Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

Faculty of Cultural Sciences

Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Master of Arts European Studies

Bilgi – Viadrina Double Degree Master's Programme

EUROPE'S GATEKEEPER:

a dialectical analysis of Turkey's signing of the March 2016 Agreement

Name:	Dominik Christian Pollner
Student IDs:	European University Viadrina: 72730 / Bilgi University: 11601049
Address:	Hofmillerstraße 4
	85356 Freising / Germany
Contact Details:	Mobile: + 49 176 820 317 37
	E-Mail: euv151643@europa-uni.de / christian.pollner02@bilgiedu.net
Supervisors:	Ass. Prof. Dr. Can Cemgil
	Prof. Dr. Timm Beichelt
Semester:	Winter 2017/2018

Abstract

The EU-Turkey 2016 Migration Agreement has received mixed reviews in the academic literature. Turkey's decision to sign the agreement has predominantly been analysed based on untheorised narratives or by approaches that rely on faulty abstractions. Given the lack of comprehensive explanations, this thesis addresses the question why Turkey signed the agreement and presents an explanation of the incident by applying a socio-relational and dialectical theory. With its theoretical focus on real agency and contradictions, emerging from the interactions of differently situated and motivated agents, this analysis demonstrates that the AKP's policies in Syria, its interactions and clashes with various other (non-) state actors, its relationship with the EU and Turkey's domestic situation merged into a complex web of interactions. This web was induced by the AKP's reproductive strategy of maintaining its power and led to the (un)intended consequence of a rapprochement between Turkey and the EU, which finally resulted in the March 2016 Agreement. Applying a dialectical theoretical framework to a concrete empirical foreign policy outcome shows that a government's strategy of reproduction and its intersection with the domestic and external arena leads to specific social constellations and contradictions, whose resolutions in turn produce specific foreign policy decisions.

Keywords: *AKP / Foreign Policy / Strategies of Reproduction / EU-Turkey Migration Agreement / Dialectics / Contextualisation / Historicisation / Agency / Interactions / Motives*

Kurzbeschreibung

Das EU-Türkei Flüchtlingsabkommen wurde im akademischen Diskurs auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise bewertet. Die Entscheidung der Türkei das Abkommen zu unterschrieben, wurde jedoch vor allem durch Narrative ohne theoretisches Fundament und Analysen die auf fehlerhaften Abstraktionen beruhen, untersucht. Ausgehend von diesem Mangel an umfassenden Erklärungen, geht diese Arbeit der Frage nach, warum die Türkei das Abkommen unterschrieben hat und präsentiert eine Erklärung dafür, basierend auf einem historisch-soziologischem sowie dialektischem Ansatz. Durch ihren theoretischen Fokus auf reale Akteure und Widersprüche, welche durch das Aufeinandertreffen unterschiedlich motivierter und situierter Akteure entstehen, zeigt diese Arbeit, dass die Syrienpolitik der AKP, Interaktionen und Konflikte mit anderen (nicht-)staatlichen Akteuren, die Beziehungen zwischen der Türkei und der EU sowie die innenpolitische Lage der Türkei ein vielschichtiges Netz, bestehend aus wechselseitigen Abhängigkeiten und Interaktionen, generiert haben. Diese Verflechtungen wurden hervorgerufen durch die reproduktive Strategie der AKP ihre Macht zu erhalten und führten zu einer (un-)beabsichtigten Annäherung zwischen der Türkei und der EU, welche schlussendlich das Flüchtlingsabkommen zur Folge hatte. Durch die Anwendung eines dialektischen theoretischen Rahmens auf einen konkreten empirischen, außenpolitischen Sachverhalt konnte gezeigt werden, dass die reproduktive Strategie einer Regierung und deren Überschneidungen mit außen- und innenpolitischen Vorkommnissen zu spezifischen sozialen und politischen Konstellation und Gegensätzen führen, welche bestimmte außenpolitische Entscheidungen nach sich ziehen.

Schlüsselwörter: *AKP / Außenpolitik / Strategien der Reproduktion / EU-Türkei Flüchtlingsabkommen / Dialektik / Kontextualisierung / Historisierung / Akteure / Interaktionen / Motive*

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency	*Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı*
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia	*Hayasdani Azadakrut'ean Hay Kaghtni Panag (HAHKP)*
AKP	Justice and Development Party	*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*
CHP	Republican People's Party	*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*
EC	European Commission	
EU	European Union	
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	
FP	Foreign Policy	
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
GIDM	General Directorate of Migration Management	*Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü*
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party	*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*
IR	International Relations	
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria	*also: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levent (ISIL), Daesh or Islamic State (IS)*
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government	*Hikûmetî Herêmî Kurdistan*
MB	Muslim Brotherhood	
MENA	Middle East and North Africa	
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party	*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation	
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation	

NSC	National Security Council	*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party	*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*
PYD	Democratic Union Party	*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*
RA	Readmission Agreement	
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	
SNC	Syrian National Council	
TAK	Kurdistan Freedom Falcons	*Teyrêbazên Azadîya Kurdistan*
TBMM	Turkish Grand National Assembly	*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union	
TFP	Turkish Foreign Policy	
TSK	Turkish Armed Forces	*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*
UN	United Nations	
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	
US	United States (of America)	
USD	United States Dollar	
VL	Visa Liberalisation	
WWI	First World War	
YPG	People's Protection Units	*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*

1 Introduction: Turkey and the March 18 Agreement

Currently, 247 million people globally find themselves displaced due to ethnic tensions, wars, religious persecution, political repression and climate change (Wahnberger 2017: 5). Many of these migrants seek protection in Europe and reach the European Union (EU) by passing through Turkey (European Council 2015a). The main reason for the sharp increase in the number of migrant arrivals in Europe is the Syrian Civil War – starting in 2011. Since its outbreak, the conflict forced more than 4.9 million people to leave their homeland and seek shelter in neighbouring countries like Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey or to attempt to reach European shores (Wahnberger 2017: 5). Turkey, often metaphorically described as bridge between Europe and the Middle East or Asia, is an interesting case in the context of global migration. Since it has turbulent relationships with both regions and is simultaneously a transit and host country for refugees (Benvenuti 2017: 2). Turkey's special role became evident in summer 2015, when the number of refugees reaching the EU dramatically increased. Between June and September 2015, the number of arrivals rose from (approximately) 65.000 to 400.000 people, which means that within three months more than 335.000 refugees reached Greece or the EU respectively (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 53). This unprecedented influx of migrations produced mixed reactions from EU decision makers, marked by anxiety and the inability to find effective solutions (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 53). The EU proved itself unable to solve the challenge internally, through e.g. the reallocation via quotas and had to face increasing pressure from the public and its member states.[1] Due to its inability of finding internal solutions, the EU made cooperating with third countries the top priority of its migration management. Turkey, as the only country separating the EU's borders from the Middle East, was identified as the most significant cooperation partner (Wahnberger 2017: 5). After difficult negotiations, Turkey and the EU signed a migration agreement on 18th March 2016.[2] In this joint statement the EU and Turkey put their common efforts to stop irregular migration on paper. The dynamics and developments leading to this agreement as well as the socio-political and scientific relevance of the incident will be at the heart of the next sections. This will lay the foundations for a dialectical and socio-historical investigation of Turkey's decision and its motives to sign the March 2016 Migration Agreement with the EU.

---

[1] Public sensitivity for the issue was e.g. raised by the widely published image of a Syrian toddler that had been washed ashore at a Turkish beach (See Daily Sabah Online, 02.09.2015).
[2] This agreement will be referred to by using different terms such as: March 18 (or 2016) Agreement, EU-Turkey Agreement, migration agreement, or 'refugee deal' (as it is publicly known).

1.1 Background Information and Status Quo – What is at Stake?

Turkey has been at the forefront of the migration crisis since 2011 and has made ambitious efforts to support refugees (Adam 2016: 2). In contrast to that, the EU has not been able to provide a common response to the challenge of global migration. Part of the EU's agenda to find a solution for the migration crisis was the externalisation of its border management, culminating in the March 2016 Agreement. This arrangement was not a covert operation, but the result of complicated negotiations and discussions that had already started before the crisis became acute in 2015. From the EU's perspective the way to the final agreement can be described as a process of convincing the gatekeeper Turkey.

In the history of EU-Turkey relations cooperation on migration management initially was not a top priority. Harmonisations and cooperation in the field of migration only emerged when Turkey transformed from an emigration to an immigration and transit country. This trend was further accelerated when Ankara reformed its migration regulations, between 2002 and 2005, to ensure the opening of EU accession talks (Benvenuti 2017: 4). Since then, the Europeanisation of Turkey's migration law had been affected by Ankara's mistrust, which was fuelled by its uncertain membership perspective. The Turkish readiness to lift the geographical limitation clause and to fully implement the 1951 Refugee Convention was negatively affected by the absence of a clearly outspoken prospect of EU membership. With regards to this, Ankara feared that it would be turned into the 'unloading site' for all migrants and asylum seekers on the way to the EU. (Benvenuti 2017: 4–5)

These doubts and apprehensions also had an impact on the negotiations of a Readmission Agreement (RA) and on the visa liberalisation (VL) dialogue. Simultaneously, these negotiations symbolised a step forward in reviving EU-Turkey relations after a period of political deadlock (Benvenuti 2017: 5). Until 2013, however, negotiations between the EU and Turkey regarding migration cooperation were marked by continuous ups and downs. In 2011, both parties could solely agree on a "very loose dialogue on visas, mobility and migration" (Benvenuti 2017: 5). Only in 2013, the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement was signed, which represented an integral component of the EU's external migration policies. In exchange for Turkey's commitment to take back all irregular migrants that passed through Turkey on their way to the EU, the Union presented a Visa Liberalisation Roadmap to Turkey. This roadmap, which was signed in 2013, included a catalogue of reforms[3] that must be implemented by Ankara to be granted visa-free access to the EU (Bal 2016: 25–26). The RA and VL processes were closely linked to each other and Turkey was given the right to withdraw from the RA if visa-free travel would not be achieved

---

[3] The list included 72 different legal/administrative reforms and benchmarks related to migration management, public security and fundamental rights (Bal 2016: 25–26).

by April 2018 (Benvenuti 2017: 8–9). These migration related negotiations slowed down after Ankara's harsh reaction to the *Gezi* protests and were not revived until the aggravation of the refugee crisis in 2015. Considering the shaking Dublin Regulation and Schengen Agreement, European decision makers decided to put emphasis on cooperating with Turkey again (Benvenuti 2017: 9). Observers of these cooperative talks detected that the anxious rhetoric of some EU member states[4], made moral criticisms from Turkish officials possible. Ankara tried to delegitimise the EU's normative power by emphasising that Turkey had to shoulder the greatest material and humanitarian burden of the crisis (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 53–54). Considering the continuously rising number of refugees, the previously signed RA became crucial. Based on the ever-rising numbers, the EU intended to convince Turkey to draw back the dates of the RA, to be able to send back migrants to Turkey sooner (Bal 2016: 25–26). To obtain Turkey's cooperation regarding the adaption of the dates of the RA, Brussels launched the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on 15th October 2015 in order to "stem the flows" (European Council 2015b). With the action plan the EU offered to revitalise the accession process and to pull forward the deadlines of the VL as well as to financially support Turkey. In exchange for Turkey's commitment to improve the situation of Syrians in the country and to strengthen its border security, the EU additionally postponed the publishing of the Commission's progress report after the Turkish national elections (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 55–58).[5]

At the EU-Turkey Summit on 29th November 2015 the EU-Turkey Action Plan was finally activated. According to this plan, the RA and VL dialogue should come into effect at an earlier date. The RA should be put into practice by June 2016 and visa-free travel for Turks should be possible from October 2016 onwards, if Turkey meets all the 72 requirements (Bal 2016: 27). After a volatile bargaining process, the EU furthermore agreed on opening new chapters if Turkey complies with the agreement, starting processes to upgrade the Customs Union and establishing High Level Dialogues on economics and energy. On the other hand, Turkey committed itself to fully implement the EU-Turkey RA by June 2016, to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey and to block the influx of refugees to the EU. (Bal 2016: 26–27; Benvenuti 2017: 10)

About two months after the finalisation of the Action Plan, the EU published an assessment report, which stated that Turkey needed to put more effort in its fight against irregular migration. The report mainly criticised the practical implementation and inefficiency of the Action Plan. Based on the ineffectiveness of the Joint Action Plan, Ankara pledged to entirely implement the

---

[4] This anxiousness is i.a. represented by the Eastern European member states' proposals of building higher fences or using military force to stop migrants (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 53–54).

[5] Postponing the report as well as intensifying accession talks are interpreted as examples for the normative concessions the EU was willing to make to obtain Turkey's cooperation (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 57–59).

RA at the informal EU-Turkey Summit on 7th March 2016. This included the acceptance of a fast return of migrants who do not need international protection, or were crossing from Turkish shores to Greece. (Wahnberger 2017: 52)

The EU-Turkey RA, Joint Action Plan and other (in-)formal meetings; as well as the lack of implementation and the controversial nature of the bargaining process, culminated in the March 18 Agreement between Turkey and the EU, which will be presented subsequently. Following the official November 2015 summit, European and Turkish decision makers met again in March 2016. On this occasion both parties agreed upon a "revised version of the deal" (Benvenuti 2017: 10), now commonly known as the March 18 Agreement between the EU and Turkey or the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal.[6] The EU-Turkey Agreement itself primarily consists of "the statement by the members of the European Council and the Prime Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu published after the European Council meeting on 17/18th March 2016" (Wahnberger 2017: 53). To stop irregular migration, the EU and Turkey agreed on the following measures[7] (European Commission 2016):

1. *"All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey;*
2. *For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU;*
3. *Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU;*
4. *Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated;*
5. *The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements;*
6. *The EU will, in close cooperation with Turkey, further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Once these resources are about to be used in full, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility up to an additional €3 billion to the end of 2018;*
7. *The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.*
8. *The accession process will be re-energised, with Chapter 33 to be opened during the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union and preparatory work on the opening of other chapters to continue at an accelerated pace;*
9. *The EU and Turkey will work to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria."*

This agreement, that i.a. involved the readmission of refugees, financial aid, visa liberalisation and the revitalisation of the Turkish accession process, is a multidimensional and unique form of co-

---

[6] The ideological foundations of the deal were laid by G. Knaus' (2015b) essay: "*Why people Don't Need to Drown in the Aegean*", wherein he proposes a middle way between '*Willkommenskultur*' ('welcoming culture) isolationism, a safe resettlement scheme and to obtain Turkey's cooperation through offering visa freedom. Finally, this was turned into the EU's negotiation basis by A. Merkel and the Dutch government (Knaus 2015a).
[7] These points (1 – 9) were retrieved from a European Commission (EC) factsheet.

operation between the two parties. Based on this uniqueness and multidimensionality, the subsequent section will outline how this thesis will scientifically approach this topic. For reasons of clarity, the empirical research question, the results of the investigation and the socio-political/scientific relevance of this issue will briefly be presented as part of a comprehensive introduction.

1.2 Empirical Research Question and Results

The previous part of this introductory chapter has demonstrated that the agreement is a novelty in the relationship between the EU and Turkey. Chapter 2 will show that this incident was approached by various scholars from different disciplines. The literature on the migration agreement mainly focuses on legal or implementation problems, the EU's interests in the deal or the importance of the agreement for the relationship between the EU and Turkey. Research dealing with Turkey's motives is rare and often one-dimensional, immature or solely relying on faulty abstractions. Based on this research gap, the issue's relevance and the fact that the EU and Turkey were alienating from each other, this paper will raise the question *why Turkey did sign the March 18 Agreement with the EU*. This research question is empirically motivated, in contrast to questions derived from theoretical presuppositions, because its identification and development were based on the perception of the incident as a complex novelty in EU-Turkey relations (see Hellmann 2004). This specific type of research question, refers to King, Keohane and Verba's (1994: 15) requirements of an equitably formulated research question. According to King et al. (1994: 15) research and research questions should always be relevant for the 'real world'. This means that they should discuss and explain issues which have an impact on the political, social and/or economic environment of people. This thesis understands science as problem solving and therefore aims to explain the occurrence of Turkey's decision in its entire complexity. Furthermore, this thesis adopts a *why*-question, since this type of question formulation leads to complex and analytically coherent answers to given empirical problems (see Egle and Theiner 2015).

To solve this empirical puzzle, the thesis will apply an unconventional theoretical framework, developed by Benno Teschke and Can Cemgil (2014), which incorporates analytical and methodological aspects from international relations theories, foreign policy analyses and dialectics. The subsequent research will refrain from carrying out a test of the theory or an attempt to refine the theory. The theoretical framework provides a unique perspective that is most appropriate to analyse a real problem in its entirety. The dialectical dimension of the subsequent analysis refers to an understanding of dialectics as a mode of inquiry that focuses on contradictions and their interrelatedness. The specific behaviour of agents, e.g. the decision to sign an agreement, is caused by the interplay of this agent with numerous other actors and their often-contradictory strategies.

Therefore, to analyse the praxes of agents (i.e. the AKP's decision to cooperate with the EU), these contradictions need to be examined. This takes place inter-subjectively, which means that the presence, motives, strategies and capabilities of other agents as well as the totality and interrelatedness of the complex web of interactions will be incorporated. Building on Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) interdisciplinary and dialectical approach, this thesis will provide a profound explanation for the occurrence of Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement. It will be shown that a theory-guided analysis can deliver a unique explanation for Turkey's decision. The investigation will demonstrate that the AKP's policies in Syria, its interactions and clashes with various other (non-) state actors, its relationship with the EU and Turkey's domestic context are all part of a complex, chaotic web of interactions, which is induced by the AKP's reproductive strategy of maintaining its power. These different developments led to the (un)intended consequence of a rapprochement between the EU and Turkey, that resulted in the March 2016 Agreement.

1.3. Socio-Political and Scientific Relevance

Before turning towards reviewing the literature and outlining the theoretical framework, the present topic's socio-political and scientific relevance will briefly be outlined. The issue of Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement had a strong impact on different dimensions and actors, which makes it a highly relevant and current issue, requiring further academic research.

Firstly, the issue of migration is one of the major challenges for bordering countries, like Turkey, and destination regions, such as the EU. The ongoing turmoil in the Middle East, intensified by increasing foreign interference in this region, in combination with the existence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the unresolved Syrian Civil War, have strong implications on global and regional mass migration movements. Therefore, even after the EU-Turkey migration deal was signed, political decision makers in Brussels as well as Ankara will have to cope with this crisis and try to find sustainable solutions.

Secondly, the question how states deal with global mass migration movements is currently one of the most important issues in international politics. Turkey is one of the countries most affected by migratory flows. It is currently hosting around three million refugees, which is equal to 3.5% of the Turkish population and makes Turkey globally the number one refugee hosting country in absolute terms (Hintz and Feehan 2017: 2). Due to his great number Turkey attributes high significance to the issue of migration: demographic changes, the integration of refugees into the Turkish society and labour market as well as the question of ensuring the medical, educational and financial well-being of refugees is one of the most important challenges Turkey's politicians and public are currently facing (Jones 2016).

Thirdly, around 1.5 million migrants – fleeing from the violence in the Middle East – reach the EU by passing through Turkey (Seufert 2016: 1). Constantly rising numbers of refugees have been one of the biggest challenges the EU has faced since its foundation. The related rise of right wing populists, like Marine Le Pen or Victor Orbán, the appearance of security concerns and the EU's inability to find common solutions are even considered as a threat to the core principles of the EU, such as tolerance, unity and solidarity (Adam 2016: 2).

Fourthly, the socio-political relevance of this topic does not only stem from the domestic implications for Turkey and the EU respectively, but also from its impact on international politics and the relationship between the two parties. Migration movements and the EU-Turkey deal have been the most dominant topics in the European as well as Turkish media, public and political discourses. Main themes regarding this involved: Turkey's hospitality towards millions of Syrians within its territories, the EU's decision to push for a 'dirty deal' (Hewitt 2016) and after the agreement came into force the continuous threats of the Turkish government to refrain from the deal (Osborne 2017; Tisdall 2016). The latter is especially visible with regards to the rhetoric of Turkish policy makers, for instance, when President Erdoğan threatened to open the borders and "put refugees on buses" (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 59). The fragility of this deal, the possible re-increase in refugee arrivals and the increasing tensions between the EU and Turkey as well as the outlined implications for the two parties, demonstrate the continuing relevance of this topic.

