustaining-multilateralism-multipolar-world-what-france-and (Retrieved on 22 March 2020)

[110] Zerrin Torun. (2017). "Dynamics behind the europeanization in crisis management under the EU's security and defence policy", METU Studies in Development, 44 (April), 2017, 95-114.

In recent years, common external threats and challenges eased strategic convergence between France and Germany. They reacted in a co-ordinated manner to the conflict in Ukraine. On the other hand, the combination of growing concerns over irregular mass migration and terrorism contributed to a convergence on regional priorities by increasing Germany's strategic interest in Africa.

In his speech in Berlin on 10 January 2017, then presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron emphasized his view that "interventions in Africa are not the sole responsibility of France".[111] With a strong focus on security and development initiatives for the Sahel zone, the Franco-German Ministerial Council of 13 July 2017 underlined this geographic convergence. It was reported in this context that Chancellor Angela Merkel confirmed her country's commitment to support the regional anti-terrorism initiatives led by France in the Sub-Sahel region.[112]

Furthermore, in Germany, considering the external security challenges and rising expectations by key partners, the Federal President, Foreign and Defence Minister announced a more assertive and proactive role in security policy at the Munich

https://open.metu.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11511/58174/900-5722-1-PB.pdf (Retrieved on 20 March 2021)

[111] Koenig & Walter Franke. (2017). "France and Germany: Spearheading a European Security and Defense Union)

[112] Claire Rush. (2017). "Macron and Merkel put defence at heart of Paris-Berlin alliance", RFI, 14 July 2017. https://www.rfi.fr/en/europe/20170714-macron-and-merkel-put-defence-heart-paris-berlin-alliance (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

Security Conference-MSC held on 31 January-2 February 2014, which may be interpreted as increased engagement in the military missions as well.

In line with this new spirit, Germany has started taking some first steps on the way to assume greater international responsibility for international security. These steps included the deployment of some elements of the Franco-German brigade to strengthen the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali and sending some troops as well as transport and sanitary planes for the EU military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA). These steps have clearly aimed at reinforcing the Franco-German partnership inside the EU and beyond the EU borders.[113]

Alexandre Robinet-Borgomano argues that the departure of Chancellor Angela Merkel from German, European and international politics after 16 years in power is almost a non-event, because, by the French benchmarks of greatness such as leading reforms, reinforcing national power and rhetorical abilities, Chancellor Merkel has not been a remarkable leader. Robinot-Borgomano further claims that Chancellor Merkel has immensely benefited from her predecessor Gerhard Schröder's austerity reforms but has not invested more in the future of Germany, remained distant to military power and not delivered exciting speeches. Still, Robinet-Borgomano accepts the leadership qualities of Chancellor Merkel and appreciates and commends what she has done for her country. In this regard, he underlines that under the leadership of Chancellor

[113] Nicole König. (2017). "France and Germany: Spearheading a European Security and Defence Union. 26 July 2017. http://institutdelors.eu/publications/france-and-germany-spearheading-a-european-security-and-defence-union/?lang=en" (Retrieved on 25 March 2021)

Merkel, Germany has grown to become a major power in Europe, and the Chancellor has been viewed as an anchor of stability and steadiness in the EU. Robinet-Borgomano also shares his prediction that, in the absence of Chancellor Merkel, President Macron may find the opportunity to promote and implement the French vision of a powerful Europe ("*Europe puissance*"), as he has been aspiring to do since his election as the French President.[114]

On the other hand, President Macron thinks very highly of Chancellor Merkel, with whom he has worked almost a full term in office. He has paid remarkably close attention to Chancellor Merkel's farewell visit to France and spared no efforts to make the Chancellor good and proud. He also expressed his admiration to the leadership qualities of Chancellor Merkel, during their first meeting with the new German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who took his first visit abroad to Paris after assuming his new role. On this occasion, President Macron said that he has worked very productively and closely with Angela Merkel, on a broad range of issues going beyond European integration to include matters related to China and conflict between Ukraine and Russia. As a sign of continuity and stability in French-German relations, President Macron also told that together with Chancellor Scholz, they will work in harmony and continue the close cooperation between their two countries.[115]

[114] Alexandre Robinet-Borgomano. (2021). "A French Perspective on the Future of Europe After Merkel", Institut Montaigne, November 3, 2021. https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/french-perspective-future-europe-after-merkel (Retrieved on 16 November 2021)

[115] Hans von der Burchard (2021). "Macron urges Scholz to 'invent' new financial solutions for EU", Politico, December 10, 2021. https://www.politico.eu/article/macron-urge-scholz-invent-new-financial-solutions-for-eu/# (Retrieved on 10 December 2021)

3.3.2.3. UK and the Brexit Process

The departure of the UK from the EU (Brexit) has further deepened the negative mood in the EU, which has already been struggling with economic and monetary crisis, several structural problems, and serious challenges like irregular migration.

Sophia Besch, in an interview to Atlantic Council based in Washington, argued that Germany feared that Brexit may trigger the EU's fragmentation and disintegration, and because Germany prefers to manage its international relations mainly through the EU structures instead of bilateral channels, Germany and UK may experience some communication and co-operation problems in the post-Brexit period. She further argues that in this new period, France may have a closer strategic dialogue and common understanding with the UK than Germany as their military capabilities and global strategic vision may overlap to a large extent, while Germany pursues a less conflictual and more mercantilist global policy, focusing primarily on economic and trade concerns.[116]

In fact, concerned about such negative consequences of Brexit process, Chancellor Merkel has made serious efforts, through her close dialogue with the UK leaders, particularly with Prime Minister Theresa May, to encourage the UK to reconsider their decision to leave the EU but could not change the final outcome. Once the British

[116] Sophia Besch. (2021). "What future for Britain and Germany". An interview to Atlantic Council, moderated by Ben Judah, April 16, 2021. https://open.spotify.com/episode/1Ld5gH9CwIY0J6cw1bxvYR (Retrieved on 20 April 2021)

people decided to leave the EU as a result of a referendum held on June 24, 2016, Chancellor Merkel emphasized that it was important to "remain calm and composed" following Britain's exit from the European Union.[117] Subsequent technical negotiations between the UK and the EU to agree on the details of the UK's separation have also proven to be rather hard and not contributed to the sense of friendly separation between the two sides. Therefore, Brexit has been recorded as a key negative development in the political history about Chancellor Merkel's era in power. The German public also followed the process with a sense of disbelief, largely bearing the conviction that the UK was damaging its own interests by such a move. Only the time will show what the real outcomes of the Brexit decision will be. It is however clear that Brexit has left the EU weakened as a global player and this may somewhat affect the German foreign policy as the EU serves as a key power multiplier for Germany.

On the other hand, as the UK left the EU but stays a key player in and for Europe as an important NATO member and trade partner, the future of the relations between the EU and UK, as well as between Germany and the UK needs to be given further thought. While Germany under the leadership of Chancellor Merkel was still digesting and accepting the painful Brexit process, it had to face and start dealing with the difficult process of managing Covid-29 pandemic. Therefore, the new common future

[117] "Angela Merkel: We have to remain calm and composed". BBC News, June 24, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36622502 (Retrieved on 21 April 2021)

with the UK is yet to be discussed thoroughly and placed upon a workable long-term strategy.

Looking at the issue from a similar angle, Rob de Wijk argues that there is a leadership issue in the EU and the Union needs a strong leadership more than ever before. In a period when France (now that the UK left the EU in 2020-Brexit) looks look incapable of leading the EU alone, as its economy seems stagnant and uncompetitive as compared to Germany's dynamic and competitive economy, Germany appears to face a history duty and responsibility of taking the helm. De Wijk sees a precondition of such a leadership which is the need for Germany to abandon its position and perception as a "reluctant hegemon" and as suggested by Kenneth Waltz[118], a prominent representative of the neo-realist International Relations school, accept the assumption that "effective diplomacy and hard power are two sides of the same coin". [119]

Considering the conclusions of the Integrated Review unveiled in March 2021, the UK Government has made it once again clear that after the Brexit, it aims to position the country as an independent global leader. To this end, also the narrative of "Global Britain" has been coined and promoted.[120]

[118] Kenneth Waltz. (1979). Theory of International Politics, New York, ch. 8

[119] Rob De Wijk. (2013). "Geo-economics, German Leadership and a Fragmenting World". Journal for Comparative Government and European Policy, 2013, 11:3, 387-412. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i24233961 (Retrieved on 22 February 2021)

[120] Claudia Major and Nicolai von Ondorza. (2021). "Germany, the EU and Global Britain: So Near, Yet So Far". SWP Comment, No. 31, April 2021. https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2021C31/ (Retrieved on 05 May 2021)

Sophia Besch from CER argues that the process of Brexit has been difficult and painful for all concerned, primarily for the UK side. Germany has chosen to leave the process entirely up to the EU without easing the process for the UK. As such, in her view, the process itself and its consequences have caused certain distancing and cooling in the relations between Germany and the UK. She thinks that even though the relations between France and the UK are somewhat closer, the same cannot be argued for Germany-UK relations and the current UK government is also holding itself back and this is not helpful in mending the relations between the two countries. Still, she remains somewhat optimistic, as there appears to be some degree of interest and awareness on both sides about the need to do something to fix their relations and she adds, perhaps what they need is some more time.[121]

On the other hand, Kaim and Puglierin share the observation that Brexit process has demonstrated that European integration steps that go beyond what is acceptable to the EU citizens may be rejected, because people would like to see the benefits of the membership in the EU clearly. In this regard, they argue that Chancellor Merkel has been able to reassure the German citizens that their country is in the driving seat of the EU, the things are under control and as a result, most Germans have had the feeling that unlike some other countries, Germany has been increasing its influence in the Union.[122]

[121] Interview with Besch.

[122] Kaim and Puglierin. (2020). "How to Prevent Germany from Becoming Eurosceptic", European Council on Foreign Relations-ECFR, Policy Brief, June 2021, p.29.

3.3.2.4. Poland

Relations with Poland, an important neighbour, occupy a special place in the German foreign policy agenda also largely due to their problematic shared history. In the past, Poland has been occupied by Germany and its territories were divided and shared between Germany and Russia. After the end of the WWII, Poland was left on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, under the influence of the Soviet Union, and its capital has given its name to NATO's rival organization, the Warsaw Pact.

On December 7, 1970, the then German Chancellor Willy Brandt from the Social Democratic Party-SPD visited Poland and apologized to the Polish people by kneeling before the monument of Unknown Soldier, an unprecedented act known as "*Kniefall*" (Kneeling down). His picture of apology has taken its place in the books about the German-Polish history.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, a new chapter has been opened in the relations of Germany and Poland. Incorporating the countries of Eastern and Central Europe in the EU and NATO has become a foreign policy priority of the West, including Germany, and by joining NATO in 1999 and becoming the EU member in 2004, Poland has taken its place, albeit with some delay due to the course of European history, and engaged in a different mode of relationship with Germany.

On the other hand, mainly due to the imperfect structure and rules of the European Union, the political developments and authoritarian tendencies in Poland have given Chancellor Merkel a lot of headache. In recent years, Poland, together with Hungary, has been referred to as illiberal democracy in a bloc of democratic countries, which promote democracy, rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms around the globe. Chancellor Merkel has spent significant efforts to correct this contradictory picture of the EU by dissuading Poland and Hungary from further moving on the authoritarian path on which they have somehow entered. It cannot be claimed, however, that she has achieved much success on this front.

Basically, Polish Government rejects the EU practice that EU law is always above the national legislation, as such, in the cases of conflict, the EU law would prevail, and the national legislation would be reviewed and amended accordingly. Reis Thebault, after underlining Chancellor Merkel's role as a mediator between Central and Eastern European and Western European countries about the disputes about rule of law issues, reported that Chancellor Merkel has been cautioning the EU about withholding the EU financial aid to such countries as Poland, and instead, an "in-depth" dialogue with its government. According to Thebault's report, Chancellor Merkel considered the EU Parliaments initiative to pursue a lawsuit against the Commission on this issue as "saddening" and thought that such motions would be fruitless. In this regard, Thebault reported that Chancellor Merkel emphasizing the importance of European solidarity

and cohesion, which required all members of the EU to look for and find compromise, by respecting the founding principles and values of the Union."[123]

Ishaan Tharoor describes what the EU faces about Poland as the EU's most existential crisis so far. In his view, the way forward looks unclear and considers Poland's behaviour partly as result of partisan policies of those conservative figures like EU President Ursula der Leyen and Chancellor Angela Merkel, who have accommodated and tolerated illiberal government tendencies in member states like Poland and Hungary, because the ruling parties in these countries have until very recently formed the same political bloc in the European Parliament. Having argued this, Tharoor also accepts the difficulty of taking the government of an EU member state due to internal complexities of the Union.[124]

With regard to Poland (and Hungary), Kristian Brakel notes that Chancellor Merkel has been criticized for not being tough enough on these two countries, which seem to be sliding backwards in terms of democratic principles and institutions. Yet, in his view, it can be said that Merkel's approach to these countries has been very German, which probably considered that being overly tough on these member states might alienate them and lead them to seek closer relations with some other authoritarian

[123] Reis Thebault. (2021). "E.U. debates withholding billions of euros from Poland as punishment for democratic backsliding", Washington Post, October 21, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/poland-eu-law/2021/10/21/80ed 84da-31b8-11ec-8036-7db255bff176_story.html?s=03 (Retrieved on 23 October 2021)

[124] Ishaan Tharoor. (2021). "Poland triggers an existential crisis for Europe", Washington Post, October 20, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/10/20/poland-europe-dispute-analysis/ (Retrieved on 23 October 2021)

actors outside the EU. In this respect, he argues that this follows a well-trodden path of German diplomacy since 1945, which prefers to avoid problems and confrontations and let others fight the battles, but he also cautions the German decision-makers by saying that this is probably no model for the future when Germany will have to step into the limelight more often.[125]

Whatever the origins of the crisis and the obstacles before its resolution were, Merkel has had to leave her Chancellor position without being able to resolve such an existential dispute between the EU and Poland.

3.3.2.5. Turkey

Primarily thanks to strong human ties between the two countries, exceptionally special and close relations exist between Turkey and Germany. Neither side has the luxury to remain politically distant to the other for a long time. Almost at all times there exists a bilateral or international issue which requires their communication, coordination and cooperation.

Germany and Turkey have close and strong economic and trade relations, as Germany for years keeps its place as Turkey's number one trade partner. Turkey is a beloved and most preferred destination for German tourists. Despite occasional difficulties in its relations with the EU and some major European countries, Turkey is keen to

[125] Interview with Brakel.

advance its EU membership process. In this regard, Chancellor Merkel, at the beginning of her times in the office as the Chancellor voiced the idea of privileged partnership for Turkey[126] but seeing the strong rejection of it by the Turkish authorities, ceased to pronounce it in the following years. Turkey traditionally regards Germany as a key partner in its quest to a full EU membership.

On the other hand, since the outbreak of civil conflict in Syria in 2011 and especially since 2015 when mass flow of irregular migrants started reaching Germany, Chancellor Merkel and the EU under her leadership have started paying closer attention to cooperation with Turkey to curb the irregular migration flows. Turkey eased deployment of a NATO mission to the Aegean Sea in 2015, which was requested by the German government.

The security and military cooperation between the two countries is also comprehensive, ranging from the deployment of Germany's Patriot missile defence systems in Kahramanmaraş/Turkey from early 2013 until the end of 2015 against the threats emanating from Syria, as a sign of the spirit of alliance, to deployment of German reconnaissance planes in the Incirlik military base in Adana in December 2015 until late 2016 to reinforce the fight against ISIS terrorist threat.[127]

[126] EU Business. (2010). "Merkel wants 'privileged partnership' between Turkey, EU", 24 March 2010. https://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/turkey-germany.3st (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

[127] Reuters staff. (2016). "German lawmakers visit Turkey's Incirlik air base after row ends", Reuters, 05 October 2016. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-germany-incirlik-idUSKCN1251EB (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

On certain issues, Germany seems to assign itself the role of mediator to help Turkey resolve some problems. For instance, on the issue of S-400 defence missiles which Turkey bought from Russia and the US opposes it, Germany has called upon Turkey to reconsider its decision.[128]

Again, during the Chancellorship of Angela Merkel, the two countries have developed several political channels to keep better communication and upgrade their dialogue. These included the Strategic Dialogue Mechanism between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and higher-level consultation mechanisms at the level of Governments. These steps have confirmed the importance which Chancellor Merkel attached to the relations with Turkey. She has visited Turkey several times and hosted her Turkish counterparts in Berlin.

However, first, adoption of a parliamentary resolution by Federal Parliament on June 2, 2016, about the controversial 1915 events[129] and later the issues that appeared after the 15 July (2016) foiled coup attempt in Turkey and subsequent developments have poisoned and undermined the robustly developing bilateral relations between two allies and partners. Yet, German-Turkish relations have proven to be resilient, stood

[128] Sputnik. (2019). "Germany Wants Turkey to Drop S-400 Missile Systems Deal with Russia – Official", Sputnik, 22 May 2019. https://sputniknews.com/20190522/germany-turkey-s400-deal-1075240782.html (Retrieved on 12 June 2022)

[129] Deutsche Welle. (2016). "Turkish government reacts angrily to German recognition of Armenian 'genocide'", DW, 25 April 2015. https://www.dw.com/en/turkish-government-reacts-angrily-to-german-recognition-of-armenian-genocide/a-18407785 (Retrieved on 12 June 2022)

the test of time, overcome many challenges, and remained strong throughout Chancellor Merkel's time in power.

Chancellor Merkel's personal role and efforts in keeping close ties between Germany and Turkey need to be recognized. She has kept the channels of dialogue open despite the frictions and difficulties in the bilateral relations with Turkey. In return, the Turkish political leadership has co-operated with her and helped her on key issues primarily in curbing the irregular migration flow from Syria running through Turkey-Aegean Sea-Greece route.

Chancellor Merkel has also played a key role in defusing the tension between Turkey and Greece about some issues in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2020, which brought the two countries to the brink of an armed conflict. This issue will be dealt with under a separate chapter/section of this dissertation.

A retired senior Turkish diplomat interviewed for this research said that CDU's previous leader and Chancellor Helmut Kohl was against Turkey's admission to the EU and Angela Merkel, who was seen like "his daughter", has adopted the same political line, yet been more open to dialogue with Turkey about the issues related to the latter's quest for a full membership. He recalled that Chancellor Merkel in her initial years in power came up with a poorly defined status of "privileged partnership" for Turkey, advocated it for a while and later shelved it, but her French counterpart Nicholas Sarkozy opposed Turkey's EU membership seriously, used it as an

ammunition in domestic politics, and caused some damage to Turkey's efforts, and Chancellor Merkel could not or has not prevented her French counterpart from behaving so. As noted earlier, Merkel has remained distant to the idea of Turkey's EU membership. So, over the years, particularly after the irregular refugee crisis experienced in 2015-2016, the senior diplomat argues, she has engaged with Turkey in a "transactional" relationship. In such a relationship, Turkey has accepted to keep Syrian refugees in Turkey, in return for some financial support and few other promises from the EU. One of these promises was the updating and modernizing the Customs Union between Turkey and EU, which was put in place in 1996. In the course of following years and events, however, it could not be updated and modernized, nor abolition of Schengen visa requirement for the Turkish nationals has been achieved.[130]

As to the irregular refugee crisis of 2015-2016, the senior diplomat thinks that the decision of Chancellor Merkel to open Germany's borders to hundreds of thousands of Syrians was a brave decision, so her motto "We can achieve this." In his view, the dire need of Germany for fresh workforce may have also played a role in Chancellor's decision, which was risky in terms of domestic politics and in fact led to some serious consequences like the rise of far-right party, Alternative for Germany. The interviewee further argued that with regard to the migration issue, the EU has not been guided solely by humanitarian concerns, but more by some mercantilist thinking and, in his view, this is not right, nor seeing Turkey as a "storage for migrants" from Syria,

[130] Interviewee 2.

Afghanistan, etc, and in the end, what the EU has done for Syrian refugees (for resolution of the conflict in Syria) may be described as "too little, too late".[131]

3.3.2.6. Israel

Germany and Israel maintain unique relations. In fact, Germany pays special attention to keep its relations with Israel unique due to Holocaust (Shoah) committed against Jewish people during the WWII by the Nazi regime. German political leaders underline at every opportunity their commitment to supporting Israel's right to exist. It may not be an exaggeration to argue that Germany sees Israel's right to exist tantamount to its own reason to exist. In other words, Germany ties its existence very closely to that of Israel. An information note shared by the German Federal Foreign Office through its website clearly defines the parameters of this unique relationship. What is highlighted in that note are the key words and definitions about Germany's relationship with Israel, which are "unique, unique nature, a cornerstone of German foreign policy, Israel's most important partner in the EU, so on.[132]

German government officials attach importance to emphasize their care about Israel and this country's right to exist in a volatile region, surrounded by unfriendly states and non-state actors. Chancellor Angela Merkel has been no exception to this long-

[131] Interviewee 2.

[132] German Foreign Office, Bilateral Relations, Israel, Article, May 19, 2021. https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/israel-node/israel/228212 (Retrieved on 12 December 2021)

held German foreign policy tradition. Accordingly, when she visited Israel in March 2018, in her address to the Israeli parliament, Knesset, she reconfirmed her country's commitment that Germany would never leave Israel to its fate and continue being a "loyal partner and friend." Observers drew attention to slight criticism pronounced by Chancellor Merkel about Israel's settlement policy on Palestinian lands and encouraging Israel to stay committed to the Middle east peace process.[133]

The EU's trade with Israel involving the import of agricultural products originating from the Israeli settlements on Palestinian territories are still a controversial issue. Despite recognising their illegality, the EU continues to trade with Israeli settlements and it appears from the available open sources that from the EU side, the issue has not been conclusively addressed. In 2019, the European Court of Justice passed a decision stipulating that products from Israeli settlements must be labelled properly so that their origin can be shown.[134] The controversial exports from these settlements include not only fruits and vegetables but also processed food, wine, chemicals, metal products, cosmetics, so on. It is claimed that these exports finance the illegal settlements, because the income generated through this part of Israel's international trade by selling the products from the occupied Palestinian territories return to those producers in these lands. According to some reports, there has been a growing concern in Europe about

[133] Ulrike Putz. (2018). "Merkel in the Knesset-We Would Never Abandon Israel", Der Spiegel, 18 March 2018. https://www.spiegel.de/international /world/merkel-in-the-knesset-we-would-never-abandon-israel-a-542311.html (Retrieved on 08 November 2021)

[134] Associated Press in Brussels. (2019). "Products from Israeli settlements must be labelled, EU court rules", November 12, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/12/products-israeli-settlements-labelled-eu-court (Retrieved on 27 December 2021)

these settlements and their economic activities and links with Europe, which has the potential to deteriorate the situation caused by these illegal settlements. Another aspect of the situation which makes the entire scheme controversial is that the exact value of these products exported to the EU from these settlements is nod reported in official documents on Israel's foreign trade statistics.[135]

The EU appears to recognize the illegality of trade with Israel as far as the products from the occupied Palestinian lands, but the issue seems to be conclusively settled yet.[136] The EU decisions, which Israel has not appreciated, may be construed also as Germany's indirect criticism towards Israel and disapproval of this state's certain practices.

Faisal Al Yafai criticizes Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy towards the Middle East and concludes that it has been a low-profile policy and she has not displayed a grand vision for the region in particular and for European and international affairs in general.[137]

[135] Quakers in Britain. (2011). "QPSW, The Middle East Briefing Paper. Trade with Israeli Settlements", August 212. http://www.quaker.org.uk/files/Trade-with-Israeli-Settlements-Background-Briefing-July-2011-FINAL.pdf (Retrieved on 25 December 2021)

[136] European Parliament. (2018). "Parliamentary questions. Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission", 18 September 2018, Question reference: E-002892/2018. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-002892-ASW_EN.html (Retrieved on 25 December 2021)

[137] Faisal Al Yafai. (2018). "Germany's Angela Merkel and her legacy in the Middle East". New Europe, November 26, 2018. https://www.neweurope.eu/article/germanys-angela-merkel-and-her-legacy-in-the-middle-east/ (Retrieved on 13 March 2021)

3.3.3. Relations with Great Powers

3.3.3.1. Overview

Managing relations with major powers is not an easy task for the political leader of a mid-size power like Germany, which is a considerable economic power but not a political and military great power on the international scene, as compared to some other actors such as the US, China and Russia. With each of these states, Germany handles a great deal of important issues in many areas.

In this regard, Brooks and Wohlforth point out an interesting difficulty and dilemma for states like Germany. They argue that such states face certain constraints in terms of expanding their powers to balance their stronger opponents because such an increase in their power would worry and become a cause for concern for their neighbours.[138] In fact this observation appears to have some reasonable grounds when one looks at the German history. Even today, many in Europe would like to see a stronger Germany with increased military capabilities and showing leadership qualities, while some other fear what might happen if Germany becomes too strong again. Once more, Henry Kissinger's famous statement about Germany being "too big for Europe and too small for the world" seems worth remembering.[139]

[138] Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth. (2002). "American Primacy in Perspective," Foreign Affairs, July/August 2002. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2002-07-01/american-primacy-perspective (Retrieved on 21 February 2021)

[139] Reuters. (2013). "Is there a Merkel alternative?", 13 June 2013. https://www.reuters.com/article/idUS249048249620130108 (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

When Merkel came to power in 2005, Germany's relations with its major ally, USA, were damaged due to previous Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's strong opposition to the US intervention in Iraq in 2003. Merkel started her term with the intention of repairing this damage and putting transatlantic relations back to its track.

In such a difficult global setting, Stelzenmüller also argues that handling Germany's dynamic and comprehensive relations with the great powers has been the most demanding and complex challenge Merkel has faced. As noted above, Germany, a mid-side European power, shares the same continent with an increasingly aggressive and revisionist Russia, which presents many geopolitical challenges as it is involved as a key player in many conflicts in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, Germany is significantly dependent on Russia for energy imports and Russia is also an important market and business partner for many big German firms.

As to China, which has become Germany's most important trade partner outside the EU, (German-US and German-China trade volumes) with significant German direct investments in this country. Especially since the time of President Barack Obama, the US has been gradually shifting its attention and military resources to the Far East to balance China and looking to its allies and partners for solidarity and support. This expectation from the US has led the countries like Germany into a dilemma about how to handle these two great powers.

In view of the current global geopolitical landscape and realities, Germany's relations with the US form a strategic backbone of the country's security and foreign policy. Since the WWII, the US has provided Germany with a security umbrella through NATO and its military presence in Germany. This reality is still valid. Thanks to the US security umbrella Germany has prospered much more that it could, by spending less on military and defence. In this regard, Germany's strategic options are limited. Stelzenmüller argues that historically, Germany has instinctually been pursuing a policy to balance allies and adversaries and Merkel has continued this approach and tradition.[140] Indeed, Stelzenmüller makes a valid point here, which will be further dealt with in the following sections on Germany's relations with each of these three great powers, the USA, Russia, and China.

On the other hand, Nora Müller highlighted that as for Germany's relations with two other great powers, namely Russia and China, one can observe both similarities and differences in German attitude towards these two states. In this regard, Müller noted that vis-à-vis China, the attitude in Europe has in recent years become increasingly critical, especially in light of growing internal repression and a more aggressive foreign-policy course on the part of Beijing. In this respect, she underlines the fact that according to surveys conducted by the Körber-Stiftung, the Germans' attitude vis-à-vis China has changed from "indifferent" to "critical" over the past years. Müller further argued that in her dialogue with the Chinese leadership, Chancellor Merkel was

[140] Constanze Stelzenmüller (2021). "The Singular Chancellor. The Merkel Model and Its Limits", p. 168. Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2021-04-20/angela-merkel-singular-chancellor (Retrieved on 22 August 2021)

not remiss to address human rights issues, like the suppression of the Uighurs or the massive curtailing of democratic rights in Hong Kong. In her view, however, Chancellor Merkel never opted for "megaphone diplomacy" but preferred to confront her Chinese counterparts behind closed doors.[141] With regard to the EU's approach to China, Müller recognizes the efforts that have been made to work towards a more coherent European China policy and the idea of an EU-China Summit during Germany's EU Council Presidency, bringing – all – EU member states to Leipzig in September 2020 was one of them but due to Covid, the summit could not be held as planned.[142]

In conclusion, in terms of transatlantic coordination on China, Müller is of the opinion that the rushed conclusion of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) with China in December 2020 was an example of bad communication, as it became an irritant for relations between the EU and the incoming Biden Administration. She thinks, however, that as of now, it seems highly likely that CAI will remain frozen as MEPs demand a "re-balancing of EU-China relations". In this context, it appears that the other side of the Atlantic, US, has not been immune to grave communication errors either. In this regard, Müller points out the view that AUKUS has been another challenge for EU-US relations, especially for the relationship between Washington and Paris, and a wake-up call to invest more in transatlantic coordination and consultation.

[141] Interview with Müller.

[142] Richard Walker (2020). "EU-China summit: What really happened?", Deutsche Welle, 04.06.2020. https://www.dw.com/en/eu-china-summit-what-really-happened/a-53688837 (Retrieved on 04 December 2021)

In this regard, she recalls that in fact, ever since the Obama Administration's "rebalancing to Asia", US strategic interests have shifted to the Indo-Pacific, and efforts to contain China have become a key feature of US foreign and security policy.[143]

In a similar vein, Sophia Besch notes her observation that with a view to improving transatlantic communication, recently both sides appear to be making efforts particularly after the examples of communication failures in the cases of CAI and AUKUS. In this regard, concrete steps are being taken to improve EU-US dialogue in several areas so that the sides can avoid unpleasant surprises in the future. CAI's ratification process is frozen in the EU Parliament and probably will not proceed further. Also, through improved German-US dialogue a major issue such as Nord Stream 2 has been resolved in 2021.[144]

Regarding Russia and China, Kristian Brakel argues that Germany has been pursuing a foreign policy, which prioritizes its business interests and vis-à-vis these two great powers, Germany does not have necessary military capabilities to counterbalance them, but its economic power and trade relations may serve as a good leverage in handling certain issues. On the other hand, Brakel further thinks that a major dilemma facing Germany in international affairs results from its economic power as it cannot clearly decide for which purposes and how best it can be used to achieve some greater

[143] Interview with Müller.