Due to the expressed relevance on various levels, the EU-Turkey deal is an issue that requires further academic research and an in-depth analysis to understand its impact on the relationship of the two parties and especially Turkey itself. Concerning this matter, this thesis will contribute to a better understanding of the political, social, economic and historical implications of the deal and Turkey's decision. The agreement is continuously subject to controversies, is used as political leverage and is an essential part of public and media debates. This creates a need in Turkey as well as the EU to have a profound knowledge of the entire web of interactions, motives, actors and strategies that are at the heart of the agreement. The present comprehensive analysis will contribute to the ongoing discourse in political science in two ways: first, it will demonstrate that a real empirical problem can most sufficiently be explained through focusing on agents, their motivations and strategies as well as their interactions. Second, in doing so the analysis will avoid abstractions used in traditional foreign policy (FP) analyses and international relations (IR) theory-based approaches. Research positioned at the cross-section of IR and foreign policy analysis (FPA) is a novelty with regards to the EU-Turkey Agreement. Thus, it is highly significant since it

offers not just an explanation based on one single factor, but an attempt to discover the full picture of underlying mechanisms, strategies and developments.

1.4 Subsequent Procedure and Content Structure

To provide a comprehensive analysis of this research subject, this thesis will structurally proceed as follows. The *second* chapter will present an in-depth analysis and discussion of the existing academic literature that deals with the EU-Turkey Agreement. The literature review will demonstrate that there is a clearly identifiable research gap regarding comprehensive analyses of Turkey's decision and its respective reasons, underlying motives and strategies. On basis of this existing research gap, the *third* chapter, will develop the guiding research question. Subsequently, the *fourth* chapter will outline the theoretical framework this analysis will be built upon. It will be shown that a broad, dialectical framework, offered by Benno Teschke and Can Cemgil (2014), delivers the most suitable analytical tools and theoretical groundworks to develop a comprehensive argumentation. Furthermore, the migration-FP nexus will be introduced. The *fifth* chapter of this thesis will present the research design, methodology, operationalisation and the hypothesis. It will emphasise the necessity of an agency-based approach and indicate that Turkey's decision is the result of a complex interplay between various agents with different strategies, which affected (and were affected by) the AKP's main strategy of staying in power. Following this, the *sixth* chapter will include the empirical investigation. This chapter will present the whole net of strategies, actions, developments and historically-emerged constellations that had an impact on Turkey's decision. At the beginning of the chapter, the historical context of Turkey-Syria relations will be discussed, followed by an overview of the developments in the Syrian Civil War and Turkey's changing FP approaches. The subsequent two sections will focus on important (non-) state actors, whose behaviour and strategies had an influence on Turkey. These will be followed by a discussion of Turkey's varying responses to the issue of migration and an examination of the relationship between Ankara and Brussels, with special focus on the historical evolution of their relations and the importance of the visa liberalisation process. Subsection 6.6 afterwards will concentrate on the domestic developments within Turkey and the AKP's main strategy. Within this paragraph the Turkish public opinion, economic development as well as domestic challengers to the AKP's legitimacy will be analysed. After having outlined all these different, yet interrelated aspects, the last subsection of Chapter 6 will interweave these actors, strategies and motives, to show that they are part of a complex interrelated net of interactions as well as the AKP's strategy of maintaining its power. The *final* chapter of this thesis will draw a conclusion, answer the research question and present final remarks.

2 State of the Art: Literature Review and Discussion

The EU-Turkey March 18 Agreement has received considerable attention in the academic discourse, due to its political and social relevance. This section will give a detailed overview of the existing works and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of these publications. In doing so, it will categorise the complex and diverse literature in different groups with respect to their main point of interest and critically evaluate their core messages at the end of every respective subsection. This chapter will unveil that there is a variety of single-discipline analyses of the incident focusing on one specific feature of the deal, while profound investigations – especially regarding Turkey's motives to sign the agreement – are missing.

2.1 Legality and Morality: Nothing more than a Press Release?

The substantial majority of publications dealing with the EU-Turkey Agreement consists of studies analysing the legality of the deal and its conformity with international law.[8] The most controversial legal issues include the question whether Turkey can be considered a 'safe country', regarding its security situation, ongoing state of emergency and its domestic as well as international challenges (Roman et al. 2016; Williamson 2016: 4). Additionally, it is disputed if returning migrants to Turkey is an unlawful 'collective expulsion' and if sending back migrants without giving them the chance to apply for asylum, breaches the international norm of 'non-refoulment' (Carrera and Guild 2016). Further legal concerns apply to inner-European and inner-Turkish processes respectively. This discussion evolves around the (possible) violation of the EU's core democratic principles[9] (Gatti 2016a, 2016b; Koenig and Walter-Franke 2017) as well as the ability of the experience-lacking Turkish asylum system to handle great numbers of refugees and guarantee (legal) security (Rygiel et al. 2016; Ulusoy 2016: 3). Dimitriadi (2016: 8) even concludes that the deal is exclusively a political decision "and the legal framework does little to support it". These legal concerns also fuelled serious moral concerns among civil rights and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which criticise the insufficient conditions for refugees (Lovett et al. 2017), condemn the unsatisfactory protection of human rights in Turkey and denounce the EU for redirecting its responsibility onto Turkey (Frelick et al. 2016, Tunaboylu and Alpes 2017). Amnesty International (2016) even goes thus far to call the deal a "historic blow to rights".

This section, outlining the debate concerning the disputed legality and morality of the deal, did not aim to evaluate whether the agreement is unlawful or immoral. The goal was to demon-

---

[8] The legal dimension is not at the centre of interest. Briefly introducing the legal debate serves the purpose of comprehensiveness. For an in-depth analysis i.a. see Peers' (2016) work. The section's title was derived from Benvenuti's (2016) article wherein she argues that the deal "is nothing more than a press release, which has no legal bearing".

[9] This mainly refers to the deal bypassing European checks and balances and violating Article 218 (6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (Gatti 2016a; 2016b).

strate that there are serious concerns among scholars and that a great share of the academic literature engaged with the migration agreement consists of legal analyses. Questions concerning the consistency of the agreement with European and international law as well as Turkey's status as a 'safe third country' are still subject to controversial debates and a consensus is not likely to occur anytime soon.

2.2 Evaluation of the Implementation and Future of the Deal

In addition to analyses focusing on the legal or moral perspective, a great portion of the academic literature involves publications dealing with the practical challenges and the implementation of the agreement. On the one hand, positive evaluations conclude that the deal led to a significant drop in the number of migrant arrivals in Europe[10] (Knaus 2016a: 43) and cannot be considered as a 'dirty deal' because more migrants than ever before will be protected and resettled. Some authors even assess the theoretical possibility of using the EU-Turkey Agreement as a role model for the EU's cooperation with third countries (Seeberg 2016, 2017). On the other hand, it is argued that the numerical decline predates the signing of the deal and that if the agreement had any effect, it is the interruption of this declining trend (Spijkerboer 2016: 5). Yet, there is not just a debate about the effectiveness in terms of numbers. Other concerns refer to the insufficient capacities of the Greek asylum system (Strik 2016: 1) as well as Turkey's lack of a proper legal framework and long-term strategy for the integration of Syrians (Kutlu-Tonak 2016: 130–131). Likewise, it is debated whether the inadequate living conditions for refugees in Turkey might increase their desire to leave Turkey and reach the EU (Soykan 2016). These concerns resulted in a variety of speculative articles which aim to analyse the future of the deal. Some authors see a decreasing reliability of Turkey, caused by the continuing state of emergency and Erdoğan's persecution of his opponents (Baume 2016). Others state that it is unclear if the deal will "survive Erdoğan's uncompromising position on the Terrorism Law" (Icoz 2016: 505), which is one of the conditions for lifting the visa requirements (Gürsel 2016). This means, if the legal problems as well as the gridlocked situation regarding the visa liberalisation process and the modification of the anti-terrorism laws persist, the deal can be short lived (Hakura 2016).

Subsequently, it should be mentioned that almost all publications dealing with the practical implementation of the deal or the future of the agreement are merely of descriptive nature or provide – in many cases highly speculative – assessments of the agreement's future from different points of view. This means that they try to deduce predictions from (more or less) profound accounts of the political context.

---

[10] According to Knaus (2016a: 44) the number of migrants crossing the Aegean fell from 115.000 to 3.300 between early and mid-2016.

2.3 The Agreement in the Context of EU-Turkey Relations

Analyses seeing the agreement in the wider context of the chameleonic EU-Turkey relations rank among the academic works that step away from the issues of legality/implementation and apply a clearer political science perspective. This discourse, for instance, raises the question whether the agreement can be a 'turning point' (Bal 2016: 31) in EU-Turkey relations or a 'make it or break it'-situation (Benvenuti 2017: 17). Publications that examine the deal considering the historical continuities and divergences in EU-Turkey relations argue that the agreement indeed led to a rapprochement between the two parties, but did not change the general pattern of their relationship (Akbulut 2016: 8–18). For instance, although the EU promised to revitalise the accession talks, there is still no common opinion among EU members states whether to grant full membership to Turkey or not, which is referred to as the EU's practice of "holding the door half open" (Phinnemore and Içener 2016: 458). In his descriptive analysis Akbulut (2016: 8–17) claims that EU-Turkey relations are 'consistently inconsistent'. Assuming Akbulut (2016: 8–17) is right, the agreement is rather a cyclical upturn than fundamental change in EU-Turkey relations. In connection to that, Anas (2016: 9) interprets the agreement as the result of decades of interactions as well as different strategies and motivations of the involved actors.

To sum up, some scholars regard the agreement as a partial result of the inconsistent relationship between Turkey and the EU. As an interim conclusion at this point it can be affirmed that the works dealing with the legality, morality and implementation of the agreement as well as the papers focusing on the context of the EU-Turkey relations are merely of descriptive nature or constitute assessments from different points of view. These works do not aim to answer in-depth questions regarding the occurrence of the agreement, but rather aim to explain a specific aspect of the agreement, based on their respective discipline and without taking a broader perspective. For instance, seeing the agreement as the result of the ups and downs of EU-Turkey relations is too superficial to contribute to a profound understanding of this matter (see Akbulut 2016). Many publications are often solely dealing with the wider political context and the general pattern of EU-Turkey relations. Hence conclusions on why the agreement came into being remain limited. Having discussed the publications concerned with legal and moral matters, the practical and future problems of the deal as well as the works locating the agreement in the wider context of EU-Turkey relations, the next three subsections of this literature discussion will evaluate publications that put identifying possible reasons for the signing of the agreement at the centre of attention.

2.4 EU-Perspective: Populism and Security

The question why the EU pushed for the migration agreement with Turkey is a well-researched aspect. The core argumentation regarding this, is that the rise of ISIS, the occurrence of terror attacks in Europe and the continuous influx of refugees enabled right wing populist parties to gain momentum and put pressure on the EU[11], which eventually resulted in the EU-Turkey Agreement (Rodriguez 2016: 24). It is argued that the migration agreement is to be understood as the result of the EU members states' attempt to regain border control and national security, which were perceived as being under threat by terrorism and mass migration (Toygür and Benvenuti 2016: 7). Other explanatory approaches suggest interpreting the signing of the agreement as the outcome of an inner-EU compromise between a German-led bloc and the more migration-averse *Visegrád* countries, since these two had different perceptions on how to deal with the crisis, e.g. regarding the reallocation of refugees via quotas (Maricut 2017). Subsequently it is asserted that the EU mainly signed the agreement to reassure its domestic situation and therefore compromised European values "in exchange for political expediency" (Bryant 2016).

All in all, the literature analysing the agreement from the EU's perspective is well developed and numerous. The EU's motivations to reach an agreement with Turkey, to condemn the influx of refugees, can be considered as commonly known and academically well-researched. Yet, these publications are solely concerned with the EU's interests in signing the agreement. Since these works do not take into consideration other aspects (e.g. Turkey's motives) their explanations remain one-sided.

2.5 Power in EU-Turkey-Relations: a Play for Leverage

Apart from arguing that the deal was mainly and sometimes exclusively the result of inner-EU processes, other works aim to explain its occurrence through outlining shifting power balances in EU-Turkey relations. These publications often refer to the criticism, that the agreement will put the EU at Turkey's mercy, because migration movements turned Turkey into a "gatekeeper of Europe" or a "guardian of the 'Fortress Europe'" (Benvenuti 2017: 3–4). The academic works regarding this matter aim to identify which bargaining party turned out to be more influential in shaping the agreement. Predominantly, these are analyses of the agents' bargaining power, outlining the dominant actor in the relationship. Only very few publications attribute the EU major influence over Turkey. For example, Bürgin (2016: 115) claims that the EU is still highly influential when it comes to motivating Turkey to implement reforms, especially in the field of migration. In contrast to that, most of the papers argue that the EU's practice of "outsourcing control

---

[11] Knaus (2016) calls this a window of opportunity for the populist, anti-Muslim, anti-refugee and anti-Brussels bloc.

and security to the European periphery" (Gloannes 2016: 1) enabled these states to gain leverage over the EU. On basis of that, a shift of power for the benefit of Turkey is detected, because the migration crisis put Turkey in a strategic position which it gradually exploited. Supporting this claim, Kfir (2017: 2–15) argues, on basis of a Weberian, interpretative approach, that Turkey became the dominant bargaining party. This shift in the balance of power was induced by a variety of factors. Firstly, Turks no longer wanted or expected to become a member of the EU, which was accompanied by the governmentally induced period of 'De-Europeanisation', wherein the AKP's political goals became dominant over fulfilling EU demands. Secondly, as Turkey's FP focus shifted away from a defensive strategy towards 'Neo-Ottomanism', which included a greater focus on the Middle East, Ankara became crucial for the EU in dealing with Iran, Iraq and Syria. Finally, the European project's dependency on Turkey's border security efforts, enabled Ankara to gain leverage over the EU. Therefore, with growing alienation from the EU and the escalation of the Syrian conflict, Ankara started to capitalise on its geostrategic location, to exploit the dependency of the EU and to gain leverage in negotiations.[12] In his complex analysis Isaac Kfir (2017) provides insights into important concepts, like taking into consideration domestic and foreign policy changes. His analysis, however, implies that Turkey only agreed to sign the deal to gain power and leverage over the EU, which could be too narrow of an argumentation. (Kfir 2017: 1–15)

Another context-sensitive approach focusing on the bargaining process and Turkey's position as a 'gatekeeper' provides a further set of explanations for the shifting power balance. The EU's indecision and incompetence, the rising public awareness and the increasing number of refugees hosted by Turkey, enabled Ankara to gain a moral high ground over the EU and to emphasise that the future of the Schengen area lies in Turkish hands. Through reversing power asymmetries and highlighting the humanitarian and financial burden it was carrying, Turkey could achieve the inclusion of non-migration related issues, like visas, in the final agreement. (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 51–63)

Recapitulating, it can be said that the literature dealing with the role of power and leverage in the context of the EU-Turkey Agreement aims to explain the signing of the deal and its content by analysing the influence of the two respective parties on each other. The research in this field outlines that the refugee crisis led to a change in the balance of power between the EU and Turkey, wherein Ankara's leverage increased. The key argument is that Turkey started to use its increased power and exploited the issue of migration to gain concessions from the EU. While often laying out important motives and factors (see Kfir 2017), the publications in this field remain too

---

[12] Turkey's self-confidence based on its increased leverage, is i.a. illustrated by Erdoğan's threats to open the borders for refugees, after the EU Parliament voted on the suspension of accession negotiations (Kfir 2017: 13–15).

narrow. Approaches that interpret the agreement as the result of Turkey's efforts to capitalise on its geo-strategically important position additionally appear immature (Kfir 2017; Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016). Claiming that Turkey politically exploited its position to gain leverage from the EU is an important factor, but picking out this instrumentalisation as the decisive factor constitutes an abstract generalisation. The question which dynamics led to this instrumentalisation of refugees is widely ignored by the literature and would require further research. Therefore, the reliance on one single explanatory factor, i.e. the shift in power, is not sufficient to capture the complexity of the agreement and the motivations of the involved actors.

2.6 Turkish Perspective: Theoretical Models and Collecting Arguments

So far, reviewing and discussing the literature concerning the EU-Turkey Agreement has shown that the legal and moral aspects, the implementation of the deal, the EU's interest in cooperating with Ankara and the impact of the agreement on EU-Turkey relations have received great attention in the academic discourse. In contrast to that, the Turkish side only attracted limited attention in the scholarly debate, as the following paragraph of this thesis will demonstrate. The previous discussion of the existing literature, therefore, proved the existence of a first research gap, since Turkey's motivation, strategies and interests in the refugee deal did not get the same extensive attention as other aspects of the agreement. This section of the thesis, will discuss the scarce literature focusing on Turkey and classify it into different categories.

2.6.1 Theory-based Explanations for Turkey's Cooperation

The first category of explanations – focusing on Turkey – includes structuralist, theory-driven approaches that apply theoretical categories or models derived from IR theories and foreign policy analysis (FPA). Some structuralists argue – referring to political realism and the concept of *Realpolitik* – that Turkey found itself in a situation, wherein it felt threatened by an increasingly opaque atmosphere in its neighbourhood. ISIS's expansionism, Iran's rise and worsening relations with Russia led to an increasing fear of political isolation among the Turkish government and fuelled the idea of turning towards the EU again for closer cooperation and Western support. (Şahin 2016)

Using a realist approach as well but having a different line of argumentation, Didić (2017) sees a connection between the Turkish Syria policy and the EU-Turkey agreement. Didić (2017) argues that Turkey's strategy in Syria as well as its cooperation with the EU fit in the categories of a realist-oriented FP with *Realpolitik* motives. The core of this argumentation is that Turkey, on the one hand, wanted to increase its power and on the other hand aimed to break free from US influence. The line of reasoning, however, includes various daring thesis e.g. that Turkey inten-

tionally shot down a Russian plane to prevent peace talks between the United States (US) and Russia, with the intention of prolonging the war in Syria. Didić's (2017: 8–18) argues that a prolonged war would force more refugees to flee to Turkey, which in turn would increase Ankara's leverage over the EU. Although Didić's (2017) analysis brings up many disputable arguments and often mixes different elements simply stating that these actions are part of a realist policy, thinking about a correlation between Turkey's FP in Syria and the migration agreement can be fruitful. Despite raising important questions, i.e. why Turkey changed its Syria policy and why the Justice and Development Party (AKP[13]) decided to sign the agreement with the EU, the paper does not provide balanced answers. The main argument is that Turkey aims to become a regional power through overthrowing the Assad regime and exploited refugees to gain leverage over the EU.[14] (Didić 2017)

A further IR theory-inspired approach applies the *regional security complex theory* and describes Turkey as an *insulator* between the Middle East and Europe. The key message of this approach is that with the intensifying conflict in Syria and the increasing threats to its national security, Turkey became aware of its role as an *insulator* and wanted to capitalise on it, e.g. through concluding a deal with the EU. (Imai 2016: 29)

In another structuralist analysis, Juliette Tolay (2016) argues that states, in the international system, have diverging statuses, depending on their actual capabilities and their dialectical recognition. Turkey as a rising power, has been using mass migration (e.g. through hosting refugees) to display an "image of power and responsibility" and to "gain recognition [...] as a 'regional power'" (Tolay 2016: 135–136). With its 'open-door policy'[15] Turkey attempted to create an image for itself as "Turkey the virtuous" (Tolay 2016: 140–142). Following this line of reasoning, the migration agreement is part of Ankara's FP strategy of politically exploiting migration movements to display itself as a 'virtuous' and powerful country[16] (Tolay 2016: 145).

Although the argumentations, of many of the previously presented papers, strongly rely on abstract categorisations and unfold simplistically, some of the outlined correlations are suitable points of departure for further analyses, e.g. the connection between the agreement and Turkey's FP or the regional context (see Şahin 2016). A major problem of all IR-theory driven works is their strong focus on states and governments as their unit of analysis. Sub-units like the public or

---

[13] The abbreviations used in this thesis refer to the name of the party, organisation, etc. in its local language. For the original name please consult the 'List of Abbreviations'.
[14] Didić (2017), furthermore, argues that Turkey turned to the EU, because it felt marginalised through the United States' stronger focus on Iran and Kurdish groups.
[15] With the 'open-door'-policy Ankara provided access to Turkish territory to every person coming Syria, even if individuals did not have the required documents, like identity cards, passports or visas (Tolay 2016: 140).
[16] This rhetoric is illustrated through A. Davutoğlu's statement: "as an island of stability, Turkey has become sanctuary for people escaping from terrorism and violence" (in Lepeska 2015) and the Presidential Press Secretary's announcement that Turkey, despite its limited resources, is "carrying the burden of humanity" (in Kalin 2016).

other actors beneath the state level are often ignored. This leads to an abstraction of decisions and decreases these papers' explanatory power. Putting complex decisions and events into abstract, analytical categories, i.e. Imai's (2016) *insulator* state, bears the risk of failing to explain the concrete empirical events. Similarly, picking out one single factor that is regarded as decisive for Turkey's commitment in the agreement is problematic as well. It is justified to question whether narrowing down a decision to scientific categories will entail the exclusion of other important factors. In the case of Tolay's (2016) analysis it is to be queried whether the external perception of a state can be treated as the dominant or only factor in shaping a policy decision. These weaknesses of structuralist approaches will receive further discussion in Section 4.1.

2.6.2 Descriptive and Untheorised Narratives of Turkey's Decision

The other literary group, dealing with the agreement from the Turkish point of view, primarily describes Turkey's motivations and behaviour. Hintz and Feehan (2017), for instance, provide a short, descriptive analysis exploring the thinking behind Turkey's approach to deal with the refugee crisis. Hintz and Feehan (2017) argue that the EU's policy of border externalisation caused a burden shifting (instead of sharing), which put greater responsibilities on the shoulders of countries like Turkey. Ankara's approach of welcoming Syrian refugees as 'brothers' and seeing them as a boon, instead of a burden, however, was not altruistically motivated but rather an attempt to politically exploit migrants for its own political advantage: "While openly bargaining with the E.U. for money and concessions in return for agreeing to host Syrians who attempt to enter Europe's borders, Turkish leaders stake their claim as being ethical leaders on refugee issues" (Hintz and Feehan 2017). Turkey's 'open-door policy', in contrast to the EU's reluctance to take in more refugees, is interpreted as the AKP's instrument to receive international and domestic legitimacy for its actions as well as to profile itself as morally superior.[17] Domestically, Hintz and Feehan (2017), assume that the AKP used the refugee crisis to 'sunnify' the country, to minimise existing ethnic cleavages and to increase electoral support. Therewith connected, the consideration of granting citizenship to Syrians could be interpreted as a tactical move by the administration, since Syrians are expected to vote for Erdoğan and the AKP. (Hintz and Feehan 2017)

Similarly, Seufert (2016: 1) emphasises the necessity of taking the Turkish domestic context into consideration. He argues that the financial and political costs for Turkey, arising from the refugee influx, only received limited attention in the public and academic discourse. Seufert's (2016) research puts its main emphasis on the challenges for Turkey. The integration of Syrians into Turkish society, for example, will not only pose major organisational but also financial chal-

---

[17] Frustrated with NATO's refusal to overthrow Assad and with the West's reluctance to host refugees, migration became a platform for the AKP to shame the West and score domestic political points (Hintz and Feehan 2017).

lenges on the Turkish government. At a time, when important funds are dwindling, because the Turkish economy is struggling, these challenges might turn out to be socially, politically and economically problematic. In addition, the Turkish public is increasingly hostile towards refugees and mass migration, because it perceives refugees as a societal and economic burden as well as the reason for a break with Turkey's ideological and legal traditions.[18] Comparable with Hintz and Feehan (2016), Seufert (2016: 5–6) assumes that the AKP government did not accept Syrian refugees only on a humanitarian basis but rather because of political considerations. Taking in refugees and supporting Syrian rebels was part of Turkey's strategy to become one of the decisive powers deciding over the future of post-war Syria (Seufert 2016: 3–6).

Further works, with a comparable focus, refer to Turkey's external environment, outlining that Turkey was in need of a rapprochement with the West due to economic problems and regional threats like ISIS (Eralp 2016: 21). Eralp (2016: 21–22), additionally, mentions that the VL dialogue, included in the agreement, is especially relevant for the AKP since visa freedom is a domestically and psychologically important goal to achieve for a Turkish administration.

Due to their weaknesses and superficiality, the different, previously presented, publications can be seen as appropriate scientific starting points for further in-depth analyses of the underlying dynamics that made Turkey sign the agreement. Although being very short and superficial, Hintz and Feehan's (2017) paper introduces many arguments that have been ignored in other works. Their essay, however, only scratches the surface of a complex policy decision. They do not provide a balanced development of each argument, which lets their paper appear as a non-investigated collection of ideas. Seufert's (2016) article likewise gives important insights on how the refugee crisis has been affecting Turkey and how the Turkish Syria policy is interrelated with its stance towards migrants. With his focus on the political costs of the refugee crisis for Turkey, he brings an issue to the discussion – which in contrast to the financial side – has not been acknowledged in the same way by previous publications. Although outlining many important factors that might lead to a better understanding of why Turkey signed the agreement, Seufert (2016) is almost exclusively focusing on how the EU could solve the existing problems in Turkey. Seufert's (2016) work is not connecting interrelated developments and therefore cannot deliver a profound explanation. His presentation of factors and problems, therefore, can only lay groundwork for further analyses.

Whereas the EU's motivation is well-researched, the Turkish interests, reasons and the underlying dynamics that led to the signing of the March 18 Agreement only received limited attention in the academic discourse. As already discussed, theory-driven works concerning the Turkish

---

[18] Traditionally, the goal of Turkey's migration policies was to create a culturally homogenous society, consisting of Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims (Seufert 2016: 4). This idea was preserved within nationalist factions.

perspective are often to be considered as one-dimensional. These publications try to narrow down this complex event to explain it with one single model, for example through describing the occurrence of the agreement as a part of Turkey's *Realpolitik* (Şahin 2016), Turkey's strategy as an *insulator state* (Imai 2016) or as a tool to display an *image of power* (Tolay 2016). As previously argued, using theoretical models that require strong abstractions bears the risk of decreasing the explanatory power of an analysis, since important factors might be excluded. This raises concerns whether the existing literature can incorporate the complexity of the event. The second part of the literature dealing with Turkey's reasons, motivations and strategies regarding the agreement, includes descriptive analyses of the causes for Turkey's decision to cooperate with the EU (Hintz and Feehan 2017), as well as untheorised narratives (Seufert 2016) and works that focus on the wider political and social environment at the time the deal was concluded (Eralp 2016). To sum up, it could be argued that the previously discussed approaches are not able to capture the complexity of the event. Based on these deficiencies and the inability to incorporate the whole puzzle, it could be indicated that a more dialectically-oriented theoretical approach would provide the necessary analytical tools to capture the incident in its entirety.

3 Research Gap and Question: Turkey's Motives

The previous broad literature review demonstrated that there is manifold research, academically dealing with the March 2016 Agreement. The academic spectrum reaches from legal analyses and speculative attempts evaluating the future of the deal, over works that locate the decision in the wider context of EU-Turkey relations or examine the EU's interest in the agreement, to publications focusing on the Turkish side. The EU-Turkey Agreement, therefore, has received considerable attention from various scholars, who put their emphasis on different aspects and come from diverging scientific disciplines.

Conspicuously, nearly every aspect of the deal has been explored in detail, apart from Turkey's motives and strategies. By discussing the existing literature, it became obvious that Turkey's role in the occurrence of the agreement only attracted limited attention in the discourse. Analyses focusing on Turkey, on the one hand, narrowly stick to theoretical models and abstractions, which makes them appear one-dimensional. While they on the other hand consist of superficial, descriptive works that avoid examining the underlying dynamics and mechanisms. Put in other words, the existing publications use theoretical models leading to massive abstractions, pick out one decisive factor, descriptively analyse the Turkey's decision or provide unstructured collections of possible reasons for Turkey's commitment. Turkey's motives, actions, interests and strategies as well as specific underlying mechanisms or social-historical developments, have been neglected so far. An argument that has repeatedly been brought forward in the literature as well as the public debate, implied that Turkey's compliance was the result of the incentives the EU offered. This line of reasoning is exemplary for the often narrow and one-dimensional approaches, which simply conclude that Turkey had to sign the agreement because it was promised a revitalised accession process, financial aid, visa liberalisation for its citizens[19] and was able to increase its leverage over the EU.

In line with other academic publications – although consisting of mostly descriptive or "theoretically uninformed narratives" (Yalvaç 2014: 121) – this paper argues that the incentives offered to Turkey cannot be considered as the sole decisive factors for the occurrence of the decision. Based on what had been outlined in Section 2.6, it is plausible to assume that there is a variety of factors, strategies, agents and motives that led to Turkey's decision to sign the agreement. Accordingly, building on the discussion of the existing literature, this thesis identified a clear research gap: namely the lack of comprehensive research dealing with Turkey's motives, strategies and reasons as well as the underlying dynamics and constellations, that persuaded Ankara and the AKP to sign the agreement. On basis of the scientific and social relevance as well as the absence

---

[19] The concrete content of the agreement and details on the offered incentives were outlined in Section 1.1.2.

of a comprehensive research paper dealing with these issues, this thesis raises the following research question:

why did Turkey sign the March 18 Agreement with the EU?

To set a more precise frame for the following investigation, the term 'Turkey' as outlined in the research question, will mainly refer to the governing party AKP, that is occupying almost all strategic positions within the Turkish state. Despite the high relevance of the present topic and the extensive literature on this subject, this question so far has not been sufficiently answered by scientific research. In answering this research question the present thesis will differentiate itself from the existing, superficial and narrow explanatory approaches. To close the previously mentioned research gap, this paper will provide a comprehensive analysis of the different factors, actors and their interactions which eventually led to the Turkish signing of the agreement. Based on the existing literature this thesis will aim to contribute to a better understanding of Turkish politics and more specifically the issue of the migration agreement. Additionally, to answer this question in a comprehensive and profound way, it will be shown that migration-related issues and the FP arena are closely tied together and demonstrated that classical IR or FPA approaches, as well as most of the outlined concepts, are not able to capture the complexity of this incident. This is the reason why an unconventional and new approach is most suitable to deliver a comprehensive explanation. The following chapter will demonstrate that a dialectical and social-relational approach offers the most appropriate analytical tools to analyse the agreement in its entirety, without having to rely on strong abstractions or generalisations, which in turn would decrease the explanatory power of the research. The next chapter will show that this analysis will range in the literature of FPA and IR, although applying a unique approach bringing together both theoretical schools. After presenting the theory and discussing its appropriateness, the hypothesis, extrapolated from the research question and the research design will be outlined.

4 Theoretical Framework: Complexity and Interactions

The complexity of the event and the shortcomings of the existing literature make it necessary to in-depth analyse Turkey's motives to sign the agreement as well as the influence of other actors and developments on this decision. Therefore, it will be demonstrated that the dialectical and social-relational theoretical framework developed by Benno Teschke and Can Cemgil (2014) constitutes a highly appropriate instrument to deliver a unique and comprehensive explanation of the Turkish decision. This chapter will primarily outline the theoretical roots of the approach, followed by an introduction of its main principles and finally highlight the benefits of this theory.

4.1 Rationale of the Theory Selection

Before introducing the theory, the following subsection will demonstrate that based on the correlation between migration and FP, Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) FP theory is applicable to the case of Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement. After that, the weaknesses of the existing IR/FPA literature will briefly be presented and the innovative character of the theory will be outlined.

4.1.1 The Migration and Foreign Policy Nexus

To be able to apply a theoretical framework deprived from FPA and IR, the research subject needs to be a matter of FP or IR. The correlation between migration and FP might not be obvious but is widely acknowledged by the academic literature. The latter consists of various publications discussing the intersection of migration and FP as well as the influence of states' FP orientations and actions on migration (see Bach 1987; Castles et al. 2014; Geddes 2009; Greenhill 2010; Mitchell 1989; Münz and Weiner 1997; Teitelbaum 1984). In this literature it is i.a. argued that migration can serve a state's FP goals, e.g. when FP (unintentionally) energises migration movements (Mitchell 1989; Teitelbaum 1984). This means that sending as well as receiving countries can use migration to manipulate their relationship with others and exploit migration movements to destabilise or mock other countries (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 196; Mitchell 1989: 682; Teitelbaum 1984: 433–441).

In this context of the migration-FP nexus, Turkey's behaviour linked to the migration crisis is an extraordinary case. On the one hand, Turkey has been hosting millions of refugees for the last years. While it, on the other hand, is a major transit country, which was able to introduce its FP interests into the agreement with the EU. Kapalidis (2017) argues that Turkey used migration as a tool of its FP and politically exploited the issue to put pressure on other actors and promote its own interests. It is plausible to assume that Turkey's policies towards the Middle East and espe-

cially Syria, had a strong influence on migratory flows and its behaviour towards the EU.[20] In the literature that is regarding migration-related issues as a matter of FP, it is argued that incidents – like Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement – are not restrictable to one single dimension. Migration-related FP outcomes are not only influenced by FP decisions, but also connected to the areas of development aid, security and economics as well as the domestic conditions and policies (e.g. migration laws) of a specific country (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 682; Teitelbaum 1984: 433–441). According to Mitchell (1989: 687–699), due to this multidimensional relationship, a broad conceptual framework is needed to analysis incidents emerging at the intersection of FP and migration. Such a conceptual framework has to incorporate all different levels and agents, foreign and domestic policies as well as insights from various disciplines, like IR, economics, sociology etc. (Mitchell 1989: 687–699). Since migration is considered as a "process that cuts across national/social boundaries" (Mitchell 1989: 691) it is more important to interweave different analytical levels (i.a. foreign, domestic, international) than to stick to general classifications. Migration-related policies take place in an arena where social forces interact, which means that they are shaped by the interplay of different actors, strategies and domestic as well as external pressures in the light of economic, geographic and historical influences (Mitchell 1989: 699).[21]

Building on that, Section 4.2 will demonstrate that Teschke and Ceemgil's (2014) theory provides such a multidimensional, comprehensive framework that incorporates all different agents and levels. The above-mentioned factors demonstrated that migration can directly be transformed into an issue of FP. Migration and foreign policies are constantly affecting each other and cannot be analysed separately. The discussion of the migration-FP nexus illustrated that migration-related FP outcomes have to be analysed in their entire complexity and multidimensionality. Due to that, these outcomes can fruitfully be analysed by an inter-disciplinary theory, like the one developed by Teschke and Cemgil (2014).

4.1.2 Shortcomings of the Existing Literature and the IR-FPA Divide

The previous section delineated that analyses of the multifaceted issues of migration and FP require comprehensive theoretical frameworks. This part of the paper will explain why traditional IR or FPA approaches are often not able to expose the full complex picture. Consequently, it will be argued that an unconventional theory is needed to overcome these weaknesses. Part 2.6 has already shown that structuralist IR theories and agency-based FP analyses often fail to deliver comprehensive explanations of FP issues in general and the March 18 Agreement in particular.

---

[20] This correlation will be discussed in greater detail in the analytical chapter of this thesis.
[21] Regarding this interrelatedness Zolberg (1983: 16) notes that the world is an arena of social interactions which are influenced by cultural, economic, social and political processes. Every process simultaneously influences other processes and is affected by them, resulting in specific configurations which could e.g. cause migratory movements.

The main difference between IR theories and FPA approaches evolves around the question of the right level of analysis, meaning whether to focus on the systemic, state or individual level, on structures or agency[22] and whether to aim for generalising or individualising answers (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 610). Generally, FPA mainly aims to explain FP decisions of a certain state, while IR theories predominantly focus on the consequences of these decisions for the relations between states and the international system as such (Cemgil 2015: 148). The gap between IR and FPA is reflected in different academic writings and various theoretical approaches. IR structuralists, like K. Waltz (1979: 71), emphasise the interactions of states and demote FP making to an insignificant and often non-theorisable area of research, which is subsumed "under wider structural imperatives" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 605). These theories aim to provide a general framework to explain the functioning of the international system. Although they observe the presence of pressures in the system, they fail to examine how different units within the system respond to these pressures (Waltz 1979: 71).[23] Often, IR theory-based works seem to solely focus on abstractions or predictable regularities, while ignoring harder observable, underlying historically-emerged and social contexts (Yalvaç 2014: 119–120).

From the FPA's point of view all major IR theories – with their focus on structures and abstractions – subordinate agency to structure (Hill 2003: 3; Hudson 2005: 7–13). Consequently, classical FPA approaches put agency at the centre. These approaches reach from generalised propositions reducing actors to pre-existing variables (Rosenau 1968) to concepts concentrating on psychological characteristics of decision makers (Hermann 1980; Holsti 1976; Jervis 1968) as well as to ideas of seeing human decision makers as the basis of IR (Hudson 2005). These approaches highlight the importance of agency, although still seeing FP as a dependent variable, but neglect systemic forces, institutions as well as domestic pressures. This reductionism leads to a narrowing down of complex FP incidents to i.a. the personality or opinions of decision makers and triggers the omission of the socio-historical context of decisions.[24] (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 609–610)

With respect to the problems of general IR theories and FPA, Teschke and Cemgil (2014: 608) argue that pressing historical complexities of international relations and foreign policy into "parsimonious theoretical definitions and categories will render very thin abstractions, through which no foreign policy can be captured" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 608), because these categorisations would have to abstract from the variety of diverse cases and praxes.

---

[22] This paper's understanding of agency will be further problematised in Section 5.1.

[23] Regarding TFP, IR theory-based works remain state-centric and limited to issues of security (Yalvaç 2014: 119).

[24] Contrary to these reductions other authors (like Gourevitch 1978; Katzenstein 1976; Putnam 1988) established an important connection between state behaviour, domestic pressures and the international system through seeing foreign policy in the frame of 'two level games' (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 609–610).

Regarding the Turkish case, traditional FPA often interprets FP narrowly as negotiations, diplomacy and decision-making processes, which leads to a separation of FP from its social context. Contextual variables, if considered at all, are regarded as international or external determinants. Social relations or questions of the effects of social interactions are widely ignored (Yalvaç 2014: 119–120).

Therefore, to deliver a comprehensive answer to an actual empirical problem, a theoretical framework would need to bridge this gap between agency-specific FPA and structuralist IR theories. To achieve this, the present thesis – referring to Teschke and Cemgil (2014) – will argue that the introduction of a dialectical approach of FP making is crucial. As the following sections will show the theory's core element is a new way of thinking about FP that incorporates a focus on the "historically specific configurations of concrete relations", "contradictory [FP] strategies" and "context-specific reproductive strategies" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 610).

4.2 Theoretical Framework: Dialectics, Agents and Interactions

Against the background of the lack of comprehensive explanations for the Turkish commitment to the EU-Turkey Agreement, this thesis will apply an unconventional, meaning a non-mainstream and dialectical theoretical framework, which will be presented hereinafter. With its interpretation of FP as the result of social actors' conflicting strategies, the present theory and the subsequent analysis are located in the increasingly wide literature which uses social-relational or historical-sociological approaches to analyse Turkey's FP and IR (see Bilgiç 2015; Bilgin 2007; Demirtaş-Bagdonas 2014) as well as in the research referring to Marxist IR concepts (see Lapointe and Dufour 2012).

4.2.1 Theoretical Groundwork: a Dialectical and Dynamic Way of Thinking

Since the selected theory is based on the concept of dialectics, a brief introduction into dialectical thinking is necessary. Dialectics is a scientific method drawing upon Marx and Hegel that provides tools to study the world "in all its ever-changing complexity and understood as a whole whose parts are each internally related to every other part as well as to the whole" (Schipper 2015). It puts its emphasis on "the processual, social-relational, and thus inter-subjectively constructed nature of all social phenomena, grounding the idea of historicity" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 605–606). Aiming to explain (social) progress, change and contradictions are put at the centre. Relational contradictions resolve themselves over time in an undetermined and open-ended manner. This means that a FP outcome, like Turkey's decision to sign the agreement is the result of contradictions and their resolution. Within this literature, general abstractions (as applied by other IR/FPA scholars) are neglected, because it is assumed that there is no correlation be-

tween universal concepts and the actual, ever-changing nature of social phenomena. (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 605–606)

To capture purposive, imaginative human action and to bring together the empirical reality with the theoretical instruments, a dialectical approach requires contextualising and historically concretising social phenomena (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 605–606). With this focus, dialectics can "narrow the gap between a concept and its empirical referent to avoid conceptual reification" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 606). This concretisation incorporates the assumption that (foreign) policy decisions are not taking place in a vacuum. FP creates the historical content of IR or, in other words, FP strategies and their effects on IR are the direct result of historical as well social dynamics (Cemgil 2015: 148–151). Through their essential responsiveness to change and focus on contradictions, dialectical approaches can differentiate themselves from non-dialectical concepts and their abstractions or exclusive definitions. It is this openness that enables the concept to acknowledge perpetual shifts and changes. Dialectical approaches, on the one hand, refrain from relying on strong abstractions and classifications, while they, on the other hand, avoid regarding temporal configurations as stable structures or attaching actors to pre-defined roles (Cemgil 2015: 117–119). Examining research subjects without putting them into static frames allows capturing the diversity and complexity of social phenomena. This unbiased treatment of actors requires a greater focus on historical details and praxes, because agents do not automatically respond to 'structural causes' or act on basis of a generic rationality. Actors respond to changing domestic and international contexts through their creative strategies and actions. (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 608)

Put in a nutshell, dialectical approaches regard the world as constantly changing, which is why a methodology needs to integrate change and contradictions. The drivers of contradictions and change, are contradictory forces and strategies, which can at best be examined through applying a context-sensitive approach based on historicity (Schipper 2015).