[144] Interview with Besch.

political objectives, other than just securing its business interests. In this regards, he drew attention to Green Party's philosophy which tends to be to achieve promotion of human rights and freedoms through smartly using Germany's (and the EU's) economic power and trade relations.[145]

3.3.3.2. The United States of America (USA)

During the era of Chancellor Merkel, the US-German relations have gained a critically important role in deciding the essence and working modalities of the of the transatlantic relations. As such, Stephen Szabo argued that as a result of the rise of Germany in the international politics largely thanks to its economic power and key position in the EU, and also due to relative decline of France and the UK in European and global affairs, the German-American relationship has become vitally important in the broader transatlantic partnership. In this respect, Szabo shares the observation that to the US decision and policy makers, Germany would appear as their key partner in Europe and in facing several global challenges. However, he also underlined the fact that this partnership has limits and is uneven, or by another adjective, asymmetrical.[146] These observations appear to explain well the areas of co-operation and divergences in the US-German relations. Indeed, they are applicable to the US relations with some other allies and partners like Turkey and the US policy and decision makers may have

[145] Interview with Brakel.

[146] Stephen Szabo. (2018). "Partners in Leadership? American Views of the New German Role". German Politics, 2018. 27:4, 539–554. DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2018.1460661 (Retrieved on 10 February 2021)

to face this reality in the post-Cold war and multipolar world order and accept that with their partners and allies, they may have both areas of co-operation and some issues on which they would just have to agree to disagree.

Far from defining and applying such a nuanced foreign policy, US President Donald Trump (2017-2021) introduced and throughout his tenure pursued the doctrine of "America First". His aggressive pursuit of this line of thinking has offended and alienated the US allies and partners. He even spoke of withdrawing the USA from the NATO, which is the main pillar and cornerstone of the European security architecture. German Chancellor has also unavoidable got her share out of this US President's at times undiplomatic remarks towards her and her country. As referred to earlier, the then US Ambassador in Berlin, Richard Grenell, inspired by his President has also gone beyond the usual diplomatic courtesy and made remarks supporting anti-EU and populist forces in Germany and other EU members. It remains unclear and debatable what were the true intentions of the USA by pursuing such a policy line. Was it because it saw the EU and Germany as a rival and aimed to weaken them or by shaking the EU boat tried to extract more concessions from the European countries primarily Germany to increase their defence expenditures and buy more weapons and military equipment from the USA?

A senior German diplomat interviewed for this research called the years spent during the term of US President Donald Trump as a unique and unprecedented period in transatlantic relations in general and in German-US relations in particular. According to his observations, it seemed a most difficult period to the people on both sides of the

Atlantic, yet the business went on as usual in the NATO, regular meetings and exchanges of views continued. It means that political rhetoric has not much affected the routine transatlantic cooperation.[147]

The interviewed German diplomat thinks that the arrival of the new US Administration under the leadership of President Joe Biden has opened the way for resolution of some major differences between Germany and the US. In this regard, he believes that the removal of US sanctions towards Nord Stream 2 pipeline may be a good example and by working together in a constructive way and through mutual understanding the two sides managed to eliminate a thorny issue from their common agenda and prepared the ground for further cooperation in many other areas. Even though the US is increasingly being criticised for not duly consulting with its allies and partners, in his view, the fact is that there are several consultations mechanisms between the sides and they are working well, like bilateral visits, consultation mechanisms, NATO Summits and other meetings. In his opinion, the US is trying to shape and implement its policies towards China in consultation and cooperation with its allies, yet, the relations of the US and its allies, who defend democracy, human rights and liberal international order, with China remain problematic and it will probably be so in the foreseeable future as China keeps getting stronger in the international system and wants to play the game by its own rules.[148]

[147] Interviewee 3.

[148] Interviewee 3.

German political leaders and opinion makers often call their country as "*Handelsnation*" (Trade Nation). This is mainly because Germany has been the world's export champion for years and generates the highest trade surplus from its international trade. A trade surplus is generated when exports exceed imports. As such, Germany has generated a trade surplus of 224 billion Euros (approximately 250 billion USD) in 2019, and despite the pandemic circumstances in 2020, 158,7 billion Euros (approximately 180 billion USD).[149] Germany's impressive trade surplus is far higher than many countries' annual gross domestic products. As a result of its trade surpluses, Germany gets richer and economically and politically stronger year by year.

Along these lines, a senior Turkish diplomat interviewed in the context of this research argued that Chancellor Merkel has often acted in a pragmatic manner, without being able to shape the relations in line with a strategic perspective. He further thinks that Chancellor Merkel's reaction in two particular cases has been ineffectual and these cases were a) the scandal about the US intelligence services' tapping into the communication of German government officials including Chancellor Merkel. He reminded the fact that this crisis broke out during President Barack Obama's time made it even more surprising and frustrating for the German government and Chancellor Merkel. b) The other scandalous case was created by the highly undiplomatic statements of the then US Ambassador Richard Grenell, who was appointed by President Donald Trump and made several statements, which could be

[149] "Germany's 2020 exports slumped 9.3% as pandemic batters trade", Deutsche Welle, February 09, 2021. https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-2020-exports-slumped-93-as-pandemic-batters-trade/a-56506934 (Retrieved on 14 March 2021)

considered as interference with the domestic affairs of the host country and that of the EU for that matter. The interviewed diplomat also recalled that Chancellor Merkel has experienced some challenges and difficulties during President Trump's time. In his view, the US sanctions towards the German carmaker Volkswagen partly aimed to push the German automobile industry towards the electric cars and to undermine the competitiveness of this key industrial sector.[150]

The reality briefly explained above also means that Germany's welfare and economic power heavily depend on the stability and sustainability of the international liberal trade system. Given this picture, President Trump's policies harshly questioning the established liberal order and engaging in a so-called trade war with China have irritated Germany deeply and served as a wake-up call in some ways, particularly about the future of the European security. President Trump was also sceptical about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which was attached a lot of importance by his predecessor Barack Obama and near a conclusion.[151] In fact, President Trump's period has been a nightmare for those who care about the transatlantic relations, particularly for Europe and for those American circles which attach a primary importance to the partnership with Europe on many global and regional threats and challenges.

[150] Interviewee 1.

[151] Sebastian Dullien. (2017). "Trump's poisoned TTIP chalice", European Council on Foreign Relations-ECFR, Commentary, 28 April 2017. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_trumps_poisoned_ttip_chalice/ (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

Joschka Fischer, a former German Foreign Minister from Green Party, in an interview given to Spiegel Online on 22 May 2018, expressed his concerns. He warned that the US President is destroying the world order constructed by his country, drew attention to the risks that a war with Iran would bear and to deterioration and weakening of transatlantic relations. Under these circumstances, Fischer underlined the necessity of investing in the EU's future seriously.[152]

Scheler and Webb also express similar concerns about the consequences of Trump policies and his "America first" doctrine. The term they chose to describe the transatlantic relations was the "estrangement" between the US and Europe. It basically meant that the two sides are becoming stranger to and moving away from each other. Scheler and Webb underlines the finding that the younger generation is particularly disappointed and turning away from the US. They also argue that generally President Trump was not liked by most Europeans, but in Germany this feeling was much more common and stronger, and Germany has really been estranged from the US unlike any other period in the near history of these two countries.[153]

Based on his extensive research, Brugger sees the following as three major reasons in deterioration of the US-German relations: 1) "a significant decline in trust among the

[152] Mathieu von Rohr & Christoph Schult. (2018). "Interview with Joschka Fischer. 'The U.S. President Is Destroying the American World Order'", Spiegel Online, International, 22 May 2018. https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/former-german-foreign-minister-american-president-is-destroying-american-order-a-1208549.html (Retrieved on 11 January 2021)

[153] Ronja Scheler & Joshua Webb. (2020). "What Europe Thinks ... About the United States". Internationale Politik Quarterly, October 1, 2020. Spring 2021 Issue: The EU-US-China Triangle, Issue #2/2021-April. https://ip-quarterly.com/en/what-europe-thinks-about-united-states (Retrieved on 18 March 2021)

traditionally pro-American German centre-right politicians (this of course includes Chancellor Merkel as well); 2) a continued decline of trust in the US as a state entity, as opposed to strongly fluctuating trust in different US Presidents; and 3) the (US National Security Agency) NSA's spying crisis which exploded in 2014[154] and deeply affected German policy makers' trust in the bilateral security partnership, an area where trust was stable even during the Bush presidency".[155]

Aiming to highlight the importance of keeping strong transatlantic ties and close cooperation, Sigmar Gabriel, a former German Foreign Minister, and John B. Emerson former US Ambassador in Berlin, published a joint article in Frankurter Allgemeine, a Germany Daily on October 20, 2020. In their article, they drew attention to the fact that in the globalized world, no country is able to counter and address global challenges on its own and therefore, needs the support and cooperation of others. They emphasized that COVID-19 pandemic has served as a stark reminder of this reality and clearly showed the vulnerability and interconnectivity of all countries around the globe. In their opinion, it appears inevitable that due to the lockdown measures the world economy will have to shrink and this will result in the loss of jobs and income for many people. As another challenge that requires global cooperation and coordination they showed climate change, which causes unusual weather conditions,

[154] "U.S. Spy Scandal Triggers Outrage, Paranoia in Germany" NBC News, August 2, 2014. https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/nsa-snooping/u-s-spy-scandal-triggers-outrage-paranoia-germany-n170366 (Retrieved on 15 March 2021)

[155] Philipp Brugger. (2019). "The Erosion of German Elite Trust in the United States of America". German Politics, 28:4, 521-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2019.1594785 (Retrieved on 05 April 2020)

thus affects agriculture and triggers mass migration. On the common transatlantic agenda, the fight against terrorist organizations and networks internationally must also appear prominently, argue the two authors. They also point out gradually widening gap between the wealthy and poor as a result of unequal distribution of income and resources, which leads to several other problems, and conclude that all these threats and challenges are of transnational nature and cannot be addressed through military means.[156]

In line with this spirit, according to a report issued by a group of prominent scholars in the name of European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a leading European think-tank, in November 2020 following the election victory of the new US President Joe Biden, the new US President's election would usher in a new era in the transatlantic partnership, which is keen on maintaining the liberal international order. In their opinion, the US wishes to see Europe as a "sovereign partner, but not as a helpless dependent". They drew attention to the expectation that the US will seek the EU's support in its efforts towards China in the Indo-Pacific region, and while doing this, will wish to see the EU take more responsibility for security and stability in its immediate neighbourhood, namely in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The authors suggest that in return for these increased efforts, the EU and its member states could propose "a new transatlantic bargain" that is so comprehensive to include all

[156] Sigmar Gabriel & John B. Emerson (2020). "Wir brauchen eine neue Agenda der Gemeinsamkeiten". Frankfurter Allgemeine, 20 October 2020. https://www.faz.net/-hbi-a4lsi (Retrieved on 05 April 2021)

major cross-cutting issues such as “health policy, trade, security, climate change, and the defence of democracy”.[157]

The authors of the aforementioned report indeed make reasonable suggestions, which, if both sides of the Atlantic are serious about renewing their partnership on new and stronger pillars and in a result-oriented fashion, are certainly worth considering and implementing to the extent possible. In this respect, as suggested also by the authors, Europeans/the EU should stop dreaming about going back to good old days and proactively look to contribute to the formation of a new partnership by undertaking their best efforts.

With regard to a serious thorn in transatlantic relations, which is European security and burden sharing between the two sides of the Atlantic, Bergmann and Haddad come up with an innovative solution to eliminate it. In this regard, they argue that a new approach needs to be developed and pursued by the US in this matter, because simply pressurizing European partners to increase their defence spending is nothing but a recipe for continuation of differences and unresolved transatlantic rift. Bergmann and Haddad further argue that European states including Germany has for too long a period shown allegiance to the NATO alliance even at the expense of leaving their militaries in atrophy, under-resourced and underequipped. In order to shed their

[157] Julien Barnes-Dacey et all. (2020). “A new transatlantic bargain: An action plan for transformation, not restoration”. European Council on Foreign Relations, ecfr.eu, 26 November 2020. https://ecfr.eu/publication/a-new-transatlantic-bargain-an-action-plan-for-transformation-not-restoration/ (Retrieved on 15 February 2021)

inaction and sense of over reliance on the NATO, Bergmann and Haddad suggest that the Next Generation EU Fund, which is recently created by the EU as a recovery package under pandemic conditions, would serve as a good example and potential model for financing the EU's initiatives aiming to reinforce the Union's military and defence capabilities. The two authors' ideas and suggestions appear quite innovative and encouraging for the EU. Because they recall that after a decade marked by successive huge crisis like Greek debt, Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU has come out and stands today stronger and more capable than before. Moreover, in their view, the EU has proven that it has the ability to launch and implement important and comprehensive policy initiatives as and when required by the circumstances. As such, believing in the possibility that the EU can achieve much about the high policy areas, the US should further encourage the EU to move ahead on this path to overhaul and reinforce the European security capabilities. In conclusion the two authors emphasize that without delay the EU should redouble its efforts, think big and launch ambitious defence initiatives, which would benefit both the EU and NATO.[158]

In this respect, one would be only fair to recall Chancellor Merkel's contributions to development and approval of creative solutions to economic challenges faced in the EU and in the transatlantic cooperation due to Covid-19 pandemic. As can be seen from the proposal put forward by Bergmann and Haddad, the innovative solutions may

[158] Max Bergmann and Benjamin Haddad (2021). "Europe Needs to Step up on Defense. Brussels Should Borrow and Spend More on Security", Foreign Affairs, November 18, 2021. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2021-11-18/europe-needs-step-defense (Retrieved on 25 November 2021)

serve as a source of innovation that can pave the way for a more robust security cooperation and burden sharing inside the EU and with the US.

3.3.3.3. The Russian Federation (Russia)

Due to their complex and interwoven history, geographical proximity, multi-faceted modern-day relations, Russia's aggressive, destabilizing and revisionist foreign policy discourse in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU and alike have made Germany's relations with Russia a most serious and sustained challenge for Chancellor Merkel throughout her four terms in power. Even though she has developed a close dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin and two countries have further developed their strong economic and trade ties, their geopolitical priorities have not overlapped, and President Putin's policies based on hard power and military challenge have become a source of grievance for the German Chancellor.

About the German-Russian relations, a senior German diplomat interviewed underlines that Chancellor Merkel, who is a Russian speaker and knows the Russian history and mentality very well, has managed them without any illusions. In his view, the criticism towards Merkel about neglecting democracy and human rights in her dialogue with Russian President Putin does not reflect the reality. So, he believes that these issues have always been on her agenda whenever she met her Russian counterpart. On the other hand, he thinks, no country formulates and implements its foreign policy on the basis of values alone but also tries to strike a good and acceptable

balance between values and national interests, even though this is not an easy endeavour and this is exactly what Chancellor Merkel has been doing or trying to do when dealing with Russia.[159]

A senior retired Turkish diplomat appears to agree with his German colleague, as he also emphasizes the view that Chancellor Merkel has managed to keep a close communication and dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the two leaders regarded each other as important political leaders in Europe. The interviewee argues that Russia, both as a vast market and economic partner, has always been important for Germany, as such Germany has attached priority to its relations with Russia and despite crisis like the one in Ukraine, German business and industry circles have lobbied with Merkel governments to go easy on Russia when the EU sanctions on Russia have been designed, decided upon and implemented. In this regard, Germany appears to face a dilemma. As also argued by the interviewee, Germany wishes to have good neighbourly relations both with Russia and Eastern European countries and at times, these two goals appear to be conflicting. Still, the interviewee believes that throughout her term in office, despite criticism from various sides, Chancellor Merkel has managed these apparently conflicting foreign policy objectives quite skilfully and consistently.[160]

[159] Interviewee 3.

[160] Interviewee 2.

In a similar way, a senior retired Turkish diplomat tends to believe that about Germany's relations with Russia, even though by pursuing a style different from that of her predecessor, the former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD), Angela Merkel has carefully kept Germany's conventional understanding and tolerance towards Russia and avoided publicly confronting this great power. In this respect, he further argues that despite Russia's violations of international law by its interventions in Ukraine and even though the EU imposed sanctions on Russia, German business circles have been allowed to find ways to continue their economic and commercial activities in and with Russia by alternative means.[161]

On the other hand, another senior Turkish diplomat seems to think a bit differently, because he argued that Chancellor Merkel has also not been able to take a strong stance against the increasingly authoritarian governments in some EU countries like Hungary and Poland. In his view, this failure of hers has tarnished the EU's image as a champion of democracy in its immediate neighbourhood and around the world. In handling these awkward crises, he argues, she has muddled through and could not present a decisive leadership to discourage these illiberal regimes.[162]

As a voice from the world of think-tanks, Ulrich Speck in an interview for this research emphasized that German-Russian relations have a deep historical background, the two states and peoples know each other very well and until 1989 there were Russian troops

[161] Interviewee 4.

[162] Interviewee 1.

stationed in East Germany, on the German soil, the then Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev withdrew them based on a Treaty reached with the then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, together with other occupying powers of WWII. Speck reminded that Chancellor Kohl adapted a policy of "Russia first", opposed the membership of Baltic states in the EU and NATO, with the purpose of accommodating Russian concerns and keeping this new relationship away from major problems. In this regard, Speck believes that Kohl and his successor Gerhard Schröder have attached priority to profitable business relations with Russia and Chancellor Angela Merkel has, by and large, maintained this tradition. However, after Putin's harsh reaction to the protests in Moscow in 2011, Speck argues, she has become critical of his policies and displayed her sympathy to opposition leaders like Navalny.[163]

As rightly noted by Stelzenmüller, in 2010s, Germany and Russia appeared to have been in a mutually beneficial relationship in which Germany was expected to help Russia transform and modernize its infrastructure and economy, but the democratization of the political sphere and system in Russia would remain out of reach. Over the time, however, Russia has become increasingly revisionist, approached another rising great power, China, and these two major powers have started acting as strategic competitors to the West and the international norms and principles largely defined by the western liberal democratic understanding. They are particularly keen to promote the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs and would like to keep their authoritarian political systems. Russian has taken its strategic

[163] Interview with Speck.

competition with the West far beyond its immediate neighbourhood to Syria and Libya and the brutal approach pursued by the Syrian regime relying on the Russian backing has caused displacement of millions of Syrians and mass flow of migration into neighbouring countries and through them all the way to Europe and Germany. Russia's encroachment of not only territorial borders, but also allegedly digital borders with the West has been a source of concern and complaint for the US, Europe and Germany.[164]

Germany occupies a prominent place on the Russian foreign policy agenda and thus receives particular attention from the Russian leadership. In the eyes of the Russian policy makers, despite its weak military capabilities, Germany is a pivotal state in the EU/Europe. As such, Russia pursues, if we are to resort the glossary of foreign policy analysis, a "linkage politics" [165] towards Germany and tries to establish linkages with Germany's civil society and political elite with a view to influencing their thinking and achieving favourable policy outcomes.

In this vein, a senior Turkish diplomat interviewed for this research also told that German-Russian relations have a deep historical background dating centuries back and Germans have a special kind of influence over Russians and vice-a-versa. He also reminded that Merkel, who grew up in Eastern Germany under the influence of Soviet/Russian culture, felt close to Russia, despite the fact that she viewed USA as

[164] Stelzenmüller (2021). "The Singular Chancellor. The Merkel Model and Its Limits", Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021

[165] Christopher Hill. (2003). "The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy", Part II-The International, Linkage politics, 208-213 (Retrieved on 20 January 2021)

her political point of reference and as such, Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline may be considered as a most recent product of this historical affinity to Russia.[166]

Besides a historical recognition for Russian culture and sympathy for Russia, however, as Wood puts it, there has been a growing disquiet and disapproval concerning Russia's foreign policy revisionism and adventurism and its authoritarian political regime and certain practices and policies in Russia.[167]

On the other hand, Russia actively works to disrupt the EU initiatives aiming to promote the liberal democratic norms and principles in its "near abroad". "Near abroad" is a concept used to describe the areas in the post-Soviet space where Russia considers itself privileged and seeks to maintain its political, economic, and military influence.[168] Oktay Tanrısever, while stating that the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative has failed to achieve its stated objectives, presents "Russia's systematic use of manipulative tactics, which aim to exploit the vulnerabilities of the target countries, as a main reason".[169] This foreign policy discourse pursued by Russia also confirms

[166] Interviewee 1.

[167] Steve Wood. (2017). "Germany, Russia, Europe: Multilevel politics and the divergent resonance of ''history''". International Journal 2017, 72:3, 338-355. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702017723668 (Retrieved on 12 January 2021)

[168] Zhao Huasheng. (2021). "Russia and Its Near Abroad: Challenges and Prospects". Valdai Club, Expert Opinions, March 9, 2021. https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/russia-and-its-near-abroad-challenges-and-prospect/ (Retrieved on 11 April 2021)

[169] Oktay Tanrısever. (2014). "EU's Eastern Partners and the Vilnius Summit: Opportunities Seized and Missed". Turkish Policy Quarterly, Winter 2014, 12:4. https://www.turkishpolicy.com/Files/ArticlePDF/seized-and-missed-opportunities-in-vilnius-winter-2014-en.pdf (Retrieved on 20 March 2021)

this country's positioning as a strategic competitor to the EU in particular and to the West in general.

Mustafa Nail Alkan in two articles complementing each other about the Crisis in Ukraine in the context of the German-Russian relations and the Energy Security problematic of the EU explains intermingled history of Germany, Russia and Ukraine in several ways and underlines the complicated nature of the crisis and conflict in Ukraine based on historical, psychological, geopolitical and economic perspectives. Alkan underlines the fact that due to their interdependence especially in the fields of energy, economic and trade ties, Russian and Germany/EU somehow avoid taking harsh steps against each other. Yet Russia's image in the eyes of German people has significantly worsened after its violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and annexation of Crimea against the clear principles of the UN Charter. Several strategies pursued by Germany towards Putin's Russia like "rapprochement through economic integration" or "partnership for modernization" have failed due to Russia's overriding security concerns and distrust in the Western policies particularly eastward expansion of NATO and the EU, not only in terms of inclusion of some countries but also its political and normative influence through initiatives such as Eastern Partnership.[170]
In fact, Germany's decision to reduce its use of nuclear energy after the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in Japan and its decision to end production of coal in

[170] Mustafa Nail Alkan. (2015a). "Avrupa Birliği Enerji Güvenliği ve Ukrayna Meselesi (Energy Security of the European Union and the Issue of Ukraine)". Karadeniz Araştırmaları (Black Sea Studies), Kış (Winter) 2015, Sayı (Issue) 44, s. (pp.) 215-227. & (2015b). "Almanya-Rusya İlişkileri Bağlamında Ukrayna Krizi (Ukraine Crisis in the Context of German-Russian Relations)". Karadeniz Araştırmaları (Black Sea Studies), Bahar (Spring) 2015, Sayı (Issue) 45., s. (pp.) 89-103 (Retrieved on 20 April 2021)

Germany in a gradual way appears to have increased its reliance on the energy imports from Russia. Also, by taking the political instability in Eastern Europe particularly in Ukraine, Germany started attaching importance direct import of natural gas from Russia and to this end construction of a first pipeline, North Stream (Nord Stream), has been completed in 2011/2012 and the work for a second pipeline, North Stream 2, has been ongoing for some time despite objections by the US and Ukraine and some other Eastern European countries.

With the development of shale gas production technology, the US in recent years has become a major natural gas producer and exporter. As a result, it has been strongly emphasizing its concern about the increasing dependence of its allies like Germany and Turkey on natural gas imported from Russia. By doing this, the US appears to indicate its wish that its allies buy natural gas from the US producers.

As noted above, Nord Stream 2 would be the second natural gas pipeline connecting the RF and Germany directly through the Baltic Sea and bypassing the Eastern European countries like Ukraine. The estimated cost of the North Stream 2 pipeline is around 11 billion USD. The project was initially foreseen to be finished in 2021.[171]

[171] Holly Elyatt. (2022). "Nord Stream 2 cost $11 billion to build. Now, the Russia-Europe gas pipeline is unused and abandoned", CNBC, 31 March 2022. https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/nord-stream-2-cost-dollar11-billion-to-build-now-the-russia-europe-gas-pipeline-is-unused-and-abandoned/ar-AAVHnQe (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

In the eyes of the US authorities in the era of President Donald Trump, if completed, this pipeline would further increase Europe's dependence on Russia and in turn this would be a security risk for Europe and a weakness for the Western alliance. In this regard, in December 2019 the US Senate approved sanctions on Germany for constructing new natural gas pipelines from Russia. Sanctions were about asset freezes and visa restrictions for those who engaged in the controversial pipeline project. In reaction to this move by the US side, the German Government rejected this US move and imposition of sanctions by underlining that it is an interference in its internal affairs. In reality, the US sanctions appeared to have brought Moscow and the European Union more closely together, as they also issued statements arguing against the US sanctions which President Trump approved.[172] The sanctions bore their immediate impact and the Swiss company Allseas which constructs the pipeline under the Baltic Sea announced that it "suspended its North Stream 2 pipelay activities". [173]

Even though Turkey has in recent years been facing some "sanctions" from its key ally, the US, due to various bilateral issues and its missile purchase from the RF, it seemed to be a first time for Germany, another NATO ally of the USA, to share a similar fate. Germany has so far shown a mild reaction and stated that it rejects such

[172] Der Spiegel. (2019). "USA verhängen Sanktionen wegen Nord Stream 2", Der Spiegel, December 21, 2019. https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/usa-donald-trump-verhaengt-sanktionen-wegen-nord-stream-2-offiziell-in-kraft-a-1302446.html (Retrieved on 11 March 2021)

[173] Der Spiegel. (2019). "Nord Stream 2 stockt auf den letzten Kilometern", Der Spiegel, December 21, 2019. https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/nord-stream-2-us-sanktionen-lassen-ostsee-pipeline-auf-letzten-kilometern-stocken-a-1302451.html". (Retrieved on 11 March 2021)

"extra-territorial sanctions"[174], yet the political analysts/experts wait to observe the impact of these sanctions on the spirit of alliance in NATO. The EU also criticised the US sanctions and described the activities of the European companies involved in pipeline construction as "legitimate business". Regarding the European reaction, the US Ambassador in Berlin, Richard Grenell, expressed the view that "15 European countries, EU Commission and European Parliament have stated concerns about this Project and in this sense, the US sanctions are in favour of Europe and protects the Europe's best interest and in fact, many European diplomats thank the US for taking this step".[175]

As it has been reversing several controversial decisions taken by the Trump administration, in May 2021 the Biden administration announced that it cancelled the sanctions imposed on the company constructing North Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, despite the objections by critics of the project in the US Congress.[176]

As to the Russian view of the transatlantic relationship, Stephen F. Szabo presents Russia as both "a divisive and a unifying force in the German-American relationship".

[174] Euractiv. (2019). "Germany and EU condemn US sanctions on gas pipeline", December 21, 2019. https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/germany-and-eu-condemn-us-sanctions-on-gas-pipeline/. (Retrieved on 11 March 2021)

[175] Guy Chazan. (2019). "US envoy defends Nord Stream 2 sanctions as 'pro-European'". Financial Times, December 22, 2019. https://www.ft.com/content/21535ebe-23dc-11ea-9a4f-963f0ec7e134 (Retrieved on 12 March 2021)

[176] Andrea Shalal, Timothy Gardner and Steve Holland. (2021). "U.S. waives sanctions on Nord Stream 2 as Biden seeks to mend Europe ties". Reuters, May 20, 2021. https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-waive-sanctions-firm-ceo-behind-russias-nord-stream-2-pipeline-source-2021-05-19/ (Retrieved on 21 May 2021)

In his opinion, Russia has been a central agenda item of this relationship since the end of WWII. Despite their certain important divergences in interests and policies, the Soviet threat, Szabo reminds, kept the US and Germany together in facing this common challenge to the liberal democratic world order and state systems.[177]

Daehnhardt argued that Russia's foreign policy revisionism combined with other factors including the Brexit is likely increase the pressure on Germany to defend the existing order. This argument is based on the observation that Germany has benefited from the post-Cold War order in the Euro-Atlantic area more than any other country in Europe. In addition, the leadership that Germany under the guidance of Chancellor Merkel has displayed in managing the Eurozone debt crisis[178], which started at the end of 2009, has raised the expectation from this country to adopt a more active and engaged attitude also in the EU's foreign and security policies. Against this background, Daehnhardt further argued that since the Ukraine crisis and Germany's performance in handling this crisis, Germany seems to be emerging the EU's strategic leader. This signifies "an unprecedented and substantial change which Germany's foreign and security policy is undergoing".[179]

[177] Stephen F. Szabo. (2018). "Different Approaches to Russia: The German-American–Russian Strategic Triangle". German Politics, May 11, 2018, 27:2, 230-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1446081 (Retrieved on 22 March 2021)

[178] Kimberly Amadeo. (2020). "Eurozone Debt Crisis. Causes, Cures, and Consequences". The Balance, November 16, 2020. https://www.thebalance.com/eurozone-debt-crisis-causes-cures-and-consequences-3305524 (Retrieved on 20 February 2021)

[179] Patricia Daehnhardt. (2018). "German Foreign Policy, the Ukraine Crisis and the Euro-Atlantic Order: Assessing the Dynamics of Change". German Politics, 27:4, 516-538, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2018.1448386 (Retrieved on 10 February 2020)

3.3.3.4. China

Chancellor Angela Merkel has, throughout her years in power, always trodden carefully as far as Germany's multi-faceted relations with China are concerned. Considering the potentially disastrous consequences of a major conflict between the current hegemon, the USA, and the rising great power, China, she has made efforts to forestall such a conflict and, in a way, even the emergence of new "Cold War" blocks. This careful policy has been interpreted by some as "Merkel's siding with Xi" after analysing her address at the 2021 Davos World Economic Forum. It was also noted by observers that in her address, she preferred to refer to certain controversial practices in China as "different social models" and human rights and fundamental freedoms as "indivisible elementary values" and underlined the need for multilateralism.[180]

Ulrich Speck from GMFUS underlined that Merkel's foreign policy towards China has basically had two legs: commercial interests and human rights. In his view, she had appreciation for China, because it helped certain EU countries during the Euro crisis. Speck argued that even though she invited Dalai Lama to Germany in 2007, in her view, China is too big to confront, Germany has large economic interests and thus, needs to work closely with China on many domestic (human rights) and global issues (like climate change). As such, Speck notes, she has paid close attention to Germany's relations with China and visited this country many times in 16 years to keep close

[180] Stuart Lau and Laurenz Gehrke. (2021). "Merkel sides with Xi on avoiding Cold War blocs". Politico, January 26, 2021. https://www.politico.eu/article/merkel-sides-with-xi-on-avoiding-cold-war-blocs/ (Retrieved on 25 February 2021)

communication and working relations with its political leadership. In this respect, Speck further argues that Chancellor Merkel has emphasized human rights and rule of law in her dialogue with the Chinese leadership, but a strategic vision appeared to be missing, as it was not very clear what exactly Germany wanted China to do and how to get there.[181]

Similarly, Kristian Brakel also thinks that as compared to Russia, China is a different and more complex case for German foreign policy and as argued by many, Germany seems too dependent on its economic and trade ties with this enormous country and rising great power. In his view, Germany is relatively still a small player in the world, especially if and when it does not act together with the EU and its member states and furthermore, German foreign policy priorities do not always fully overlap with those of the US and all EU members. Brakel also draws attention to the fact that under these circumstances, unlike the approach of Merkel governments, the new German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Green Party) takes up and targets China specifically regarding its human rights policies, however, China's leverage over Germany is quite strong and as such, the outcome of this new critical approach is difficult to predict.[182]

[181] Interview with Speck.