A dialectical approach helps to overcome the weaknesses outlined in Section 4.1.2, by treating FP making as active and innovative praxes. In contrast to traditional IR theories that attach a secondary role to FP. Furthermore, distancing itself from classical FPA, dialectical approaches do not link actors with pre-defined and static roles to achieve cross-case comparability. In a dialectical approach, all social categories, like the state or FP, remain open to change instead of being theoretically closed.[25] By focusing on inter-subjective acts, a dialectical approach can avoid pressing these acts into theoretical containers. Yet, this requires a greater attention for historical details

---

[25] Teschke and Cemgil (2014: 608–611) argue that theories and concepts with closed categories that for generalisation are misleading and abandon the idea of a general theory for IR. The openness of the theory furthermore helps to overcome the agent-structure problem, which refers to the IR-FPA divide.

and praxes, because agents never automatically carry out a given set of actions based on structural causes. Dialectically analysing FP outcomes can integrate "the more agency-specific concerns of FPA with the more structuralist orientations of IR theory" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 611). This calls for examining the relations between polities as "historically-specific configurations of concrete relations between them" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 611). These configurations result from the historically indefinite, concrete and contradictory FP strategies of different agents and are part of these agents' context-specific strategies of reproduction. A dialectical approach captures these inter-subjective relations that represent the intersection of the internal and external. This means that FP is the 'crucial site' where different – domestic and foreign – influences intersect. As the following subsection will show, Teschke and Cemgil (2014) offer such a comprehensive, open and dynamic theoretical framework, that puts change and contradictions at the centre and avoids seeing social phenomena as theoretically fixed. It brings together FPA, IR theories as well as dialectics and sees FP decisions as the historical manifestation of concrete relations as well as the result of contradictory (FP) strategies. (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 605–611)

4.2.2 The Dialectic of the Concrete and its Main Aspects

What Teschke and Cemgil (2014) describe as their *'dialectic of the concrete'* is closely tied to the major dialectical principles outlined in the previous paragraph. Particularly, it is highlighted that human activities cannot be frozen or subsumed under pre-established categories, because they are subject to constant change. This change is the result of contradictions which emerge from social relations and the interrelatedness of social phenomena. Additionally, human social reality is regarded as inter-subjectively constructed (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 612–618). This means that it emerges from "clashes, convergences, partial overlaps, and antagonistic conflicts between the praxes of differently situated and motivated subjects" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 618). All these different motivations, strategies and actors create a complex web of social relations, which appears as a "mess of things, where everything is related to everything else chaotically" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 618). The interactions and the interrelatedness of 'everything to everything else' refers to the notion of FP as part of a state's, or an agent's, reproductive strategy (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 611). Based on the significance of these strategies of reproduction for the historical-sociological framework, a few additionally remarks shall be made.

With their understanding of reproductive strategies, Teschke and Cemgil (2014) refine Robert Brenner's concept (1985a; 1985b), because instead of defining these strategies in a solely material way, they are characterised as all social action carried out by agents and as subject to a net of social relations. Importantly, these agents, mostly unreflectedly, aim to maintain or improve their position in relation to others, meaning to reproduce themselves. Reproductive strategies consist

of all policy areas, e.g. social, economic as well as geopolitical and are the result of the interplay between conflicting strategies of reproduction carried out by different social actors. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1281)

These reproductive strategies as well as the agents' praxes are depending on what actors see as 'structures' and how they act upon them. This includes the past and present actions of other agents. Considering the nature of these interactions, foreign policies are the result of a contradictory intercourse of reproduction and determined by the actions of domestic (e.g. citizens) and external (e.g. other states) actors. Based on this dynamic and the observation that interactions often have unintended results, tracing back the preconditions of a given FP decision is necessary (Breuning 2007; Knafo 2010). Agency, therefore, can at best be analysed with reference to relational contexts and through historicisation.[26] Consequently, historicity is the key to understanding how actors behave in a certain context and to incorporate the social-relational and inter-subjective nature of FP and FP conjunctures. (Cemgil 2015: 93–96; Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 618–621)

Foreign policies are based on the interplay of "the concrete praxes of a variety of social actors, including states" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 619). FP decisions result from convergences and contradictions that i.a. emerge when conflicting reproductive strategies of different actors reach an equilibrium (e.g. in institutional forms), but remain (un)intentionally contested. Interactions, additionally, can consist of negotiations among agents and not between agents and structures as many mainstream IR theories claim. (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 619–620)

With regards to this, Teschke and Cemgil (2014: 620) point out the necessity of investigating these interactions and negotiations as well as the inter-subjective formulation of demands. Although being an agency-based an approach the present theory does not assume that agents can shape every aspect of the conditions surrounding them. They are always subject to specific circumstances and constellations that emerged historically and are located outside of the agents' sphere of action (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 620). One actor's action creates an externality for other actors, "upon which they act in reproducing themselves" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 620). Of course, different agents have different perceptions of these externalities, which lead to different conditions for their reproduction. In an interactive situation where every agent has a different strategy of reproduction contradictions emerge. These contradictions, in addition to other factors, create a situation wherein the praxes of an agent do not necessarily lead to the agent's intended result. Yet, its activities, whether successful or not, will change the conditions for other actors as well as cause a new conjuncture for every actor in the system. Put in other words, the

---

[26] Historicisation as understand by this thesis basically means to locate a social phenomenon (i.e. policy decision) in its wider historical context.

strategies of actors and their interactions can have unintended results – for the single actor as well as for the entirety of actors. (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 618–620)

4.2.3 Summary: a Complex Web of Interactions

Having discussed dialectics and the theoretical framework, this subsection will briefly recapitulate the theory's main components, before turning towards the presentation of the research design. The present theory, in contrast to other concepts, does not assume that FP decisions are to be treated as theoretically closed. FP actions are subject to change because agents must respond to domestic and international circumstances as well as the behaviour of other actors. Contradictions, interactions, strategies and historical relations are an integral part of actual human life. FP decisions, moreover, will be handled as inter-subjective consequences of differing and conflicting actions of agents. Inter-subjective in this regard means considering different strategies, motivations and capabilities of agents which influence each other. To pay attention to the interrelatedness of these factors, a given decision is located in the wider historical context to understand how an observable constellation emerged and why actors find themselves in a specific situation. This considers the instance that FP does not take place in an empty space. FP decisions are subject to current social dynamics, (historical) interactions and historically-emerged constellations. (Cemgil 2015: 93–151; Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 615–616)

Furthermore, a state or agent's reproductive strategy is regarded to be crucial for the occurrence of a specific FP decision and additionally helps to understand the interrelatedness of different strategies, agents and motives. Based on these strategies of reproduction and various other aspects, FP decisions can be the unintended result of the interplay between agents with contradictory motivations and specific historically-emerged constellations. This means that FP making takes place in a complex net of relations between different agents that respond to changing circumstances. Therefore, the FP arena is an evolving system in which historical interactions have a long-term effect on contemporary matters (Biltekin 2014: 266–270). Based on that, it is crucial for a comprehensive analysis to examine strategies and actions of different actors that are involved in a FP outcome. This is necessary to reveal the complex web of interactions and how their behaviours influenced one another and to pay attention to an agent's reproductive strategy as well as the impact of historically-emerged constellations.

4.3 Exploring New Horizons: the Theory Selection's Benefits

Applying the previously outlined historical-sociological framework, to evaluate why Turkey did sign the migration agreement with the EU, is a novelty. Yet, refraining from traditional mainstream explanation patterns offers great benefits. Using Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) approach enables this research to examine the empirical incident in all its multidimensional nature. It already has been shown that comprehensive and profound academic writings concerning the Turkish side of the March 18 Agreement are rare. Since the aim of academic research should be to contribute to a profound understanding of an empirical circumstance, this thesis aims for comprehensiveness.[27] Comprehensive in this matter does not imply developing a fundamentally new set of arguments, as the convergence with the existing literature indicates. The goal is to explain that this specific FP decision is not the embodiment of theoretical models but the (unintended) consequence of contradictory interactions of different actors with diverging motivations (Cemgil 2015: 148–151).

Additionally, a theoretical framework should always be chosen with respect to the research's *explanandum*. Since the goal is to analyse the incident in its entire complexity, the comprehensive framework provided by Teschke and Cemgil (2014) is most appropriate. The present theory's core and its dialectical dimension refer to the importance of change. The migration agreement is a novelty in EU-Turkey relations and symbolises a change in Turkey's policies, which makes a change-sensitive approach an appropriate analytical instrument. The theory is thus highly suitable to analyse FP decisions, shifts and inconsistencies due to its dynamism. Besides that, the agreement represents a complex matter that involved different actors and their respective strategies, wherein foreign and domestic as well as social, economic and migration-related circumstances influence each other and are mutually dependent. They need to be examined with an interdisciplinary theory that incorporates the huge variety of actors, strategies and interests and enables the revelation of the full picture. Traditional theoretical models fail to solve the underlying empirical puzzle, since they e.g. argue that the agreement was the result of transnational bargaining processes between 'the EU' and 'the Turkish state or government', as two non-theorisable abstract bodies of decision formation. Abstractions like these can be avoided by applying Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) concept that regards FP making as a dynamic relationship between i.a. political leadership, international and domestic actors and institutions. Focusing on agency and the context the decision was taken in is therefore inevitable (Cuhadar et al. 2015: 1–2).

---

[27] Comprehensiveness can only be achieved with an interdisciplinary approach, because different disciplines in social sciences predominantly want to explain one single part of human social life. A comprehensive approach, furthermore, allows to consider political, social, psychological and economic facets surrounding the incident.

Aiming for comprehensiveness also implies refraining from answering the research question by solely focusing on one decisive factor. This paper assumes that FP changes cannot be caused by one single dominant factor, like changing political ideologies (e.g. Turkey discharging Kemalism[28] and being increasingly Islamist), the nature of the international system (e.g. US dominance) or by the strategies within the leadership or bureaucracy (e.g. Erdoğan's self-realisation) (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1281–1282). Instead of picking out single factors, this research will examine the whole net of social relations (i.e. agents, strategies, interactions) and consider a government's decisions as the result of the intricate interplay between agents with diverging motivations. On basis of these arguments – as Chapter 6 will show – this thesis will provide a unique approach of historically tracing back the steps of various agents and offer an empirical analysis of the most important actors that shaped the Turkish decision (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1283).

---

[28] Kemalism refers to the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which for decades had been Turkey's, publicly unchallenged, state ideology. Its core principles are the popular six arrows (Turkish: *alt ok*): republicanism, statism, populism, laicism, nationalism and reformism. (Tunçay 2017)

5 Research Design: Agency, Methodology and Hypothesis

After having outlined the theoretical framework, the subsequent paragraph serves the purpose of presenting the thesis' research design, methodology, operationalisation and hypothesis, which are necessary to answer the question why Turkey signed the migration agreement. Methodologically this paper will follow a "research-question-guided and agency-based analysis" as recommended by Teschke and Cemgil (2014: 619).[29] At the beginning, this chapter will problematise the role of agency and the research design's case-study-relatedness as well as outline the most important actors for the analysis. This will be followed by the presentation of the applied methods, analytical tools and sources. Finally, this thesis' hypothesis will be introduced.

5.1 The Role of Agency and Case-Study-Relatedness

Agency in this paper is understood as human action and the role of human beings (or groups of human beings) in decision formation processes. The focus on agency is inevitable to examine a complex web of relations consisting of different actors with different motivations and different socially/historically transmitted presuppositions. Approaching the present question from an agency-based perspective includes that the occurrence of the decision is the *explanandum*; whereas the whole variety of factors which have an influence on agents or processes are regarded as the *explanans*. This agency focus means that 'real agents' are at the centre of interest. Real – as understood by this paper – indicates that agents are not 'generic entities' but consisting of actual human beings either in the form of collective groups or individuals. Agency is shaped through a variety of multidimensional factors, whose origins can i.a. be historic, economic, political or psychological.

Therefore, FP is affected from various sides and levels e.g. by a leader's worldview/personality, diverging perceptions, the impact of institutions, the public opinion, history and culture, geography, capabilities as well as other agents and their strategies (Breuning 2007: 163–169). These different aspects, additionally, may originate from multiple levels, including the domestic, state and international level. Therefore, the analysis will be carried out as a multidimensional and multi-level approach. Consequently, the understanding of the intercourse and interrelatedness of these different aspects, agents, strategies and domestic/international conditions is crucial to fully explain a certain FP outcome (Breuning 2007: 168–171). Contrary to many other agency-based analyses, which limit themselves to one narrowly specified aspect of a given FP outcome, this paper assumes that isolating a small portion of variables is unsuitable for com-

---

[29] It should be added that the present paper will not undertake a theoretical test, the evaluation of the used theory's significance is therefore no part of the paper's scope. As already substantiated, the theory is an appropriate tool to develop a comprehensive argumentation and unfold the complex web of interactions and strategies.

prehensively examining the entirety of factors that produce a real empirical incident (Breuning 2007: 168–172).

To execute this agency-based analysis and to accomplish comprehensiveness, the research design of this thesis is inspired by single case study analyses, solely focusing on the Turkish case. According to Yin (2009: 14) case study research is "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Case studies allow the detailed through-analysis of the complex nature of distinct social phenomena and are therefore highly suitable for the present work (Willis 2014). Unlike other analyses, the form of the present research "is defined by interest in [the] individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (Geertz 1973: 443). A case-study related research design enables this paper to provide a "nuanced, empirically-rich, holistic account" (Willis 2014) of the subject of research. In this thesis case study is not understood as a simple illustration or instantiation of a general theory or methodology. It is rather seen as an instrument to examine a complex empirical problem with reference to the incident's concrete present and historical context.

As already mentioned, this paper will not treat agents as 'generic entities' or as a unitary whole. To reveal the complex interplay that led to the agreement, this paper will not focus on the Turkish state as such but carry out a sub-unit level analysis, focusing in the ruling AKP. Incorporating different actors with varying significance and strategies, additionally enables the analysis to explore the underlying web of interactions and to show that FP decisions can be the (unintended) result of interactions and historical relationships. Putting actors, their behaviour, interactions and historical relations at the centre of attention is important, when FP is assumed to be a relational construct, wherein relationships between actors shape outcomes. The aim of the analysis is to explore and explain the different, autonomous but interrelated and interdependent nodes of the net and to develop a coherent explanatory argumentation. (Biltekin 2014: 266–270)

Teschke and Cemgil (2014: 619) point out that states, or in this case the AKP, are the primary agents of foreign policy and international relations. These agents or states are not only constituted, or regarding their actions influenced, by the actions of those "over whom they lay claim to sovereignty" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 619), but also by the actions of other states or external agents, "who enter into contradictory intercourses in reproducing themselves" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 619). Building on this theoretical claim, this thesis identified the main agents, meaning the one's expected to be decisive for the occurrence of the agreement, based on the second-

ary literature.[30] As already mentioned, it was the AKP government[31] or leadership, that agreed to sign the refugee deal. As the main decision-making agent, the AKP represents the decisive primary actor, constitutes the centre of interaction and the most relevant respondent to the actions and strategies of other actors. Based on the migration-FP nexus and the Syrian refugee crisis, this paper assumes that the Turkish policy in Syria played a crucial role for the occurrence of the agreement. That is why, various agents involved in the conflict are expected to have an influence on the AKP's decision and its strategy of reproduction. These actors include global powers (i.e. Russia and the US), regional players (i.e. the Assad regime) as well as non-state actors like radical Islamist ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or the Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), PYD (Democratic Union Party) and YPG (People's Protection Units). The EU, as the other main party involved in the agreement, is an important player for Turkey's decision. The thesis does not only focus on the international level but also aims to incorporate the developments in the Turkish domestic arena, including the Turkish public's interests and Turkey's economic development. Besides the influence of the economy and the public, further domestic challengers to the AKP's rule, like the PKK or the Gülen movement will be discussed.

With regards to the level of analysis it should be mentioned that the discussed theory represents a dynamic framework. Atypically, its methodology allows modifying the context that was defined by the research question. The focus on a respective unit or level of analysis can change during the empirical analysis, because Teschke and Cemgil (2014) suggest not to determine which level/unit to concentrate on prior to the analysis but rather to observe the concrete actions and practices of agents. Nevertheless, the present analysis will primarily focus on Turkey's domestic arena, regional dynamics and the international sphere.[32]

5.2 Qualitative Methods, Analytical Tools and Procedure

In the course of the analysis, this paper will use qualitative research methods, combining findings of the existing literature in the light of the presented theoretical framework. With its reference to a dialectical and historical theory using qualitative methods is inevitable, since the latter are oriented on the identification of contexts and interdependencies. A qualitative orientation is most suitable regarding the exploratory, descriptive and explanatory nature of this research and the

---

[30] It should be noted that while tracing back the agents' actions, new actors can occur in the analysis and the agent's relevance can change, because the theory refrains from pre-determining the agents' significance.

[31] When the term AKP is used during the analysis it does ususally not refer to the party as a whole but describe the AKP's leadership or officials (occupying positions relevant for the decision), like the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or officials for EU affairs. Furthermore, this thesis uses the terms 'Turkey' or 'Ankara' which – as understood by this research – also refer to the AKP leadership and officials.

[32] Put in other words, this means that the dynamic nature of this theory can include a change of the vantage point because, although part of the same FP conjuncture, different agents with their contradictory strategies have varying perceptions of externalities, which makes it important to detect how they see the world (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 619–621).

topic's actuality. The term qualitative is understood as research that "produces findings not arrived by statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 17). This means that this thesis takes any kind of research into account that was not produced quantitatively. Methodologically, different analytical tools will be applied to analyse IR and FP as the result of human social life.

First, *contextualisation* will represent a tool to analyse FP decisions as concrete actions carried out by human beings, instead of abstracting them. FP, as the result of human social life, will be analysed through placing all related events in their sociological context, to discover the social and historical relations as well as the interactions and strategies that influenced Turkey's decision (Cemgil 2015: 161–163). Putting agents in their concrete context enables scholars to avoid predetermined categories and pays attention to the assumption the FP does not take place in a vacuum, but is subject to social dynamics.

Second, *historicisation* will help to understand how specific constellations emerged and why agents behaved in the way they did. Historicisation stands for historically concretising agents, their strategies and relationships with other agents. This means to locate decisions, actions and agents in their wider socio-historical context. Contextualisation and discovering the roots of a specific decision have a major advantage over traditional FPA or IR related analyses, since they can embody the whole variety of different agents as well as their rationales and motives.

Third, methods and mechanisms of *process tracing* will find their way into the analysis, because decision formation processes are an important part of the inter-subjective formulation of demands. Process tracing can be defined as a "systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analysed in light of research questions and hypotheses" (Collier 2011: 823). Process tracing is a suitable method to identify intervening processes, relational chains and procedural mechanisms (George and Bennett 2005: 206). Process tracing, however, will not be used in its strictest methodological way but serve as an orientation. According to Bennett and Checkel (2012: 10) process tracing can be advantageous to analyse "evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case". This procedure enables this research to test its hypothesis and to examine mechanisms that led to the occurrence of the subject of research by offering a coherent explanation of different key sequential steps (Bennett and Elman 2010: 503–504).

Regarding the temporal demarcation of this analysis, it should be added that the main period of investigation is the time from the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011 until the signing of the agreement in March 2016. This time frame covers the refugee crisis, originating from the conflict in Syria, which is at the heart of the agreement. Thus, the analysis of actors will sometimes make it necessary to trace back their decisions in history to understand certain behaviours. The

agreement, for example, cannot be interpreted detached from the context of EU-Turkey relations. Therefore, although the main decisions regarding the migration agreement were taken in the post-2011 period, having a look at the development of the past relationship is important as it shaped a particular way of interacting between the EU and Turkey.

With its aim of bringing together different aspects and examining their interrelatedness, this thesis strongly builds upon existing works. A large share of the used secondary literature brings up highly relevant aspects but either remains one-sided or does not establish a connection between the raised topic and the migration agreement. One of the major contributions of this research is uniting different scholarly works and revealing the full picture underlying the agreement. The secondary literature includes scholarly articles, monographs as well as journalistic works and online articles. The latter two are mainly included due to the actuality of the topic. The selection of sources will aim to approach the topic with its entire dynamic character. The literature is used as an instrument to trace back and analyse different motives of agents, which interact with each other and at large form a complex web of interactions through contradictory but interdependent strategies. This also indicates that every actor must be carefully analysed, and their strategies context-sensitively observed. The analysis will identify relationships, contradictory strategies and historically transmitted presuppositions, on basis of which the analysis will detect a web of interactions and provide a new understanding of Turkey's signing of the migration deal.

5.3 Key Hypothesis: Interrelatedness and Reproductive Strategy

Before outlining this thesis' main hypothesis that will help to analyse, structure and interpret the present empirical material, it should be mentioned that with the discussion of Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) theory, the research question of this paper was complemented by a second dimension. The empirical question why Turkey decided to sign the March 2018 Agreement with the EU, could slightly be reformulated, without changing its content and significance, by asking how an explanation for Turkey's signing of the migration agreement with EU, based on Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) dialectical approach would evolve. Based on this theoretical framework, the paper's methodology and the literature review, this paper is able to formulate and deduce the following broad hypothesis that will serve as the red thread for the subsequent analysis:

> *The AKP's policies in Syria, its interactions and clashes with various state and non-state actors, its relationship with the EU and Turkey's domestic situation, merge into a complex web of interactions, induced by the AKP's strategy of maintaining its power and leading to the (un)intended consequence of a rapprochement between Turkey and the EU, which finally resulted in the March 2016 Agreement.*

Put in other words and with respect to the existing literature, it can be asserted that visa liberalisation, financial incentives and the revitalisation of the accession process offered by the EU to convince Turkey, are not to be seen as the profound explanatory factors. They are parts of social and historical developments as well as the interactions of a variety of actors with different, often contradictory strategies in light of the AKP's strategy of maintaining its legitimacy, power and electoral success. Considering the shape of this hypothesis, examining and exploring the context, in which the respective agents take their decision in and detecting interrelated cross connections is crucial for answering the research question. To avoid methodological restrictions, in the form of abstractions, this paper will trace, contextualise and historicise all important actors, their motives, strategies and steps. This research will bypass disciplinary self-restraints and take into account i.a. political, economic, historical, ideological and various other factors, because it is assumed that contradictions and interactions cannot be analysed through a lens limited to only one research discipline. Therefore, the key method of this paper will be the observation of the actual praxes – past and present – of agents.

Before completing the presentation of the research design, one further comment regarding this thesis' methodology should be made. Using a dialectical-historical (or critical-theoretical) approach requires the identification of historic relationships. Furthermore, dialectics does not separate, it connects and combines. Different elements are thought together to establish correlations. The analytical procedure on basis of this will unfold as follows. At first, a chaotic web of interrelated elements, interactions and constellations will be outlined on basis of the secondary literature to reveal the full picture that AKP was confronted with when taking its decision. Within this complex web, different nodes will be identified (see Chapter 6). By contextualising and historicising the different nodal points, as well as by tracing different processes, the single, although interdependent nodes of the complex whole will be revealed. This does not mean that they will be outlined and discussed in total isolation from each other, they will still be thought as a n interrelated complex. After having revealed the single nodes of the complex web the last subsection of the analytical chapter will interweave these different nodal points of the web, identify a red thread, as well as further contextualise and historicise them, to develop a coherent narrative that explains why Turkey did sign the migration agreement with the EU. Methodologically, in a way, this represents the move from a chaotic entirety to a concreted or dialectically structured entirety.

6 Empirical Analysis: Agents, Strategies and Interrelatedness

The previous chapters and especially the discussion of the theoretical framework demonstrated that foreign policy (FP) can neither be considered as a closed or elite-driven policy arena nor can migration-related FP issues be restricted to one single dimension. Based on that, the empirical investigation will follow a multidimensional and multi-level approach. It will cover various dimensions, including political, economic, geographic, historical as well as psychological and many other aspects of the instance. This part of the thesis will outline the interactions, interests and behaviour of strategic agents as well as the main dynamics that led to the signing of the agreement. In contrast to other FPA or IR analyses, this paper will not erase contradictions and differences related to the agents' interactions for practical reasons. As an analysis based on a dialectical theory a main emphasis will be put on problematising the interplay and consequences of the contradicting actions of different agents. Methodologically the empirical analysis will contextualise all relevant events and decisions (to discover socio-historical relations and interactions), historicise them (to understand the agents' behaviour) and trace back important processes.

In order to meet these requirements, this chapter will start with a discussion of the Syrian Civil War and Turkey's changing FP responses, followed by an analysis of the strategies of the most important (non-) state actors and their influence on Turkey's agenda. Subsequently, Turkey's migration policies and their external dimension will be problematised, before turning towards an evaluation of EU-Turkey relations and the importance of visa freedom. Section 6.6 then leaves the international arena and focuses on Turkey's domestic context, involving the public's interests and the economic development, as well as the AKP's main challengers. After analysing and outlining the various elements, Section 6.7 will interweave the nodes of this complex web to comprehensively answer the research question.

6.1 Centrepiece: Changing TFP in Syria and Regional Dynamics

Based on the theoretical framework and the interconnectedness of migration and FP, the AKP's decision to sign the migration agreement is expected to be strongly affected by Turkey's strategies in Syria as well as its strategic changes and the emerging contradictions. The following paragraph will give a short overview of the historical relationship between Turkey and Syria and then turn towards an analysis of the events on the ground and the respective political responses of the AKP. This section will identify and discuss the most influential actors affecting TFP in Syria. These will include non-state actors, like ISIS or Kurdish groups, as well as international agents, like the US and Russia. Outlining these different actors with their diverging strategies, refers to

the theoretical framework, which indicates that migration-related FP decisions take place where social forces interact. Therefore, it is crucial to present the interplay of different actors in detail.

6.1.1 From Enmity to Amity and Back? Syria and the World in the Eyes of the AKP

To understand the AKP's behaviour during the Syrian Civil War and the migration crisis, it is important to historically contextualise the circumstances that were present before the outbreak of the armed conflict. As the theoretical framework emphasises, historically-emerged constellations have a major influence on FP outcomes. Turkey's strategy towards Syria is to be analysed against the background of their historical relationship as well as referring to the situation the AKP found itself located in, at the time when it took office. Building on Teschke and Cemgil's (2014: 618) theory, when a FP outcome of a specific state should be analysed, it is essential to discover how the world appeared in the eyes of this respective agent.

Historically, Turkey and Syria have had a troubled relationship since they both emerged as sovereign entities after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Altunışık 2016: 39). Republican Turkey, under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, widely ignored Syria (and the Middle East), due to its doctrine of breaking with its Ottoman past and strengthening its ties with the West. The Kemalist establishment's[33] main concern, at the time, was Turkey's security. This lead to a narrow interpretation of national interest, mainly focusing on maintaining its protection within the Western bloc and pursuing the most important economic concerns (Cemgil 2015: 100). This low-profile FP also had implications for the relations between Ankara and Damascus, which had been affected by contentious issues, like the status of Hatay, Turkey's dam building projects and their affiliation to different security blocs.[34] By the end of the 1990s, the two countries found themselves at the brink of war, because Syria harboured terrorist groups like ASALA[35] and the Kurdish separatist PKK, including its leader Abdullah Öcalan. When Syria refused to extradite Öcalan, Turkey threatened to take military action. War was only prevented by mediating efforts of other countries and ultimately Syria agreed to stop its support for the PKK (*'Adana Accords'*). (Altunışık 2016: 39; Islam 2015: 12–13)

From this point on, the relationship between Ankara and Damascus entered an unexpected era of rapprochement in the 2000s, after the AKP was elected. This development was shaped by

---

[33] The secularist-nationalist or Kemalist establishment, which had been the dominant political actor for decades, consisted of military personnel, judges, prosecutors, intelligence organisations, big business and media tycoons as well as different 'shady' networks (Cemgil 2015: 99). Commonly this network is referred to as the 'deep state' (Turkish: *'derin devlet'*) or 'state within the state' in Turkey.

[34] Firstly, Hatay remained a source of conflict, even after France ceded the city to Turkey after WWI. Secondly, Turkey's dam projects at the Euphrates and Tigris raised concerns in Syria regarding water supply security and agricultural production. Thirdly, Turkey joined the NATO while Damascus was affiliated to the Eastern bloc, receiving more Russian (military) assistance than any other Middle Eastern country. (Islam 2015: 13)

[35] ASLA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) was responsible for attacks on Turkish diplomats.

the historically-emerged constellation the AKP found itself in when it came to power. At the beginning of its rule, the AKP had to cope with the legacy of the Kemalist FP, which had led Turkey into isolation in the 1990s and triggered controversies like the Cyprus conflict. After its election the AKP had to carefully deal with the secularist-nationalist elites, because as a party with Islamist roots, it was a possible target for an intervention by the secular establishment. While balancing the military and bureaucratic apparatus' influence, the AKP gradually started to transform Turkey's FP agenda away from the Kemalist isolationism. The rapprochement with Syria, starting with Assad's visit to Turkey in 2004[36], reflected different interdependent circumstances including changing regional dynamics (i.e. Iraq war), the countries' domestic contexts and more importantly the profound reorientation of TFP under AKP Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, who established the principles of 'strategic depth' and 'zero problems with neighbours'. Based on these FP guidelines Turkey turned towards the Middle East and former Ottoman territories, aiming for 'brotherly' relations with its close neighbourhood.[37] Davutoğlu's FP doctrine and the concept of Neo-Ottomanism led to a break with the Kemalist FP, which had created non-existent relations with Syria and the Middle East. This reorientation also included Turkey's strive for a leadership role in the region. The underlying assumption was that Turkey as a Muslim and democratic nation should serve as a model for other countries in the region. (Altunışık 2016: 39; Aras and Mencutek 2015: 198–199; Islam 2015: 14–16)

Turkey's new FP activism entailed the signing of a free trade agreement (2007) as well as the decision to lift visa restrictions (2009) and raised Turkish-Syrian relations to a higher level (Islam 2015: 14–16). The signing of the free trade agreement between the two parties is a good example for the economic component of the AKP's new FP strategy. Not only did Turkey aim to establish a sphere of influence in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, it also had the objective of developing new export markets for its goods and services. It will be demonstrated in detail later that economic success is a crucial source of domestic legitimacy for the AKP. The new markets in the Middle East and the related increasing exports are a decisive part of maintaining high economic growth rates.

In addition to the economic partnerships, Damascus officially recognised Turkey's borders and consequently accepted the status of Hatay. This rapprochement even led to the establishment of joint cabinet meetings and unprecedented close personal ties between Assad and Erdoğan, who even went on vacation together. By 2011, Erdoğan addressed Syrians as 'brothers and sisters' and the Syrian President stated that Turkey is Syria's best friend. With the help of

---

[36] Assad was the first Syrian President since Ottoman times to visit Turkey (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 198).

[37] The TFP's reliance on soft power instruments (e.g. diplomatic, economic or cultural), its focus on former Ottoman territories and its new FP activism have been labelled 'Neo-Ottomanism' and symbolised a break with the country's traditional Kemalist and security-oriented FP (Demir 2017: 42; Islam 2015: 14).

Turkey, Syria broke its international isolation and diversified its alliances. For Turkey, however, Syria represented the gateway to the Arab world and the key to increase its political and economic influence in the region. All in all, it could be said that if there is something like a role model for Davutoğlu's doctrine it would have been Syria. Since Turkey applied all major principles including 'strategic depth', 'zero problems with neighbours', 'becoming a soft power' and 'desecuritising problems' with great success. (Altunışık 2016: 39; Aras and Mencutek 2015: 198–199; Islam 2015: 14–16)

6.1.2 The Syrian Civil War and Turkey's Changing Strategies

At the climax of Turkish-Syrian economic, cultural, military and political cooperation the Arab Spring (starting in 2011) changed the relationship from scratch (Demir 2017: 43). This wave of rebellions against authoritarian leaders in MENA countries, represented a possibility for the AKP to demonstrate Turkey's democratising influence, by becoming a strong supporter of anti-authoritarian movements (Aktürk 2017: 91). The uprisings opened a window of opportunity for the AKP to present Turkey as a model for other Muslim countries and to increase its power in the region.

At the beginning of the rebellion in Syria, AKP policy makers believed that they are in a strong position to persuade Bashar al-Assad, the opposition and international actors to adopt stances reflecting Turkey's interests (Demir 2017: 44). Based on its utmost brotherly relationship with Syria, the AKP assumed it would be capable of diplomatically convincing Assad to take necessary reform steps until summer 2011 (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 200). Additionally, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkish Prime Minister at that time, believed that his family-like relationship with Assad would give him the opportunity to shape Syria's democratisation process (Demir 2017: 45). The Syrian government did indeed implement minor reforms. The Assad regime for instance allowed the emergence of a controlled opposition, but simultaneously started to forcibly crack down demonstrations (Altunışık 2016: 40). At that time, the AKP became so much occupied with the Syrian crisis that it labelled it as "almost an internal problem" (Seibert 2011) and a threat to Turkey's national security (Demir 2017: 45). While the international community was already harshly condemning the violence in Syria, Turkey was still trying to reach a diplomatic solution (Islam 2017: 16–17).

With the regime's increasing violence, however, the AKP gradually lost patience and decided to end its diplomatic efforts, eventually leading to the AKP's demand of Assad's withdrawal.[38] Although overestimating its influence and having to cut all ties with the regime, Turkey still

---

[38] Assad's non-respondence to any initiatives, made the AKP release that the regime had no intention to solve problems through reforms and to stop the violence (Islam 2015: 16–17). This was the impulse for the first change in TFP.

wanted to be a decisive force in deciding over Syria's future. Therefore, the AKP started to get more actively involved in organising the Syrian opposition. (Altunışık 2016: 40; Demir 2017: 45)

The government's support for the opposition served the purpose of increasing Turkey's influence in the region i.a. by installing an ideologically AKP-affiliated government in Syria. This strategy was inspired by the courses of action in the Egyptian uprisings, where the AKP decided to oppose the authoritarian government and support the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) instead. To a certain extent, this decision was influenced by Turkey's history of military interventions. The AKP's expectation that supporting a conservative Muslim movement against military rulers, additionally served the purpose of domestically increasing its electoral support from the conservative/religious constituency and enable Turkey to reach its long-term FP goal of enlarging its regional sphere of influence. Having in mind the MB's rise to power in Egypt, the AKP thought it could establish a Sunni Islamist regime in Syria. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1283–1294)

This turn in Turkey's strategy shows that, with its aim of the de-radicalisation and appeasement of the conflict, the AKP overestimated its influence over Assad. The Turkish government's approach of supporting the opposition and its goal of power aspiration were based on serious miscalculations. The AKP, for instance, misinterpreted the United States' intended actions in Syria. Since President Obama was among the first international leaders to call on Assad to step down, the AKP mistakenly assumed the US would militarily intervene in Syria if necessary.[39] (Itani and Stein 2016: 1–2; Yorulmazlar and Turhan 2015: 338–340)

With the increasing violence in summer 2011, Erdoğan and the AKP became the most vocal critics of Assad and labelled him as morally bankrupt, a 'dictator' and the 'Butcher of Damascus'. Furthermore, Turkey's support for the Syrian opposition solidified. Aiming to become a decisive force, the AKP allowed the Syrian opposition to organise within Turkey, which led to the formation of the, exile government-like, Syrian National Council (SNC). The AKP also opened Turkey's borders for rebels (and refugees), which accelerated the foundation of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), consisting of former Syrian army personnel. By recognising the SNC as the official representative body of the Syrian people the AKP emphasised its anti-Assad position. The AKP declared that it would not be satisfied with anything less than regime change. (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 200; Demir 2017: 45–46)

A government that actively demanded regime change and directly supported opposition forces in overthrowing a foreign government was unprecedented in TFP and controversially debated within Turkey. The AKP itself has always been highly critical of regime change, caused by foreign

---

[39] Comparable with Turkey, the Syrian opposition read Obama's statement as a sign that the US would support the insurgency (militarily) against the regime. This led to an increasing radicalisation and militarisation among Syrian opposition forces. (Itani and Stein 2016: 1–2)

interventions. In the Syrian case, however, it was this AKP that even tried to convince the international community to conduct a military intervention to overthrow Assad. Intervening militarily would i.a. have been necessary to implement the AKP-proposed no-fly zones and humanitarian corridors. Yet, Turkey was reluctant to act unitarily, while the US preferred to rely on regional partners and to 'lead from behind'. Turkish calls for a military intervention especially emerged after July 2012, when Assad decided to withdraw his troops from northern Syria. This pulling back from the Kurdish regions, enabled Kurdish forces (PYD-YPG) to control large territories at the Turkish border and to establish an autonomous administration. At latest at that moment Assad became one of Turkey's top FP priorities. (Altunışık 2016: 41–42; Tunç 2015: 70)

With its goal to overthrow Assad, by strengthening the opposition, the AKP was pursuing a long-term strategy to establish a new political order. To achieve this, Turkey decided to rely on "ideologically compatible partners" (Itani and Stein 2016: 1). After Syrian nationalist defectors turned out to be an unappealing option, due to their disorganisation and internal rivalries, Turkey committed to supporting Islamist groups. These were already in place to fight Assad and ranged from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) to hard-line Salafi Islamists. This strategy was part of the Ankara's agenda to increase its regional influence and reflected the AKP's vision that a MB government would be more democratic and representative of the Muslim masses, than the Ba'athist regime. Yet, the AKP's strategy enabled the MB to dominate the SNC, which is why the de-facto Syrian exile government did not represent the actual fragmentation of the opposition. This raised concerns among the secular and Kurdish factions of the insurgency, which accused Turkey of hijacking the revolution to initiate an Islamist countermovement. Based on these accusations, these groups eventually decided to refrain from the SNC. The AKP's preference of Islamist groups within the insurgency, also fostered the rise of Islamist terrorist organisations, like *Jabhat al-Nusra*.[40] This radicalisation of the insurgency and the rising influence of Kurdish groups (especially the PYD-YPG in northern Syria), led to an adjustment of Turkey's strategies and objectives. Turkey gradually shifted away from the goal of democracy promotion (illustrated through the support of the democratic MB against autocratic Assad) towards a national security-oriented approach, that focused on the containment of Kurdish expansionism with its strong domestic implications for Turkey. (Altunışık 2016: 42; Itani and Stein 2016: 1–5)

Turkey's active involvement in Syria and its abandonment of the 'zero problems with neighbours'-doctrine, furthermore, had major implications on the relationship between Turkey and actors like Russia or the US (see Section 6.3). The Turkish policy in Syria bore the risk of losing the achievements of the previous decade, wherein Turkey had built up a strong net of relations

---

[40] *Al-Nusra* (currently known as: *Jabhat Fateh al-Sham* or *Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham*), despite its ties to Al-Qaeda, became an appealing ally for other rebel groups due to its military capabilities (Itani and Stein 2016: 3–5).

with its neighbours. While it simultaneously brought the Kurdish question back to the top of Turkey's agenda, based on the territorial gains of Kurdish rebels and their ability to establish an autonomous region at the Turkish border. (Altunışık 2016: 42–433)

As already indicated, the long duration and violence in Syria were accompanied by the radicalisation of the insurgency, especially after 2013. The growing sectarian dimension of the conflict, which was caused by the advance of *Jabhat al-Nusra* and the Iranian-backed *Hezbollah*, raised doubts among international actors whether supporting opposition groups was still an adequate instrument. In this context, Turkey's position of supporting Islamist factions of the insurgency became increasingly isolated. (Altunışık 2016: 43–44)

Mid-2013, after Morsi's MB government in Egypt was overthrown by a military coup, Syria turned out to be Turkey's last remaining option to bring its ideological allies to power. Yet, the growing radicalisation and the accompanied concerns of the international community prevented the latter from reaching a consensus regarding a substantial support for the opposition. The lack of international assistance for the insurgency further weakened Turkey's assertive strategy in Syria. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1295)

The radicalisation process, e.g. illustrated by ISIS's capturing of Raqqa and the proclamation of the caliphate in 2014, caused another change in the AKP's approach towards Syria. With the advance of ISIS, the international community started prioritising the fight against radical Islamist terrorism over regime change in Damascus. When an US-led coalition started to launch airstrikes against ISIS (in fall 2014) and Russia increased its support for Assad, to prevent the regime from collapsing, Turkey's goal of regime change in Syria receded into distance. Not only was the main goal out of reach, Ankara furthermore received heavy criticism for its reluctance to join the anti-ISIS coalition and its weak border security. Furthermore, Turkey was lambasted for its continuing support of Arab and Turkmen anti-regime rebels, because these groups were seen as part of the radical Islamist spectrum. This influence of the American and Russian actions as well as the impact, which ISIS and the PYD-YPG had on Turkey's approach, will be discussed in detail in Section 6.2 and 6.3.[41] (Altunışık 2016: 43–44)

---

[41] The temporal end point of this research is March 2016. For the purpose of completeness, however, it should be mentioned that in summer 2016, TFP in Syria took another turn with the *Operation Euphrates Shield*. Ankara declared that with this intervention Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) would target ISIS and meet Turkey's international obligations. Despite this official statement, it is to be assumed that the main goal of the mission was to stop the advance of the PYD-YPG at the Turkish border, because Assad's victories and the international realignment had created a quasi-stable order in Syria which was unacceptable to Turkey. (Altunışık 2016: 43–44; Heller 2017)

6.1.3 Assessing Turkey's Wavering Strategy in Syria

After having briefly outlined the course of the Syrian Civil War, this section will discuss the changes in Turkey's Syria strategy as well as its underlying mechanisms and motives. This subsection will lay the groundwork for Section 6.7, wherein the AKP's actions will be coherently interweaved through tracing the party's strategy of reproduction. In the wake of the Syrian Civil War, the AKP turned into a passive respondent to the developments on the battleground. It became apparent that the AKP was not the active creator of the situation and that its policies would not deliver its intended results. The AKP, with its strong desire to increase its regional power, for instance, underestimated Assad's ability to rigidify his power. The AKP's strategies were based on a specific expectation of how the events in Syria would evolve. Briefly spoken, the AKP assumed that the uprisings in Syria would take the same course of action as in Egypt or Libya and expected that there would be an international intervention to overthrow Assad. Moreover, the conflict was predicted to be short-lived which would have led to the fast return of all Syrian refugees and the quick establishment of a pro-AKP government in Syria. (Altunışık 2016: 42–433)