[182] Interview with Brakel.

In fact, given the increasing significance of China's economic and political role in the global framework, a deep understanding of China is essential.[183] In this respect, it is clear that Germany does not want to be caught in the middle of any conflict between the USA and China, and Chancellor Merkel seemed to be aiming to separate and compartmentalize the problematic issues with China like human rights and freedoms, from the economic and trade interests. On the other hand, in dealing with the USA, she has been aiming to strike a delicate balance between keeping the US security umbrella over Europe mainly through the NATO and continuing its economic and trade relations with China, by expecting the US not to push too much Germany and the EU to side with it in its struggle against China. It is clear that it may not be possible to achieve all these conflicting objectives regarding the relations with China and the USA. To the contrary, this ambivalent and inconsistent strategy could have elicited negative reaction both from China and the USA. Still, given Germany's global strategy and brand as a "trade nation", Chancellor Merkel has not had many choices in trying not to upset Germany's major ally, the USA, and giant market and trade partner, China.

A senior retired Turkish diplomat argues that China's human rights records have always been known to Chancellor Merkel and other German foreign policy makers, yet Germany has not been able to influence China visibly in this field. For instance, he recalls that due to China's political and economic pressure, Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, has started being received in Germany gradually at a lower political

[183] Karl Koch (2016). Book Review: "Germany and China: Transnational Encounters since the Eighteenth Century, by Joanne Miyang Cho and David M. Crowe (eds), Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 296" German Politics, 25:1, 159-160 (Retrieved on 26 February 2021)

level, as argued by some political circles in Germany, in order to appease China.[184] In this respect, he claims that once again, Germany's foreign policy allegedly based on liberal democratic values and norms, as well as the concept of "change through trade" has failed and even been used by China against Germany. He also recalls that China has played important roles in supporting the EU to overcome the Euro crisis and Chancellor Merkel recognized at an early stage the reality of China as a great power. He concluded that after all, it can be argued that Germany treats other countries depending on their size and political and economic power, in this respect, great powers seem to receive more understanding and tolerance in certain areas.[185]

Indeed, at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2021, Chancellor Merkel made it clear that she has reservations about joining forces and acting against China or being dragged by another power in that direction.[186] French President Macron appeared to support the Chancellor's approach and welcoming the US return to the Paris Agreement, called on the USA and China to work together on climate change.[187]

[184] Deutsche Welle Staff. (2008). "Dalai Lama to Get Weak Welcome During Germany Visit". https://www.dw.com/en/dalai-lama-to-get-weak-welcome-during-germany-visit/a-3335112 (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

[185] Interviewee 4.

[186] Alessandra Scotto Di Santalo. (2021). "Angela Merkel delivers blow to Joe Biden as she sides with China against EU-US alliance", Express, 27 June 2021. https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1389555/Angela-Merkel-news-Davos-speech-Joe-Biden-us-eu-china-xi-Jinping (Retrieved on 12 February 2021)

[187] Alain Guillemoles. (2021). "*À Davos, Emmanuel Macron appelle à un accord international sur la biodiversité*", La Croix, 26 January 2021. https://www.la-croix.com/Economie/A-Davos-Emmanuel-Macron-appelle-accord-international-biodiversite-2021-01-26-1201137142 (Retrieved on 11 June 2022)

These position taken by the European leaders indicate that even though the US President wishes to act together with their allies against China, these allies do not approach to such a confrontational handling of relations with this rising great power. On the other hand, the Chinese side does not seem to be missing any opportunity to drive wedges between the states in the Western camp, as Chinese Foreign Ministry in a statement emphasized that it would continue to be in the interests of European firms to invest in the Chinese economy, which keeps growing fast and in a stable manner. It is safe to assume that European companies are going to continue their economic relations in China and with their Chinese counterparts regardless of differences of opinion between the two sides of the Atlantic about how best to handle a rising and increasingly assertive China.

In this context, C.H. Fung examines the economic links first between the European Union (EU) and China by focusing mainly on the economic relationships between Germany and China. In this context, he considers the so-called "German Model" or the "Berlin Way" and tries to see if they can somehow be reflected in the relevant policies of China. As a result, he comes up with the findings that "1) EU-China trade and investment relationships are strong, deepening rapidly but they are somewhat unbalanced and asymmetric; 2) the economic relationships between Europe and China are focused on manufacturing; 3) the EU-China relationships are primarily Germany-centric; and 4) the elements of the "German Model" such as participation (*Mitbestimmung*), medium-sized businesses (*Mittelstand*) and the German apprenticeship system can have important structural and policy implications as China

continues to grow and experiment with reforms aiming at combining stability, harmony and competitiveness".[188]

By way of a critical approach to the question, Melvyn B. Krauss argues that Germany is too dependent on its exports to China and therefore, cannot take a tough line about the alarming human-rights record of this country, which is run through communist regime, and Germany's foreign policy towards China should not be expected to change under the next Government. Krauss presents an interesting side effects of Germany's conciliatory policy towards China and emphasizes that this policy is not helpful for the German economy, because it keeps the German companies focused on export-oriented approach and therefore, prevents it from investing more productively in digital and environment friendly technologies, which have not received adequate attention from the governments of Chancellor Angela Merkel. In the opinion of Krauss, in order to remain competitive and get more prosperous in the 21st century, Germany needs to transform its economy into a high-tech, digitalized and environment friendly one, however, its pro-China policy sustains an obsolete mercantilist model of economy. Whereas the Greens are aware of the side effects of Germany's export oriented economic model which pays a close attention to relations with China, Krauss argues, the new Chancellor Olaf Scholz is likely to keep the approach of his predecessor Chancellor Merkel, also due to the pressure from trade and business circles, which too prefer the status quo. Another interesting claim put forward by Krauss is that

[188] K.C. Fung (2015). "Europe, Germany and "The German Model": Economic Links and Implications for China". Global Economic Review, October 2015, 44:4, 376-386. DOI:10.1080/1226508X.2015.1106059 (Retrieved on 20 February 2020)

Germany's pro-China foreign and economic policy, even at the level of kowtow to China, despite the assertive foreign policy pursued by Chinese President Xi Jinping, which elicits a strong reaction from the US, and this leads to tension and fractures within the EU. This is because many EU members feels compelled to choose between the EU solidarity and transatlantic partnership.[189] In fact, it is not only a dilemma facing the other EU member states, but also Germany itself has been having increasing difficulty in striking a right balance in its foreign policy, especially in view of the intensifying confrontation and competition between the US, its most important ally, and China, its leading economic and trade partner.

In fact, China is known to be a good at reverse engineering. It has accumulated an impressive pool of advanced technologies through this method. Yet, politically and social, it refuses to play the international game by the liberal rules set out largely by the West, i.e., the US and its allies. Germany, on the other hand, has historically defined and implemented foreign policy discourse towards the Soviet Union and other countries behind the Iron Curtain, which was described as "*Wandel durch Handel* (Change through Trade)". Apparently, Germany under the political leadership of Chancellor Merkel has been tried to apply this policy approach to China as well and recommended the same approach to all its allies and partners including the US. China, however, has proven to be too strong, too big and too resilient in the face of liberal pressures to change it and embrace the rules-based liberal international order as is now.

[189] Melvyn B. Krauss. (2021). "Germany's Chinese Kowtow", Project Syndicate, November 5, 2021. https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/new-german-government-same-china-policy-by-melvyn-krauss-2021-11 (Retrieved on 06 November 2021)

Moreover, it can even be argued that China, through a "political reverse engineering" and by manipulating the difficulties facing the EU and Germany during global financial crisis and Euro crisis, has implemented the same approach towards Germany and Europe. By acting so, China may not have been able to make Germany and the EU accept its authoritarian world view, but by offering economic and trade advantages mainly to Germany, has certainly managed to silence most of outside criticism towards its domestic practices, including human rights violations against Uighurs in the autonomous Eastern Turkistan (so-called Xinyang) region.

Yet, Elizabeth Economy argues that China's militarily assertive foreign policy in its region does not really support its desire for regional leadership. On the contrary, its aggressive behaviours tend to mobilize other states in the region, led by the US, to form new partnerships, like the Quad, which includes Australia, India, Japan and the US. Similarly, Economy draws attention to a newest regional partnership, called AUKUS, formed with the participation of Australia, UK and the US. She also note that other European countries, like France, Germany and the Netherlands, alongside the transatlantic security alliance NATO, got also prompted to show closer attention to and develop a deeper security engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.[190] Gradual uniting of anti-China actors can be viewed as an indication of the diminishing tolerance of these players in the face of China's thirst for geopolitical gains and strong appetite for competition.

[190] Economy (2021). "Xi Jinping's New World Order. Can China Remake the International System?", Foreign Affairs, 2021.

3.4. Multilateralism and Germany's Efforts to Have a Seat at the Top Table

Germany under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel has placed a strong emphasis on the maintenance and well-functioning of the rules-based liberal international order, known also as multilateralism.

Particularly due to the questioning of the liberal institutional world order, which was triggered by US President Donald Trump's "America First" doctrine, Germany has started highlighting the importance of multilateralism more strongly and often in its international relations. It has even launched a new international initiative called as "Alliance for Multilateralism" and presented it in the context of the UN General Assembly gatherings in New York. As such, multilateralism and its defence have gained a significant place in the Merkelian foreign policy literature. Therefore, answers to sub-questions like "Why does multilateralism matter so much for Germany? Does it compensate in some ways for the lack of material power in certain areas which are important for Germany to achieve its foreign policy goals?" are sought also in this dissertation.

A senior German diplomat interviewed for this research drew attention to the fact that the role of international organizations and rules have been weakening in international politics, but still Germany attaches high importance to maintenance of rules-based international order. He recalled that to this end, Germany, together with France, launched a new initiative called Alliance for Multilateralism, but under the current

international circumstances including fierce competition among great powers, particularly the US and China, the impact of this initiative has remained somewhat limited. Still, the interviewee believes, it is an important reminder for all states, which are not great powers, about the importance of keeping the liberal international order robust and well-functioning. In terms of multilateralism and international security and stability, he shared the view that currently it is hard to argue that disarmament issue, which is particularly important for international peace and security, receives adequate attention from all sides concerned. He further emphasized that it is definitely not a high priority issue nowadays, but renewed efforts must be made also in this area, even though under the current circumstances, one cannot be very hopeful.[191]

In a similar way, Ulrich Speck also has the view that Germany under Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy discourse has attached priority to the rules-based international order and strengthening international and regional cooperation like in the case of the EU. He thinks, however, that in recent years in the international system the role of nation states started becoming increasingly important as they seem to underline their role as the main actors in the system. In this regard, he argues that Chancellor Merkel has maintained the philosophy that Germany should be able to remain in a position that would allow it to talk to all and keep communication and dialogue with all including the authoritarian states. In line with this approach, Speck notes that Chancellor Merkel has been good at mediating including with the leaders of Russia, China and Turkey, has been able to criticize Russia, for instance, for pursuing a foreign

[191] Interviewee 3.

policy based on projection of military power, which should not be in the toolbox of international politics in the 21st century.[192]

Demesmay and Kunz underline the vital importance of the cooperation between Germany and France to defend the international multilateralism, which has been damaged by the previous US Administration. They also point out the fact that international multilateral system serves the best interests of these two countries in terms of protecting and advancing their interests especially in terms of "welfare, security, prosperity and environmental protection".[193]

On the other hand, Germany's representation at the UN Security Council, which is the central body in charge of international security, stability and co-operation, has been attributed a high importance. During Chancellor Merkel's term in the office Germany has been elected twice as the UNSC's non-permanent members for the periods of 2011-2012 and 2019-2020.

Natalie Tröller argues that the increased importance attached to being represented in the UNSC is also related to Germany's changing self-perception and projected image about its expanding role and responsibilities on the international stage. Tröller, after noting that West Germany and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) joined the UN in 1973, shares her interesting observation that after the unification Germany was

[192] Interview with Speck.

[193] Demesmay and Kunz. (2019). "Sustaining Multilateralism in a Multipolar World. What can France and Germany Do to Preserve the Multilateral Order"

elected to the UNSC almost every ten years in 1995/96, 2003/04, 2011/12 and the last time, in 2019/20. As dealt with in more details under the section devoted to the international intervention in Libya in 2011, Germany's UNSC membership in 2011/12 is associated with its policy disagreement on how to handle the crisis in Libya and on the establishment of a no-fly zone over this country, because Germany abstained at the voting in the Council on Resolution 1973, which has triggered a debate and suspicions about the role of Germany in international affairs and its questionable harmony with its Western allies.[194]

Germany follows very closely and actively takes part in the debates related to the reform of the UN Security Council in terms of increasing the number of its permanent members with veto right. Ramesh Takur suggests that the UNSC can be made more representative by implementing a number of options, which would be based on regions, population, economic power, cultural/civilizational groups, and democracy. In his view, the lack of representation from Africa and Latin America represent the biggest challenge and Germany, together with Japan, India and Brazil and one candidate from Africa (Egypt, Nigeria or South Africa) appear to have strong claims and chances, if a reform is undertaken, to be represented at the Council on a permanent basis. In this respect, Thakur lists Germany's advantages in such a reform process as follows: its position as Europe's largest and the world's third largest economy and its

[194] Natalie Tröller. (2019). "Germany in the UN Security Council: The Past as Prologue". E-International, April 18, 2019. https://www.e-ir.info/2019/04/18/germany-in-the-un-security-council-the-past-as-prologue/ (Retrieved on 25 April 2019)

increasingly active role in international affairs but underline the fact that as France and the UK are already permanent members from Europe and questions whether a third European member would be really justified.[195]

Sophia Besch from CER underlined that to Germany, maintenance of the rules-based international order and multilateralism bear particular importance and in this respect, recalled that Germany, in cooperation with France has come up with the idea of Alliance for Multilateralism. In her view, this was also developed as a reaction to the unusual policies of former US President Donald Trump, who kept attacking and shaking the foundations of the existing liberal international order. One can hardly argue, though, that the initiative of Alliance for Multilateralism has been a big success and filled with great ideas and action plans.[196]

3.5. Chapter Conclusion

Nora Müller reminded the conventional perception about Germany and pointed out that Germany under Merkel's chancellorship can be described as a European "status quo power", while France, especially under President Macron, has been pushing for European reform. However, with regards to the establishment of NGEU, Müller thinks that Germany and France were pulling in the same direction. Additionally, she

[195] Ramesh Thakur. (2004). "United Nations Security Council Reform". African Security Studies, 13:3, 66-74. DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2004.9627305 (Retrieved on 12 March 2020)

[196] Interview with Besch.

considers the view that France always expects Germany to cover the financial implications of its assertive ideas and proposals seems somewhat simplistic.[197]

On the other hand, Sophia Besch suggests that in its relationship with France, Germany does not need to always adhere to French ideas and proposals and can try to come up with its own ideas. With regard its presence in Mali, for instance, Besch is of the opinion that Germany follows and supports France, but on the other hand, France needs to communicate its ambitions and goals in the Sub-Sahel region more clearly.[198]

A senior retired Turkish diplomat argued that German foreign policy towards France (and Poland) has been defined and implemented in view of Germany's historical burden and responsibilities and Germany has been making a lot of efforts to regain the public of these countries through various projects like youth bridges. On the other hand, he further argued, by developing and implementing smart economic and scientific policies, Germany has grown so strong in Europe that has turned France into a second-tier actor and given this reality, Germany has been importing electricity and other products from France so that the latter can maintain a bearable foreign trade deficit in their bilateral trade and feel better in this asymmetrical, unequal and imbalanced relationship. The interviewee also claimed that as another example of Germany's tendency to keep good relations with France, it has been supporting French

[197] Interview with Müller.

[198] Interview with Besch.

operations in Africa, particularly in Mali, even though it has been refraining from wholeheartedly mobilizing all its capabilities.[199]

Jana Puglierin underlined in our interview that that close relationship, coordination and consultation with France has been important to Chancellor Merkel. However, in her view, it is a fact that structurally the two countries come from different places, their geography, for instance, is a strong determinant of their foreign policy behaviours and priorities. In this respect, as an example, she thinks that while Germany feels responsibility for Central and Eastern European countries and pays attention to their concerns and well-being, France has different priorities (like its operation in Mali). Puglierin argues that Chancellor Merkel has not always been happy with the French President Emmanuel Macron, viewed him as disruptive because she has had to fix or undo some of what he has said or done. (For instance, President Macron has called NATO "brain dead", while Germany still considers the transatlantic security alliance as the main pillar of its security policies.) As a positive example of German - French partnership and cooperation, Puglierin notes, however, that one can refer to the establishment of the EU Recovery Fund aiming to help EU member states overcome the economic challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic for the EU member states. She underlines that it was a joint project and implemented successfully. Regarding the two states' cooperation on the international stage beyond the EU's borders, she thinks

[199] Interviewee 4.

that Germany and France have coordinated very well and worked together to develop a solution to the crisis in Ukraine as two members of the Normandy format.[200]

In view of Nora Müller, emphasizing the geostrategic necessity for the EU to take on more responsibility for its own security has become a hallmark of the late years of Merkel's chancellorship. She thinks that it became particularly clear during Donald Trump's presidency and given the changed attitude of the Trump Administration vis-à-vis its European allies, Merkel emphasized the need for Europeans to take their fate in their own hands, i.e., to strengthen their capabilities in security and defence policy. Nora Müller further argues that as for European security, France and Germany have different perspectives, because compared to France which favours "strategic autonomy" as a concept, Germany places greater importance on the transatlantic dimension of European security. One reason for this, in her view, can be found in Germany's dependence on the US security umbrella. Going further east, she also argues that Central and Eastern European countries like Poland and the Baltic states consider NATO and US security guarantees as a "life insurance" against potential Russian aggression.[201]

Ulrich Speck concluded in the interview for this research that under the current international affairs based on application of power and considering geopolitical competitions, Merkel's approach does not work anymore, yet this does not mean that

[200] Interview with Puglierin.

[201] Interview with Müller.

it is recommended for Germany to pursue power politics as well. He further argues that the idea of maintaining international order and rules-based system is important for Germany, but the current times may be requiring it to have a clearer foreign policy and be harder when and where necessary, particularly towards authoritarian regimes that try to undermine the rules-based international system, which has contributed to Germany's export oriented economic success and growth immensely.[202]

In this regard, Speck further argues that EU-China Trade and Investment Agreement (CAI) concluded towards the end of 2020, just weeks before Joe Biden assumed his position as the new US President, and construction of Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline with Russia despite warnings and reactions from allies and partners could be mentioned among Chancellor Merkel's mistaken political moves. In his view, Merkel at times has focused on German national interests too much and underestimated various repercussions of Nord Stream 2 pipeline, even though its technical impacts could be eliminated by reverse gas flow, etc. In relation to transatlantic communication and coordination, Speck thinks that the US strategy to counter and contain China appears to represent a continuity in the US foreign policy regardless of the President being Republican or Democrat. Therefore, he believes that it would be unfair to claim that the lack of communication on the side of US regarding AUKUS was caused somewhat by the conclusion of CAI. Still, his most recent observation is that the need

[202] Interview with Speck.

for an improved coordination and consultation in transatlantic relations appears to be recognized by both sides.[203]

The multilateralism and adherence to the rules-based liberal international order remain key to the continued success of Germany's export-oriented economic model. As such, Germany continues its efforts, without too much disturbing the great powers, to defend and promote multilateralism and cooperates with some other states like Brazil and Japan to advance the consultation processes aiming to achieve a reform in the membership of the UNSC.

Most experts/analysts agree that during Chancellor Merkel's time in power, Germany has kept emphasizing the importance of maintaining the rules-based liberal international order, also by launching an initiative called the Alliance for Multilateralism, it has struggled to strike an easily sustainable balance. In this context, Yaşar Aydın also underlines the importance of the rules-based liberal world order for Germany to continue its export-oriented economic success story and social system based on that economic success. In this regard, he argues that Germany faces a dilemma in its foreign policy discourse vis-à-vis China and Russia. Both scenarios pose a dilemma for German foreign policy. In his view, confronting these two countries would undermine German economic interests and welfare. He points out the fact that China has become Germany's largest trade partner over the past decades and with Russia, Germany has extensive economic interests, a most important one being

[203] Interview with Speck.

competitive energy supply. Confronting Russia may also lead to security risks for Germany and Europe, Aydın adds, and in any case by increasing the cost of energy, would undermine competitiveness of German economy on a global scale. [204]

Aydın's observations and conclusions also confirm Germany's difficult position and need for balancing act between the US, China and Russia. In fact, as an economic powerhouse with global links and Europe's leading economic and political power, it does not appear possible for Germany to completely "decouple" from any of these great powers.

Chancellor Merkel has taken a stance to observe some balance in her country's relations with these three states and to maintain dialogue and trade relations with all three. One can expect that in the period ahead, under the new German government, the tone of criticism against China and Russia may get stronger, but in any case, the new government too will have to develop its model of dialogue and cooperation with authoritarian and increasingly assertive political leaderships in these countries.

[204] Yaşar Aydın. (2021). "Post-Merkel Germany Likely to Balance Washington and Moscow", Feniks Politik, December 8, 2021. https://fenikspolitik.org/2021/12/08/post-merkel-germany-likely-to-balance-washington-and-moscow/ (Retrieved on 20 December 2021)

CHAPTER 4

CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL'S FOREIGN POLICY VISION AND DISCOURSE

4.1. Overview

Chancellor Merkel has been an anchor of stability and to a large extent, continuity in Germany's foreign and European policy. This policy framework seems to have been both appreciated and criticized depending on whom one talks to.

In this regard, Ulrich Speck from GMFUS argued in our interview that Chancellor Angela Merkel's guiding beliefs and principles have been wedded to the era of globalization and tend to ignore that in recent years we see a gradual return of geopolitics and geopolitical competition to international politics, as seen in assertive foreign policies of the states like Russia, China and Turkey. As such, in his view, Merkel's approach is a remnant of 1990s, when globalization was a strong trend, and the concepts like open borders and free movement were important, as she has been referring to them frequently.[205]

[205] Interview with Speck.

Yet one can argue that Chancellor Merkel has been at times going beyond the narrowly defined national interests, in a way, taking a cosmopolitan approach to the international politics and foreign policy, her response to the irregular refugee crisis in 2015 has been an evidence of such a flexibility.

Sophia Besch from CER is of the opinion that in terms of strategic thinking, Germany usually imports strategic ideas from its allies without developing and coming up with many indigenous ideas of its own. Yet, the US expects the EU and its wealthiest member Germany, to assume more responsibility for its own affairs, primarily, its security. Germany under the new government may initiate an exercise to review all military deployments abroad with a particular attention to their usefulness and purpose.[206]

Jana Puglierin from ECFR Berlin argues that it may not be entirely true to argue that Chancellor Merkel has not had any vision for Europe. As a reason behind this argument, she reminds that in 2012, in a speech she emphasized that "status quo was not enough for the EU and the Union was to proceed into a different phase". In her view, however, over the following years, perhaps partly due to successive crisis, Chancellor Merkel has probably not seen a majority of member states willing to go that way and such a progress did not seem achievable to her and that is why she aimed for the possible and reachable, instead of the desirable.[207]

[206] Interview with Besch.

[207] Interview with Puglierin.

Kristian Brakel is of the opinion that not always throughout her 16 years in power, but particularly in her recent years, Chancellor Angela Merkel has earned a position of respect as a "cool-headed adult in the room" and reliable crisis manager.[208]

A senior retired Turkish diplomat shared the view that Merkel, as a political leader, has been different from Konrad Adenauer, Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmid, Helmut Kohl, so on. In his view, Chancellor Merkel has been modest, but determined, focused on her objectives and been able to establish close working relations and communications with political leaders around the world. Thanks to her network and credibility, the interviewee thinks, she has been able to play a kind of mediator role in the crisis experienced in the Eastern Mediterranean, bilaterally and through the EU. In his view, Chancellor Merkel's modesty has over the years become her main asset and source of power, because her calm approach has reassured Germany's allies and partners and appeased their concerns. The senior diplomat argues that Chancellor Merkel has spoken the truth to the third countries but has not underestimated or belittled them and believes that her Eastern German background must have played a determining role in shaping her modest personality and this egalitarian attitude.[209]

The retired senior Turkish diplomat interview for this research also noted that Germans work and act in a systematic way, they do not like show-like diplomacy and as a

[208] Interview with Brakel.

[209] Interviewee 2.

political figure, who has been keen on dialogue, listening to others, modest and low-profile mediation, Merkel's departure from the international politics as a respected leader will be felt both by Germans and Europeans. In his view, Chancellor Merkel has ensured continuity and foreseeability in German foreign policy, managed very well the transatlantic tensions particularly during the time of US President Donald Trump, managed carefully and successfully the East-West differences, particularly through close communication with Russian President Putin. He further argues that she has made it possible for Germany to prepare well to face the challenges of the 21st century. She is leaving behind a politically credible and economically strong Germany. Last but not least, the senior diplomat thinks that the way Chancellor Merkel is leaving the politics, on her own will, even though she could probably have won elections and served for another term of four years, will be regarded and remembered as a concrete sign of democratic development and maturity, which Germany has achieved since the WWII and reunification of the two German states in 1991.[210]

4.2. Definitions Applied to Germany's Foreign Policy Behaviours and Discourse

Germany is referred by some as an "abnormal" state, which does not have a military power that corresponds to its economic might.[211] As such, it is suggested that Germany should gradually become a "normal" state and pursue its national interests by resorting

[210] Interviewee 2.

[211] Hans Kundnani. (2011). "Germany as a geoeconomic power", European Council on Foreign Relations-ECFR, 01 July 2022. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_germany_as_a_geoeconomic_power/ (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

to military power as and when necessary. Germany, however, as a state Europeanised inside the European Union and adapting itself to European behavioural patterns, gives priority to soft power tools in its foreign policy. In the 21st century, when the world is filled with nuclear weapons and other threats, however, it is debatable which discourse makes a state more "normal" or "abnormal". Under Chancellor Merkel, Germany has carefully steered away involving directly in any military conflict on its own without acting together with its allies and partners and one may claim that the world where there are enough powers of all sizes which are "normal" states, the states like Germany are unique and valuable actors. Even though it appears to be punching below its weight, Germany manages quite well without resorting to military power to protect or defend its interests. Above all, it has discovered the EU and uses it in a smart way as a power multiplier in the international arena.

Jan Hacke, in an article published in 2006 just one year after Angela Merkel became the first female Chancellor of Germany, announced that a cautious reorientation of German foreign policy is being undertaken under and by Chancellor Merkel and in this respect, relations with the USA have improved considerably and several great challenges facing the West are on the way to be solved through co-operation.[212] The emphasis here on the improving relations with the USA was mainly resulting from the deterioration of the relations between Germany and the USA due to Germany's

[212] Jan Hacke. (2006). "Deutsche Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel". Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, October 13, 2006. https://m.bpb.de/apuz/29462/deutsche-aussenpolitik-unter-bundeskanzlerin-angela-merkel (Retrieved on 02 March 2020)

opposition to the US intervention in Iraq in 2003, when in Germany a coalition government led by Gerhard Schröder of SPD (Social Democratic Party) was in power.

Constanze Stelzenmüller draws attention to a PEW survey in 2020 that showed Chancellor Merkel as the "world's most trusted political leader" also to the fact that Forbes magazine has chosen her, ten years in a row, as the "world's most powerful woman". Indeed, Chancellor Merkel has been keen on opening more room for women in the politics. She has given even the post of Defence Minister to women more than once and ensured that former German Foreign Minister Ursula von der Leyen assumed the position of President of the EU Commission, which, together with the Council Presidency, one of the two most influential positions within the EU structures and thereby, resembles the post of Prime Minister in the national parliamentarian systems with broad executive powers. On the other hand, Chancellor Merkel has often been criticized for being too slow in decision-making in critical times and crisis situations as she has been taking all the time possible to clearly see the broader picture and consider all the options. This fact has also been recognized and underlined by Stelzenmüller.[213]

Hanns W. Maull, a leading scholar on German foreign policy, has been devoting a lot of attention to descriptions and adjectives attributed to Germany such as "reflective,

[213] Stelzenmüller (2021). "The Singular Chancellor. The Merkel Model and Its Limits". Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021.

hegemonic, geo-economic or civilian… (power)". [214] A former Foreign Minister of Poland, Sikorski called Germany as the "indispensable nation of Europe".[215] Given its foreign policy behaviours in the face of various international issues, events and crisis during the time of Chancellor Merkel, it may also be possible to add to these descriptions yet another concept like "hesitant yet progressive power".

4.3. Domestic Actors and Factors Influencing and Shaping German Foreign Policy

In terms of level of analysis, the research for this dissertation is mainly conducted at the level of international system but it does not neglect the role of domestic factors and actors influencing the making and implementation of German foreign policy either.

Accordingly, it may be a good starting point to recall that as per liberal theory, abundantly explained by Andrew Moravcsik, state preferences are defined based on domestic factors such as public expectations, then translated into the international behaviours of the states by influencing the definition and implementation of their foreign policy strategies and objectives.

[214] Hanns W. Maull. (2018). "Reflective, Hegemonic, Geo-economic, Civilian…? The Puzzle of German Power". German Politics, 27:4, 460-478. DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2018.1446520 (Retrieved on 15 April 2020)

[215] Radoslaw Sikorski. (2011). "I fear Germany's power less than her inactivity". Financial Times, November 28, 2011. https://www.ft.com/content/b753cb42-19b3-11e1-ba5d-00144feabdc0 (Retrieved on 22 April 2021)

Public Opinion. Largely due to historical realities experienced before and during the WWII, German public has over the past decades developed strong and deep-seated anti-militarist preferences. It is not principally against international military interventions as a last resort, but even then, it is against Germany's active participation in military operations, with the exceptions in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Public surveys regularly conducted by think-tanks and other foreign policy shaping actors prove this risk averse nature of German people.