The AKP wanted to strengthen its domestic electoral appeal as well as its international legitimacy and reputation by positioning itself as a vital advocate of democratic rights and as a guardian of the people against authoritarianism. Furthermore, this strategy served the purpose of increasing the AKP's regional influence. Based on the success of the AKP-supported MB in Egypt, Ankara developed a sense of triumphalism regarding its role in the liberation of Egyptian people. The AKP expected that the opposition in Syria would quickly replace the regime, if necessary with the help of an external intervention. The AKP's thinking patterns support the assumption of the previously outlined theory, according to which historical developments and relations have a major impact on present FP outcomes. The AKP's assumption that the events in Syria would certainly follow the same pattern as in other Arab Spring countries and that the fall of Assad – which was highly unlikely – would be the most probable outcome, demonstrate that historicising FP decisions is crucial for profound explanations. Based on its strategy of reproduction, that will be discussed in detail in Section 6.7, AKP officials developed a sense of moral superiority and overconfidence, derived from the exemplary character of the *Turkish model* in the region. Due to that and its neo-Ottoman doctrine, that enhanced its aspirations of regional influence, the AKP ignored the possible risks associated with its heavy involvement in Syria. Regime change was of greatest importance for Ankara, since it was assumed that Assad would prevent Turkey from achieving its goal of regional dominance. In connection to this, relying on the MB was seen as the appropriate instrument to enforce Turkey's interests, based on their ideological proximity. (Demir 2017: 49–79; Ertuğrul 2012: 1–3)

As indicated by the theoretical framework, however, agents cannot control the developments surrounding them. Different developments on the ground, like the advance of ISIS, Kurdish expansionism, Russian support for Assad and the United States' focus on fighting terrorism contradicted Turkey's strategy and averted the AKP from reaching its goals. Besides these interactions with other agents, that will be examined in greater detail in the next two sections, specific developments within Syria opposed the AKP's interests. A political revolution in Syria, leading to regime change, did not occur. A nationwide mass movement could not evolve, due to the fragmentation and disorganisation of the Syrian insurgency. The oppositional movement remained rural and did not gain control over important political and economic centres. Moreover, important social groups[42] did not get involved in the insurgency, because they feared that the removal of Assad would deprive them of their privileges. Without occupying strategic positions in state and military institutions an erosion of the regime from within could not emerge.[43] Turkey's strategy of supporting Islamist factions enhanced this problem further, since liberal and Kurdish opposition groups refrained from joining the SNC. What this brief discussion of the AKP's behaviour in Syria and its underlying strategy showed is that there has been a gap between Ankara's aspirations and the actual developments. The AKP misinterpreted various signs, based on its ambitions to project its power and to become the regional hegemon. The wavering TFP in Syria illustrates that reproductive strategies, FP actions and the interplay between different agents with contradictory strategies, have an impact on FP decisions. (Demir 2017: 49–79; Ertuğrul 2012: 1–3)

Furthermore, briefly examining the developments in Syria, helped to identify the US, Russia, ISIS and Kurdish groups as the main agents contradicting Turkey's strategies in the Middle East. The previous exposition of TFP and the developments in Syria, additionally, served the purpose of contextualising Turkey's strategies and its changes. Characterising the AKP's policies in Syria illustrated the importance of the AKP's power aspirations. The historical context, which refers to the AKP's renunciation from Kemalist FP principles to ensure its own political legitimacy, represents the groundwork for the later analytical narrative. These strategies to remain in power, which the theory calls strategies of reproduction, are the basis of the analyses of Turkey's interactions with other main agents. What the next sections will show is that Turkey's behaviour in Syria as well as its strategies are the starting points of a chain of actions that eventually led to Turkey's

---

[42] Privileged Sunni Muslims or ethnic/religious minorities like Alawites, Druze and Christians feared that their situation would get worse once the secular Assad regime would have been overthrown (Demir 2017: 64–68).

[43] With regards to this it should be mentioned that the AKP not only overestimated the opposition's capabilities, but also underestimated Assad's ability to maintain control over key institutions, exploit sectarian cleavages and retain his legitimacy. Sectarianism e.g. played a role when Assad withdrew his troops from northern Syria to allow Kurdish (PKK-affiliated) groups to gain control and put pressure on Turkey. Additionally, Turkey oversaw the fact that the upper ranks of Assad's army all belonged to his religious sect. Contrary to the AKP's assumption the army remained loyal to Assad. (Demir 2017: 68–69; Ertuğrul 2012: 1–3)

signing of the migration agreement with the EU. As already indicated, the outlined changing actions, resulted from interactions with other (non-) state agents, whose interests, actions and contradictory strategies will be discussed in the next sections of this thesis. Finally, it should be mentioned that tracing back Turkey's actions in Syria as well as the subsequent analyses of Turkey's interplay of other agents, serves the purposes of identifying the emergence of a specific constellation that triggered Turkey's decision to sign the refugee deal.

6.2 Non-State Agents: ISIS, PYD-YPG and the Kurdish Question

The previous presentation of the main developments in Syria and Turkey's respective responses, on the one hand identified the US and Russia as the main states influencing Turkey. While it on the other hand demonstrated that ISIS and the Kurdish groups (PYD-YPG) had an impact on Turkey's strategies. This section as well as paragraph 6.3, will serve the purpose of outlining the behaviour as well as strategies of these specific agents and their impact on the AKP. Influence, in this context, manifests itself through the contradictory strategies of the other agents. ISIS and the PYD-YPG as well as the PKK were following their own agenda in the Syrian turmoil. Their strategies, thus, often contrasted the AKP's agenda which lead to contradictions and policy changes. This focus on agency refers to a core principle of the dialectical approach, which regards different foreign policies as the result of the interplay of the conflicting strategies of social actors. To assess the extent to which specific actors' strategies stood in contradiction to the AKP's goals, their steps in the Syrian war will be traced back. Since dialectical approaches provide tools to study the world in its entire complexity and as a system wherein everything is interrelated, the investigation of different – non-state and state – agents will involve various aspects and dimensions.

The AKP's policies in Syria, as well as considering the big picture the AKP's decision to sign the migration agreement with the EU, were influenced by two main non-state actors: ISIS and PYD-YPG (and the PKK). The strategies of these actors and the induced transnationalisation of the conflict through spillovers, forced the AKP to adapt its actions in Syria and had a strong impact on domestic developments within Turkey. The following section, will begin with discussing ISIS's influence and subsequently analyse the PYD-YPG.

Firstly, the influence of ISIS on TFP mainly occurred in the form of an imminent security threat and the priority of fighting the jihadists on the agendas of many other actors. ISIS's attacks on Turkey not only caused hundreds of civilian causalities but also sparked criticism on Turkey's FP. Concerns were raised that the AKP's new FP activism made Turkey a target for jihadist attacks. Although the expansionism of ISIS was a major security threat for Turkey, the AKP did not consider combating ISIS as a top priority. ISIS was regarded as the reason and the conse-

quence of the unresolved situation in Syria and AKP officials tried to connect their goal of regime change to the fight against ISIS. This comprehensive approach did not find much acceptance in the international community, since most (Western) allies prioritised fighting ISIS over removing Assad. Turkey's strategy regarding ISIS was ambiguous: on the one hand Turkey was supporting Islamist groups like *al-Nusra*, which later became part of ISIS, in their fight against Assad, while on the other hand it accused the Assad regime of cooperating with ISIS. This rhetoric could be interpreted as the AKP's attempt to integrate ISIS into its strategy of overthrowing Assad. In addition, Turkey's open-door policy contributed to conflict spillovers, since fighters were able to almost unrestrictedly cross the Turkish-Syrian border.[44] (Dal 2017: 1404–1409)

The existence and advance of ISIS contradicted the AKP's strategy of projecting its power and maintaining its legitimacy. Terror attacks on Turkey, sparked domestic criticism on the AKP's FP agenda and therefore constituted a threat to the party's legitimacy. The electoral success of Turkish political parties, including the AKP, is closely tied to their ability to ensure national security. The case of ISIS, furthermore, illustrates the AKP's underlying strategy in Syria. Overthrowing Assad was the main priority, since it was a basis of Turkey's aspirations to become the regional leader. The ideological affiliation with Islamists in Syria as well as the priority of regime change, caused hesitation among AKP officials when it comes to combatting ISIS. Since the international community's main concern was to defeat ISIS, disagreements between Ankara and above all Washington were inevitable. The next section as well as Section 6.7 will demonstrate that Turkey's priority for regime change and reluctance to fights ISIS had a major impact on its geopolitical standing and eventually enhanced the emergence of a constellation that motivated Turkey to sign the migration agreement with the EU.

Secondly, Turkey's policies in Syria, as well as its domestic policies, were strongly influenced by its stance regarding the Kurdish question. Repeatedly, the international community criticised Turkey for its lack of support for Kurdish groups in their fight against ISIS. Ankara, however, strongly opposed Kurdish expansionism at its southern border, because it feared a strengthening of Kurdish separatism within Turkey and was reminded of the decades of armed conflicts between the Turkish state and the separatist PKK. AKP officials, consistently, proclaimed that they do not differentiate between the PYD and the PKK. In the eyes of the Turkish government both organisations were regarded as the same, equally dangerous terrorist group. The AKP assumed that the PYD was an ally of the Assad regime because the latter granted Kurds autonomy in northern Syria. To a great extent Turkey's FP in Syria was shaped by concerns about the demo-

---

[44] It could be assumed that the Assad regime accelerated the spillovers to Turkey, because if the AKP would have been occupied with reacting to ISIS, it would have had less time and resources to support opposition groups within Syria. (Dal 2017: 1404–1409)

graphic and ethnical future outlook of the region. A possible large and connected Kurdish-controlled territory at its southern border, was interpreted as a threat to Turkey's national integrity. (Dal 2017: 1407–1415)

As Section 6.3 will show, the AKP's strategy concerning the Kurdish issue opposed the positions of other international actors. The AKP's Kurdish policies are an area were the interrelatedness of domestic and foreign policy decisions most clearly comes to light. The international criticism on Turkey's policies, the AKP's inconsistent approach in Syria and towards the Kurds, as well as this strategy's domestic impact, create the necessity for a profound analysis of the PYD's expansionism and Turkey's responses. Early in the conflict (mid-2012), the PYD gained control over *Rojava* (West Kurdistan), after Assad decided to withdraw his troops from this region.[45] At that time, Turkey's Kurdish policies were ambivalent and two-pronged. On the one hand, the AKP was trying to undercut the PYD's dominance through pressuring them to join the Turkish backed opposition and through supporting Kurdish groups aligned with Kurdish Iraqi leader and Turkish ally Masoud Barzani. On the other hand, domestically the AKP started peace negotiations with the PKK, which eventually resulted in a ceasefire deal in 2013. Ensuring national security, by putting an end to the violence, while at the same time addressing Kurdish voters, was supposed to serve the purpose of increasing the AKP's electoral appeal. In Syria, the expansion of the PYD-YPG, which displaced Barzani-affiliated forces, led to a growing number of confrontations between Kurdish rebels and other anti-Assad forces. This resulted in major clashes between the YPG and the FSA, which was often fighting alongside *al-Nusra* and supported by Turkey. This war between Turkish-backed groups and the PYD-YPG as well as the AKP's affiliation with Islamist groups had strong domestic implications for Turkey. The AKP's anti-Kurdish FP strategy not only increased domestic tensions but also affected the peace process with the PKK. Furthermore, the historically-emerged and socially deeply rooted, concerns regarding any form of Kurdish autonomy, regardless whether inside or outside of Turkey, jeopardised the AKP's long-term goal in Syria. Turkey's support for the SNC/FSA and its anti-Kurdish position weakened the Syrian insurgency and had a negative impact on Turkey's strategy of replacing Assad with an ideologically-affiliated government. The AKP's strategy enabled the emergence of a safe haven for the PKK in PYD controlled territories. The establishment of this – what Heller (2017) calls – 'PKK-istan' brought counterterrorism on top of Ankara's agenda. The most important turning point for the AKP's strategy in Syria and its Kurdish policies emerged in 2014. (Heller 2017; Itani and Stein 2016: 5–9)

---

[45] In this area the PYD established a governing structure that was inspired by PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's vision of autonomous governance (Itani and Stein 2016: 5).

The battle of Kobanî (summer 2014 – 2015) undermined the Turkish-Kurdish peace process entirely and revealed the AKP's strategy in Syria as well as the deep disagreement between Ankara and Washington. Additionally, the incident demonstrates the interdependence of foreign and domestic issues, as well as the impact of contradictions. To contextualise Turkey's decisions, a few comments on the situation in Kobanî shall be made. Starting in July 2014, ISIS attacked Kurdish enclaves and was able to surround the Kurdish city of Kobanî. By early October 2014, YPG troops, protecting the city, feared that ISIS might soon be entering the city. In connection to this, there was rising global concern that thousands of Kurds within Kobanî will be assassinated by ISIS in a genocidal massacre. It was against this context, when the international community called on Turkey to help preventing this humanitarian disaster. Despite announcing that it had no interest in the fall of Kobanî, the AKP's pledges did not materialise and the Turkish government refrained from actively cooperating with the US-led anti-ISIS coalition. Turkey's indifference regarding ISIS's violent attacks on Kurds, its affiliation with Islamist groups and its lack of reaction to international appeals, raised major concerns among the international and Kurdish community. Domestically, the AKP's inactivity even sparked anti-government protests in south-eastern Anatolian provinces. Turkey's strategy of containing Kurdish influence by all means, seriously damaged its reputation. It also led to accusations that Turkey was cooperating with ISIS, regarding it as the lesser evil, compared to the Kurdish movement. Being concerned with its electoral appeal and its ability to ensure national security, the AKP repeatedly distanced itself from the Kurdish forces defending Kobanî, referring to them as PKK-offshoots. Eventually, the battle for Kobanî led to a striking reorientation of Turkey's FP. In response to domestic upheavals and the international pressure, the AKP took a momentous decision marking the inconstancy of the AKP's approach in dealing with Kurds. On October 22nd, Turkey allowed *peshmerga* fighters from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq to pass through Turkish territories to help the YPG forces trapped in Kobanî. The international community as well as the Kurdish population welcomed the arrival of the *peshmerga*. The latter, in combination with the already present troops and the coalition airstrikes, eventually enabled the Kurds to celebrate the liberation of Kobanî in January 2015. Allowing *peshmerga* fighters to support the PYD-YPG, is a contradiction to Turkey's initial strategy of supporting *Jabhat al-Nusra* in Syria. Helping an organisation that the AKP regards as being equal to the PKK is a major shift in TFP. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1279–1280; Tunç 2015: 74–96)

Yet, the AKP's decision regarding Kobanî, indicates the importance of its long-term goals. Section 6.7 will show that Turkey's FP strategies were to a great extent shaped by domestic developments and its strategy to maintain its power. Shortly anticipating what Section 6.7 will focus

on, it can be argued that the anti-government protests were interpreted as a threat to its electoral success by the AKP. In combination with the AKP's fear of a worsening international reputation, which in turn would be a menace to its power, the public protests made the AKP rethink its actions. The battle for Kobanî, furthermore, had severe implications for Turkey's geopolitical position and its relation to the US. After Kobanî, the US started to rely on the secular PYD as their ally on the ground fighting ISIS. With the United States' assistance Kurdish forces were not only able to hold Kobanî, but also made large-scale territorial gains. Turkey, on the other hand, argued that the PYD was cooperating with Assad, weakening the Arab mainstream opposition and therefore actually strengthening ISIS. (Heller 2017; Itani and Stein 2016: 5–9)

In conclusion, this means that the battle for Kobanî represents the end for Turkey's regional vision. The cruelty of ISIS, which further became apparent with the siege, shifted the West's focus almost entirely away from Assad towards fighting ISIS. The developments on the ground as well as domestic events, such as the end of the peace process with the PKK, the terror attack in Suruç and national elections (see Section 6.6), changed Turkey's FP approach in Syria.[46] (Ifantis and Galariotis 2017: 31, 34)

Discussing the influence of ISIS as well as the PYD-YPG/PKK on Turkey served the purpose of demonstrating that Turkey's strategy in Syria was a reflection of different developments. The rise of ISIS was a direct security threat for Turkey and, thus, challenging the AKP's legitimacy. The increasing number of terror attacks, on the one hand, weakened Turkey's stability and security, which i.a. had implications on the Turkish economy. On the other hand, the worsening security situation, raised public concerns regarding the AKP's FP and its ability to ensure security within Turkey. The Kurdish question furthermore demonstrated how different elements in the FP arena are interdependent. Turkey's rejection of any form of Kurdish autonomy i.a. is a symbol for its strategy to increase its regional influence (and domestic legitimacy) by supporting ideologically AKP-affiliated groups in Syria, with the goal of overthrowing Assad. The case of Kobanî illustrated the interrelatedness of foreign and domestic developments. Seeing protests in southeastern Anatolia, where the electorate to almost the same extent either voted for Kurdish parties or the AKP, raised concerns among AKP officials regarding the party's electoral appeal. Eventually, these concerns led to a major change in TFP. Yet, more importantly, Turkey's Kurdish policy and its stance towards ISIS, as manifestations of its power strategy, led to disagreements with the US. Based on this, the next section will focus on the influence of the strategic interplay between Turkey and other state actors, on the AKP's agenda as well as the decision to sign the migration agreement.

---

[46] In July 2015, the AKP agreed to cooperate with the anti-ISIS coalition by opening its air bases in Incirlik and Diyarbakır for the US and carrying out airstrikes against ISIS and also the PKK (Ifantis and Galariotis 2017: 31, 34).

6.3 External State Agents: the US, Russia and Turkish Isolation

Turkey's FP actions and its contradictory interactions with non-state actors had major implications for its relationships with regional and global powers. This section will demonstrate that Turkey's engagement with rebel groups and its worsening relations with major powers pushed Ankara into regional and global isolation.[47]

The first step towards Turkey's isolation was the AKP's misinterpretation of the United States' intentions that was facilitated through Turkey's power ambitions. Early on, Turkey found itself in an ambivalent situation. On the one hand, Ankara was pursuing its own target of a new regional order after the United States' partial retreat, intending a leading role for Turkey. On the other hand, the AKP still tried to convince the US to play a more active role, mainly in military terms, in the Middle East. In the light of this ambivalence it is no surprise that Ankara interpreted Obama's comments on Syria as an expression of Washington's willingness to take military action against Assad, which the US had never intended. Not only the different opinions regarding a military intervention in Syria impeded Turkey's ambitions of increasing its regional sphere of influence. The main source of conflict between Turkey and the US, turned out to be whether to prioritise regime change or fighting radical Islamism. In contrast to the US, the AKP preferred regime change over "what it saw as the short-term problem of jihadist organisations – a policy at odds with the US focus on potential terrorist attacks" (Itani and Stein 2016: 5). The United States' strategy was inspired by Obama's approach of 'leading from behind' that excluded a direct involvement in overthrowing the regime in Syria. Bearing in mind the failures of its policies in Iraq, the US were reluctant to have any US troops on the ground and were predominantly concerned with stabilising the Middle East. To achieve a stable solution for the region, defeating ISIS was crucial in the eyes of the US.

The United States' approach of relying on regional actors to defeat ISIS, became increasingly visible after the battle of Kobanî. To fight radical Islamist terrorism, the Obama administration decided to rely on the Kurdish secular PYD-YPG forces, which proved to be a reliable partner in the successful defence of Kobanî. As previously outlined, the AKP's stance regarding Kurdish rebel groups and the future outlook of the Middle Eastern contradicted the United States' intentions. The AKP aimed to weaken the regime, contain the PYD and shape a post-Assad order with a dominant MB. Fighting ISIS was not a precondition for these goals but rather a comple-

---

[47] This isolation was furthermore fostered by a specific regional dynamic that emerged in the wake of the Syrian war. Since 2011, two conflicting groups of states were involved in the conflict: a Sunni-Salafist and 'pro-Western'-group including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan, which aimed at overthrowing the Assad regime; and a predominantly Shi'ite and 'anti-Western'-bloc that wanted to keep Assad in power, consisting of Russia, Iran, Lebanon and Iraq (Ertuğrul 2012: 1–2). The sectarian conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, additionally, side-lined Turkey's ambitions of becoming the regional leader (Phillips 2017: 36–37).

mentation. In the AKP's opinion Assad was the main driver of the conflict and caused the emergence of all negative externalities including *al-Nusra* and ISIS. (Itani and Stein 2016: 10–12; Phillips 2017)

The US, in contrast, "showed no appetite for defeating the regime or significantly strengthening local Islamists" (Itani and Stein 2016: 10). They prioritised ISIS and supported the PYD. The support for the PYD, which Ankara's sees as a terrorist organisation, seriously harmed the relationship between the two countries.