In fact, among various domestic factors affecting and defining how the German foreign policy is shaped and implemented, the feeling, stand and support of the German public bears a key importance. This is so, because in the past years German foreign policy and German behaviour in international relations have suffered visibly from a wide gap between the anti-militarist and power competition averse public and the repeated calls and increasing expectations from Germany's partners, first and foremost the USA, and the growing willingness of German political leaders and decision-makers to respond to these calls and expectations positively. German political leaders, including Chancellor Merkel, however, have failed to take specific and decisive steps in the field of military and defence capabilities, largely due to wary nature of the German public.[216]

[216] Sarah Brockmeier. (2021). ""World Out of Joint": Citizen Dialogue on Foreign and Security Policy". Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung/Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), November 03, 2021. https://gppi.net/2021/11/03/citizen-dialogues-on-foreign-and-security-policy (Retrieved on 15 November 2021)

Just less than three months after the departure of Chancellor Merkel from the power, aggressive and revisionist Russian foreign and security policies, particularly invasion of Ukraine, appear to have triggered Germany to play the game differently by deciding to increase Germany's defence budget significantly to boost the nation's military capabilities. In other words, Chancellor Merkel's cautious geopolitical rhetoric falling short of concrete steps started to be replaced by concrete actions in the sphere of military capabilities. Humanitarian tragedy and refugee flow into Germany caused by the Russian aggression may play an important role in sustaining the German public's support to these efforts.[217]

Parliament. German army is called as the army of its Parliament and a Parliamentarian especially tasked and responsible for monitoring and following up matters related to German army (*Parliamentarische Beauftragter*). A conventional way of handling important foreign policy matters in Germany is to present and discuss them in the Federal Parliament, which is of a multi-party character and very representative of the German public. This approach ensures that all different political perceptions and views are expressed and considered for making the most feasible and rational foreign policy to protect German interests and standing in international relations. Political parties have their own views about the different aspects of German foreign policy.

[217] Economist. (2022). "Germany. Ploughshares to swords", March 19, 2022. https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/03/19/a-risk-averse-germany-enters-an-age-of-confrontation (Retrieved on 20 March 2022)

As important participants of foreign policy making and implementation processes, **bureaucratic actors** also have their say about foreign policy issues and in deciding the country's foreign policy behaviours by considering also public preferences. This fact is important to highlight, because it is important in terms of identifying bureaucratic actors that shape the German foreign policy and finding out both domestic and international actors, who play important roles in charting a rational discourse to the German foreign policy. In fact, in today's globalized world and Germany's key roles in the EU, almost every ministry and other government structures perform tasks and responsibilities that are somehow related to foreign relations as well. In this regard, s**ecurity structures** of German bureaucratic system also play a significant role in definition and implementation of German foreign policy. In this regard, a senior retired Turkish diplomat (Interview participant no.9) shares this view and expressed the view that in Germany, s**ecurity institutions** like Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence and Federal Intelligence Agency (BND) play a significant roles in definition and implementation of foreign policy goals. As a key parameter of its foreign policy since the end of WWII, Germany has been wary of the role of the military in its foreign relations and diplomacy. The recent crisis in and around Europe, especially Russian aggression towards and invasion of Ukraine, appears to have the potential to expand the role of Defence Ministry and Military bureaucracy in shaping and implementing its foreign policy. The new direction and measures announced by German Chancellor Scholz represent a significant deviation from the conventional anti-militarist German foreign policy, which has been strictly adhered to by Chancellor Merkel, too.

While dwelling on the security-related actors, among the non-state platforms, which play important roles not only influencing the German foreign policy but also international affairs, the annual **Munich Security Conference (MSC)** deserves a special attention. Under the leadership of former Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, the MSC has become known a major international forum, similar to the Davos Economic Forum, gathering political leaders, scholars and experts every year in Munich to discuss the various aspects of the international security and politics and also serving as a forum for discussing the course of German foreign policy. In this regard, the 2014 MSC will be devoted in this dissertation a special attention as the then German political leaders declared their opinions about a revised and more active role for Germany in its foreign policy, which later was called "Munich Consensus".

Ministry of Finance is another key player, as it has played crucially important roles in defining German approach and response to the Euro crisis by defining and insisting on the austerity measures which have not been welcomed in other EU members, particularly in Greece. The insistence position about the austerity measures taken by the then Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schaeuble has undermined and eliminated the proposals for the EU members to enter into a debt mutualisation by issuing common Eurobonds. In other words, Germany strictly refrained from assuming the debt of other EU member states and held them responsible for their lack of financial discipline and by engaging the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well and by setting up EU funds, devised strict schemes to address the debt crisis of other EU member states and helped stabilize their economy, particularly that of Greece.

Constitutional Court. Due to peculiar nature and structure of the German federal political system, German Constitutional Court also gets from time to time the opportunity to pass decisions on some foreign policy matters, like military participation in international military interventions or setting up of financial recovery tools for ensuring financial and economic stability in the EU area.

Political Parties. Germany has been governed since WWII by coalition governments formed by two or three political parties and thus, foreign policy visions and principles of political parties matter in defining the country's foreign policy aims and the means to implement and achieve them. As indicated by its name, for instance, Green Party advocates environment friendly policies. Social Democrat Party (SPD) is traditionally known as the party, which pays particular attention to Germany's relations with the states in Eastern Europe and Russia as "*Russland Versteher* (The one understanding Russia)". Christian Democratic Union (CDU and CSU) is traditionally not supportive of Turkey's membership in the EU, but still does not block the open-ended membership negotiations. Free Democratic Party (FDP) is known as business-friendly party, which keeps close relations with key economic and trade actors and is keen to protect their interests. Because Germany is governed through coalitions, which are formed based on the meticulously negotiated coalition agreements including foreign policy, political parties' views, perceptions and agenda play important roles in defining and implementing foreign policy priorities, goals and orientations.

Political Party foundations, non-governmental foundations and think-tanks. When analysing or writing about the German foreign policy, Germany's political parties and their foundations deserve a special attention and place. These political foundations are associated with political parties, therefore called as such, and receive financial support from the federal budget. They are the foundations linked to political parties which have entered the federal parliament (Bundestag) twice in a row. They are Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Social Democrats, SPD), Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Free Democrats, FDP), Hanns Seidel Foundation (Bavarian Christian Democrats, CSU), Heinrich Böll Foundation (Alliance 90/the Green Party), Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Christian Democrats, CDU) and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (the Left Party). The right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) does not yet have such a political foundation as it is represented in the federal parliament for the first time. As Barbara Unmüssig also notes, Germany's political foundations are *sui generis* as their exact counterparts cannot be found in other comparable countries and they are seen as complementary vehicles stabilizing democracy in Germany and in other countries where they operate. Strengthening civil society and promoting democratic culture are among their core missions. In this sense, their motivations are similar to and supportive of some major intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU). By encouraging and supporting civic participation in all aspects of life, they aim to help the principles of liberal democracy, including fundamental human rights and freedoms and the rule of law, take stronger roots in Germany and elsewhere. They work closely with civil

society organizations in the host countries and provide training for their volunteers. This way, they also aim to facilitate international understanding at the civil society level.[218]

Besides political foundations, non-governmental think-tanks like Körber Foundation based in Berlin, contributes to foreign policy making processes in Germany. Regular public surveys, which this Foundations conducts for instance about the opinion of German people on certain foreign policy issues, offer interesting and useful information. German Institute for International Politics and Security (Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik-SWP) is another leading think-tank in Germany, which focuses on international matters and publishes many informative reports and articles.

A senior retired Turkish diplomat argued that Germany's political foundations and non-governmental organizations play a significant role in its foreign relations, associated with political parties they are funded by Federal Parliament from the federal budget and this scheme is quite unique to Germany. He also drew attention to the fact that besides political foundations, large companies, which are active around the world, have their own foundations and they also play their unique roles in definition of Germany's foreign policy priorities and in projecting influence in other countries by offering research scholarships, etc. In the opinion of interview participant, addition to diplomatic missions, all these entities work in close interaction and coordination with

[218] Barbara Unmüssig. (2017). "Political Foundations, Promoting democratic values. https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/germanys-political-foundations-are-unique-world-over" (Retrieved on 12 March 2020)

each other, watch and analyse the developments in their target countries, make policy recommendations and thereby, contribute through various ways to the formulation and implementation of German foreign policy towards these countries/regions. In this sense, he concluded, their contributions make life easier for those who make and execute German foreign policy and Chancellor Merkel's governments have also benefited from these contributions.[219]

The extensive work and broad social engagement of these political foundations abroad may at times become a source of political contention particularly in the countries where democracy is still developing, or authoritarian rule is on the rise. For instance, the activities of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Egypt during the Arap Spring have elicited strong reaction from the Egyptian authorities and the restrictions and pressure towards them caused a reaction from the German government.[220] Still, German political foundations continue their wide range of activities around the world to support the German foreign policy objectives and liberal democratic worldview. Their activities continued to enjoy political support also during Chancellor Merkel's time in power.

Media. German media consists of many TV channels, newspapers, magazines, so on, which pay close attention to foreign policy issues and influence foreign policy making

[219] Interviewee 4.

[220] "German and US NGO workers acquitted in Egypt". Deutsche Welle, December 20, 2018. https://www.dw.com/en/german-and-us-ngo-workers-acquitted-in-egypt/a-46823075 (Retrieved on 20 April 2021)

and implementation processes. They keep the interested German public informed on foreign policy matters. Reports and news of media outlets such Der Spiegel, Deutsche Welle, die Welt, so on, on various aspects of Germany foreign policy such as arms exports, have been analysed and are cited in this Dissertation.

In this context, an interviewed retired senior Turkish diplomat argued that regarding Germany's relations with Russia and China, Merkel Governments have been quite successful in influencing the German public opinion mainly through media by emphasizing the importance and trade relations and by underlying the importance of understanding these great powers (*Russland-Versteher and China-Versteher*). On the other hand, he further argues, when it concerned some other states of smaller scale, the German public has been influenced in a way that would justify applying pressure on these countries by highlighting the importance of democratic norms and values like respect for human rights.[221]

Trade unions and economic interests also significantly influence the course and substance of German foreign policy, as evidenced by its strong economic and trade relations with the authoritarian states like Russia and China, during the time of Chancellor Merkel.

[221] Interviewee 4.

4.4. Germany's Arms Exports during Merkel Governments

The production capacity of the German arms is enormous. As a result, German arms production far exceeds its national needs. Therefore, in order to survive and keep job opportunities, the job industry heavily relies on exports. However, given the local conflicts, rogue and failing states, and authoritarian regimes around the world, Germany's arms exports policy has from time to time severely criticised.[222]

The fact that Germany's military capabilities do not match its economic and political power in Europe and in the international affairs is well known and often criticized by its key ally, the EU. As such, Germany is often called upon to invest more in its military and assume more responsibilities in taking care of its own and European security.

In this regard, Jana Puglierin from ECFR Berlin argued in our interview that that Chancellor Merkel has not done much to improve and strengthen Germany's military capabilities and this has not been an item on her list of priorities. In her view, Chancellor Merkel has never had a positive view of military, because the purpose of military capabilities in German foreign policy remained unclear to her. Puglierin further argues that Chancellor Merkel has seen the world through economic lens, but not through the lens of military power and as a result, after 16 years of administration

[222] William Nehra. (2020). "German arms exports hit a record high in 2019". Iamexpat, January 09, 2020. https://www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/german-expat-news/germanys-arms-exports-hit-record-high-2019 (Retrieved on 21 November 2021)

of the Ministry of Defence by ministers from her party, CDU, the Germany military is currently in a miserable shape and in need of serious investment to strengthen its capabilities. Puglierin also adds, however, that the poor state of the Bundeswehr is not only the fault of Merkel or the CDU, but of course also of their coalition partners.[223]

Based on the above-mentioned facts, one cannot fail to see a paradox in Germany's approach to its own military capabilities and its enthusiasm to remain a major arms exporter for its clients around the world. Given its emphasis on human rights in its foreign relations, it would normally be expected from Germany to be more careful and cautious about its arms exports and their recipients. Along these lines, a report issued by the well-known German magazine Der Spiegel (Spiegel International) in 2012, Chancellor Angela Merkel is criticised due to her preference for exporting high-tech armaments, even to states with questionable government regimes, instead of equipping German military. Der Spiegel staff also refer to Military Equipment Export Report for 2011, which indicated that German arms exports have been steadily increasing, thanks to export permits granted by the relevant Government agency for export worth of ten billion Euros for the first time. Spiegel report also highlights another important point, which is that approximately 42 percent of the exported weapons (29 percent in 2010) are sent to the states (so-called third-party states), outside NATO, NATO-equivalent and EU countries and this may be yet another record setting fact. Spiegel International called this foreign policy discourse pursued by Chancellor Merkel as the "Merkel doctrine". According to this doctrine Germany is extremely careful about sending its

[223] Interview with Puglierin.

troops to conflicts zones, perhaps only in emergency situations, but instead prefers to support and strengthen "partner countries" in certain regions through arms exports so that they can use them in their efforts to maintain peace and security in their neighbourhood.[224] Germany's procurement of a significant amount of weapons and ammunitions to Kurdish peshmerga in 2014 in the face of possible attack by ISIL has also been another interesting foreign policy behaviour. In this case, the arms were not exported but freely given. Later there were reports about Peshmerga militants selling these weapons to terrorist organizations like PKK, which elicited reaction from Turkey. It was a case of arms "exports" ignoring regional sensitivities and without taking strict measures about the end users.[225]

Similarly, a Deutsche Welle report publicized in September 2014, despite strict regulations and restrictions of arms export to certain countries, the German government keeps approving an increasing volume of arms exports. The report shows that the main recipients of exports was an EU member state, and the arms exports were to reach a record level in 2014 with a total amount of 6,35 billion Euros by the end of August 2014. This figure, the report underlines, is equal to 75% of the total amount of arms exports in 2013 and may be yet another record high amount. The report further explains that the Chancellor Angela Merkel heads the Federal Security Council, which

[224] Spiegel staff. (2012). "German Weapons for the World. How the Merkel Doctrine Is Changing Berlin Policy", Spiegel International, December 3, 2012. https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-weapons-exports-on-the-rise-as-merkel-doctrine-takes-hold-a-870596.html (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

[225] Deutshce Welle. (2014). "German weapons delivery heads to Iraqi Kurdistan", September 25, 2014. https://www.dw.com/en/german-weapons-delivery-heads-to-iraqi-kurdistan/a-17954068 (Retrieved on 25 December 2021)

approves arms exports, and approved exports do not necessarily take place in that year, but still, they are good indicators about the Government's overall policy direction on this sensitive matter.[226]

According to a most recent report disclosed by Deutsche Welle in December 2021 soon after Chancellor Merkel handed over her position to the next Chancellor, the last Merkel Government approved export permits for significant number of weapons right before the end of its term. The report is based on a response to a Parliamentary question. The Government response unveils even more surprising data, which reveals that within its last nine days, the Merkel Government approved a massive amount of arms export worth of five billion Euros and thereby, the total amount of arms exports in 2021 exceeded 9 billion Euros, representing a new record over exports worth of 8 billion Euros in 2019. Furthermore, the information provided by the Government also confirms that Egypt is by far the leading importer of German arms and military equipment and Deutsche Welle highlights the fact that Egypt is being criticized due to its destabilizing role and involvement in Yemen and Libya and its poor human rights record.[227] The arms exports constitutes the Achilles heel of German foreign policy, which claims to be promoting and protecting human rights globally.

[226] Deutsche Welle. (2019). "Germany's arms export approvals headed for record high", October 7, 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-arms-export-approvals-headed-for-record-high/a-50730209 (Retrieved on 22 September 2021)

[227] Deutsche Welle. (2021). "Merkel hükümeti son anda rekor düzeyde silah satışına onay Verdi (In its last moments Merkel government approved the export of arms at a record amount)", December 25, 2021. https://www.dw.com/tr/merkel-hükümeti-son-anda-rekor-düzeyde-silah-satışına-onay-verdi/a-60255357 (Retrieved on 27 December 2021)

4.5. Chapter Conclusion

Sophia Besch told in our interview that like most other states, Germany, under Merkel's leadership, has been constrained by its economic interests and Chancellor Merkel has preferred to develop and follow European approaches instead of acting alone.[228]

Ulrich Speck argues that strategic vision requires a political leadership to shape the course of events, rather than just managing them like a crisis manager and in this respect, Merkel has not showed a strategic approach in foreign policy. He thinks that instead, she has concentrated on analysing the situations and managing them to the best interests of Germany by avoiding any serious economic damage or loss for Germany. Looking at the bigger picture, in his view, at this point in the course of history, one can observe the gradual end of pax-Americana and thus, needs to acknowledge that Americans are not and will no longer be thinking about Europe's problems for Europeans, including Germany. In this regard, he further argues that Chancellor Merkel has chosen not to see this reality fully and decided not to change Germany's behaviours radically, even though the time has long come for Germany to think and act strategically by defining its strategic objectives and foreign policy stance in global politics. Speck further argued that even though it may be unfair to stick Germany's all weakness to Chancellor Merkel, still she has failed to develop and demonstrate a strategic vision, like that of Turkey, for instance. In his view, one can

[228] Interview with Besch.

disagree with Turkey's foreign policy priorities and discourses, however, it cannot be denied that it pursues result-oriented strategic goals in Libya, Azerbaijan, Africa, etc.[229]

Nora Müller also noted that Chancellor Angela Merkel has managed several fundamental crisis and thus started being called as "Crisis Chancellor or Crisis Manager". For instance, the establishment of European Recovery Fund allowing some mode of debt mutualization during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was originally a French idea, has also been a result of these crisis management efforts and she deserves credit for this step forward in European integration. Indeed, such crisis tend to bear such unforeseen consequences as well. This can also be seen as a sign of Germany's flexibility, when it is called for by the dire circumstances.[230]

As to Chancellor Merkel's performance on the global stage, Jana Puglierin from ECFR Berlin thinks that after 2014, careful management of the crisis in Ukraine has been a high point in her career. Puglierin notes in this context that Chancellor Merkel has cooperated well with the US and France, got the EU mobilized behind Germany's (and France's) efforts and kept a good dialogue with Russian President Putin. All of these, in Puglierin's view, have been achieved thanks to her personal involvement and leadership. On the other hand, Puglierin argues that Chancellor Merkel has also been

[229] Interview with Speck.

[230] Interview with Müller.

divisive inside the EU at some points, but in the end managed to hold the EU together and prevented it from falling apart.

A retired senior Turkish diplomat shared his assessment that Chancellor Merkel, by relying on Germany's well-established institutions and their recommendations, has been able to smartly steer the German foreign policy for 16 years. Also, in his view, by continuous prioritization of the EU, US, France and other key actors in Germany's foreign policy, she has managed to keep and even upgrade Germany as a reliable ally and partner in its international relations, without radically changing its foreign policy parameters and orientations. In the opinion of the interview participant, for instance, she has carefully avoided taking a clear side in the trade conflict between the USA and China and in this respect, her policies have mainly reflected the feature of continuity, rather than permanent and radical change, despite some limited changes regarding nuclear energy and admission of a large number of refugees in 2015/16.[231]

[231] Interviewee 4.

CHAPTER 5

HANDLING OF SOME MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CRISES AND ISSUES BY MERKEL GOVERNMENTS

5.1. Overview

Regarding the international issues and crises, which require military intervention, Germany still prefers diplomatic and non-military means to address them, however, as a last resort, after all other means are exhausted, it consents to military intervention provided that there is international legitimacy and the intervention is undertaken as a collective efforts by allies or like-minded states as part of a coalition of the willing, similar to the one against Anti-DAESH operation conducted into Syria.

The USA, which is the main pillar of the international liberal system has been giving an unreliable picture over the past years. This has started becoming visible already during President Barack Obama (2009-2017), who has promoted adhered to the concept of "leading from behind" about the handling of the international conflicts and crisis. Such an approach was intended to hold the USA back and let its international partners and other actors take more responsibility in addressing the crisis like the one in Syria and Ukraine. This approach has given the major US allies like Germany a larger room for manoeuvre, but it would be overstatement if one argues that Germany

has taken this opportunity actively and tried to lead the international community on many issues.

A senior Turkish diplomat interviewed for this research argued that Chancellor Angela Merkel has been praised for her leadership as she navigated through many crisis, but she has also been criticised heavily for staying inactive until the crisis situation got really worse and hurt other parties concerned.[232]

On the other hand, in the view of Kristian Brakel, some expectations from Germany about international crisis and issues do not seem to be proportionate to its size, resources and relative power in the global affairs. In this regard, he argues that in fact, German political decision-makers appear to be still in a strategy-making process as far as foreign policy is concerned and German public, especially younger generations, do not have a clear view about their country's role in international relations either and it appears that their vision too is still taking shape.[233]

5.2. Conflict in Ukraine and the Crimea Issue

The conflict in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 are distinctly different from those so-called frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet area. In cases of other territorial conflicts like the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and

[232] Interviewee 1.

[233] Interview with Brakel.

Armenia, the issues related to Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia, the situation in Transdniestria region of Moldova are all conflicts, which have not changed the international map in favour of Russia and expanded Russian territories. The annexation of Crimea did. In this sense, Russia for the first time since the end of the Cold War changed the internationally recognized borders of a sovereign and independent state, in this case, its neighbour, Ukraine. Therefore, the Russia's challenge to the established international order and recognized borders in Europe is unprecedented. As a result, this internationally illegitimate move of Russia has caused a strong reaction in the West and met with strong rejection from the EU countries and NATO members, who have rejected to recognize this change of map.

In addition to not recognizing the annexation of Crimea, the EU and the US have imposed comprehensive sanctions on Russia to push it to reconsider and reverse this illegal action. Yet no change in Russia's position has so far been observed.

Germany ruled by Chancellor Merkel government has assumed the leadership role in Europe about the crisis in Ukraine and got involved in the negotiations more than any other EU state.

The senior German diplomat interviewed for this research reminded that the conflict and internal instability in Ukraine has been going on for almost eight years and emphasized his view that the situation in conflict zones bears the characteristics of frozen conflicts, still, looking at the facts on the ground, one can observe that the

conflict is quite hot, even though over the years ahead it may turn into frozen conflict that can continue for decades, like other frozen conflicts in the OSCE area. He also told that Germany has spared to efforts to ensure resolution of this conflict under Normandy Four format and the Minsk agreement serves as the basis for a future resolution. He recalled that Chancellor Merkel has seen a possibility of contributing to peaceful resolution of this conflict by working together with Russia and France, but again without any illusions, as she knows the facts on the ground and different approaches of conflicting parties very well.[234]

Marco Siddi argues along the same line and shares the observation that since late 2008, Germany, through a bottom-up policy making approach and by uploading its "long-standing policy of dialogue and co-operation with Moscow (known as Ostpolitik-Eastern Policy)", has been shaping and leading the EU policies towards Russia. Siddi argues that Germany's leadership in this field has become hegemonic since the eruption of the conflict and crisis in Ukraine. In other words, Germany has not acted in the case of Ukraine as a "reluctant" hegemon but as an "assertive" hegemon. In fact, Siddi argues that Germany has been seeking to assume the leadership in the EU's relations and dialogue in this policy area. The fact that Germany has been acting with its civilian power identity helped it secure the support from the rest of the EU members as this has been reassuring that a military conflict with Russia would not be triggered by the German involvement. In Siddi's view, its economic power, success in securing the consent of its European and transatlantic partners and allies and favourable

[234] Interviewee 3.

domestic circumstances have been helpful to Germany in profiling itself as the EU's main negotiating partner for Russia on resolving the crisis in Ukraine.[235]

On the other hand, a former Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder, Merkel's predecessor from the SPD (Social Democratic Party), who has been working as a kind of advisor for the Russian President Putin, voices his opinions from time to time and encourages constructive dialogue with Russia and argues against "Russia bashing".[236]

Yet, Chancellor Merkel's Germany has pursued an active foreign policy to counter Russia's revisionist and assertive foreign policy objectives, and this has become most visible in the case of the crisis and conflict in Ukraine. In this spirit, Germany has taken part and together with France, led two key informal international processes, namely the Minsk Process and the Normandy Format talks, which have been formed in an inclusive manner and been seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis facing Ukraine.

Besch and Odendahl argue that the traditional German policy known as "Ostpolitik (Eastern Policy)", which as a principle aims "change through rapprochement" has not generated the expected outcome against President Putin's Russia. Still, they also draw attention to the fact that Germany has long assumed the role of broker in the EU's

[235] Marco Siddi. (2020). "A Contested Hegemon? Germany's Leadership in EU Relations with Russia", German Politics, 29:1, 97-114 (Retrieved on 25 January 2021)

[236] "Gerhard Schröder beklagt 'Russland-Bashing' in Debatte über Nord Stream 2". Die Welt, January 30, 2021. https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article225327799/Gerhard-Schroeder-beklagt-Russland-Bashing-in-Nord-Stream-2-Debatte.html (Retrieved on 02 February 2021)

relationship with Moscow, primarily thanks to its geographical proximity and extensive economic and trade ties. In the face of Russia's annexation of Crimea and the crisis in Ukraine, Germany felt compelled to and saw an opportunity to demonstrate its leadership in the EU. The design and introduction of the EU sanctions and their subsequent extensions bear the mark of Germany. Besch and Odendahl also confirm that together with France, Germany has played a decisive role in "bringing Ukraine and Russia together and brokering the Agreements of September 2014 and February 2015." Regarding the future steps about the situation in Ukraine and against Russia's unacceptable foreign policy discourse and behaviours, they suggest that the German political leadership must seek the ways and make efforts to mobilize and sustain the understanding and support of the German public by emphasizing the security concerns resulting from Russia's actions.[237]

By pointing out the fact that the Russia-backed separatists continue to hold the control over a considerable size of territory in the Donbas region of Ukraine, and that a solution does not appear possible in the near future, Michael Kimmage and Bruno Lete, two analysts of the GMFUS (The German Marshall Fund of the United States) discuss the efficiency of the Minsk process and whether the time has come to abandon the Minsk process.[238]

[237] Sophia Besch and Christian Odendahl. (2018). "The good European? Why Germany's policy ambitions must its power". Center for European Reform, February 22, 2018.

[238] Michael Kimmage and Bruno Lete. (2021). "Is the Minsk Process for Eastern Ukraine Dead or Deadlocked?". The German Marshall Fund of the United States-GMFUS, May 5, 2021. https://www.gmfus.org/blog/2021/05/05/minsk-process-eastern-ukraine-dead-or-deadlocked (Retrieved on 17 September 2021)

The other informal initiative aimed at resolving the crisis and conflict in Ukraine is the Normandy Format talks. It is formed by participation of four countries, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France. They first met on an informal basis on the margins of the 2014 D-Day commemoration in Normandy. The efforts of this format, which is also known as the Normandy Contact Group, is primarily focussed on the conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine. Yet, the Group has so far been not successful in resolving the crisis and stalemate over Crimea and Donbas.[239]

It is important to keep in mind that Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a body that bears the primary responsibility for international security and stability and thus, for protection of the territorial integrity of the UN members. Therefore, if not countered and discouraged effectively, the aggressive and revisionist foreign policy pursued by Russia tends to bear the risk of undermining and weakening the rules-based international order, which is key to Germany's national security and wealth.

Russia's perception of Germany as a great power in the EU and President Putin's respect for and willingness to collaborate with Chancellor Merkel have also been important factors that made Germany as Russia's main counterpart in the EU about the situation in Ukraine. Disengagement of the US from the European affairs and its

[239] Richard N. Haass and Charles A. Kupchan. (2021). "The New Concert of Powers. How to Prevent Catastrophe and Promote Stability in a Multipolar World". Foreign Affairs, March 23, 2021.

wish to see Europeans handle and resolve their own security on their own have also been other elements that paved the way for Germany to assume the leadership on the crisis in Ukraine.

On the military front, NATO has always remained watchful of processes and showed its presence in the Black Sea and Baltics region, as and when it considered such activities necessary, which besides serving as deterrent towards Russia, also reinforced the position of Germany (and its partner, France) as the West's leading negotiator.

5.3. Civil War in Syria and Irregular Migration Crisis

Unlike its active involvement to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, Germany and the EU led by Germany (and France) have not done enough at the first stages to prevent the escalation of the conflict in Syria from turning into a large-scale civil war, which has devastated the entire country and brought so much suffering to its people.

In fact, both the EU and its main partner on the other side of the Atlantic, the US, appeared to have chosen to remain distant to the conflict in Syria at least in its beginning. The humanitarian catastrophe caused by this civil war in its later stages has, however, drawn their attention. Particularly the allegations about and confirmation of the use of chemical weapons in this conflict led the then US President Barack Obama to declare that the use of chemical weapons as his "red line" and he gave the impression that in case this red line is crossed he would act and intervene militarily in Syria on humanitarian grounds. But this did not happen. Despite the confirmation by

Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that chemical weapons had been used in this civil war, the US Administration, persuaded by the RF, has preferred to use the occasion only to destruct all chemical weapons and the substances used in their production in Syria. As a result, an internationally supervised process, under the surveillance by OPCW, has been started and declared to be successfully concluded.[240]

The USA and the EU have acted together and co-ordinated closely throughout this process. Germany has also played an active role in destruction of some of Syria's chemical arsenal. However, despite the fact that the elimination of chemical weapons has been successful, this did not bring an end to the civil conflict in this country and to the suffering of Syrian people. The policy convergence of the USA and the EU on how to manage the conflict in Syria – distant, passive and ineffective – might be seen as one of the reasons expanding the magnitude of the conflict and its devastating impacts. Their reactive and ineffective engagement in this conflict has paved the way for enormous refugee/illegal migrant flow out of this country mainly towards Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan and subsequently through Turkey into Europe.

Because other actors including Germany and the EU were neither prepared, nor capable of handling such a large-scale civil conflict, and the US decided to "lead from behind" as announced by President Barack Obama, one of other actors, Russia, seized

[240] "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2021. Fact Sheets and Briefs". Arms Control Association, last reviewed in May 2021. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity (Retrieved on 15 June 2021)

the opportunity to intervene in the conflict on the side of the Syrian Government, led by President Bashar Al Assad, and to expand its military presence and political influence far beyond what it could a few years ago hope for.

Since mid-2015 Germany has become a favourite destination for Syrian refugees and Germany started taking action to curb the irregular refugee flow. However, even the close dialogue between Chancellor Merkel and Russian President Putin was not enough to curb the mass flow of irregular migration from Syria. On the contrary, the Russian Federation has taken further steps and intensified the military operations in and around Aleppo, which led to displacement and migration of more people out of Syria.