The clash of United States' and Turkey's diverging strategies and perceptions was not only fuelled by their differences concerning the PYD-YPG. The strategic disagreement between the two parties is, furthermore, a manifestation of a more profound change in TFP. Historicising this change, it can be asserted that after the Cold War ended, Turkey managed to transform its FP from a security-driven approach to an integrative one. This transformation made Turkey highly valuable for its Western allies as a strategic interconnector with the Middle East. With the outbreak of the Arab uprisings, the AKP's integrative and multidimensional FP approach became flawed. Ankara's wavering FP, which also had been the result of Turkey's domestic developments, made Turkey a less reliable partner for its Western allies. In short, the different views regarding the PYD-YPG and Turkey's decreasing reliability led to a break between Ankara and – its historical and NATO ally – the US. (Yorulmazlar and Turhan 2015: 337–343)

However, during the war in Syria, Ankara not only came at odds with Washington, it also had to face tensions with Russia. This crisis between Turkey and Russia seemed inevitable, given the fact that Ankara was one of the strongest opponents of the Assad regime, while Moscow turned out to be its most valuable supporter. The most serious incident between the two occurred in November 2015, when Turkey downed a Russian jet. This incident had geopolitical consequences and severe implications for the Turkish economy, which will be examined in Section 6.6.2. The downing of the jet, did not only lead to a direct confrontation, it also "further limited any role for Turkey in northern Syria" (Altunışık 2016: 44), because Russia increased its air campaigns targeting the Turkish-backed Arab opposition. These air strikes enabled the PYD to make further territorial gains and violated Turkish interests. Russia and to a certain extent Iran[48] saw the United States' partial retreat from the Middle East as a window of opportunity to increase their regional influence, e.g. considering President Putin's strategy to turn Russia into a global superpower. Russia's involvement in the conflict, directly contradicted Turkey's strategy of projecting its power by replacing Assad with a MB government. With Russia's military support, the probability of the fall of the regime decreased and Turkey's goal of regime change became unattainable. Russia's

---

[48] Iran's involvement in the conflict, its aspiration of becoming a regional power and its economic upturn, furthermore put pressure on Turkey.

regional strategy, therefore, cornered Turkey and fostered Ankara's isolation. (Itani and Stein 2016: 10)

The contradictory strategies and praxes of the US, Russia and Turkey had severe implications for Ankara's geopolitical position. Through the disagreement with Russia concerning the Assad regime and the conflict with the US regarding the American support for the PYD-YPG, Turkey became isolated in the region. As already mentioned, Turkey's anti-regime stance and its favouring of the Islamist/Arab opposition over Kurdish rebel groups is rooted in its strategy of increasing its regional power while at the same time stabilising its domestic legitimacy. In the wake of the Syrian Civil War, this strategy of the AKP clashed with the United States' and Russia's intentions. The resulting isolation and the feeling of being constrained impelled the AKP to look for alternatives, which included the EU (Altunışık 2016: 43–44). The observation of Turkey's increasing geopolitical isolation is, furthermore, underpinned by Kirişci and Ekim's (2016: 53) summary of the impact of Turkey's FP on its political relationships: "[a] foreign policy, predicated on an agenda that misjudged, or blatantly disregarded, the realities on the ground, pushed Turkey into considerable isolation" (Kirişci and Ekim 2016: 53).[49] This isolation and the interplay between Russia's, the United States' and Turkey's interests laid the foundations for a rapprochement between the EU and Turkey, which eventually led to the migration agreement and will be further problematised in Section 6.7.

6.4 Syrian Refugees and Changing Turkish Responses

After having outlined the main developments in the wake of the Syrian Civil War and the interplay of different agents with their contradicting strategies, this section of the paper will turn towards Turkey's responses to the civil war-induced mass migration movements. Section 4.1.1 already showed that migration and FP are two closely related and interdependent fields. Migration movements can have implications on a country's FP orientations, while they simultaneously can be an instrument to achieve FP goals. Turkey's response to refugees fleeing from the turmoil in the Middle East is not only an integral part of Turkey's strategy in Syria but also represents the nexus between TFP and migration-related decisions. Furthermore, Turkey's migration and border management policies had a strong impact on the EU, since Turkey is one of the most important transit countries for migrants aiming to reach Europe. On basis of that, analysing Turkey's responses serves the purpose of identifying the underlying migration-related dynamics that contrib-

---

[49] Finally, it should be added that this section concentrated on Russia and the US as the main agents in Syria, not because other regional/international powers did not have an influence on Turkey's strategies, but because it was these to agents that most clearly contradicted Turkey's policy preferences.

uted to the emergence of the migration deal. The following paragraph, therefore, will outline Turkey's reaction to mass migration by tracing back major decisions and their FP implications.

Firstly, at the beginning of the uprisings in Syria, Turkey adopted an unconditional open-door policy, which means that every person fleeing from conflict could enter Turkey (even without legal documents). The decision to open the borders was not only taken on basis of humanitarian concerns. Turkey used its migration and border policies as an instrument to reach its FP goals in Syria. On the one hand, the AKP assumed that helping millions of Syrian refugees, would boost Turkey's reputation once the conflict was over and subsequently serve the purpose of increasing Turkey's influence in the region. On the other hand, the practice of not registering refugees enabled rebel fighters to come and go across the border. On that account, fighters and weapons were able to reach anti-Assad forces affiliated with Turkey, which was intended to increase the probability of regime change. Building upon the theoretical framework, the AKP's purposive, creative praxis of opening the borders for refugees and fighters was consistent with the AKP's FP goals of enlarging its regional influence, removing Assad and appealing to the wishes of its Sunni Muslim core electorate. Referring to the AKP's electorate, it should be added that the AKP's migration policy obtained a strong approval by its voters, who saw it as their religious or moral duty to help those in need. Besides satisfying its constituency, the AKP also wanted to present Turkey – internally and externally – as a powerful and humanitarian country. Initially, Ankara refrained from calling for international assistance to demonstrate that Turkey was capable of handling the crisis on its own. To display itself as a humanitarian leader, the AKP prevented the emergence of a public discourse labelling migrants as an economic or social burden by referring to them as 'brothers' or 'guests'. The AKP's strategy of opening the doors and the public approval of this move, however, were based on the assumption that the conflict in Syria will be short-lived. Since Assad was expected to be overthrown soon, refugees would quickly be able to return to their homelands. (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 201–203; Ferris 2017: 25)

Secondly, when the number of arrivals was continuing to rise sharply, the General Directorate for Migration Management (GIGM), initiated a policy shift, in the legal area, guaranteeing refugees temporary protection. This legal adjustment was consistent with the AKP's policy agenda, since Turkey still expected a fast transition in Syria and aimed to project its power by creating the image of a humanitarian leader. By the end of 2012, Turkey was sheltering approximately 250.000 Syrian refugees, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This number was still considered manageable, but based on the developments in Syria throughout 2012, the AKP's stance on migration gradually shifted. Since Turkey was not able to reach its intended goals, due to the previously outlined interactions, the AKP had to realise that Assad

would not be overthrown in the short-run and that refugees would not return soon. Despite its great emphasis on humanitarianism, AKP officials started to mention material and "psychological thresholds to Turkey's capacity to absorb refugees" (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 53). The slow renunciation from the open-border policy reflects Turkey's inability to reach its goals in Syria. When it became apparent that Assad's ability to control the country was stronger than expected and that the fragmented and disorganised opposition could not seriously challenge the regime's power basis, the AKP began to adapt its strategy. This shift was, furthermore, accelerated through the increase of conflict spillovers and the occurrence of violent confrontations at the Turkish-Syrian border, which raised concerns about Turkey's national security. (Altunışık 2016: 41–42; Aras and Mencutek 2015: 201–204; Ferris 2016: 25–26)

Thirdly, in 2013, although legally making important steps forward, the government became increasingly worried about the implications of its weak border security. In addition to that, Turkey's failures to achieve its FP goals and the therewith connected realisation that refugees will not leave Turkey soon, led to a change in the public and political discourse. The initial morally framed refugee discourse became increasingly dominated by economic concerns and Turkey started to demand international (financial) burden sharing mechanisms. With the increasing number of migrants, Turkey reached the limits of its admission capacities and experienced a growing competition in labour as well as housing markets. These developments, as Section 6.6.1 will show, also raised concerns among AKP decision makers regarding the erosion of the foundations of the party's electoral appeal: economic stability and prosperity. The gradual migration aversion, in addition, found its way into the FP arena. Turkey's calls on the international community to establish 'safe zones' (Turkish: *Güvenli Bölge*), are to be seen in light of these developments, since safe zones would have enabled the return of refugees.[50] (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 204–205; Ferris 2016: 25–26)

Fourthly, in April 2014 Turkey began to register refugees, granting them a conditional refugee status. Yet, the number of registered refugees skyrocketed from approximately 1 million in November 2014, to 1.5 million at the end of 2014 and almost 2 million in August 2015. In 2015, the EU, simultaneously, experienced escalating numbers of migrant arrivals. Therefore, Turkey's actions in Syria as well as its open-door policy had a major impact on inner-EU affairs, which were outlined in Section 2.4. The European refugee crisis forced EU decision makers to provide solutions and enhanced the urge of restricting migration. Especially in 2015, the advance of ISIS and

---

[50] Regarding Turkey's demands for safe zones, the international community could not agree on their establishment, since this would have required a military intervention. Turkey's demands, however, were inspired by its positive, historical experience from the 1991 Gulf War, wherein the establishment of a safe zone for Kurdish refugees enhanced their fast return. Regarding the situation in Syria it is, furthermore, plausible to assume that the AKP's demands also intended to condemn Kurdish expansionism and autonomy at the Turkish border. (Ferris 2016: 25–26)

the clashes between jihadists and Kurdish rebels contributed to this drastic increase. These events, in addition to territorial losses of the Assad regime, changed the nature of the refugee flows into Turkey. While in the initial years of the crisis mainly Sunni Muslim Arabs came to Turkey, the battle for Kobanî and the spread of ISIS increased the number of Yazidis, Christians and Kurds fleeing to Turkey. It can be assumed that the increasing number of non-Sunni refugees as well as terror attacks endangering Turkey's national security and enhanced the AKP's efforts to restrict migration. (Ferris 2016: 27–28; Zaragoza-Cristiani 2015: 9–11)

Finally, as a consequence of the problematised dynamics, from November 2015 on, the AKP implemented an unofficial 'closed-door policy' to restrict migrant arrivals. Closing the borders was accompanied by increasing demands to transnationally share the burden of the refugee crisis. This symbolises a transition away from Turkey's initial self-confidence and aim to manage the issue of mass migration without any external help, towards an unintended passivity (Aras and Mencutek 2015: 204–205). Turkey's demands were intensified by its heavily increasing expenditure on refugees: between 2013 and 2015, Turkey's governmental spending on refugee care had risen from USD 2 billion to USD 8 billion (Ferris 2016: 27). As Section 6.6 will show, the claims for international burden sharing were also influenced by the more and more migration-averse Turkish population that began to see refugees as an economic burden. Throughout 2015, nearly all border posts were closed, symbolising the conversion of Turkey's openness into fortification.[51] During that year, it became obvious that Turkey no longer had the willingness or capacity to continue its unconditional refugee admission. Capacity limitations, domestic tensions, the failure of achieving its strategic goals in Syria and the not foreseeable return of Syrian migrants led to an end of Turkey's unconditional welcoming of refugees. Since Section 6.7 will help to profoundly understand the implications of Turkey's domestic situation, it should only be briefly added that Turkey's fortification was, partially, the result of the success of the HDP, which challenged the AKP's power. To regain its absolute majority the AKP aimed to appeal to nationalist voters and in doing so had to apply stricter border policies. Conclusively, it should be amended that in 2016, immediately before the singing of the EU-Turkey agreement, almost 3 million refugees were seeking shelter in Turkey. With regards to this, the following section will turn towards the impact of migration and Turkey's FP on EU-Turkey relations. (Ferris 2016: 25–29; Itani and Stein 2016: 5; Zaragoza-Cristiani 2015: 10–15)

---

[51] In connection to this the government, furthermore, decided to build a 150km long modular wall at Turkish-Syrian border. Governmental officials argued that the wall's main goal was to stop ISIS from entering Turkey, but it also made it drastically more difficult for Syrians to flee to Turkey. (Zaragoza-Cristiani 2015: 10–15)

6.5 Turkey and the EU: a Chameleonic Relationship

Besides considering Turkey's FP strategies and failures as well as its migration policies it is important to analyse the EU-Turkey March 2016 agreement against the background of the chameleonic relationship between Ankara and Brussels. A context-sensitive analysis of the Turkish decision is crucial for providing a comprehensive answer to the given research question. The subsequent paragraph, therefore, will locate the agreement in the wider historical context of EU-Turkey relations. Furthermore, the historically-emerged constellation the two parties found themselves in and the impact of the nature of EU-Turkey relations on the agreement will be examined. For that purpose, concrete praxes, strategies and interest will be analysed on basis of the theoretical framework.

6.5.1 Rapprochement and Alienation in EU-Turkey Relations

The negotiations between Turkey and the EU regarding the migration agreement did not take place in an empty space. The specific situation both parties found themselves located in, was the result of a historical process. With reference to the theoretical framework, having a look at specific socio-historical developments will help to understand the AKP's behaviour in the migration crisis. Briefly spoken: the relationship between Turkey and the EU is a continuous flow of ups and downs, wherein periods of rapprochement and times of alienation alternate. As a short summary of the historical relationship will show, the specific circumstances that emerged prior to the agreement are closely related to the historical evolution and contradictory praxes.

After having applied for membership in the European Economic Community in the late 1950s and having signed an Association Agreement in 1963, Turkey started to liberalise its economy and consolidated its democracy in the 1980s. Turkey's opening culminated in the EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement of 1996. At the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkey was given the official candidate status. After being able to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria in 2004, accession negotiations were opened one year later. This progress was induced by a democratic, economic and legal reform process, that had been initiated by the (in 2002 elected) AKP government. (Akbulut 2016: 13–16; Bal 2016: 23–24)

This reform process and the intense relations with the EU were of greatest relevance for the AKP. Section 6.6.3 will present in detail that the AKP, as a party with Islamist roots, was in concrete danger of becoming subject to an intervention by the military-bureaucratic establishment. Given the military's active political role, the AKP was conscious not to provoke the generals. The AKP's strategy to stay in power involved self-induced restrictions of its political activism to the economic sphere and to making Turkey compatible with the EU's *acquis communautaire*. The EU, on the other side, was a strong supporter of this development, welcoming Turkey's legal and

economic as well as human rights-, security- and military-related reforms. Being market-friendly, democratic and predominantly Muslim, Turkey gained the status of a role model. The EU's support provided the AKP with domestic legitimacy, which it needed to consolidate itself. Focusing on economic stability and growth, became the AKP's main source of electoral success. The EU, in connection to this, has been a crucial economic anchor for Turkey and the AKP. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1292)

The early years of Europeanisation, experienced a major setback, when Turkey refused to implement a protocol related to the Cyprus conflict, which led to the blockage of eight negotiations chapters. Besides that, the absence of an inner-EU consensus on whether Turkey should become a full EU member or not, represented a backlash for Ankara. More recently, during the times of the global financial and Eurozone crises, the EU became preoccupied with itself and EU-Turkey relations slowed down. In 2013, however, a EU-Turkey RA was signed, but due to increasing Euroscepticism in both entities and the occurrence of the *Gezi* protests in Turkey, the relationship did not regain momentum. Most recently, economic stagnation and major democratic setbacks in Turkey, raised concerns within the EU, if the AKP was still able or willing to fulfil the obligations connected to the accession process. On basis of these developments it is to be stated that the refugee crisis and the need for EU-Turkish cooperation occurred at a time when the relations were at a historic low. (Akbulut 2016: 13–16; Bal 2016: 23–24)

This alienation is the result of the (historic) relationship between Turkey and the EU that had been constantly inconstant. Brussels mainly exerted its normative power to tie Turkey to the EU, without having reached an intra-EU consensus regarding Turkey's full membership. Turkey on the other hand, felt mistreated, because it had the feeling that its efforts to meet EU standards did not lead to any significant progress regarding its membership perspective. The AKP, with its strategy to consolidate and legitimise itself, had a strong interest in being integrated into the common European market. The AKP, thus, never has been a pro-European prime example. Turkey-EU relations have always had the notion of a mutual instrumentalisation of one another. For example, at the beginning, the AKP used Europeanisation as a strategic tool to ensure its political survival and to deprive its biggest opponent, the military-bureaucratic establishment, of its powers. Yet, until the occurrence of the migration crisis, Turkey could be considered as the weaker link in the equation of EU-Turkey relations. (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 51–65)

This status quo changed with the Syrian crisis and the AKP's open-door policy, which had enabled thousands of people to flee from the violence in the Middle East. Many of these refugees passed through Turkey to reach the EU. With Turkey's role as a host as well as transit country, the balance of power in EU-Turkey relations shifted. When the AKP became aware of its role as

a transit country and when it realised that the refugees will not return soon, migration flows became a political bargaining tool (Şenyuva and Üstün 2016: 3).[52] In its gatekeeper-role Turkey was confronted with an increasingly migration-averse and security oriented EU, which enabled Ankara to gain significant leverage over Brussels. The reversing power asymmetries and the instrumentalisation of migration, furthermore, illustrate the migration-FP nexus. Rhetorically, Turkey's increased power was e.g. illustrated by the AKP's highlighting of the importance of Turkey's gatekeeping efforts for the European project. Ankara, additionally, used migration as a political tool when it tried to delegitimise the EU's normative and humanitarian perception by claiming that it had been Turkey that put major humanitarian and material efforts into helping refugees. (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 51–65)

Consequently, the circumstances under which the migration deal was concluded had been shaped by two major dynamics. Firstly, the relationship between Turkey and the EU had been a continuous flow of ups and downs, wherein individual interests and mutual uncertainties created a deadlocked situation. Secondly, the stuck relationship got a new dynamic through the occurrence of the migration crisis. With its increasing leverage over the EU, the AKP received a new instrument to enforce its national interests. Turkey's interests, however, were shaped through the actions of other actors, in the domestic and international arena. Section 6.7 will demonstrate that different developments and results of specific interactions made Turkey sign the agreement as a part of its strategy of maintaining its power. Based on the historical importance of the EU as an economic anchor for Turkey, it can be indicated that economic concerns played a major role for Turkey's decision. Furthermore, against the background of Turkey's isolation (see Section 6.3), the EU's dependency on Turkey is a crucial factor. Conclusively, with regards to the theory, outlining the historical relationship between the EU and Turkey as well as the shifting balance of power was important to contextualise the migration agreement and to understand the underlying mechanisms leading to the signing.

6.5.2 Leaving the Dead End: Visa Liberalisation for Turkish Citizens

The previous paragraph outlined the historical evolution of EU-Turkey relations and ended with the context the EU and Turkey found themselves in, at the time when they agreed on the migration deal. Related to the changing power asymmetries, it was argued that Turkey's stronger bargaining power provided it with the opportunity to enforce its interests. This is the manifestation of a specific constellation that emerged in the wake of the Syrian Civil War and the result of the AKP's strategy to maintain in power. In this context, one of Ankara's main interests was to lift

---

[52] Turkey's importance and power as a transit country has already been indicated with the title of this thesis, Turkey's position as a 'gatekeeper' for the EU is at the very heart of the refugee deal.

the visa requirements for its citizens. To understand the relevance of the visa issue for Turkey's politicians and citizens a few further comments and contextual details are indispensable. Visa liberalisation (VL) has been playing a major role in EU-Turkey relations for decades. Its importance is vividly illustrated by President Erdoğan's comments from late May 2016, wherein he announced: "[i]f that [the visa exemption] is not what will happen…no decision and no law in the framework of the readmission agreement will come out of the parliament of the Turkish Republic" (The Guardian 2016). The underlying connection of visa-related incentives and readmission agreements was not uniquely designed for Turkey, but has been an essential part of the EU's migration policy (Bal 2016: 22). The EU is aware of the importance of visa-free travels for the Turkish government and public. Public opinion polls prove that 36% of the Turks perceive the issue of visas as the most important area in EU-Turkey relations which they can gain advantage from (Benvenuti 2017: 6; IKV 2016). Turkey as the only accession candidate not having been granted the right to visa-free travelling felt unjustly treated (Benvenuti 2017: 6).