Simon Schütz describes the irregular migration issue as the "biggest political crisis" that Chancellor Merkel faced, because the serious political differences about her migration policy, known also as "open door" policy, have threatened her government, affected and undermined her popularity as a political leader. Her 2015 decision to keep Germany's borders open to more than one million irregular migrants in 2015 and 2016 has been unprecedented in the German political history.[241] The rationale behind Chancellor Merkel's unusual decision is still being debated as for some, it was motivated by humanitarian reasons, for some others it was more than humanitarian considerations.[242]

[241] Simon Schütz. (2018). "Differences Over Migration Policy Throw German Government into Crisis". Npr, June 19, 2018. https://www.npr.org/2018/06/19/621439416/differences-over-migration-policy-throw-german-government-into-crisis. (Retrieved on 06 March 2020)

[242] Constanze Stelzenmüller (2021). "The Singular Chancellor. The Merkel Model and Its Limits", p. 168. Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021

The US seemed not to endorse the migration policies pursued by the EU and major European countries like Germany and Italy. German Chancellor Merkel's "open door" policy towards Syrian refugees has elicited sharp criticism from the other side of the Atlantic, and President Trump, who banned even travel from some countries whose populations are predominantly Muslim, accused Chancellor Merkel of diluting Western culture by accepting so many (Muslim) refugees in an uncontrolled way.[243]

Other than the NATO operation SNMG, deployed in the Aegean Sea in 2016-2017 to curb the mass flow of illegal migration mainly from Syria, through Turkey and Greece into further Europe, up until Germany, as the main destination, the US seemed to have left the EU and Germany alone in handling this biggest challenge of recent history.[244] On its side, the US President Trump, as one of the first steps after he came to power, took some radical majors since the coming to power of President Trump, who went so far even to ban travels to the US from some Muslim countries. Except for the humanitarian sentiments expressed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the height of the irregular refugee flow like "We achieve it! (Wir schaffen es!)"[245], in terms of terms of their basic restrictive approach towards irregular migrants/refugees, there has

[243] Kate Connolly. (2017). "Merkel made catastrophic mistake over open door to refugees, says Trump". The Guardian, January 15, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/15/angela-merkel-refugees-policy-donald-trump (Retrieved on 21 March 2021)

[244] NATO News. (2016). "NATO Secretary General visits NATO flagship in Aegean Sea", 21 April 2016. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_130225.htm?selectedLocale=en (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

[245] Janosch Delcker. (2016). "The phrase that haunts Angela Merkel", Politico, August 19, 2016. https://www.politico.eu/article/the-phrase-that-haunts-angela-merkel/" (Retrieved on 12 March 2021)

not been much difference between the US and the EU/Europe. Further down the process, as a side challenge for Chancellor Merkel, some EU countries in Eastern Europe like Slovakia, as a reaction to the EU's plan to redistribute Syrian refugees arriving in Germany to some other countries, have declared that they will not accept Muslim refugees.[246]

As to the irregular refugee crisis in 2015-16, Sophia Besch argues that Chancellor Merkel's decision to open Germany's borders to a high number of refugees was not spontaneous and poorly considered. She has waited long enough until the public felt the humanitarian pressure and drastic situation of refugees and then decided to open the borders. She has followed a similar line of action about the phasing out of nuclear power plants in Germany after the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011. As such, usually she does not take a position until the issue is widely discussed and a domestic position is built. Due to her affinity to religious values, she also acts as a good Christian, showing mercy and empathy.[247]

Jana Puglierin also claims that regarding the irregular migration crisis in 2015-2016, Chancellor Merkel made a conscious decision, which was not about opening the borders, but about not closing them and there is a difference between these two actions. In her view, this decision was motivated by several factors and primarily, Chancellor Merkel did not want the EU to give a negative image to the world, in other words, she

[246] BBC News. (2015). "Migrants crisis: Slovakia 'will only accept Christians'". BBC News, August 19, 2015. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33986738 (Retrieved on 17 March 2021)

[247] Interview with Besch.

did not wish the EU to be defined and remembered as an actor pushing migrants back at a time of dire needs. Secondly, the decision was intended to save Hungarians from a huge pressure. Puglierin argues that it was also motivated by humanitarian concerns, yet the decision was taken in the course of an unfolding crisis and one cannot argue that every detail of it was very well considered and from this angle, it was different from Merkel's earlier careful and well-calculated decisions. Puglierin thinks that there was also a certain degree of public sympathy towards the migrants and this may have also facilitated her unconventional and bold decision. In the following years, Puglierin believes, German government has done a good job in integrating Syrian migrants into the society, proving Chancellor Merkel right in her statement that "we can achieve this".[248]

In the opinion of Kristian Brakel, during the irregular refugee crisis of 2015-2016, Chancellor Merkel basically decided to take in a huge number of refugees from Syria without coordination with other EU governments, however, the opportunities for a unified solution were slim given that Hungary was already pushing refugees towards the German border and several other member states having been very unwilling to make concessions and she took the only decision that was realistically available to her. Brakel reminds that she has been criticized for this decision domestically and within the EU, but with the hindsight, in his view, one can perhaps argue that Chancellor

[248] Interview with Puglierin.

Merkel could have coordinated with other EU members better, but probably the outcome would not change.[249]

A retired senior Turkish diplomat expressed the view that Chancellor Merkel has earned a good reputation in her country and beyond as a cool-headed and restrained crisis manager, who most of the time has demonstrated a common sense and acted with caution, and over the time, her cautious and well-calculated behaviour has strengthened the trust in her approaches and made her an influential and efficient political figure in Germany, Europe and world politics. On the other hand, he also pointed out the opinion that Chancellor Merkel has not always been consistent, because, for instance, she put aside her well-calculated and cautious approach in the face of a massive irregular refugee flow originating mainly from Syria in 2015-2016 and her policy of "We achieve it! (Wir schaffen das!)" was a clear deviation from her usual crisis management style. The interviewed diplomat thinks that besides humanitarian concerns, she might have also taken into consideration the continuous workforce gap in Germany, but in any case, her decision has alleviated the pressures on the transit countries, particularly Hungary. He also reminds the fact that because other major EU countries like France and Italy had their own refugee challenges, Chancellor Merkel had to take the lead in managing this crisis, even though her approach has been criticized by some other EU members. He concluded by sharing his

[249] Interview with Brakel.

observation that today, it appears that Germany has integrated these refugees quite successfully and the time has proven Chancellor Merkel right.[250]

In addition to the challenge of irregular migration flowing from Syria, the civil war in this country has also presented opportunity and a fertile ground for some terrorist organizations. In fact, the disengaged attitude displayed by the USA and EU has led to a vacuum of power in certain regions in Syria, which was filled by radical terrorist groups, primarily by ISIS/DAESH. Therefore, at a later stage, the USA had to spearhead a coalition of the willing, called Anti-DAESH Coalition to counter and end this terrorist threat. In addition to military intervention by this Coalition, the US authorities have engaged Kurdish elements against DAESH and because of affiliation/association of these groups with the notorious terror organization PKK, this choice of the USA has become a major point of contention between the USA and Turkey.

Looking at the way the USA and the EU has approached the conflict in Syria, one can argue that the EU/European countries, primarily Germany (and France) need to re-consider their attitude vis-à-vis the conflicts in their immediate neighbourhood, draw some lessons and choose to pursue a more energetic and proactive policy in the future. In fact, the EU/European countries, particularly Germany, have since 2015/16 been paying a high price for their political indifference to the devastating civil war in Syria. Perhaps they could not have changed the outcome, but they could certainly have made

[250] Interviewee 4.

increased a more visible efforts aiming to end the hostilities and civil war in this country. For instance, the establishment of "no fly zone" at least in the northern and eastern regions of Syria, which Turkey has been advocating since the beginning of the conflict could have been quite instrumental in forestalling the emergence and growth of irregular migration and terrorist threats. Thanks to its geographical distance, the USA has been affected from this conflict much less than the EU/Europe and this must be a lesson learnt for Europe about the necessity for them to be more initiative-taking and effective in taking care of their own security without the help from the US.

With regard to irregular migration resulting from Syria as a result of its protracted civil war, Nora Müller from Körber Foundation argues that although progress has been made, the EU still lacks a common migration policy which deserves the name. Recalling that during the 2015 refugee crisis, Chancellor Merkel was criticized by the CEE countries for not having adequately consulted and coordinated with them, Müller notes that contrary to this, "holding Europe together" was reportedly one of Merkel's key motivations during the refugee crisis. In this regard, for example, by insisting on keeping the so-called "Western Balkans Route" open, Müller thinks, Chancellor Merkel sought to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe with thousands of refugees stranded in Greece.[251]

[251] Interview with Müller.

5.4. International Intervention in Libya

Germany has demonstrated an unexpected foreign policy discourse about the international military intervention to Libya in 2011. Its vote at the UN Security Council for Resolution 1973 in March 2011 on the introduction of a no-fly zone over Libya was abstention and it put Germany in the same camp with Russia, China, India and Brazil, four BRICS countries. Although the German Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Ambassador Peter Wittig explained the reasons behind the German vote clearly, it has not changed the fact that when its national interests so require, Chancellor Merkel's Germany would not hesitate to take an international behaviour different from that of its closest allies and partners like the US, the UK and France.

In the literature, there are also articles claiming that by its abstention vote, Germany has kept its moral superiority, and this has enabled it to assume a leadership role in the further stages of the developments in Libya.

Similarly, a senior Turkish diplomat interviewed for this research, by referring to Germany's "abstain" vote in the UN Security Council in 2011, draws attention to the aftermath of international intervention and underlines the fact that Germany under Chancellor Merkel's leadership, by hosting a number of Berlin Conferences on Libya, has endeavoured to assume the international leadership in ensuring political compromise and unity, and launching reconstruction efforts in this country. He also recalls that German political leaders and analysts widely claim that Germany's vote of

abstained at the UNSC has given it the legitimacy to lead such international efforts.[252] Indeed, this argument is interesting and the freedom of action provided to Germany by its abstain vote in the UNSC may encourage the German political leadership in the period ahead to consider making similar decisions. The chaotic and disorderly withdrawal of the US-led international community including Germany from Afghanistan in August 2021 may in fact be another strong reason to behave in a constrained and cautious manner.

Robert Kappel argues that Germany's vote of abstention about the international military intervention in Libya led to questions about the role of this country in the international system.[253] Chancellor Merkel and her government must have guessed the possibility of such a questioning and yet chose the abstention as Germany's vote. Why did Germany behave so even if it could have seen the consequences of such a vote?

Alistair Miskimmon undertakes an in-depth analysis of Germany's discourse on the international military intervention in Libya. Miskimmon also argues that Germany's abstention at the UN Security Council brought its foreign policy under scrutiny, as it broke the lines of Western allies and partners, made a NATO response to the crisis more difficult that it already was, and prevented the EU from having a common

[252] Interviewee 2.

[253] Robert Kappel. (2014). "Global Power Shifts and Germany's New Foreign Policy Agenda". Strategic Analysis, May 2014. DOI: 10.1080/09700161.2014.895237 (Retrieved on 22 January 2020)

position on such a critically important issue in its immediate neighbourhood. For Miskimmon, by this unexpected decision German foreign policy has starkly displayed its dilemma between its desire to assume an increased role in crisis management and thereby, to gain more influence in the EU and NATO, and its wish to keep its freedom and right to reject involvement in operations, which it thinks, do not serve its national interests or even harm them. Miskimmon, also by referring to the arguments of the realist IR scholar, Robert Gilpin, argues that Germany's decision on the abstention vote at the UNSC resulted from its calculations about the costs and benefits of an international intervention and the Eurozone crisis and its wide-ranging implications.[254]

5.5. Iran Nuclear Deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-JCPOA)

The Nuclear Deal with Iran (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPAO) was signed on July 14, 2015, among the USA, the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, the EU and Iran. According to this comprehensive Deal, Iran agreed, amongst others, a) to decrease its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 98%, b) to enrich uranium only up to 3.67%, a level enough for civilian nuclear power and research, but not for building nuclear weapons, c) to refrain from building any new uranium- enrichment facilities for fifteen years and d) to accept a comprehensive inspection regime by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In return for this deal, Iran would ensure suspension and termination of various economic and nuclear sanctions and removal of

[254] Alistair Miskimmon. (2012). "German Foreign Policy and the Libya Crisis", German Politics, November 19, 2012. 21:4, 392-410, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2012.739610 (Retrieved on 20 February 2020)

the oil embargo that prevented the import of oil from Iran. The country would also be allowed to use around $100 billion of its assets frozen in overseas banks and the US companies located outside the U.S. would be allowed to engage in trade with Iran.[255]

Despite the comprehensive nature of this Deal, President Trump decided to withdraw the USA from this multilateral agreement in May 2018, despite the objection of other states parties. Moreover, in November 2018, President Trump announced a new policy called as a "maximum pressure campaign" against Iran. As a part of this new approach, a set of economic sanctions seriously restricting Iranian oil exports and hindering Iran's access to the international financial system has been re-imposed.[256]

What exactly Trump Administration wanted to achieve by this decision and follow up actions is not fully clear. Trump administration officials did not seem to agree whether the U.S. wants a behaviour change or regime change. President Trump's then National Security Adviser John Bolton has at some point advocated for a regime change to end the Ayatollah's reign in the country.[257]

[255] Ellie Geranmayeh. (2015). "Explainer: The Iran Nuclear Deal", European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR, ecfr.eu), 17 July 2015. https://ecfr.eu/article/iran_explainer3070/ (Retrieved on 07 June 2022)

[256] Henry Rome. (2019). "Iran Is Doing Just Fine. Tehran Has Survived U.S. Sanctions. Its Nuclear Program and Regional Activities Will, too." Foreign Affairs, November 5, 2019. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2019-11-05/iran-doing-just-fine (Retrieved on 20 March 2021)

[257] Madeline Conway. (2016). "Bolton calls regime change the 'only long-term solution' in Iran", Politico, 17 November 2016. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/john-bolton-iran-regime-change-231586 (Retrieved on 08 June 2022)

The European side of the Atlantic did not support the US decision about the Iran Nuclear Deal, which bears the signs of domestic populism. Major European powers like Germany, France and the UK disagreed with the decision of the Trump Administration and declared their continued commitment to Nuclear Deal with Iran. They expressed their concern about getting adversely affected by the US sanctions and made efforts to devise ways which could be used to bypass the US sanctions.[258]

This divergence of vision between USA and Europe presented to the world, particularly to the adversaries of the West, once again a picture of the West that suffers from the lack of unity and common vision.

It can also be argued that the Europeans felt the need to show the US President that they have their own principled approaches, they do not lightly abandon international agreements and can challenge the US in case their principles and interests are disregarded.

At this point, as proven by their handling of major international issues such as the nuclear deal with Iran, the UK, France, and Germany are able to work closely whenever they feel the need to do so. In this respect, it is noteworthy to see that the UK and France, two permanent members of the UN Security Council and two nuclear powers act carefully and sensibly in dealing with Germany so that this country does

[258] Michael Lipin. (2020). "Why EU Powers Rejected Trump's Call to Leave Iran Nuclear Deal", VOA, 11 January 2020. https://www.voanews.com/a/middle-east_voa-news-iran_why-eu-powers-rejected-trumps-call-leave-iran-nuclear-deal/6182445.html (Retrieved on 08 June 2022)

not get the feeling of being kept out of major international processes. As a result, these three countries act in a format of "E3" in approaching to and voicing their positions on some major international issues.

5.6. The Eastern Mediterranean Issue

In 2020 the relations between Turkey and Greece, two NATO allies, have gotten tense to the extent that a military conflict between these two neighbours would not be ruled out. The disagreement resulted from a set of old and new differences of opinion, and this time, the main point of contention was about dividing boundaries at sea and production of oil and natural gas in the disputed waters of the Mediterranean. The unresolved and prolonged Cyprus problem also lied at the core of this recent wave of disagreement and likelihood of military conflict. France has become a side to the conflict due to its conception of national interest and siding with Greece, whereas Germany, under the leadership of Chancellor Merkel, favoured a dialogue-based approach and conflict to the disagreement, first by defusing the tension between Turkey and Greece.[259] A military conflict between these two NATO allies, one of which is also an EU member would seriously threaten the regional security and stability, hence German diplomatic efforts were important.

[259] Sinem Adar & Ilke Toygür. (2020). "Turkey, the EU and the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis. Militarization of Foreign Policy and Power Rivalry", German Institute for International Politics and Security, SWP Comment 2020/C 62, 09.12.2020. doi:10.18449/2020C62 (Retrieved on 09 June 2022)

This issue once again demonstrated the fact that Germany, which pursues a foreign policy based on liberalism and multilateralism, seems to have major difficulties and differences with its main partner in the EU, France, which views the international politics more through a realist perspective, that is, prone to the use of force or threat to use force, in order to defend its national interests. As such, in the international crisis about the Eastern Mediterranean, France appeared to be prepared to resort to military and confrontational discourse, while as Germany led by Chancellor Merkel preferred a diplomatic approach and peaceful resolution of differences, thus excluded the military ways and means, and acted as a calm and successful mediator between Turkey and Greece. Even though German diplomacy has played a successful role, Chancellor Merkel did not take the centre stage.[260] The approach of Chancellor Merkel can be described as a kind of "invisible hand" diplomacy.

A joint article published by Hüseyin Bağcı and his Greek counterpart George N. Tzogopoulos on 26 September 2020, a project facilitated by the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, has been a concrete illustration of the German approach. In this joint article, Bağcı underlined the fact that that owing to the personal mediation efforts by Chancellor Merkel, Turkey changed its discourse and gave a chance to diplomatic efforts by withdrawing its seismic research ship to Antalya port.[261]

[260] Galip Dalay. (2021). "Turkey, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a way out of the current deadlock", Brookings, 28 January 2021. https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/ (Retrieved on 10 June 2022)

[261] Hüseyin Bağcı & George N. Tzogopoulos. (2021). "From escalation to normalisation. A Greek-Turkish dialogue and the role of Germany". Konrad Adenauer Foundation-KAV, September 26,

This was perhaps a most concrete and quickest fruit that any recent international mediation effort has borne and as such, the contribution of Chancellor Merkel and Germany, sticking to peaceful resolution of conflicts, unlike France's preference for military discourse, has been recognized by the Turkish and Greek public and international community.

5.7. Afghanistan and Chaotic End of International Intervention

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11 (2001), the US has called on its allies and partners to side with it to eliminate the Al Qaida terror organization and led an international intervention into Afghanistan. The call of the then US President George W. Bush was strong, as he stated that "You are either with us, or with the terrorists".[262]

Responding positively to the US call, Germany has shown a strong solidarity with the US and taken an active part in this intervention by offering contributions in many fields. A former German Defence Minister Peter Struck made an interesting decision as to the relationship between international intervention in Afghanistan and Germany's security. He said that Germany's security needs to be defended starting from "the

2020. https://www.kas.de/en/web/tuerkei/laenderberichte/detail/-/content/from-escalation-to-normalisation-2 (Retrieved on 28 September 2021)

[262] Voice of America News (2001). "Bush: 'You Are Either with Us, Or with the Terrorists', September 21, 2001, Voanews, October 27, 2009. https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2001-09-21-14-bush-66411197/549664.html (Retrieved on 11 November 2021)

Hindukush (mountains)". This strong and unusual view has taken its long-lasting place in the memories of international security experts/scholars.[263] In fact, Germany's extensive involvement in and aid to Afghanistan has been in line with this vision until the abrupt and disorderly withdrawal of the international community from Afghanistan in August 2021. For instance, Germany has hosted two international conferences in Berlin on the future of Afghanistan in 2001 and 2011.[264]

The inability and unpreparedness of European countries including Germany to effectively take part in, let alone lead, an international intervention like the one in Afghanistan have been quite visible since the very beginning. Indeed, the end of intervention as decided and implemented by the US almost unilaterally has confirmed this bitter reality once again. In this regard, Giovanna De Maio points out a weird fact that despite its economic might and advanced technological innovation ability, Germany has only some symbolic defence capabilities. De Maio considers this lack of capability as a result of inadequate investment of Germany in its military forces, which do not have critically important equipment, like helicopter spare parts, vision gear and body armour. On this issue of unpreparedness and lack of capabilities of European states in launching and maintaining international interventions, Michael E. O'Hanlon from Brookings also argues that European countries participating in NATO operations

[263] Thomas Ruttig. (2012). "Protecting Freedom at the Hindukush: Source of Famous Afghanistan Quote Dies". https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/international-engagement/protecting-freedom-at-the-hindukush-source-of-famous-afghanistan-quote-dies/ (Retrieved on 11 November 2021)

[264] German Foreign Office. (2021). Article, "Germany and Afghanistan: Bilateral relations". https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/afghanistan/209228 (Retrieved on 12 November 2021)

in Afghanistan did not make significant efforts to continue their military presence in a location crucial for European security and this behaviour too attests their inability to conduct such operations without the leadership and assistance of the US.[265]

A senior German diplomat interviewed for this research expressed the view that the sudden and disorderly departure of the international community from Afghanistan may not have been the wisest decision yet he notes the fact that that the US President Biden has decided so and implemented this decision quickly. In his view, overall, the Afghanistan case has become a frustrating experience, after all the efforts and investments undertaken in that country and as a result, in Germany, a debate took place in the Federal Parliament to form a committee to look into what really happened in Afghanistan and the withdrawal process, but as there were Parliamentary Elections in September and the negotiations to form a new governments take time, there has not been any meaningful progress on that front. Regarding the criticism towards the US about sudden withdrawal from Afghanistan, he thinks that, had the issue been debated in NATO for instance, most probably the debate would be long and inconclusive due to differing views among the allies and therefore, considering this likelihood and the cost of intervention and massive military presence in Afghanistan, the US Administration might have decided to withdraw from this country as quickly as possible. He also drew attention to the fact that Germany's means of intervention in regional crisis has been limited and this fact continued also to be valid also in the era

[265] Giovanna De Maio (2021). "Opportunities to Deepen EU-NATO Cooperation", Brookings Institute, December 2021. https://www.brookings.edu/research/opportunities-to-deepen-nato-eu-cooperation/ (Retrieved on 10 January 2022)

of Chancellor Merkel. Now especially after what happened in Afghanistan, he thinks, it is being questioned also by decision-makers and foreign policy experts in Germany to what extent such interventions have been useful and whether it really makes sense or it is really possible to influence political evolution of a country through external interventions. In this respect, he shared the view the fact that Germany has not been a game maker affecting the course of international affairs but has taken part in major international processes like international efforts in Afghanistan. In this vein, he argues, Chancellor Merkel has also played a leading role in international efforts aimed at achieving political solutions and reconstruction of the country in Afghanistan. Yet, he argues that despite all their contributions and sacrifices, the US has decided to fully withdraw from Afghanistan in 2021 without properly consulting with its allies and partners and implemented this decision in a most disorderly and chaotic manner.[266] In fact, this way of decision-making and action taken by the US seems to have caused disappointment in Germany, as also implied by retired Ambassador Christoph Heusgen, who has served as Germany's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York between 2017-2021 and described the manner of US withdrawal from Afghanistan as "awful brinkmanship".[267]

It appears likely that in the period ahead, there may be a deeper debate in Germany aimed at drawing lessons out of Germany's engagement in Afghanistan and the chaotic

[266] Interviewee 2.

[267] Christoph Heusgen. (2021). "Germany and Afghanistan: Time to ditch bad governments, not good Governance". European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), August 20, 2021. https://ecfr.eu/article/germany-and-afghanistan-time-to-ditch-bad-governments-not-good-governance/?amp (Retrieved on 28 August 2021)

and abrupt end of the international mission. In this respect, Philipp Rotmann invites the German political decision-makers to engage in a self-critical exercise about the choices which they have made over the past 20 years.[268]

5.8. The Last Hurdle Before the Finish Line: COVID-19 Pandemic

5.8.1. Global Impact of the Pandemic

As a global pandemic, Covid-19, has received close attention by the world leaders and become a priority agenda item at the important international events, including the World Economic Forum (WEF). Chancellor Angela Merkel attended the WEF virtual summit which was held on 26 January 2021 and underlined the importance of multilateral cooperation to counter the Covid-19 pandemic and emphasized her view that self-interested approaches by any state will not be helpful in addressing the issue. At this critical time in history, Chancellor Merkel also welcomed the decision of the US Administration to return to the World Health Organization (WHO) and made a call on all members to take steps to strengthen this organization. This call has been in line with German multilateralist foreign policy. As such, in her address, Chancellor Merkel also stated that at the beginning of the pandemic, in Germany and Europe the decision-

[268] Philipp Rotmann. (2021). "Germany's Afghan Defeat: Unhappy Not-Quite-Warriors", Internationale Politik Quarterly, September 30, 2021. https://ip-quarterly.com/en/germanys-afghan-defeat-unhappy-not-quite-warriors (Retrieved on 15 October 2021)

makers made mistakes and reflexively focussed on individualistic efforts to counter the pandemic but later they have learned the importance of acting together.[269]

As part of the international efforts to address the pandemic, under WHO's Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator programme, a vaccines pillar called COVAX has been established. Its aim has been to facilitate the development, production, distribution of Covid-19 tests, treatments and vaccines and fair access to them. The ACT Accelerator is a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. At the WEF 2021, Chancellor Merkel reiterated Germany's continued support to the COVAX Facility and encouraged wealthy countries to contribute more to the funding of this important initiative.[270]

As to the probable consequences of the COVID 19/Coronavirus pandemic, many IR scholars have been sharing their views and observations. Juan Laborda argues that clearly the Covid-19 pandemic will give more impetus to the changes in the global system in favour of China.[271]

[269] "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel anlässlich des Davos-Dialogs des World Economic Forum am 26. Januar 2021 (Videokonferenz)". https://www.bundeskanzler.de/bk-de/aktuelles/rede-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-anlaesslich-des-davos-dialogs-des-world-economic-forum-am-26-januar-2021-videokonferenz--1844594 (Retrieved on 15 Dec 2021)

[270] Donor Tracker. (2021). "Multilateral approach needed to fight COVID-19, says Germany's Merkel at World Economic Forum", January 26, 2021. https://donortracker.org/policy-updates/multilateral-approach-needed-fight-covid-19-says-germanys-merkel-world-economic (Retrieved on 17 December 2021)

[271] Juan Laborda. (2020). "The Coronavirus and the End of Neo-Liberalism". Brave New Europe, March 21, 2020. https://braveneweurope.com/juan-laborda-the-coronavirus-and-the-end-of-neo-liberalism (Retrieved on 26 March 2021)

Francis Fukuyama describes the pandemic as a "global political stress test". In his view, the countries, whose governments are capable and legitimate, have managed the pandemic better, while others have been facing serious difficulties in countering the challenges. He also underlines the importance of building social consensus and having competent political leaders, besides capable state institutions and sufficient resources to manage the crisis well. In this respect, as two successful examples, Fukuyama highlights South Korea and Chancellor Merkel's Germany as they have delegated the management of crisis to their capable health professionals.[272]

5.8.2. Germany's and the EU's Response and Chancellor Merkel's Leadership and Efforts

Chancellor Merkel's ordeal with Covid-19 pandemic has gone through several stages. In most of 2020, Germany has put up such a successful and nationally well-organized fight against this deadly virus and Chancellor Merkel's leadership in these efforts displayed by closely following the advice of scientific experts have been watched by others with great admiration. When the fight against Covid-19 has reached the stage of production and administration of vaccinations, Germany seems to have decided to act together with its partners in the EU and the EU Institutions like EU Commission, the things started not to go as planned and even though the most effective vaccine has been developed and produced by a German company, Germany even into Summer 2021 struggled to make progress with its vaccination efforts.

[272] Fukuyama. p.31

One strategic thinking behind the decision of German Government and its Chancellor might be not to offend the new President of the United States, Joe Biden, by pressing on the German company BionTech and its American partner, Pfizer, to have more vaccine allocated for German people. By early summer 2021, the US requirements for vaccine appeared to have been satisfied to a large extent and this is supposed to start opening the way for Germany and other client nations to obtain more from this effective vaccine. Once again it seems that German Chancellor has trodden carefully not to get engaged in a vaccine war with Germany's main security provider and trade partner, thus chosen not to upset the new US President, who is a staunch supporter of the rules-based international order and decided to wait its turn for vaccine until the US vaccine thirst has been satisfied.

Kühnhardt takes a comprehensive look at various consequences of Covid-19 pandemic on global and European affairs and comes up with some substantive academic research ideas and structural reform proposals to the EU. Kühnhardt notes that with the Covid-19 pandemic an issue has truly deserved to be called as a world issue, as its consequences have somewhat affected all societies around the world. After listing possible future research areas which the pandemic has brought to the fore, Kühnhardt looks into its consequences for the EU as well. In this regard, he specifically calls for the revision of Lisbon Treaty so that the currently existing concept of "shared responsibility" (Art. 168) between the EU and its member states in situations caused by health-threatening natural disasters could be reconsidered with the aim of

introducing improvements through creation a robust Emergency Situation Mechanism based on stronger EU competencies and necessary budgetary allocations.[273]

In fact, Kühnhardt's recommendation to reform and consolidate the health management responsibilities within the EU by clarifying the delimitation of responsibilities between the EU and its member states corresponds well to the observation shared by Francis Fukuyama. Similarly, Fukuyama also points out the role of a coherent health administration system within a political structure, in his case, the state, in countering and managing serious health challenges like Covid-19 pandemic.[274]

In the case of the EU, had the responsibility to access to vaccines been left to each member states, it was highly unlikely that small members would not be able to get vaccines simultaneously with wealthier and stronger member states. Therefore, a primary conclusion from both Kühnhardt's and Fukuyama's observations and recommendations, which might apply to the EU, would be that the EU needs to better organize itself and like a capable and well-governed nation state, should be empowered to act more efficiently and autonomous in facing and dealing with similar future health crisis like pandemics.

[273] Ludger Kühnhardt. (2021). "The post-corona world. A research agenda". ZEI Discussion Paper C 267 / 2021-Centre for European Integration Studies, p. 35-36. https://www.zei.uni-bonn.de/aktuelles/2021/zei-discussion-paper-c-267-2021 (Retrieved on 21 November 2021)

[274] Fukuyama. (2021). "The Pandemic and Political Order". Foreign Affairs, July/August 2020.

In fact, despite the harsh criticism aimed at German Government's handling of Covid-19 pandemic, Chancellor Merkel favoured a European solution in the case of vaccine procurement and fair distribution.

As expressed by Chancellor Merkel in her address to WEF 2021, Nora Müller from Körber Foundation recalls that in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, EU member states displayed a blatant lack of solidarity, e. g. by unilaterally closing national borders. She further remembers that there was great concern as to whether European solidarity would hold at a moment of fundamental crisis and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned that the EU had "looked into an abyss". In her view, at a later stage, important steps were taken to strengthen European cohesion and crisis resilience. In this respect, she mentions particularly two measures: 1) Firstly, a common European approach to buying and distributing Covid-19 vaccines and 2) Secondly, the Franco-German initiative to set up a one-off financial instrument to boost Europe's economic recovery, which evolved into the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) fund. Müller thinks that even though NGEU is financed by a *one-time* issuance of common European debt, Germany crossed the Rubicon by at least partly dropping its long-held resistance to common debt. In her opinion, the fact that Berlin took the helm in advancing Europe's economic recovery has been a strong confirmation of Germany's interest in maintaining the cohesion within the EU. Considering the fact that Angela Merkel's chancellorship was marked by a series of fundamental crises and thus, she came to be known as the "Crisis Chancellor", Müller

views the establishment of NGEU as a case in point confirming her pragmatism and flexibility if and when required by dire crisis situations.[275]

5.9. Chapter Conclusion

During the period of Chancellor Angela Merkel, as far as international crises care concerned, Germany has preferred to assume the role of mediator in the international system, which has proven to be useful and instrumental both within the EU and outside of it. It is neither feasible nor meaningful to expect Germany to take side in all conflicts or confrontations around the globe and away from Europe, to which the US is a party, like the geopolitical competition and "trade wars" between US and China. In case Germany starts becoming a party to major disagreements, like France does for instance in Eastern Mediterranean, then there may emerge the lack of a credible mediator, which can talk to all parties, mediate and develop solutions to crises.

In this respect, regarding Russia and its aggressive policies towards Ukraine, Sophia Besch commented that Chancellor Merkel has been actively involved and influential in her dialogue with the parties of the conflict and Germany has spared no efforts to prevent a military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine (and by blocking Ukraine's membership in NATO has ensured that NATO has not gotten involved in this conflict either). In her view, Germany does not want to and is not going to take

[275] Interview with Müller.

the leadership on behalf of the EU and West in this conflict or any other similar conflict and it rather prefers to embed itself in the EU and acts on behalf of the EU.[276]

Nora Müller highlighted in our interview her observation that it is important to draw lessons from the failure in Afghanistan. In her opinion, one lesson learned is certainly that the goals for international missions will have to be more focused and modest, and it is apparent that the era of nation-building has come to an end. She thinks that long-term engagements such as in Afghanistan require political will and domestic support over a sustained period of time which is extremely hard to muster as the example of the US shows. In her view, overall, the international community has failed to build up sustainable state structures in Afghanistan, and the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan tainted the image of the West. She believes that the German political leadership will take steps to draw lessons from what happened in Afghanistan. In this regard, Müller recalls that during the election campaign, Annalena Baerbock, Germany's new Foreign Minister, pledged to undertake a thorough evaluation of Germany's military missions abroad.[277]

In a similar way, Sophia Besch believes that the withdrawal of the international community from Afghanistan has been the result of many specific trends coinciding

[276] Interview with Besch.

[277] Interview with Müller.

in a particular time. US had its own reasons, Germany and other allies had theirs and they simply followed the US decision. It has been a terrible defeat on behalf of those, who intervened and spent many years and a lot of resources to build a functioning state and modern society in Afghanistan. Germany has also contributed to these efforts with a whole generation of diplomats, security personnel, development experts, so on. Yet, the result is a huge disappointment and would be further analysed with a view to drawing some lessons.[278]

Regarding the international crises, Jana Puglierin argued in our interview that under Chancellor Merkel's rule, Germany has punched below its weight. In the case of Libya, it abstained in the voting at the UN Security Council, even though it has hosted in Berlin few conferences on Libya. The same holds true for the civil war in Syria. Until the massive and irregular refugee crisis has reached, Germany has not done much. When the US and UK (and France) had some air force operations in 2018 against some targets like facilities suspected of producing chemical weapons in Syria, Germany chose to stay away and did not join them but expressed its support to the operation.[279] (It played an important role, though, in destructing Syria's chemical arsenal.) In fact, war and peace issues have not really been at the forefront of German diplomatic efforts around the world during the time of Chancellor Merkel. As mentioned earlier,

[278] Interview with Besch.

279 Deutsche Welle. (2018). "US, UK, France launch strikes on Syrian chemical weapons capabilities", April 14, 2018. https://www.dw.com/en/us-uk-france-launch-strikes-on-syrian-chemical-weapons-capabilities/a-43384179 (Retrieved on 15 December 2021)

Germany's active role in trying to develop solutions to the crisis in Ukraine is distinctly different from its approach to other conflicts like the ones in Syria and Libya.[280]

COVID-19 pandemic broke out in December 2019 but quickly spread around the world in the first quarter of 2020 as a global challenge undermining the mobility and exchange in the international system. At the beginning of the crisis, all countries, including the developed ones, have struggled, muddled through and mostly failed to devise an effective response to this unprecedented crisis. Germany appeared to manage the crisis well at the national level, but its first approaches have not contributed to a European response and sustainable solution protecting the citizens of all member states. Only at the later stages of the pandemic and after the wealthy members like Germany and France started favouring a European solution by engaging the EU structures in Brussels particularly the EU Commission more effectively, the EU has begun to address the pandemic successfully and in a collective way, without undermining the EU solidarity and cohesion. Chancellor Merkel has played important roles in this process, not only by letting the German health professional handle the crisis in a most efficient way, but also by facilitating European solutions that also aimed to address economic impacts of the pandemic, like creation of new credit facilities.

In this regard, Sophia Besch shared some observations by saying that that regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, at the beginning, the EU member states including Germany

[280] Interview with Puglierin.

have approach the matter from a national perspective and tried to take measures, by introducing border controls, etc. Such national approaches, however, have started bearing undesired consequences and undermining the EU solidarity. As a result, Germany under the leadership of Chancellor Merkel has changed its position, started favouring EU-led solutions and this has strengthened the sense of solidarity and unity within the EU. On European matters, Merkel has not been a visionary, but made a lot of efforts to keep the Union together. She has appeared bolder in taking some steps towards the end of her last term in office, for instance, as was the case in establishment of the European Recovery Fund during the COVID-19 pandemic.[281]

Jana Puglierin appears to both agree and disagree with these views. In this respect, she expressed the opinion that in the first phases of Covid-19 pandemic which broke out in March 2020, Chancellor Merkel was quite successful, even though decentralized nature of political system in Germany posed some serious challenges to her in taking the necessary measures swiftly. However, she also notes that looking back at the entirety of the process, one might have difficulty to argue that the pandemic has been managed well but can count the creation of a European Recovery Fund among the successes.[282]

[281] Interview with Besch.

[282] Interview with Puglierin.

To sum up, Germany's performance regarding the management of international crises during Chancellor Merkel's time seems to attract both critical and appreciative remarks depending on with whom one talks to.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

A multitude of key factors have shaped and guided the German foreign policy during the period of Angela Merkel. Some of them have been specific to the Merkel period, like Eurozone crisis, irregular migration crisis and the conflict in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea by Russia, etc, and some others have been valid and applicable to all periods since German reunification in 1991, regardless of who the German Chancellor was, such as anti-military stance of German public, civilian power nature of Germany, the need to maintain a close co-operation with France, so on. All these and their long-term consequences like the Eurozone crisis have defined and still affect and shape the German foreign policy discourse and behaviours.

In the era of Chancellor Merkel, by navigating through several serious crisis and developments inside and outside Europe, Germany has grown stronger both economically and politically in Europe and in the international politics. Chancellor Merkel has earned the image of a “dependable captain” who has always steered her ship well in the stormy seas. She has added a lot onto what she has taken over from her predecessor.

Still, many important questions related to the purpose of Germany's power, its place and role in international relations, what sort of power Germany is or has, whether it will or should use its economic power to become a military power as well or it should put more of its financial resources at the disposal of other EU members and drive the European integration further and deeper, whether it should put more emphasis on cosmopolitan values like democracy and fundamental human rights and freedoms instead of its economic national interest, so on, remain to be clearly and persuasively answered. Indeed, my comprehensive literature review also confirmed that many prominent scholars, thinkers, politicians, diplomats, experts, so on, have been devoting a lot of time and attention to Germany's foreign policy discourse and behaviours, which seem, at times inconsistent and unexpected, and some other times, like great power behaviours.

Despite all efforts spent by Chancellor Merkel and other German policy makers, at the end of Chancellor's 16-year tenure, still there appears to be a wide gap between German political elite and people about the conception of Germany's international role. To address and overcome this hurdle before a more active and engaged German foreign policy also showing leadership qualities whenever needed in the face of international crisis, many scholars seem to have made suggestions about the need for Germany to assume increased responsibilities in international affairs, but the majority of German people appear to be distant to the idea of Germany's active military contributions to international interventions as was the case in Libya in 2011.

In this regard, Nora Müller highlights that Germany and France have quite different strategic cultures. In her view, France wants Germany to become more active in ensuring European security and Berlin's decision to deploy troops in Mali was seen by many as a concession to French pressure in the first place.[283]

Munich Consensus of 2014 appears to have strikingly demonstrated this difference of perception between German political elite and public. Therefore, experts like Sophia Besch and Christian Odendahl suggest that the German policy makers develop strategies to earn the support of German public for building up its military capabilities so that it can assume increased responsibilities and play more important roles in international affairs, which would better reflect and match its economic power and political weight in Europe.

Rachel Rizzo and Max Bergmann, while evaluating the possible foreign policy discourse of the new German Government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz and new Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens), also take a critical look at Chancellor Merkel's foreign policy priorities and actions. In this regard, they recommend the US Administration to pay attention to at least four possible changes in German foreign policy which may impact its relations with the US. Their first advice is that the US should expect to see in German foreign policy more emphasis on values and treatment of autocrats through harder policies. As such, they argue that Chancellor Merkel has not placed too much emphasis on values in foreign policy and been not tough enough

[283] Interview with Müller.

with autocrats, as she prioritized business and economic interests over values. In their view, such a values-driven approach by the new German Foreign Minister Baerbock would be welcomed by the Biden Administration. Secondly, they think that the new German government will ascribe a highest priority to Europe and may take some bold steps to advance European integration. Another criticism towards Chancellor Merkel, who is criticised by many for not having a grand vision for Europe and for not taking bold steps to deepen European integration. Thirdly, by referring to Chancellor Merkel's disputable performance and legacy in the field of climate protection, they argue that with the new Government, which includes the Greens and the Foreign Minister is from that party, Germany will play important role in setting the pace in global efforts on climate-related issues. As the fourth point, they predict that Germany's attitude on defence matters will remain largely unchanged, even though the new government reaffirms Germany's commitment to NATO and adhere to its obligations under NATO nuclear sharing arrangements.[284]

In this respect, a key question remains to be further debated concerns how to push Germany out of its comfort zone which appears to be caused largely by the US security umbrella over Europe and perception about the lack of an imminent threat to Germany's territorial security. On the other hand, for instance, international trade is key to Germany's economic wealth, and it requires international security to ensure

[284] Rachel Rizzo and Max Bergmann. (2021). "The End of an Era in Germany. What does the new German government mean for US foreign policy?", Inkstick, December 10, 2021. https://inkstickmedia.com/the-end-of-an-era-in-germany/ (Retrieved on 10 December 2021)

free, safe and unhindered exchange of goods and people. This has a cost, of which Germany should have a proportionate share.

The current transatlantic arrangement ensuring Europe's security through NATO has started seeming increasingly unfair to the American policy makers as the impacts of the WWII are no longer visible in Europe and Germany and some other EU members are wealthy enough to invest more in their ow defence. Indeed, the US appears to be tolerating an indirect wealth transfer from USA to Germany and other European nations for ensuring their territorial security. The US economy is run based on neo-liberal understanding without a strong and comprehensive public social security system including health insurance, whereas German people do have these benefits. On the other hand, the US has a foreign trade deficit of hundreds of billions of Dollars every year, while Germany has hundreds of billions of Dollars trade surplus. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise if conscious US policy makers and citizens object the current scheme. Not only President Trump but also his predecessors have been drawing attention to this imbalanced relationship, President Trump has just been louder and less diplomatic than his predecessors.

Regarding Germany's role in Europe, as indicated also by PEW Research Survey conducted in 2018, the opinions expressed by the respondents appear different on whether Germany plays a greater role in Europe and in the world as compared to its role about 10 years ago or its role is more or less the same. It was interesting to witness,

however, to see that many people in Europe viewed Germany's role more influential.[285]

In fact, Germany as a key player within the EU has been influencing the EU's strategic culture about its involvement in international crisis management efforts and contributed to the positioning of the EU as civilian power. It cannot be argued though that Germany is the only actor in the EU shaping its behaviour as a civilian power.

Looking at the issue from a different angle, one can argue that Germany's military weakness seems to be a conscious choice. In other words, Germany uses its relative military weakness very skilfully to its advantage. Because once it builds up and owns a strong military there will be more and stronger demands from its allies and partners for its military intervention in the international crisis. For instance, a strong German military may be asked by the US to support its efforts in the Pacific region against China. This would mean a serious dilemma for Germany as to deciding on whether it really wants to be a part of a military deterrence scheme against China or not. Becoming a trade nation and mid-size military power intervening against great powers may not necessarily be compatible foreign policy choices.

On the global stage, it can be argued that the EU is a power multiplier for Germany. It uses the EU as a platform to project a broader and stronger influence in international

[285] Pew Research Center, October 2018, "Trump's International Ratings Remain Low, Especially Among Key Allies, p.11. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/trumps-international-ratings-remain-low-especially-among-key-allies/ (Retrieved on 21 April 2021)

affairs. Without the EU, Germany would be lessened, because, unlike the UK, it does not have a commonwealth, nor is it a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

As to the US-China competition and Germany's stance on that, the former US President Trump's loss of the presidential elections in November 2020 and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic seem to have given the two sides of this trade/tariff wars an opportunity to pause and consider the issues in a calm manner. Like German Chancellor Merkel, the rest of national leaders around the world perhaps can follow the suit and make efforts to discourage these two great powers from even thinking about resorting to military means to resolve their differences.

As Eberle and Miskimmon also put it, given the fact that Germany's relationship with the European and global orders has become interwoven and interdependent, analysing the German foreign policy is becoming increasingly interesting. Also, mainly due to the foreign policy discourse and behaviours preferred by the German policy makers, sometimes in unexpected ways, like in the case of international intervention in Libya draw scholarly attention to German foreign policy. Especially the weaknesses and anomalies of the current international system exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic show that the uncertainties about the future of the international order and politics will continue in the years to come.[286]

[286] Jakub Eberle & Alister Miskimmon. (2020). "Conclusion: German Foreign Policy in the (post) Corona World". German Politics, 30:1, 140-148, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2020.1850695 (Retrieved on 22 January 2021)

At this point, if we are to draw up a summary of key continuities and changes in German foreign policy during the 16 year-tenure of Chancellor Merkel, we could start by referring to NATO and EU as two main pillars defining the German foreign policy identity. NATO remained key in keeping the transatlantic cooperation with the US strong; whereas the EU, which has survived serious financial and economic crises successfully thanks also to the German leadership, maintained its core place in German foreign policy for advancing prosperity, security, stability and cooperation in Europe. Despite Brexit, Chancellor Merkel has left behind a stronger EU, underpinned by some newly created funds, making the EU better prepared for similar future crisis. The UN and particularly the Security Council resolutions continued to be a main source of international legitimacy for Germany. Protection of the rules-based liberal international order has received a lot of attention from the Merkel Governments, particularly the fourth and last Government launched and spearheaded an initiative called Alliance for Multilateralism, together with France. Brexit was a serious blow to the EU as for the first time in its history the Union lost a member. Still, the EU continued to progress and look to the future and even started taking some steps through PESCO and EDF to reinforce its military capabilities. Germany's economic and trade relations, therefore, dependence on states with authoritarian regimes like Russia and China has grown during the Merkel era. The construction of Nord Stream II pipeline has been strongly criticized both in Germany and in the EU and opposed by the US. Yet, it has been completed but could not be operationalized, and nowadays has an uncertain future. Germany's traditional policy of "Change through trade (Wandel durch Handel)" has clearly failed as far as these two great powers are concerned.

Its opposition to the international intervention in Libya in 2011 represented a major change in German foreign policy in terms of deviating from the mainstream behaviour of its allies and partners. Yet, this can also be seen as a continuity in foreign policy behaviour in terms of its conventional preference for anti-military approaches. By admitting a huge number of refugees from Syria in 2015-16, estimated to be around one million people, Germany demonstrated another major behavioural change in its foreign policy under Chancellor Merkel's leadership. As confirmed by the Munich Consensus of 2014, the German political leadership has at times strongly advocated for Germany to break its shell and assume more responsibilities in international affairs but these calls have failed to resonate with the anti-militarist German public. As another continuity, Germany military has been neglected and not considered as a foreign policy tool by Chancellor Merkel, leaving Germany unprepared in the face of unexpected crisis which require military response in cooperation with its allies and partners.

The way in which the international community led by the USA left Afghanistan in August 2021 seems to have made the Germany decision makers suspicious about the utility of such future missions. This fact may lead to further changes in German foreign policy behaviours in terms of international interventions and their purposes in the future.

Four years spent during the period of the former US President Donald Trump has been quite traumatic for Chancellor Merkel and the European political leaders. The possibility of Donald Trump's return after the elections to be held in 2024 looms like a nightmare about which not many would like to talk about. The Trump period and President Trump's unfriendly treatment of its European counterparts and its country's allies and partners have led the European leaders particularly those in Germany and France to think more seriously about the subjects like European sovereignty, strategic autonomy, self-reliance in terms of defence capabilities. This can be interpreted at least as a potential change in the German foreign policy behaviour also acknowledged by Chancellor Merkel. Yet not many concrete practical decisions and steps have been taken in this direction before the end of her period in office.

Despite all the debate about the European self-sufficiency in terms of its territorial defence and the changed German foreign policy behaviour to protect its national interests, if necessary, by resorting to the use of military force, a prevailing motto that captures Germany's political behaviour domestically and internationally may be phrased as follows: "Always act in coalitions at home and never act without a coalition in the world." The post WWI German political leaderships continues to strongly believe in the benefits and suitability of collective action inside and outside the country, because in their view it reduces or eliminates the margin of fatal errors which may bear irreversibly destructive consequences. A lesson they have learned well from their national history. Chancellor Merkel has also acted as a keen representative of this

political philosophy and steered her country clear and away from any international adventures.

To sum up, those, who look at and analyse the German foreign policy through the lens of realist theory often do not see and appreciate Germany's *sui generis* capabilities and strengths. Indeed, by not prioritizing or preferring the resort to military power and intervention as a first choice in resolution of international disagreements, tensions and conflicts, Germany may appear to some as sidelined or naively pacifist in an increasingly competitive world. Germany's true strength, however, may be lying in this appearance of military weakness, which has given it the excuse to stay out of military interventions and conflicts with some exceptions. Therefore, in view of the author of this dissertation, Germany's power can be best understood and analysed through a liberal (Kantian) prism. It is true that the world is not (yet) in a stage of "perpetual peace" as predicted by Immanuel Kant, but in the era of nuclear armament, those states, like Germany, who tirelessly endeavour to avoid militarization of international disagreements and conflicts, will be preventing the outbreak of new inter-state, regional or global wars and thereby, destruction of countries and their peoples. To this end, Germany tends and tries to stay out of conflicts and is careful not to side with any conflicting party so that it can call upon all sides to exercise constraint and commit themselves to the peaceful resolution of conflicts by respecting international norms, principles, primarily, human rights. Yet, Germany is often called upon to behave like a "normal" state and pursue its national interests. However, as emphasized earlier, in an era when many states are heavily armed with nuclear weapons, which are

enough to destroy the entire world several times and wipe out the humanity from this planet, Germany's foreign policy behaviours, discourse and orientations may be representing the "new normal" for all nation states, who should put aside nationalism, aggressive pursuit of national interests and instead focus on current and looming global risks and challenges. The legacy of Chancellor Merkel, who has become the symbol of stability, continuity and measured change in Europe and in international affairs, may perhaps be most useful, if it is considered from this perspective.

What the life holds in the pipeline for Chancellor Merkel is yet to be seen. In an article issued in a prominent German daily, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, on December 8, 2021, the columnist Burghart Klaussner, for instance, after praising personal and professional qualities of the outgoing Chancellor and proposed that she should lead the UN as its Secretary General (UNO Praesidentschaft). This proposal indeed makes a lot of sense. So much experience and knowledge about the global risks and challenges facing the humanity as a whole, which the Chancellor has gained over three decades in national and international politics could this way be put to better use for global good. In fact, in case Chancellor Merkel was suggested for such a candidacy through a global voting system, she could very well be the winner of such an election.[287]

[287] Burghart Klaussner. (2021). "Die Letzte an der Bar", Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, December 8, 2021. https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/mensch-merkel/wie-angela-merkel-uns-alle-durch-unscheinbarkeit-getaeuscht-hat-17672531.html#void (Retrieved on 09 December 2021)

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
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14 OCAK 2022

Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr.Hüseyin BAĞCI

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Hidayet Çilkoparan'ın "The Changing World Order and German Foreign Policy in the Era of Chancellor Angela Merkel (2005-2021)"başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **0043-ODTU/İAEK-2022** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
İAEK Başkan

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name	: Çilkoparan, Hidayet
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MSc	Middle East Technical University, International Relations	2018
BA	Ankara University International Relations	1997
High School	Kayseri Aydınlık Evler High School	1991

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Title
1997-2000	Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara	Junior Diplomat
1998-1999	Turkish Chief of Staff, Ankara	Military Service
2000-2002	Turkish Embassy in Khartoum Sudan	Third Secretary
2002-2005	Permanent Mission of Turkey to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Vienna, Austria	Second Secretary
2005-2006	Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara	First Secretary
2006-2012	The Secretariat of the the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Vienna, Austria	Deputy Director Chief of Personnel Ethics Coordinator

2012-2015	Turkish Embassy in Berlin Germany Deputy Head of Mission	Political Counsellor Minister Counsellor
2015-2017	Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara	Head of Department

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English (Advanced), German (Intermediate), French (Intermediate)

PUBLICATIONS

1) Master Thesis, October 2018, "Europe's Security Challenges and Transatlantic Relations". https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12622720/index.pdf

2) "International Political Sociology Contributions to International Relations", E-International, May 23, 2020. https://www.e-ir.info/2020/05/23/international-political-sociology-contributions-to-international-relations/

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C. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Öz kısmından da anlaşılacağı üzere bu Doktora Tezi Almanya'nın ilk kadın Şansölyesi (Başbakan için Almanya'da kullanılan unvan) Dr. Angela Merkel'in dört tam dönem yani 16 yıl devam eden görev süresince (2005-2021) liberal temellere dayalı dünya düzeninde yaşanan değişimler ve Alman dış politikasının bu değişimlere uyumu üzerine yürütülen kapsamlı bir literatür taraması ve araştırma temelinde yazılmıştır.

Mesleki geçmişi itibariyle bir fizik doktoru akademisyen olan Angela Merkel Doğu Almanya kökenlidir. Batı ve Doğu Almanya'nın 3 Ekim 1991'de birleşmelerinden sonra II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası Almanya'sının 8. Şansölyesi olarak bu önemli görevi üstlenen ilk Doğu Alman kökenli kişi olması itibariyle de Almanya siyasi tarihinde bir ilki teşkil eden önemli bir yer edinmiştir.

Tezin Öz kısmından da anlaşılacağı üzere, bu tezin liberalizm/kurumsal liberalizm teorisi temelinde cevap aradığı ana soru şu şekildedir: "Başbakan Angela Merkel döneminde (2005-2021) uluslararası sistem hangi yönlerden değişti ve Alman dış politikası bu değişiklikler ile bazı uluslararası krizlere ve sorunlara nasıl cevap verdi?". Bu kapsamda bazı alt soruların yanıtları da aranmaktadır: "Başbakan Merkel değerler üzerine mi yoksa çıkarlar üzerine mi inşa edilmiş bir dış politika izledi? Ekonomik ve ticari çıkarları insan hakları ve temel özgürlüklerin önüne mi koydu? Dış politikası kozmopolitan (insan odaklı) mı, yoksa komunitaryen (devlet/çıkar) odaklı mıydı?

Almanya'nın sert güç eksikliğinden kaynaklanan dezavantajlarını nasıl aşmayı amaçladı? Başbakan Merkel, Alman dış politikasını hangi bakımlardan ve hangi zamanlarda önemli müttefikleri ve ortaklarının politikalarından ayrıştırdı ve bunu neden yaptı? Hangi dış politika araçlarını ve hareket tarzlarını tercih etti? Dış politika alanında halefine nasıl bir miras bıraktı? Onun Çin ve Rusya'ya karşı yumuşak tutum izlediğini iddia edenler haklı mıydılar?" Bu soruların cevapları bir kesinlik içermeyebilir ama esasen Alman dış politikasının bazı yönleri de böyle bir görüntü vermektedir.

2. Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana geçen on yıllar boyunca ve özellikle de Soğuk Savaş'ın bitiminden sonra 1991 yılında iki Almanya'nın birleşmelerinden sonra Almanya kendine özgü bir dış politika geliştirmiş ve uygulayagelmiştir. Bu kapsamda, Alman karar vericiler ülkelerinin uluslararası yükümlülük ve taahhütlerini, iç siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal gerçeklerini, müttefiklerinin, ortaklarının ve küresel kamuoyunun beklentilerini, Avrupa entegrasyon süreci ve AB üyeliğinin gerektirdiği davranış kalıplarını ve Rusya gibi hasımları ve rakipleri tarafından ilan edilen kırmızı çizgileri dış politika belirleme ve uygulama süreçlerinde dikkate alagelmişlerdir. Angela Merkel de dahil, Almanya Başbakanları da dış politika paradigma ve parametrelerini büyük ölçüde bu çerçevede belirlemişler ve bunu yaparken kendi dünya görüşleri ile uluslararası düzenin hangi yönde evirildiği gibi küresel gelişmeleri yorumlama biçimlerinden süzülen özgün katkılar da yapmışlardır.

Avrupa'nın yeni haritası, bölgesel ve küresel jeopolitik gerçekler Almanya'nın birleşmesinden sonra bu ülke için tanımlanan uluslararası kimlik ve dış politika çerçevesini içeren 4+2 Antlaşması'nı büyük ölçüde anlamsız kılmıştır. Doğu Avrupa ülkelerinin bağımsız aktörler olarak ortaya çıkmaları ve AB ve NATO'ya üye olmalarının ardından Rus tehdidi Almanya'nın doğu sınırlarından büyük ölçüde uzaklaşmıştır. Bu durum, ABD'nin NATO üzerinden Avrupa'ya sağladığı güvenlik şemsiyesinden büyük faydalar sağlayan Almanya'nın askeri harcamalarını azaltabilmesine ve bu suretle ekonomik kalkınmasına, uluslararası ekonomik ve ticari ilişkilerini daha da geliştirebilmesine ve Avrupa entegrasyonu üzerine odaklanabilmesine imkân tanımıştır. Bu tez kapsamında görüşülen kıdemli bir Alman diplomat, Almanya'nın uluslararası krizlere ve sorunlara kolektif bir yaklaşımla ve BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin kararlarına dayalı meşruiyet temelinde çözüm arama politikası izlediğini teyit etmiştir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, Almanya denenmemiş ve maceracı yolları tercih etmemekte ve uluslararası toplumun ana akımı içinde hareket etmeyi tercih etmektedir ve Başbakanların eğilimleri de bu yönde olagelmiştir.

Kendine özgü dış politikası, ekonomik ve siyasi gücü arasındaki farklılık ve bölgesel ve küresel gelişmelerde lider rolü oynamaktaki isteksizliği dikkate alınarak Almanya'ya çeşitli sıfatlar yakıştırılmıştır. Bunlar arasında "Avrupa'nın isteksiz hegemonu", "jeo-ekonomik güç", "vazgeçilemez ulus", "belirsiz güç", "kafası karışık hegemon" gibi tanımlamalar bulunmaktadır. Alman dış politikasını yakından takip eden ve yorumlayan Hanns Maull, Constanze Stelzenmüller, Ulrich Speck ve Hans

Kundnani gibi araştırmacı yazarların bu konuda oldukça yaratıcı olduklarını belirtmek mümkündür.

Başbakan Angela Merkel 16 yıl boyunca Almanya'nın ve Alman dış politikasının sürücü koltuğunda oturmuştur. Almanya'nın geleneksel olarak koalisyon hükümetleri tarafından yönetilmesine ve Dışişleri Bakanlarının da küçük koalisyon ortağı partiden olmalarına rağmen, Başbakan Merkel Alman dış politikasının belirlenmesinde ve yürütülmesinde her zaman ilgili ve aktif bir rol üstlenmiştir. Bu kapsamda, dünya Başbakan Merkel'in AB'nin iç krizleri, Ukrayna, Libya, Suriye ve Doğu Akdeniz gibi yakın komşu bölgelerindeki çatışmalar ve krizlerle, iklim değişimi, çevre dostu enerji ve Avrupa'ya yönelik düzensiz göz krizi gibi sorunlarla nasıl ilgilendiğini gözlemleme imkânı bulmuştur.

Şansölye Merkel'in dış politika konularına aktif katılımı ve ilgisi ve Donald Trump'ın ABD Başkanı seçilmesi ve adı geçenin yeterince düşünülmemiş ve öngörülemeyen yaklaşımları gibi beklenmedik ve arzu edilmeyen gelişmeler de Şansölye'nin uluslararası siyasetteki kilit ve en etkili yüzlerden biri haline gelmesini sağlamıştır.

Başkan Trump'ın liberal kurumsal uluslararası düzenin ve NATO'nun varlığını devam ettirmesine bağlı ortak savunma anlayışına dayanan Avrupa savunma mimarisinin temellerine yönelik saldırgan tutumu sadece Almanya'yı değil ABD'nin diğer müttefik ve ortaklarını da derinden endişelendirmiştir. Böyle bir zamanda Şansölye Merkel bu ciddi sınamayı görmezden gelmemiş ve bu tutumuyla Avrupa'nın ve

uluslararası toplumun saygısını kazanmıştır. Erkekler dünyasında bir kadın siyasi lider olarak, Şansölye Merkel kararlı adımlar atmış ve pek çok alanda kalıcı izler bırakmıştır. Diğer tüm siyasi liderler gibi eleştirilerle de karşılaşsa da, Şansölye Merkel açısından bu durum daha çok onun fazlasıyla ihtiyatlı karar verme tarzından kaynaklanmıştır.

Bu kapsamda Berlin merkezli Körber Vakfı'ndan Nora Müller Şansölye Merkel'in çok önemli jeopolitik değişiklikler ve Avrupa ve Almanya'nın bunlara uyum sağlama ihtiyacının ortaya çıktığı bir dönemde görev yaptığına dikkat çekmiştir. Müller küresel düzende yaşanan hızlı gelişmelere rağmen ABD'nin Avrupa'nın en yakın uluslararası ortağı olmaya devam edeceğine ve Avrupalıların da dünya siyasetinde daha ağırlıklı bir aktör olabilmek için pek çok alanda daha fazla yatırım yapmaları gerekeceğine de dikkat çekmiştir.

Avrupa Reform Merkezi'nin Berlin ofisinde görevli Sophia Besch de Şansölye Merkel'in Almanya ve Avrupa'nın pek çok krizden başarıyla çıkmasında kilit roller oynadığını ve bu sayede Almanya dışında da tevazu sahibi bir "istikrar çıpası" olarak tanınırlık kazandığını kaydetmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Besch Şansölye Merkel'in fazla bir vizyon ve stratejisi olmadan çaba gösterdiğini belirtmiş ve dış politika konularına yakın ilgisine işaret etmiştir.

Avrupa Dış İlişkiler Merkezi Berlin Ofisi Başkanı Jana Puglierin, Almanya'nın temel dış politika ilke ve geleneklerini Avrupa yanlısı, transatlantik ortaklık taraftarı, çok

taraflı uluslararası işbirliğini ve kurallara dayalı uluslararası düzeni savunan ve destekleyen bir tutum olarak tarif etmiştir. Puglierin, Şansölye Merkel döneminde de bu parametrelerin büyük ölçüde aynı kaldığını belirtmiştir. Almanya'nın uluslararası sistemde iyi konumlandığına ve dünya genelinde büyük saygı ve güvene sahip olduğuna dikkat çeken Puglierin, diğer taraftan Şansölye Merkel'in Çin ve Rusya'yla bu ülkelerdeki insan hakları ihlallerine ve otoriter rejimlere rağmen devam eden güçlü ekonomik bağlarının eleştirildiğini vurgulamıştır. Bu kapsamda, Puglierin, pek çok kişi ve AB üyesi bir çok ülkenin eleştirilerine ve bu adımı bir hata olarak değerlendirmelerine rağmen Rusya ile Almanya arasında Kuzey Akım 2 (Nord Stream 2) doğalgaz boru hattının inşa edildiğine dikkat çekmiştir.

Almanya'nın ve Şansölye Merkel'in transatlantik ilişkileri önceleyen dış politika yönelimine rağmen, eski ABD Başkanı Donald Trump, Almanya'nın genel dış politika parametreleri ve tercihlerini, özellikle de güvenlik politikaları ve NATO'ya bağımlılığı temelinde Şansölye Merkel'in 2015 yılında yüksek sayıda Suriyeli sığınmacıyı kabul etmesi gibi bazı kararlarını açıkça eleştirmiştir. Esasen Başkan Trump tarafından sergilenen davranış tarzı transatlantik ilişkilerde emsali bulunmayan nitelikteydi ve diplomatik teamüllere uygun değildi ve bu tutumun transatlantik bağlara önem verdiği bilinen Şansölye Merkel'i üzdüğü ve kendisinde hayal kırıklığına yol açtığı görülmekteydi. Bu nedenle Şansölye Avrupalıların kaderlerini kendi ellerine almalarının zamanının geldiğini bile ifade etti. Her şeye rağmen G7 Zirvelerinin birinde Şansölye Merkel'in kendisiyle aynı fikirde olan meslektaşlarının arasında öne çıkarak ABD Başkanı Trump'ı ikna etmeye çalışan duruşu Alman,

Avrupa ve uluslararası kamuoyunda Şansölye Merkel'in "erkekler dünyası"nda irrasyonel tutumlara karşı çıkabildiğinin görsel bir teyidi olarak hafızalardaki yerini aldı. Şansölye Merkel'in bu kararlı ve cesur tutumu Başkan Trump'ın kurallar temelli liberal uluslararası düzene saldırıları karşısında Şansölye'ye uluslararası medya tarafından "özgür dünyanın lideri" unvanı verilmesine kadar vardı.

Bu noktada, 2. DS sonrası dayatılan kısıtlamalar nedeniyle ve iki Almanya'nın birleşmesinin bir bedeli olarak, Almanya'nın "normal" bir ulus devlet tanımından farklı özelliklere sahip olduğunu ve bunun dış politika yönelimleri ve davranışları üzerinde belirleyici etkisi olduğunu hatırlamakta yarar görülmektedir. Bunun temel nedeni ise Rusya gibi dış güçlerden gelebilecek dış saldırılara karşı güvenliğini neredeyse tamamen ABD ve NATO'ya dayanarak sağlayabilecek olmasıdır. Farklı bir açıdan bakıldığında, bu sıra dışı düzenleme Almanya'ya pek çok ekonomik avantajlar sağlamış ve Avrupa entegrasyon sürecini kolaylaştırmakta, ancak aynı zamanda Başkan Trump gibi ABD karar vericilerinin Almanya'yı eleştirme ve hatta diplomatik olmayan şekillerde aşağılama imkânı bulmasına yol açmaktadır.

Bu tezin ana konusunu daha geniş bir bağlamda ele almak gerekirse, Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşünden beri geçen zaman zarfında dünya düzeninin henüz tam olarak tanımlanamayan yeni bir şekil ve döneme doğru evirilmekte olduğunun tespit edilmesi yararlı olacaktır. Karşısında rakip bir güç bulunmayan ABD'nin liderliğinde gerçekleştirilen Afganistan (2001) ve Irak (2003) müdahalelerinin de yaşandığı kısa bir tek kutuplu düzenden geçen Soğuk Savaş

döneminin iki kutuplu düzeni Şansölye Merkel döneminde belirsizliğe ve çok kutuplu bir dünya düzenine doğru evirilmeye devam etmiştir. ABD dış politika kararlarında BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin onayını her zaman aramamış ve kararlarını Almanya dahil müttefikleriyle yeterince koordine etmemiştir. Bu yaklaşım son olarak 2021 yaz aylarında ABD önderliğindeki uluslararası varlığın Afganistan'dan kaotik ve düzensiz bir şekilde geri çekilmesi sürecinde yaşanmıştır.

Avrupa Dış İlişkiler Merkezi (ECFR) Berlin yetkilisi Jana Puglierin uluslararası ilişkilerin bu geniş çerçevesi içinde Alman dış politikasını değerlendirirken, Şansölye Merkel döneminde uluslararası düzenin köklü şekilde değişmeye devam ettiği ve dünyanın geri kalanıyla birlikte Almanya'nın çok taraflılık döneminden jeopolitik hasımlık ve güç temelli rekabet dönemine geçtiği görüşünü dile getirmiştir. Bu kapsamda Puglierin, Şansölye Merkel'in böylesi bir yeni dönemde sadece iletişim ağları ve diyalog yoluyla değil, aynı zamanda kurulu düzenin ana hasımları olan Rusya ve Çin ile de yakın durmayı ve bu devletleri Batı'nın ağırlıklı olduğu çok taraflı uluslararası sisteme entegre etmeyi seçtiğini belirtmiştir. Jana Puglierin bu yaklaşımdaki umudun bu hasım güçlerin kurallara dayanan uluslararası sisteme eklemlenmeleri yoluyla Batı devlet modelini benimseyen ve demokrasi, hukukun üstünlüğü ve insan hakları gibi değerlere saygı gösteren iyi ortaklara dönüşmeleri olduğuna işaret etmiş, ancak bu umudun planlandığı gibi gerçekleşmediğini, zira Rusya ve Çin'in kendilerine özgü bir yolda ilerlediklerini kaydetmiştir.

Puglierin bu yeni uluslararası çevrede Şansölye Merkel'in yapıcı diyaloğun herkesin çıkarına hizmet edeceğine inandığını, bununla birlikte ütopik bir düşünce içinde hareket etmediğini, ancak belki Almanya'nın Çin ve Rusya'dan sağlayabileceği ekonomik çıkarlara fazlaca önem vermiş olabileceğini de belirtmiştir.

Tez araştırması kapsamında mülakat yapılan bir kıdemli Türk diplomatı Şansölye Merkel'in Almanya'yı AB içinde tartışmasız şekilde lider pozisyona getirdiğini ve kararlı tutumuyla Yunanistan'ın içine düştüğü ekonomik ve mali krizi aşmasında önemli rol oynadığına ve ekonomisinde ve bütçe giderlerinde reformlar yapmasını sağladığına işaret etmiştir. Aynı diplomat, Fransa ile yakın eşgüdüm ve danışma halinde hareket ediyor gibi görünse de Almanya'nın Avrupa'da başat ekonomik ve siyasi güç haline geldiğini, istikrar, barış ve refahın sürdürülmesini sağladığını ve bu itibarla uluslararası arenada da saygın bir konuma yükseldiğini kaydetmiştir.

ABD'nin eski Berlin Büyükelçilerinden John Kornblum, sahip olduğu merkezi konum ve ekonomik imkanları göz önüne alındığında Almanya'nın Avrupa'daki doğal lider olduğunu, bu durumun farkında olan ABD Başkanı Joe Biden'ın Uzakdoğu'da oluşturulan ve 2021 Eylül'ünde duyurulan yeni ittifak AUKUS (Avustralya, Birleşik Krallık ve ABD) ile de bağlantılı olarak Avustralya ile Fransa arasındaki nükleer denizaltı alımına ilişkin anlaşmanın iptali sürecinde Fransa'yı aşağılayan bir tutum izlerken, Almanya'ya ayrıcalıklı ortak muamelesi yaptığını ileri sürmektedir.

Yine de John Kornblum'u ve benzer görüşte olanları hayal kırıklığına uğratmak istercesine Almanya uluslararası ilişkilerde herhangi bir düzeyde liderlik yapmaya ilgi duymadığını ve dış politikasını farklı yöntem ve araçlarla yürütmeyi tercih ettiğini göstermektedir. Bu haliyle Almanya küresel köyün AB'yle bütünleşmiş mutlu ve varlıklı bir hayat süren ve rahatsız edilmek istemeyen uyumlu ve iyi bir üyesi görüntüsü vermektedir. Bu itibarla, Almanya, çıkarlarını tehdit eden bir kriz durumunun gelişmekte olması gibi kendisini mecbur bırakan durumlar olmadıkça öne çıkmayan bir tutum izlemektedir. Bu durumun mutlaka sorumsuzluk olarak tarif edilmesi doğru olmayacaktır. Almanya liderlikle birlikte gelecek sorumlulukları istememekte, bunlardan kaçınmakta, gücü ve sorumlulukları BM, AB veya NATO gibi çok taraflı yapılar içinde paylaşmayı tercih etmektedir. Ülkenin siyasi liderleri tarafından 2014 Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nda olduğu gibi Almanya'nın gelişmeleri bir seyirci gibi tribünden izlemek yerine daha aktif olması ve daha fazla sorumluluk üstlenmesi gerektiği yönündeki çağrılar uluslararası seviyede müttefik ve ortakları tarafından memnuniyetle karşılanmasına rağmen Şansölye Merkel döneminde de uygulamaya yeterince yansımamış, Almanya'nın dış politika davranış, yaklaşım ve yönelimlerini köklü şekilde değiştirememiştir. Bu bakımdan, Şansölye Merkel tarafından 16 yıl boyunca belirlenen ve uygulanan dış politikanın da büyük ölçüde yerleşik paradigma içinde kaldığı ileri sürülebilecektir.

Bununla birlikte, tez araştırması kapsamında görüşülen kıdemli bir Alman diplomat Şansölye Merkel'in dış politika parametreleri ve performansının değerlendirilmesinin sübjektif bir çaba olduğunu ve herkesin bu konuda kendi görüşleri bulunduğunu

vurgulamıştır. Alman diplomat, Şansölye Merkel döneminde Alman dış politikasının pragmatik olduğunu, krizlere mümkün olan en iyi ve en makul şekilde cevap vermeye çalıştığını, Şansölye'nin Avro krizi ve düzensiz göç gibi konularda yavaş ve ihtiyatlı tutumlar izlemeyi tercih ettiğini ve konuların tüm artı ve eksilerini değerlendirdikten sonra büyük sürprizler olmayan kararlar aldığını da kaydetmiştir.

Almanya'nın Avrupa'daki yeri ve rolü hakkında devam edegelen ama bir sonuca bağlanamayan tartışma bağlamında Almanya'nın Avrupa'daki hegemon rolüne de değinmek yararlı olacaktır. Ulrich Speck, GMFUS, bu kapsamda ne Alman siyasi karar vericilerin, ne de Alman kamuoyunun uluslararası ilişkilerde bir lider olma arzusu içinde bulunmadıklarını, Avrupa'daki krizleri yönetmek gibi Alman çıkarlarının riske girdiği durumlarda Almanya'nın ve siyasi liderlerinin öne çıktığını ileri sürmüştür.

Alberto Cunha Almanya örneğinde hegemon kavramını orantısız ve abartılı nüfuz şeklinde beliren aşırı başat konum olarak tanımlamakta ve bunun daha AB içinde ve üzerinden gerçekleştiğinin gözlemlendiğini, kriz durumlarına ilişkin karar verme süreçlerinde diğer ortaklarla yeterince danışılmamasını bunun bir göstergesi olarak sunmaktadır. Constanze Stelzenmüller ise Almanya'nın durumunu "kafası karışık hegemon" olarak tanımlamaktadır.

Şansölye Angela Merkel bu makama 2005 yılında, 51 yaşındayken geldi. Öncesinde Gerhard Schröder başkanlığındaki Sosyal Demokrat Parti (SPD)'nin büyük ortak

olduğu yedi yıllık bir iktidar dönemi yaşanmıştı ve bu dönemde özellikle Almanya ve Fransa'nın ABD'nin 2003'te Irak'a müdahalesine karşı çıkmaları nedeniyle Avrupa ve ABD arasında, yani transatlantik ilişkilerde ciddi bir kırılma durumu mevcuttu.

ABD yönetiminin değişen dış politika ve güvenlik önceliklerine bağlı olarak transatlantik ilişkilerin doğası da sürekli değişegelmiştir. Esasen ABD-Almanya ikili ilişkileri Almanya ve her Alman hükümeti için çok önemlidir, zira Almanya'nın güvenliği ABD ile işbirliğine ve NATO üyeliğine bağlıdır. Bu kapsamda Almanya'nın kendi nükleer silahlarına sahip olmasının yolu da kapatılmıştır.

Şansölye Merkel Başkan Donald Trump hariç ABD'deki hem Cumhuriyetçi, hem Demokrat Başkanlarla iyi anlaşmıştır. Donald Trump, örneğin 2015/2016 düzensiz mülteci akımı konusundaki tavrına ilişkin olarak Şansölye Merkel'i doğrudan hedef almaktan ve eleştirmekten çekinmemiştir. Şansölye Merkel'in Beyaz Saray'ı ziyaret etmesine karşılık Başkan Trump Berlin'e resmi bir ikili ziyaret gerçekleştirmemiştir.

ABD'nin yeni Başkanı Joe Biden selefi Donald Trump tarafından zarar verilen ikili ilişkileri onarmaya, transatlantik işbirliğini ve çok taraflı uluslararası düzenin taşıyıcı kurumlarını güçlendirmeye önem atfeder görünmektedir. Bu anlamda örneğin iki ülke arasında sorun olan, Rusya'dan doğrudan Almanya'ya doğalgaz naklini öngören Kuzey Akım 2 boru hattına yönelik yaptırımlara sona erdirmiştir.

Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesinden beri Almanya ABD ve Rusya ile ilişkilerini dengeli bir şekilde yürütmeye gayret ve özen göstermektedir. Her iki ülke de Alman dış politikasında önemli bir yer tuttukları için Şansölye Merkel bu politikayı hassasiyetle devam ettirmiştir. Ulrich Speck, GMFUS, bu yaklaşımı "Merkel doktrini" olarak adlandırmaktadır.

Öte yandan, Almanya Çin'in hızlı ekonomik büyümesini ve uluslararası sistem içindeki yükselişini erken aşamalarda fark etmiştir. Eberhard Sandschneider'in 2007 yılında yayınladığı "Global Rivals (Küresel Hasımlar)" ve Theo Sommer'in 2010 yılında yayınladığı "China First (Önce Çin)" ve kitaplarında bu gerçeğe dikkat çekilmiş ve 21 yüzyıl Çin yüzyılı olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bu farkındalık Almanya'nın bu ülkede önemli yatırımlar yapmak ve kapsamlı ticari ilişkiler geliştirmek suretiyle Çin'in ekonomik kalkınmasından önemli avantajlar elde etmesini sağlamıştır. Bu durumun sonucu olarak, Almanya özellikle Başkan Trump döneminde sert şekilde yaşanan ABD-Çin ticaret savaşlarında tarafsız bir arabulucu olarak kalmayı ve taraflardan birinin yanında görünür şekilde yer almamayı seçmiş, taraflara soğukkanlı hareket etmeleri ve görüş ayrılıklarını müzakereler başta barışçıl araçlarla çözme çağrısında bulunmuştur.

Bu kapsamda, bir sonuca bağlanamasa da, Almanya'nın Şansölye Merkel'in siyasi liderliği döneminde ekonomik çıkarlarına aşırı öncelik atfetmesi nedeniyle liberal demokratik değerler ve ilkelerden taviz verip vermediği tartışması yaşanmıştır. Almanya gibi ekonomik refahı, siyasi ve sosyal istikrarı ihraç edebilme kapasitesine

büyük ölçüde bağlı bir ülkenin Başbakanı için milli çıkarları takip etmekle insan hakları ve temel değerleri koruma konusunda herkesi tatmin edecek mükemmel bir denge kurulması kolay olmamaktadır. Bu yüzden Merkel sonrası dönemde de bu tartışmanın devam etmesi muhtemel görünmektedir.

Bununla birlikte, Şansölye Merkel uygun vesilelerle demokrasiyi koruma ve güçlendirme konusunda sürekli çaba gösterilmesinin gerekliliğine güçlü vurgular yapmıştır. Mayıs 2019 ayında Harvard Üniversitesi'nde yaptığı konuşma bu anlamda bir Demokrasi Manifestosu gibi değerlendirilebilecektir. Merkel bu konuşmasında "bireysel özgürlüklerimiz bizlere bahşedilmiş değillerdir. Demokrasiyi çaba göstermeden her zaman sürecek bir şey gibi göremeyiz. Barış ve refahı da öyle." ifadelerini öne çıkarmıştır.

Ortadoğu'da Arap Baharından sonra bile Almanya demokratikleşme konusunda ısrarcı olmaya pragmatik bir politika izlemiştir. Bir askeri darbe yaşanan Mısır ve siyasi sistemi demokrasi olmayan Suudi Arabistan ile işbirliğini Şansölye Merkel döneminde de devam ettiren Almanya, tarihi nedenlerle İsrail'le bu ülkeye ayrıcalıklı bir öncelik tanıyan yaklaşımını da korumuştur. Esasen, Almanya'da Hükümetler değişse de İsrail'e yönelik bir anlamda eşsiz ilişkiler özenle devam ettirilmektedir.

Diğer taraftan Almanya Libya konusunda BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nde alınan 1973 sayılı karar konusunda çekinser kalmış ve bu anlamda müttefik ve ortaklarından ayrışan bir yaklaşım ortaya koymuştur. Bu tutumun ilerleyen yıllarda Almanya'ya

Libya konusunda uluslararası siyasette yapıcı roller üstlenme, bu ülkedeki siyasi uzlaşı çabalarında, ülkenin yeniden yapılanması çalışmalarında yapıcı roller üstlenebilme ve bu amaçla Berlin'de Libya Konferansları düzenleyebilme imkanını tanıdığını ileri süren görüşler bulunmaktadır.

Teorik Çerçeve: Liberalizm / Liberal Kurumsalcılık başlıklı İkinci Bölüm değişen dünya düzenine ilişkin tartışmalar kapsamında liberal dünya düzeni, çok taraflılık, uluslararası kurumlar, kozmopolitanizm ve komüniteryanizm, demokratik ve otoriter rejimler, evrensel insan hakları ve temel özgürlükler üzerinde durmaktadır.

Uluslararası İlişkiler (Uİ) disiplininde liberalizm, realizmden sonra, en eski ve en gelişmiş teori okullarından biri olarak görülmektedir. Liberalizmin teorik kökenleri John Locke ve Immanuel Kant'a kadar geriye gitmektedir. Uİ disiplinine her zaman güçlü savunucuları olmuştur ve bu kişiler liberal norm ve değerleri ve liberal uluslararası sisteme bağlılığın önemini vurgulamışlardır.

Uİ disiplininde liberalizm ve realizm birbirlerinden köklü şekilde farklı dünya görüşleri üzerine bina edilen teorik akımlardır. Dünyadaki gelişmeleri yorumlama ve ulus devletler üzerinde bir otoritenin bulunmaması anlamında kullanılan "anarşi"nin hâkim olduğu dünya sisteminde neyin mümkün olup olmadığı konusundaki varsayımları ve argümanları birbirlerinden büyük ölçüde farklıdır. Sert silahlanma yarışının yaşandığı ve iki blokta da (Sovyetler Birliği/Doğu Bloku ve ABD ile NATO üyelerinden oluşan Batı bloku) askeri gücün öne çıkarıldığı Soğuk Savaş'ın bir anda

ve beklenmeyen şekilde sona ermesi ve güç kavramını anlama konusunda iddialı olan realist okul taraftarlarının bu gelişmeyi öngörememiş olmaları liberalizm ve diğer Uİ teorilerinin düşünürlerine dünya ve uluslararası düzen konusunda kendi düşünme ve bakış açılarını öne çıkarma konusunda bir avantaj sağlamıştır. Bu anlamda, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemin hemen sonrasında liberalizm taraftarları arasındaki ruh halini iyimser, hatta aşırı iyimser olarak tanımlamak mümkündür. Francis Fukuyama'nın "Tarihin Sonu (1989)" başlıklı ünlü makalesi de bu ruh halini yansıtmaktadır.

Liberalizm ve realizmi iki önemli Uİ teori akımı olarak dünya düzenini anlama ve açıklama konusunda yarış halinde olsalar da, realizmden farklı olarak, liberalizm aynı zamanda bir ideolojidir ve uluslararası ilişkilerin uluslararası kurumlar, işbirliği, demokratik rejimler ve temel insan haklarına saygı gibi yaklaşımlar yoluyla barışçı şekilde yürütülmesini teşvik eden bir vizyondur. Liberal düşünürlerin bakış açılarına göre, devletler arasında askeri gücü sınırlandırmak ve işbirliğini teşvik etmek suretiyle çatışmalardan ve savaşlardan kaçınılması mümkündür. Liberal teori kapsamında hayat bulan Demokratik Barış Teorisi de demokratik ülkelerin birbirleriyle savaşmayacakları yönünde Immanuel Kant tarafından geliştirilen düşünce temelinde dünya genelinde demokrasi ve işbirliği yaygınlaştıkça uluslararası ilişkilerde daha barışçıl bir ortamın hâkim olacağını öngörmekte ve savunmaktadır.

Richard N. Haass and Charles A. Kupchan Başkan Joe Biden kendisinin göreve gelmesiyle birlikte ABD'nin uluslararası sahneye geri döndüğünü açıklasa, Batı ekonomik alandaki üstünlüğünü muhafaza etse, liberal olmayan demokrasi akımları

engellense de, uluslararası sistemde çok kutupluluğun ve ideolojik çeşitliliğin kaçınılmaz olduğunu ileri sürmektedirler. Bu kapsamda adı geçen düşünürler çok kutupluluğa yol açan jeopolitik ve ideolojik rekabetin altını çizmekte ve bunun sonucu olarak 21. yüzyılda büyük güçlerin siyasi katılıma ve prosedürel gayrı resmiyete dayanan bir küresel büyük güçler uyumu yaratılması gerektiği görüşünü tartışmaya açmışlardır. Onlara göre, devletlerin iç yönetim sistemleri ve uygulamaları gibi konulardaki ideolojik görüş ayrılıkları uluslararası işbirliği gerektiren konulardan ayrı tutulmalıdırlar.

Bu görüşleri içeren makaleye cevap olarak ise üç düşünür, Nicu Popescu, Alan S. Alexandroff ve Colin I. Bradford "Yeni Güçler Uyumuna Karşı Görüşler (2021)" başlığını taşıyan bir makale yayınladılar. Bu düşünürlere göre, dünya düzenine ilişkin tartışmalar esas olarak ABD ve Çin arasında küresel liderlik için yaşanan rekabete odaklansa da, yeni dünya düzeninde söz sahibi olmak isteyen pek çok başka devletler ve bunların yanısıra devlet dışı aktörler bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu aktörleri dışlayan herhangi bir yeni uluslararası sistem şeması bu oyuncular tarafından hayal kırıklığı ve reddetmeyle karşılayacağından yeterince kapsayıcı olmaması yüzünden uluslararası meşruiyeti sorgulanabilecektir. Dünya düzenine ilişkin bu gibi tartışmaların Covid-19 salgınının etkilerini de dikkate alacak şekilde önümüzdeki dönemde de devam etmesi beklenmelidir.

Daron Acemoğlu uluslararası düzen konusunda Haass ve Kupchan tarafından önerilen yapıyla benzerlikleri de bulunan bir diğer yapıyla tartışmaya katkı sağlamıştır.

Acemoğlu kendi modelini “Dört Kutuplu Dünya (Quadripolar World, 2020)” olarak adlandırmakta ve adından da anlaşılacağı üzere bu yapının temel olarak dört ayağı bulunmasını, bunların ABD, Çin ve AB ile Meksika, Brezilya, Endonezya, Türkiye, Güney Afrika ve diğerlerini temsil eden bir yükselen ekonomiler konsorsiyumu olmasını önermiştir. Uluslararası düzenlere ilişkin olarak, Acemoğlu çok kutuplu düzenin iki kutuplu düzenden daha iyi olduğunu savunmakta ve bu kapsamda, devletler arasında farklı görüşlerin ve değişik konularda bir araya gelebilme imkanının daha çok umut ve çoğulculuk sağlayabileceğini ileri sürmektedir.

Acemoğlu’nun önerdiği model dünya düzeninin gelecekte alacağı şekil konusundaki düşünce egzersizlerine iyi bir katkı sunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, uluslararası ilişkilerin AB üyesi olmayan veya gelişmekte olan ülke olarak sınıflandırılamayacak Rusya ve Birleşik Krallık gibi iki aktörünü dışarda bırakmaktadır.

Bir sonraki dünya düzenine ilişkin yarışan vizyonlar çok kutuplu, çok merkezli veya dört merkezli gibi adlarla anılmaktadırlar. Yeni dünya düzeninin hangi adı alacağı henüz belli olmasa da kesin olan bir şey bulunmaktadır ki, o da dünyanın iki kutuplu düzenin ardından Soğuk Savaş sonrasında ortaya çıkan tek kutuplu düzeni de geride bıraktığı ve birden fazla güç merkezi arasındaki dengeye dayalı yeni bir düzene doğru yol almakta olduğudur.

Dominic Tierney (2021) küresel liberal düzene diyalektik bir yaklaşımla ele almakta, küresel düzenin düzensizliğe veya kendisine yönelik bir tehdide ihtiyaç duyduğu, bu

durum ortaya çıktığında mevcut düzenin taraftarlarının küresel liberal düzeni korumak ve sürdürmek için birleşerek hareket ettiklerine dikkat çekmektedir. Tierney kayda değer bir tehlikenin yokluğu halinde liberal düzenin ihmal edilebileceğini, giderek önemini kaybedebileceğini ve içten çürüyebileceğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu kapsamda Tierney liberal küresel düzenin kurucusu ve koruyucusu konumundaki ABD'nin iç siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal problemler içinde boğulmasının da uluslararası liberal düzenin devamına yönelik bir risk oluşturduğunu da belirtmektedir.

Başkan Donald Trump zamanında ABD'nin uluslararası düzene yönelik yaklaşımında görülen değişiklik ve dikkatini iç meselelere ve Avrupa'dan uzak uluslararası konulara vermesi Alman dış politika yapıcıları tarafından kaygıyla karşılanmıştır. Bu ortamda Şansölye Merkel, özellikle Başkan Trump döneminde, ABD'nin dikkatini yeniden liberal uluslararası düzenin devamına, istikrarına ve sürdürülebilirliğine çekebilmek için yoğun çaba harcamıştır. AB'nin ABD ile Çin arasındaki ticaret savaşını sadece izlememesi ve mevcut düzenin zarar görmemesi için taraf olması gerektiği yönündeki görüşlere rağmen, iki büyük güç arasındaki çatışmanın tüm dünya için yıkıcı sonuçları olacağını, uluslararası güvenlik ve istikrarın altını oyacağını, uluslararası ticareti sekteye uğratacağını ve bu nedenlerle Almanya'nın çıkarlarına zarar vereceğini öngören Şansölye Merkel ülkesini bu çatışmada taraftan ziyade iki büyük güce eşit mesafede duran bir arabulucu olarak konumlandırmıştır.

Gerry Simpson Amerikan dış politikasının liberal dünya düzeninde uygulanan normları belirleme ve aynı zamanda gerektiğinde milli çıkarlarına öncelik veren ve

güç kullanımı ve savaşa başvurulmasına da cevaz veren sürekli bir faydacılık (pragmatizm) üzerine bina edilmiş göründüğünü kaydetmiştir. Bununa birlikte, ABD Başkanları Barack Obama ve Donald Trump'ın uluslararası askeri müdahalelere mesafeli tutumları ve askeri seçeneği acele verilen kararlarla kullanmamaya özen göstermeleri uluslararası güvenlik ve istikrarın göreceli olarak uzunca bir süre sağlanabilmesine imkân tanımış ve Şansölye Merkel'in liderliğindeki Almanya uluslararası ticareti kolaylaştıran bu nispeten sakin dönemi iyi kullanarak avantaj sağlamıştır.

Uluslararası işbirliğini ve çok taraflı yaklaşımlara öncelik veren Şansölye Merkel dönemindeki Alman dış politikasını açıklamak için Uİ teorilerinden realizme başvurulmasının uygun olmayacağı düşünülmektedir, zira realizmin temel ilkeleri liberalizminkilerden çok farklıdır. Örneğin, yeni-realist John J. Mearsheimer uluslararası liberal sistemin kurumlarını "sahte vaat" olarak nitelendirmektedir (Mearsheimer, 1994-1995). Benzer şekilde, bir başka realist düşünür Joseph Grieco da uluslararası sisteme hâkim olan anarşik yapı nedeniyle uluslararası işbirliğinin sınırları bulunduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Stephen Walt da realist bir açıdan bakarak, kendisini uluslararası liberal düzenin savunulmasına ve sürdürülmesine adamanın ABD'nin çıkarlarına hizmet etmediğini ve bu durumun Soğuk Savaş sonrasında yaşanan gelişmelerle teyit olunduğunu belirtmektedir.

Bunlara mukabil, liberal bir Uİ düşünürü olan Andrew Moravcsik devletlerin politika tercihlerinin onların uluslararası alandaki davranışlarını etkileme ve şekillendirmede

kritik rol oynadığını savunmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, Moravcsik liberalizmin uluslararası sistemi ve devlet davranışlarını izah etmede realizmden daha üstün bir teorik yaklaşım olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Bu arka plan ışığında, gücü giderek azalan hegemon güç ABD ile yükselen büyük güç Çin arasındaki gerginlik dünya genelinde ve Almanya'da da kaygıya yol açmaktadır, çünkü Almanya'nın zenginliği uluslararası ticaretin istikrarına bağlıdır. Bu kapsamda Almanya'nın eski Dışişleri Bakanlarından Joschka Fischer (Yeşiller) uluslararası düzende temel bazı değişikliklerin yaşanmakta olduğunu, Dünya Ticaret Örgütü'nün (DTÖ) koyduğu kuralların artık küresel düzeyde uygulandığını ve ABD ile Çin arasındaki ticaret anlaşmazlıklarının çözümü konusunda da tarafların sonuç odaklı müzakereler yürüttüklerinin söylenemeyeceğini kötümser bir tonda yazmıştır (2019).

Liberal kurumsalcılık Alman dış politikasını açıklama konusunda güçlü bir teorik çerçeve sunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte Almanya'nın büyük güçlere yönelik politikasında eklektik bir teorik yaklaşım daha açıklayıcı olabilecektir. Almanya ABD'nin Çin'e yönelik, diplomatik araçların yanısıra bu ülkenin yakınlarına daha fazla askeri güç konuşlandırmayı öngören politikasına bir itirazı yok gibi, bir anlamda, Çin'in belirli çizgileri aşması halinde ABD'nin bu ülkeye karşı askeri güç kullanma ihtimalini dışlamayan bir politika benimsemiş görünmektedir.

Liberal kurumsal dünya sisteminin bir parçası olarak Avrupa Birliği (AB) Almanya'nın kendisini ait hissettiği ve dış politika davranışlarını ona uyarladığı

birincil uluslararası aktörü ve topluluğu teşkil etmektedir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, bu "Avrupalılaşmış bir Almanya"yı tarif etmektedir. Aynı zamanda, Almanya'nın dış politika tercihleri de AB dış politikasının belirlenmesinde etkin görünmektedir ("Almanlaşmış Avrupa") ve bir kez oluşturulduğunda AB'nin davranış ilkeleri de Almanya'nın uluslararası alandaki davranışlarını etkilemektedir. Özetlemek gerekirse, Almanya'nın dış politika tercihleri ve davranışları ile AB'nin uluslararası alanda izlediği politikalar ve davranış ilkeleri karşılıklı olarak birbirlerini etkilemekte ve şekillendirmektedir. Bu itibarla Almanya AB'den ikili düzeyde dengeleyemeyeceği ve karşısına alamayacağı ABD, Çin ve Rusya gibi büyük güçlere karşı bir kalkan ve manivela olarak faydalanmaktadır.

Diğer taraftan, ABD ve Çin arasındaki derin ve kapsamlı anlaşmazlıklar listesine rağmen, Thomas Fues (2017) Almanya'nın kendisi gibi imalat ve ihracat odaklı bir ekonomik modele sahip olan Çin ile yakın ortaklık geliştirmeye devam edeceğini ve liberal uluslararası sistemin geleceği ve işleyişi konusunda yakın diyalog içinde olacağını ileri sürmektedir. Bu itibarla, Fues bu iki ülkenin uyumsuz bir ikili görüntüsü vermekle birlikte uluslararası serbest ticaret koşullarının korunması hususunda güçlü bir eksen oluşturmakta olduklarını ve gelecekte de birlikte hareket edeceklerini öngörmektedir.

Dünya düzeninin geleceği ve Çin'in bu düzeni kendi ilkeleri temelinde yeniden şekillendirme arzusu konusundaki tartışmalar yoğun şekilde devam etmektedir. Bu kapsamda Elizabeth Economy (2021) Çin'in dış politika amaçları konusunda şüpheci

görünmekte ve mevcut uluslararası sistem içinde yeterince temsil edilmenin bu ülkeyi tatmin etmediğini, çünkü Çin Devlet Başkanı Xi Jinping'in daha fazlasını amaçladığını ve arzu ettiğini düşünmektedir. Bu anlamda, Economy Çin Devlet Başkanı'nın yeni ve köklü değişikliklere uğramış bir uluslararası düzen tahayyül ettiğini ve bu düzenin Çin'in merkezde olduğu ve liberal temellere dayanmayan bir yapı olmasını istediğini ileri sürmektedir.

Esasen Elizabeth Economy'nin görüşleri dikkate alınmalıdır. Çin ve Devlet Başkanı dünyayı ağırlıklı olarak güç politikası ve jeopolitik rekabet penceresinden gören realist teorinin ilkeleri üzerinden algılıyor görünmektedirler. Bununla birlikte, Çin siyaset yapıcıların diğer ülkelerin ve onların yanısıra hükümet dışı aktörlerin ve küresel sivil toplumun rol ve etkisini küçümsediği dikkati çekmektedir. Küreselleşmenin etkileri, ileri iletişim teknolojileri sayesinde hükümet dışı aktörler daha yakın bir etkileşim ve eşgüdüm içinde hareket edebilmekte ve Çin'in insan haklarına ve liberal uluslararası düzene yönelik olumsuz yaklaşımlarına Çin mallarının ve bu ülkenin ev sahipliği yaptığı uluslararası spor etkinliklerinin boykotu gibi güçlü ve etkin tepkiler geliştirebildikleri görülmektedir. Bu nedenle, Çin siyasi liderliği mevcut iç ve dış politikalarını ve davranışlarını, en başta da insan hakları ve temel özgürlüklerine saygı konusundakileri gözden geçirirse ülkelerine bir iyilik yapmış olabileceklerdir.

Sophia Besch, Avrupa Reform Merkezi-CER, bu tez ile ilgili araştırmalar kapsamında yapılan mülakatta Almanya ve AB'nin değişen ve artan şekilde jeopolitik rekabet ve askeri gücün öne çıktığı uluslararası düzende kırılgan ve dezavantajlı olduğunu

belirtmiştir. ABD'nin stratejik dikkatinin Uzakdoğu-Pasifik bölgesine daha fazla yöneldiği bir dönemde, Besch, Şansölye Merkel'in kapsayıcılık ve diyaloğa özel önem verdiğini, Alman dış politikasının iki ana sütunu olan AB ve NATO'ya güçlü bağlılığını devam ettirdiğini, ancak bunlarla birlikte ülkesinin dış politikasını uluslararası düzenin değişen gerçekleri ve yeni doğasına uyarlama konusunda çok güçlü çabalar içine girmediğini belirtmiştir.

Almanya'nın küresel politikaları şekillendirme konusunda çok küçük olmakla birlikte, uluslararası ilişkilerde yanında yer alacağı tarafa önemli avantajlar kazandıracağı, bu itibarla uluslararası arenada "dengeleyici güç" rolünü benimsediği ileri sürülebilir. Şansölye Merkel tarafından takip edilen ihtiyatlı ve iyi düşünülmüş dış politika bu tutumu Alman dış politikasının bu özelliğini daha görünür hale getirmiş ve daha inandırıcı kılmıştır ve bu Şansölye Merkel'in dış politika mirasının önemli bir boyutunu teşkil etmektedir.

Covid-19 salgınının dünya düzeninde önemli değişikliklere yol açabileceği de Uİ düşünürleri arasında genel anlamda benimsenen bir görüş olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Francis Fukuyama (2021) salgın sonrası süreçte uluslararası aktörlerin ortak sorunlara ortak çözümler geliştirilmesine odaklandıkları uluslararası işbirliğine dayalı bir düzenin öne çıkabileceğini öngörmektedir. Fukuyama'nın öngörüsü uluslararası sistemin ideolojik boyutlarına ilişkin tartışmanın ikinci plana itilebileceği tahminine dayanmaktadır, ancak Çin'in insan hakları politikaları ve komşularına yönelik bazı

politikaları bu öngörünün sorunsuz şekilde gerçekleşmeyeceğine dair ipuçları olarak değerlendirilebilecektir.

Buradan Alman dış politikasının temel parametreleri ve yönelimlerine geçecek olursak, iki Alman devletinin 1991 yılında yeniden birleşmelerinden bu yana Almanya Federal Cumhuriyeti'nin (AFC) dış politika ve uluslararası sistemdeki rolü ve yeri konusunda bir kimlik arayışında olduğunu ileri sürmek mümkündür. Hem Alman politika yapıcılarının, hem kanaat önderleri ve düşünürlerinin bu konuya epey zaman ve enerji harcadıkları görülmektedir. Bu kapsamda, Almanya sıklıkla uluslararası ilişkilerde, uluslararası barış ve güvenliğin temini, Avrupa savunması gibi konularda daha fazla sorumluluk üstlenmesi yönünde çağrılara muhatap olmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bahse konu "sorumluluk" tam anlamıyla ve açık şekilde tanımlanmış değildir. Almanya'ya 2. DS sonrası uluslararası düzende biçilen kısıtlayıcı çerçevenin ve aradan geçen on yıllarda Alman toplumunun askeri yöntemlere karşı anlayışın kökleşmesinin Almanya'nın askeri gücünü artırmaya ve askeri gücü diplomasisindeki araçlardan biri olarak görmekten kaçınmaya yönelen politikalarında etkili olmuştur.

Bu çerçevede, GMFUS'dan Ulrich Speck, Almanya'nın uluslararası sistem içinde Fransa, Türkiye ve benzerleri gibi normal bir egemen devlet gibi mi hareket edeceği, yoksa ABD'yi takip eden ve bu ülkenin stratejik kararlarını destekleyen bir aktör olarak mı kalacağı konusunda karar vermesi gerektiğinin açık olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Speck'e göre, selefi Gerhard Schröder "stratejik kararların Berlin'de alınması gerektiğini" savunurken, Şansölye Merkel transatlantik ilişkileri daha fazla

önemsemiş ve ABD'nin uluslararası alanda liderlik rolünü üstlenmesini sorun etmemiştir. Bununla birlikte, Speck, Almanya'nın jeopolitik rekabetin giderek daha öne çıktığı ve ulus devletlerin milli güç unsurlarına dayanarak kendi çıkarlarına odaklandıkları bir döneme girildiğinin daha fazla farkına varması gerektiğini savunmaktadır.

Annegrette Bendiek ve başkaları da günümüzde Alman dış politikasının bir dizi sınamalarla karşı karşıya bulunduğu ve bu sınamaların çoğunun kolay bir cevabı olmadığı gözlemini paylaşmaktadırlar. Almanya düşük kapasiteli ordusuna rağmen dış politikada karşılaştığı zorluk ve sınamaları başarılı şekilde yönetmeyi öğrenmiş görünmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Bendiek, Almanya'nın Soğuk Savaşın bitiminden bu yana coğrafi olarak genişlediğine ve ekonomik olarak daha da güçlendiğine dikkat çekerek, Avrupa'da Fransa'nın, dünyada da ABD'nin küçük ortağı rolüyle yetinmemesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bu tez kapsamında mülakat yapılan Alman uzmanlarının çoğunun vurguladıkları gibi, Almanya dış politika açısından stratejik perspektife ve amaçlara, ayrıca uluslararası ilişkilerde mevcut konjonktürde kendisinden beklenen roller oynamaya yeterli askeri araçlara sahip değildir. Dolayısıyla, bu roller gerçekten oynayabilmeyi ve artan sorumluluklar üstlenmeyi arzu ediyorsa buna ciddi şekilde hazırlanması ve önemli miktarda kaynak ayırması gerektiği genel olarak kabul edilen bir olgu olarak dikkat çekmektedir.

Bu çerçevede, Şansölye Merkel dışındaki Cumhurbaşkanı Joachim Gauck ve Savunma Bakanı Ursula von der Leyen gibi en üst düzey bazı Alman devlet yetkilileri 2014

Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nda (MSC) yaptıkları konuşmalarda ülkelerinin dünya sahnesinde sorumlu bir aktör olarak daha fazla sorumluluk yüklenmesi gerektiğine inandıklarını vurgulamışlar, bu tutum açıklamaları Münih Oydaşması olarak adlandırılmış, bununla birlikte Sophia Besch'in de mülakatımızda dikkat çektiği gibi Donald Trump ABD Başkanı oluncaya kadar bu yönde kayda değer somut adımların atıldığı görülmemiştir.

ECFR Berlin yetkilisi Jana Puglierin ABD'nin dikkatinin Asya-Pasifik bölgesine kaydığının net şekilde görülmesinden sonra Şansölye Merkel'in dile getirdiği gibi, Avrupa'da Avrupa ülkelerinin kendi güvenliklerini kendilerinin sağlamaları ve bu amaçla gerekti dikkati ve kaynağı ayırmaları gerektiği yönünde artan bir farkındalık ve kabul gözlemlenmiştir. Bu kapsamda, Şansölye Merkel hükümetlerinin son Savunma Bakanı Annagret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Almanya'nın milli çıkarlarını korumak için gerektiğinde muhtemel askeri güç kullanmaya hazır olması gerektiği yönündeki beyanı belki de bu alandaki en net ifade olmuştur.

Yine de güç kavramı ülkenin 2. DS'ndan kaynaklı olumsuz hafızası nedeniyle Alman dış ve güvenlik politikasında hassas bir konu olmayı sürdürmektedir. Almanya'nın büyük ekonomik zenginliğiyle ortaya çıkan siyasi gücünü ve yeniden geliştireceği askeri gücünü hangi amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılması gerektiği konusunda stratejik bir netlik bulunmamaktadır. Alman askeri güçlerinin yurtdışında görevlendirilmesinde Federal Parlamento'nun onayı ve uluslararası meşruiyet açısından da BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin kararları kilit önem taşımaktadırlar. Nicole Koenig Almanya'nın

uluslararası askeri müdahalelere dikkatli yaklaşmasının ve bu müdahalelere katılmayarak "sivil güç" rolünü benimsemesinin de siyasi bir tercih olduğuna dikkat çekmektedir.

Bununla birlikte, Weiss (2011) ilk bakışta kolaylıkla fark edilmemekle birlikte Almanya'nın bir krizden ötekine artan şekilde uluslararası müdahalelere daha aktif katılım sağladığı ve bazı bölge ve alanlarda liderlik rolü de üstlendiğine dikkat çekmektedir.

Flemes ve Ebert (2017) Almanya'nın resmi ve gayrı resmi çok taraflı düzenlemeleri bir güç çarpanı olarak etkin şekilde kullandığını, bu anlamda dünyanın "en bağlantılı (most connected)" biri olduğunu ve bu suretle ortaya çıkardığı gücün "ağ gücü (network power)" olarak adlandırılabileceğini belirtmektedirler. Bu yaklaşımın kısmen Alman diplomasisinin bazı uluslararası muhataplarını etkileme konusunda başvurabileceği askeri güçten yoksun olmasından kaynaklandığı da ileri sürülebilir.

Öte yandan, Şansölye Merkel'in Avrupa entegrasyonuna katkıları ve bu alandaki mirası hem olumlu, hem eleştirel yorumlar almaktadır. Bu alanda ECFR tarafından Eylül 2021 ayında Piotr Buras ve Jana Puglierin imzasıyla yayınladığı politika belgesinde Almanya'nın AB vatandaşları tarafından güvenilir ve Avrupa yönelimli bir üye ülke olarak görüldüğüne, Şansölye Merkel'in birbirleriyle yarışan veya çatışan tarafları ortak çıkarlar etrafında uzlaştırmak için harcadığı yoğun çabaların bu olumlu imajın oluşmasında etkili olduğu değerlendirilmesi yapılmaktadır. Buras and Puglierin

Şansölye Merkel'in bu uzlaştırmacı yaklaşımından esinlenerek "Merkelizm" ortaya atarak Merkel yazınına ilginç bir katkı sağlamışlardır. Bununla birlikte, yazarlar, Almanya'nın kendisinden beklenen liderlik rolünü üstlenmesiyle birlikte uzlaştırıcı rolünden giderek uzaklaşabileceğini ve bunun dikkate alınması gereken bir ikilem olacağını da kaydetmektedirler.

Almanya'nın AB içindeki ana ortağı Fransa'yla danışmadan ve birlikte hareket etme zeminini oluşturmadan AB'ye uluslararası alanda tek başına liderlik etmeye istekli olmayacağı açıktır. Şansölye Merkel döneminde Almanya ve Fransa anlaşmazlıkların barışçı yollardan çözülmesi ilkesine bağlı kalarak Ukrayna'daki krizin yönetilmesi başta pek çok alanda iyi bir işbirliği içinde hareket etmektedirler. Bu yaklaşımın da Alman dış politikasının süreklilik sergilediği ve Şansölye Merkel'in de bağlı kaldığı bir dış politika davranışı ve yönelimi olduğunu belirtmek mümkündür.

Şansölye Merkel'in AB bütünleşmesini daha da derinleştirme konusundaki isteksizlik ve tereddüdünün ağırlıklı olarak Almanya ile diğer üye ülkeler arasındaki ekonomik ve mali farklılıklar ile AB'nin kendine özgü yapısından kaynaklandığını ileri sürmek mümkündür. Alman karar vericiler öncelikle AB'nin yapısını gözden geçirmeden ve üye ülkelerin mali durumlarını yakından izleyebilecek ve gerektiğinde müdahale edebilecek bir mekanizma kurulmadan Almanya'nın mali kaynaklarını diğer üye ülkelerin hizmetine onlara açık bir çek vermek yoluyla sunmaktan kaçınmaktadırlar. Buna karşılık, Mark Leonard ve Jana Puglierin (2021) Almanya'nın AB politikalarına yönelik eleştirel bir değerlendirme yaparak Covid-19 salgını gibi yeni küresel

sınamalarla etkin şekilde mücadele edebilmek için Almanya'nın geleneksel dış politika yaklaşımlarının ötesine geçmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadırlar.

Şansölye Merkel dönemine Almanya'nın büyük güçler ve ana ortaklarıyla ilişkilerini değerlendiren Ulrich Speck, Merkel'in bu ilişkileri yönetme tarzını "Merkel Doktrini" olarak tanımlamıştır. Speck'e göre, Merkel Doktrini kapsamında Almanya bu ülkelerle ilişkilerinde bir denge politikası izlemiş ve bunu onlara bazı alanlarda tavizler verirken, diğer bazı alanlarda ise onları hayal kırıklığına uğratacak tutumlar izlemek yoluyla yürütmüştür. Bununla birlikte, Speck, Merkel Doktrini'nin ne sürdürülebilir olduğunu, ne de artan şekilde jeopolitik rekabete dayanan yeni uluslararası gerçeklerle uyumlu olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Almanya'nın dış politika yaklaşımları çeşitli boyutlarıyla eleştirilmekle birlikte, bir ekonomik dev ve AB içinde siyasi liderlik üstlenen bu ülke çok boyutlu ve yönlü dış politika belirlemekte ve uygulamakta, bu amaçla da dünyanın her tarafındaki ülkelerle yakın ve güçlü ilişkiler geliştirmeyi seçmektedir. Bu tez çalışmasında Almanya'nın ABD, Rusya ve Çin gibi büyük güçlerle ilişkilerinin yanısıra Fransa, Birleşik Krallık, Polonya, Türkiye ve İsrail gibi önde gelen ortaklarıyla işbirliği ve ilişkileri de irdelenmektedir.

Önemli bir ekonomik güç olmakla birlikte uluslararası sistemde kendi başına en önemli siyasi ve askeri güçlerden biri olarak değerlendirilemeyecek orta sıklette bir güç olan Almanya'nın büyük güçlerle ilişkilerini yönetmenin siyasi lideri için kolay

bir iş olarak görülemeyeceği açıktır. Almanya, büyük güçler ABD, Çin ve Rusya'nın her biriyle pek çok alanda önemli konularda işbirliği yapmakta, kapsamlı ekonomik ve ticari ilişkiler içinde bulunmaktadır.

Constanze Stelzenmüller (2021) de Almanya'nın büyük güçlerle dinamik ve kapsamlı ilişkilerini yönetmenin Şansölye Merkel'in 16 yıllık görev süresi boyunca karşılaştığı en önemli sınamalardan olduğuna dikkat çekmektedir.

Bu bağlamda ilginç bir yorum yayan Brooks ve Wohlforth (2002) Almanya ayarındaki ülkelerin önemli bir ikilemine ve büyük güçler tarafından dikkate alınmak için güçlenmek zorunda olan bu ülkelerin, güçlendikçe komşuları tarafından bir risk ve kaygı sebebi olarak algılanmalarına dikkat çekmektedirler. Bu yorum karşısında Henry Kissinger'ın "Almanya'nın Avrupa için fazlasıyla büyük, dünya için ise fazlasıyla küçük bir oyuncu" olduğu şeklindeki tarifini hatırlamak kaçınılmak olmaktadır.

Mevcut küresel jeopolitik tablo ve gerçekler karşısında Almanya'nın ABD ile ilişkileri bu ülkenin dış ve güvenlik politikasının belkemiğini oluşturmaktadır. 2. DS'ndan buy ana ABD Almanya'ya bir güvenlik şemsiyesi sağlamakta ve bu ülkede kayda değer bir askeri varlık bulundurmaktadır. ABD'nin NATO üzerinden sağladığı bu koruma şemsiyesi sayesinde Almanya savunma alanında daha az harcama yaparak ekonomik açıdan daha hızlı kalkınabilmiştir.

Karmaşık ve iç içe geçen ortak tarihleri, coğrafi yakınlıkları ve günümüzdeki ilişkilerin çok boyutlu doğası nedeniyle, Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin liderliğindeki Rusya'nın AB'nin yakın komşuluk bölgesinde izlediği saldırgan, istikrar bozucu ve sınırları değiştirmekten çekinmeyen dış politika yönelimleri Rusya'yı Şansölye Merkel'in görev yaptığı dört hükümet dönemi boyunca karşı karşıya kaldığı en ciddi ve sürekli bir sınama haline getirmiştir. Şansölye Merkel ve Devlet Başkanı Putin yakın diyalog geliştirseler de iki ülkenin jeopolitik öncelikleri ve yaklaşımları örtüşmemiş, Rusya'nın askeri güç kullanımını dışlamayan yaklaşımları Alman Şansölyesi için bir şikâyet kaynağı olmuştur

Berlin merkezli Körber Vakfı yetkilisi Nora Müller Almanya'nın iki büyük güç Rusya ve Çin ile ilişkilerinde benzerlikler ve farklılıklar bulunduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu açıdan Müller Avrupa'da özellikle son yıllarda Çin'e karşı eleştirel seslerin bu ülkenin insan hakları ihlalleri ve saldırgan dış politikası nedeniyle giderek yükseldiğine dikkat çekmiş ve Şansölye Merkel'in Çinli muhataplarıyla diyalogunda insan hakları konularını her zaman bir şekilde gündeme getirdiğini, ancak bunu "megafon diplomasisi" yöntemiyle yapmadığını kaydetmiştir.

Almanya'nın çok taraflılığı korumayı ve bu düzende uluslararası sistemin en tepesinde yer edinmeyi amaçlayan politikaları kapsamında Şansölye Angela Merkel kurallara dayalı liberal uluslararası sistemin iyi işlemesine özel önem atfetmiştir. Bu stratejik hedef bağlamında Almanya, yakın ortağı Fransa'yla beraber Çok Taraflılık İçin İttifak (Alliance for Multilateralism) adıyla bir girişim başlatmış ve bu girişimini BM

forumlarında tanıtmıştır, ancak bu girişimin büyük bir başarı kazandığını söylemek mümkün görünmemektedir. Öte yandan, Almanya BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin reformuna ilişkin tartışmaları yakından takip etmekte ve bu süreçlere katkı sunmaktadır.

Şansölye Merkel, kiminle konuşulduğuna bağlı olarak takdir veya eleştiri alsa da, Almanya'nın dış ve Avrupa politikasında önemli bir istikrar ve devamlılık çıpası olmuştur.

Bu kapsamda kendisiyle yaptığımız mülakatta Ulrich Speck Şansölye Merkel'in temel yönlendirici dış politika inanç ve ilkelerinin küreselleşme dönemi kaynaklı olduğunu ve son yıllarda Rusya, Çin ve Türkiye gibi ülkelerin iddialı dış politikalarında gözlemlenen jeopolitik ve jeopolitik rekabetin uluslararası siyasete geri dönüşünü dikkate almadığını ileri sürmüştür.

Tüm eleştirilere rağmen, Şansölye Merkel'in zaman zaman dar alanda tanımlanan ulusal çıkarlar kavramının ötesine geçerek kozmopolitan bir dış politika anlayışı da benimsediğini ve bu tutumun en çok 2015-16'da yaşanan Suriye kaynaklı düzensiz mülteci akımı karşısında Almanya'nın sınırlarını kapatmama ve "Başarabiliriz" sloganıyla çok sayıda mülteciyi ülkesine kabul etme kararında belirginleştiğini ileri sürmek mümkündür.

Sophia Besch (CER), stratejik düşünce anlamında Almanya'nın kendi fikirlerini üretmediğini ve daha çok ABD gibi önemli müttefiklerinden aldığını ileri sürerken; Jana Puglierin (ECFR) Şansölye Merkel'in Avrupa için herhangi bir vizyonu olmadığı görüşünün tamamen doğru olmadığını kaydetmiş, buna delil olarak ise Merkel'in 2012 yılında yaptığı ve statükonun AB için yeterli olmadığını ve AB'nin farklı bir aşamaya ilerlemesi gerektiğini vurguladığı konuşmasına atıf yapmıştır.

Almanya'nın askeri müdahale gerektiren uluslararası sorunlar ve krizlere ilişkin yaklaşımını analiz ettiğimizde, bu ülkenin diplomatik ve askeri olmayan araçları tercih ettiği ve ancak tüm bu yollar tüketildikten sonra ve en son çare olarak askeri müdahaleye rıza gösterdiği dikkat çekmektedir. Bu noktada da uluslararası müdahalenin meşru olması ve müttefiklerle veya Suriye'de terör örgütü DEAŞ'a karşı yapıldığı gibi istekliler koalisyonu (Coalition of the Willing) gibi kolektif yaklaşımlar yoluyla gerçekleştirilmesine önem atfetmektedir. Uluslararası krizler kapsamında bu tezde Ukrayna krizi ve Kırım yarımadasının Rusya tarafından ilhakı, Suriye'deki iç savaş ve düzensiz mülteci krizi, Libya'ya uluslararası müdahale, İran'la nükleer anlaşma (JCPOA), Doğu Akdeniz sorunu, Afghanistan ve uluslararası müdahalenin kaotik sonu ve Covid-19 salgını ve Şansölye Merkel liderliğindeki Almanya'nın bu konularda izlediği yaklaşımlar incelenmektedir.

Küresel bir salgın olan Covid-19 dünya liderlerinin yakın ilgisini gerektirmiş ve Dünya Ekonomik Forumu (WEF) gibi uluslararası etkinliklerde öncelikli bir gündem maddesi olmuştur. Bu kapsamda Şansölye Merkel 2021 Dünya Ekonomik Forumu'nda yaptığı

konuşmada bu salgınla mücadelenin çok taraflı işbirliği gerektirdiğini ve ülkelerin kendilerinden başkasını düşünmeyen tutumlarının bu sıkıntının aşılmasında yarar sağlamayacağını vurgulamıştır. Şansölye bu bağlamda ABD'nin Başkan Donald Trump döneminde ayrıldığı Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'ne (DSÖ) geri dönme kararından memnuniyet duyduğunu vurgulamış ve tüm üye ülkelere bu önemli örgütü güçlendirme yönünde adımlar atma çağrısında bulunmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, Şansölye Merkel döneminde Alman dış politikasının şekillendirilmesinde ve uygulanmasında çok sayıda faktör rol oynamıştır. Bunlardan, Avro krizi, Suriye'deki iç savaş ve düzensiz mülteci krizi, Ukrayna'daki çatışma ve Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından ilhakı, İngiltere'nin AB'den ayrılması, Çin'in yükselişi ve ABD ile jeopolitik ve ticari rekabetinin sonuçları gibi konular Merkel dönemine özgü ve bu açıdan yeni yaklaşım ve kararlar gerektirir iken, Avrupa entegrasyonu, ABD ve Fransa ile ilişkileri gibi diğer bazıları Almanya'nın dış politikasının geleneksel boyutlarını teşkil etmiş ve bu anlamda bir süreklilik unsurları olagelmişlerdir.

Şansölye Merkel döneminde Almanya, Avrupa'daki ve Avrupa dışındaki pek çok ciddi kriz ve gelişmeleri başarıyla aşarak Avrupa ve dünya sahnesinde ekonomik ve siyasi açılardan daha güçlü ve hatırı daha çok sayılan bir aktör haline gelmiştir. Bu açıdan, Şansölye Merkel'in ihtiyatlı ve iyi düşünülmüş kararlarla belirlediği yol haritaları ona fırtınalı denizlerde gemisini başarıyla yönlendiren "güvenilir kaptan" imajını kazandırmıştır.

Bununla birlikte Almanya'nın gücünü hangi amaçlarla kullanması gerektiği, ekonomik ve siyasi gücünün yanına askeri gücü de eklemesinin yararlı olup olmayacağı ve uluslararası sistemdeki yeri ve rolü gibi hususlardaki tartışma devam edecek gibi görünmektedir.

Şansölye Merkel ve diğer Alman politika yapıcıları tarafından Merkel'in 16 yıllık görev süresince harcanan tüm çabalara rağmen Alman siyasi elitinin bakış açısıyla Alman toplumunun Almanya'nın uluslararası sistemdeki ve siyasetteki rolüne bakış açısı arasındaki mesafe kapanmamıştır. Bu durumun Almanya'nın stratejik kültürünün Fransa ve İngiltere gibi ülkelerin yaklaşımından farklı olmasından kaynaklandığı yönünde görüşler mevcuttur ve Almanya'daki karar vericilerin önümüzdeki dönemde bu konuya daha yakın ilgi gösterecekleri düşünülmektedir.

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