To understand why the VL issue especially gained importance in the wake of the migration-related negotiations, a brief historical excursus is necessary. In 2009, the contentious issue of visa-free travels was brought to the European Court of Justice. In the now famous *Soysal Case* the court ruled against the visa requirements for Turkish citizens, arguing that visa-free travelling can be derived from the Association Agreement. Feeling empowered, Turkish officials tried to convince the EU to include a VL roadmap into the RA in 2011. Until 2013, Turkey hoped to achieve visa-free access through legal channels, but in 2013 the *Soysal* ruling was reversed with the *Demirkan Case*. Turkey's odyssey for visa freedom continued after legal measures were exhausted. The ruling of the European Court of Justice and the behaviour of EU organs only let one door open for Turkey: the negotiation of RAs. (Benvenuti 2017: 6–7; Toygür and Özsöz 2016: 1)

Since the AKP could not convince the EU to grant Turks visa-free travel, neither through negotiations nor through jurisdiction, the party decided to focus on RAs. After tough negotiations the EU and Turkey were finally able to agree on an EU-Turkey RA in 2013. In the same year the EU presented a VL roadmap to Turkey which outlined a catalogue of criteria as preconditions for the lifting of the visa restrictions. The planned time frame was set until 2016 and if the VL was not achieved until 2018, Turkey would have had the right to withdraw from the agreement. (Benvenuti 2017: 8)

The nature of this process, however, changed with the occurrence of the refugee crisis. On the one hand, the EU had a clear interest in pulling forward the inception date of the RA. While Turkey, on the other hand, saw the deal as a chance to express its interests. Against the background of different external as well as domestic developments (see Section 6.6), AKP officials

began to politically exploit the issue of migration and Turkey's leverage over the EU. The fact that with the March 2016 agreement the dates for the abolishment of all visa restrictions were predated, indicates that the AKP wanted to use the refugee crisis to gain political advantages. The question why visa liberalisation was important for the AKP's strategy to maintain its legitimacy will now only be briefly addressed, while being discussed in detail later. Visa-free travels to the EU would benefit the country's citizens and government, because the electorate would attribute the achievement of visa freedom to the AKP (Silva 2016). Delivering what the people want is a major political asset for any government in power. Achieving visa freedom would boost the popularity of the AKP and contribute to the party's political legitimacy. Not only because the AKP would be the one to finalise the decades of negotiations but also because it would be responsible for the increasing freedom of its economic, political and intellectual elites as well as the average citizens.

Conclusively, the deadlocked situation regarding the visa process, Turkey's exceptional status as the only candidate country not being granted visa freedom and the public pressure were crucial for Turkey's signing of the migration agreement. Subsequently, the AKP's opportunism made it realise that the occurring migration crisis provides a strong bargaining tool to achieve visa freedom, which Turkey had been denied of for decades. Having contextualised the decision with regards to the relationship between the EU and Turkey and having problematised the issue of VL, the next section will focus on Turkey's domestic arena. The already discussed nodal points and the theoretical framework indicate that external and EU-related decisions had a strong impact on Turkish domestic politics and vice versa.

6.6 Domestic Agents and their Influence on the Turkish Government

Dialectical approaches see FP as the crucial site where different foreign as well as domestic influences intersect Therefore, this paragraph of the thesis is devoted to domestic agents, historically-emerged constellations and motives affecting the AKP's decision to sign the agreement. In the domestic arena, the AKP had to react to various diverging developments and interact with numerous actors with contradicting interests. For example, the Turkish public's opinion, Turkey's worsening economic situation, Erdoğan's strategy to remain in power and other events like the resurgence of the Kurdish conflict were among the explanatory factors. FP, as seen by this thesis, is more than just the result of negotiations and diplomacy. FP decisions are an integral part of international and domestic social contexts. To get to the ground of the decision's social context this section will, derived from theory, focus on specific historically-emerged constellations and relations as well as the context-specific strategies of different actors. Historicisation is especially relevant to examine the different nodes of a complex web of social relations and their influence

on the AKP's policy choices. The analysis of the domestic circumstances will start with the Turkish public, followed by the economic sphere and end with a discussion of the AKP's domestic challenges.

6.6.1 Public Opinion and Migration

The previous section already outlined the importance of the visa liberalisation process for the Turkish public. Based on the AKP's self-perception of representing the majority of the Turkish population, it can be assumed that the public's interests/opinions had an influence on the AKP's decisions. The opinion of the Turkish citizens and their influence on the policies of the governing party, are especially relevant, considering the AKP's strategy of maintaining its electoral success and creating a positive image for itself.[53]

Initially, Turkey's citizens reacted positively to the AKP's open-door policy and were welcoming refugees as 'brothers', because many predominantly Sunni Muslims saw it as their moral duty to help those in need. The public discourse was dominated by humanitarian issues. With the realisation that Syrians would not return to their home country anytime soon and that the number of refugees would further rise, Turkey's public opinion started to shift. While in 2013 only 25% of all respondents thought that there were too many foreign-born people in Turkey, the number increased by 17 percentage points to 42% in 2014. Against the background of Turkey's FP failures and struggling economy, Turkey's public discourse shifted from the initial humanitarian debate to a material and security-oriented one.[54] The public's dissatisfaction with the government's FP and its aversion towards migration further increased with Turkey's inability to reach its goals in Syria.[55] In 2015, as a survey by Kadir Has University (2016) shows, 60% of the Turkish population were unhappy with having Syrian refugees in their country. 56% demanded the government to stop accepting further refugees and 32% stated that those migrants already residing in Turkey should be sent back (Kadir Has 2016). By the end of 2015, the economic concerns of the Turkish population further increased and a vast majority of 70% took the position that refugees represent a security and economic threat. (Erdoğan 2014; Seufert 2016: 3)

This short overview concerning the public's dissatisfaction with the government's migration policies and implicitly the AKP's FP as well as Turkey's economic situation, evaluated whether the AKP's strategy of maintaining its high public support was influenced by its political decisions. Regarding the issue of migration, there was growing concern among Turks with respect to the

---

[53] In this section, for the purpose of simplification, the Turkish public will be treated as one single actors whose interests can be examined through consulting public opinion polls.
[54] This shift is illustrated by 66% of the interviewees demanding stricter governmental migration policies and approximately 70% declaring that they consider refugees as an economic burden (Erdoğan 2014; Seufert 2016: 3).
[55] To recapitulate: Assad remained in power; the Turkish-backed opposition was weak; Turkey was increasingly isolated and subject to conflict spillovers.

economic, social and sectarian impact of mass migration (Ferris 2016: 28). The shifting public opinion was enhanced by the AKP's policy failures in Syria, the related impossible return of Syrian migrants as well as the worsened security situation. But more importantly, the public discourse was increasingly dominated by material concerns. Against the background of fundamental economic problems (see Section 6.6.2), Turkey's citizens became more and more worried that large numbers of refugees might be a burden to the nation's economy and harm their personal economic situation.[56] With reference to the theory, it should be stated that the public's intended goals were (economic) security and stability. The rising economic concerns among the Turkish population, were to a certain extent directly caused by the AKP's policy decisions, e.g. illustrated by Russia's sanctions. The AKP's migration and foreign policy measures, contradicted the public's interests. Subsequently, Turkey's citizens expressed their discontent in various anti-refugee demonstrations throughout the country, for instance, in Kilis, Gaziantep, Adana and Kahramanmaraş (Spencer 2016; Yeni Şafak 2014). At times when the AKP was tying its political survival to major election campaigns and was preparing a constitutional referendum that would establish a presidential system, it is plausible to assume that the government was very sensitive to the public's opinion in fear of losing its electoral appeal. Even if the AKP would not have been directly reacting to the demands of its citizens, the public opinion is always the political seismograph for a governing party. Closing the borders and signing an agreement with the EU, therefore i.a. served the purpose of appeasing the public. A public that was increasingly worried about its own economic well-being as well as about the economic impact of refugees might be partially satisfied by an agreement that includes additional EU funds and burden sharing mechanisms. The importance of Turkey's economic development for the public, the AKP and the migration agreement will be discussed in the following section.[57]

6.6.2 Turkey's Struggling Economy and Financial Interests

The Turkish public's increasing migration-aversion was closely related to the country's economic situation. The relevance of Turkey's economy mainly manifests itself in two different dimensions. The first sphere includes economic trends, caused by the merging of external influences into domestic effects. The second category, thereafter, refers to the government's financial interests and the connection between the AKP's strategy and the economic arena. To be able to outline the impact of the Turkish economy on the AKP's decision, it is indispensable to analyse the econom-

---

[56] More than half of Turkey's population thinks that tax money should rather be spent on Turks than Syrians and confirms the statement that 'Syrians took our jobs' (Erdoğan M. 2014: 28–29).

[57] Section 6.7, furthermore will relate the public opinion to the various other outlined dynamics and actors, as well as demonstrate the impact of these elements on the AKP's strategy of reproduction.

ic climate of Turkey and to bear in mind the crucial role of economic stability and security for the AKP's electoral appeal.

First, Turkey's economic context will be illustrated numerically. Before the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey was one of the fastest growing economies globally, repeatedly showing double-digit annual growth rates. When the Syrian crisis awakened, Turkey's annual economic growth declined from 10.75% in 2011 to approximately 3% in 2016 (OECD 2017). With the GPD growth slowing down, Turkeys youth and general unemployment rates were rising, leading to a more competitive labour market and contributing to the public's migration aversion (Chopra 2015: 156; Ferreira 2017). Besides these macroeconomic trends, Turkey's economy was directly influenced by the government's FP choices. Turkey's downing of a Russian bomber and Russia's subsequent implementation of economic sanctions, had serious consequences for Turkey's energy, trade and tourism sectors. Akmehmet (2015) estimated an economic damage for Turkey of almost USD 4 billion resulting from the resentment with Russia. This is for instance, caused by the 65% drop of Turkish exports to Russia between 2015 and 2016 (Kirişci and Ekim 2016: 51).[58] Russia's suspension of all commercial flights to Turkey, furthermore, hit Turkey's tourism industry, because the absence of millions of Russian tourists created high sales losses (Akmehmet 2015). Turkey's worsening security situation, in addition to the sanctions, led to a 30% drop in the number of foreign visitors (Sano 2017). Incidents like the 2015 Ankara bombings further decreased Turkey's attractiveness as a tourist destination and a foreign investment target. The latter is directly reflected by the decrease of foreign direct investments (FDIs)[59] reaching Turkey (Akmehmet 2015). This brief discussion of Turkey's economic context, on the one hand, demonstrates that various economic developments are (in)directly caused by the AKP's FP decisions. While it on the other hand suggests that the AKP had a clear economic interest in partnering with the EU, i.a. because of the importance of economic stability for its own electoral success.

The second economic dimension, that will be discussed in this section, encompasses the AKP's financial interests which are part of its reproductive strategy of staying in power. By hosting around three million refugees within its borders, Turkey carries a major financial burden. Providing accommodation, food, health care and education for millions of people burdens the state budget. Analysists as well as Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Presidency (AFAD) estimat-

---

[58] This drop, in addition to the downward trend of Turkey's overall trade volume (i.e. around 10% in 2015) is highly problematic, since foreign trade corresponds to almost 50% of Turkey's national GDP (Kirişci and Ekim 2016: 50). This decline was, additionally, enhanced by the complete breakdown of Turkish-Syrian trade and the fact that Syria had been the gateway of Turkey's exports to the Middle East (Akmehmet 2015).

[59] The absence of foreign investments and currencies in problematic because of the high private debts in Turkey. These debts are often denominated in foreign currencies, which is reason for Turkey's dependency on FDIs. Two thirds of the FDIs are coming from EU member states. (Werz 2017)

ed that until 2016, Turkey spent approximately USD 10 billion on refugees (Cetingulec 2016).[60] The AKP's challenges, therefore, were manifold. Initially, the AKP refused international assistance, because it wanted to present Turkey as a powerful country, autonomously able to master this humanitarian challenge. Additionally, the AKP had to cope with an immense financial burden at times when the economy was underperforming. Besides the money spent on refugees, Turkey's state budget was burdened by the AKP's FP decisions. In the wake of the Syrian war, e.g. Turkey's military spending increased. A self-conducted calculation based on SIPRI data indicated that Turkey's military expenditure had risen by approximately 10% during the Syrian war.[61] Due to its FP choices and the changing security environment the government had to provide more funds for border security tasks and counterterrorism measures (Akmehmet 2015). Therefore, as previous sections have demonstrated, with the increasing duration of the crisis Turkey repeatedly demanded an international sharing of the financial burden wherein the EU's financial assistance was crucial.

Emphasising Turkey's general economic downwards trend and the government's increasing expenditure, which were both influenced by the AKP's FP decisions, served the purpose of illustrating that Turkey had a clear financial interest in the refugee deal and the rapprochement with the EU. Based on its increasing leverage over the EU, the AKP seized the opportunity to reduce the economic pressure with the migration deal.

Firstly, the €6 billion of financial assistance the EU offered to Turkey, were welcomed by the AKP to compensate its immense expenditures on refugees in light of the slowing down of its economic growth.

Secondly, Turkey was facing increasing isolation in the international political and economic arena. The implications of its worsening relationships with Russia and the US, in combination with the general economic downturn, led to the realisation among AKP officials that a closer relationship with the EU was needed. The EU remains the most important trading partner for Turkey[62], which is why a rapprochement with the EU had been inevitable for Turkey to restabilise its domestic economy.

Thirdly, as the theory indicates, having a look at the historical developments and the agent's strategies can give fundamental insights regarding the importance of the economic sphere for the

---

[60] Lately, President Erdoğan declared at a United Nations (UN) meeting that the actual number is even close to USD 25 billion (Cetingulec 2016).

[61] Other scholars even expected the number to increase more strongly (see Akmehmet 2015; Gurcan 2017).

[62] In 2016, more than half of Turkey's exports reached the EU (twice as much than the share of the second largest buyer market, the Middle East). The increasing share of the EU in Turkey's total exports is an additional indicator for Turkey's economic dependence of the EU, especially considering Ankara's eroding web of economic and political partnerships. For Ankara, re-energising its cooperation with the EU, in addition, can be one possibility to compensate the economic losses it suffers due to the worsening of its relationships with other countries. (Kirişci and Ekim 2016: 50–57)

occurrence of the Turkish decision to sign the migration agreement. Economic stability and growth have always been important pillars of the AKP's strategy of reproduction and a major source of its popularity. Before the AKP was elected, Turkey experienced times of hyperinflation, austerity, crises and instability, especially in the 1990s (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1293). Based on these negative past experiences, one of the key elements of the AKP's reproductive strategy was to ensure economic stability and growth. The AKP's reform process, subsequently, led to unprecedented prosperity and stability in Turkey. The socio-economic stability, attributed to the government, was a key motive for the electorate to vote for the AKP. Therefore, against the background of the general economic downturn and the rising governmental expenditures, the AKP worried about its electoral support. To prevent sinking public approval rates, one part of the AKP's strategy to stay in power, was to economically and financially exploit its strong position in the relationship with the EU.

This previous discussion of economic factors, implies that financial, commercial as well as strategic aspects contributed to Turkey's decision to sign the agreement with the EU. Russia's strategies, suffering domestic businesses and various interrelated developments in the light of the AKP's reproductive strategy, strengthened the AKP's desire to acquire financial funds. This means that the combination of sanctions, isolation, excessive spending, insecurity and the importance of economic stability for the AKP's success contributed to the (primarily unintended) result of a rapprochement between the EU and Turkey (see Section 6.7).

6.6.3 The AKP's Agenda and its Domestic Challenges

FP decisions, as already noted, do not take place in an abstract vacuum. They have to be seen in the light of the concrete context, they have been taken in. Conditions and developments occurring at the time a decision was taken, as well as historical processes contribute to the manifestation of specific FP outcomes. On basis of this, it is essential to shade light on the domestic context in Turkey and to assess the influence of historical developments. Before the March 2016 Agreement between Turkey and the EU was signed, Turkey was – and still is – going through a period of major domestic turmoil, marked by social cleavages and threats to the government's power. The AKP experienced several, severe challenges to its legitimacy and Turkey's national security. Besides focusing on these processes, it is crucial to consider that the AKP's behaviour and strategies were influenced by the way the world presented itself to the party. According to the theory, this requires an analysis of how the world appeared in the eyes of the AKP. The AKP's view of the world and the concrete domestic context is especially relevant, since the AKP's strategy of ensuring its own political survival was closely tied to the domestic developments. The theoretical framework, furthermore, demands a strong focus on historical details and

praxes, because it assumes that agents do not automatically respond to 'structural causes'. Agents react to changing domestic and international contexts as well as to the contradictory strategies of other agents, through their own creative strategies, actions and policies (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 608).

This section of the thesis will, therefore, demonstrate how the AKP's actions were influenced by domestic developments as well as historically emerged constellations. When the AKP came to power in 2002, it had to act with caution, because as a party with Islamist roots it was suspiciously observed by the Turkish elites. The powerful secularist-nationalist establishment of the military and the bureaucracy had a historically proven record of intervening against political actors, which it perceived as a threat to Turkey's secular order.[63] In light of the past interventions against Islamist parties, the AKP was very careful in its actions, because Erdoğan wanted to ensure that his party would not be banned by courts or overthrown by the military. The historically-emerged dominance of the military-bureaucratic establishment was the reason why the AKP, as a challenger to this order, had to strategically fight for its political survival and had to balance its domestic and foreign policies in order not to provoke the establishment. Also by tying Turkey closer to the EU, the AKP gradually began to deprive the so called 'deep state' of its power and privileges. Erdoğan broke with Kemalism, initiated a peace process with the Kurds, reformed the judiciary, implemented (EU-aligned) reforms to limit the military's role in politics, forged an alliance with the Gülen movement and followed a more active and integrative FP approach. All of these actions served the AKP's goal of ensuring its political survival. As part of this strategy, starting in 2007, the AKP started to pursue political opponents and to restrict the influence of the military and the secular establishment, with the so called *Ergenekon* and *Sledgehammer* trials.[64]

---

[63] To fully understand the AKP's actions, a few comments on the historical roots of the AKP's strategies are useful. The secular elites' central role resulted from interactions in Ottoman times and was enhanced by their reproductive strategy (i.e. establishing a central defensive state), which enabled them to gain primacy over the society. In 1960, the military publicly hanged Prime Minister Menderes, who was accused of having Islamist tendencies and being too permissive in the Kurdish question. This illustrates that the two main contenders for the establishment's power were political Islam and the Kurdish movement, which both represented rival social projects. In the 1970s and 1980s the military organised two coups due to the increasing political violence and growing strength of leftist movements. Gradually, the establishment strengthened political Islam, to have a counterweight against the left. In the 1980s, the elites tolerated the 'Re-Islamisation' of politics under T. Özal, mainly because his neoliberal agenda benefitted them. In the late 1990s, however, when the Islamist government under N. Erbakan (Erdoğan's mentor) tried to establish an Islamic FP, the military intervened in a post-modern coup, because it saw FP as its monopoly. The political role of the military, the power of the elites and the history of interventions against Islamist parties is important to understand the circumstances in which the AKP found itself in 2002. The AKP's strategies of reproduction cannot be understood without considering these historical constellations. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1283–1290)

[64] In 2008 the AKP almost got banned by the Constitutional Court on basis of anti-secularism charges. Based on this traumatic experience, the AKP got more directly involved in the judicial branch, as part of its reproductive strategy. Furthermore, the *Ergenekon* trial (2007 – 2013) was an investigation targeting the 'deep state' that was accused of intervening into politics when its interests were under threat. Operation Sledgehammer (*Balyoz Harekâtı;* starting in 2010) referred to an alleged coup plan of secularist military personnel to overthrow the newly elected AKP government. The trial led to the imprisonment of numerous senior military staff, but the judgment was taken back in 2014, due to the involvement of Gülen's followers, who was an ally of Erdoğan, before they broke in 2014. (Cook 2016)

With the progressing marginalisation of the 'deep state', other challengers to the AKP's rule have arisen and represent threats to the AKP's political survival.

One of these challengers was the Kurdish terrorist group PKK. The conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK has been deteriorating after the truce ended in 2015. Subsequently it entered one of its bloodiest periods with 2.500 militants, security forces and civilians being killed. In the wake of this conflict, Turkey additionally experienced a series of deadly terrorist attacks. In 2016, the PKK-affiliated Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) killed 65 people in two separate attacks in Ankara. (Guéhenno 2017; Stewart 2016)

The re-eruption of violence between the Turkish state and the PKK as well as the thereto related termination of the peace process, raise the question why these events took place at this particular point in time. One of the reasons was Erdoğan's fear that the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) might turn out to be a major opponent for his absolute majority in the June 2015 elections. As the following analysis will show, the year 2015 appears to be crucial for the AKP's strategies. Geopolitically, Turkey became increasingly isolated while its economy, one of the pillars of its legitimacy, at the same time was suffering under rising inflations rates, decreasing exports and a weakened Turkish Lira (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1295).

These developments subsequently coincided with the HPD's entry into the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), which was the first-time in history that a pro-Kurdish party was able to surpass the 10% threshold.[65] The AKP, that had been ruling without a coalition partner since 2002, lost its absolute majority. In this parliamentary constellation the AKP no longer had enough seats to change the constitution in order to establish a Russian-style presidential system. After coalition talks with the Republican People's Party (CHP) failed, Erdoğan called for snap elections to be held in November 2015. The talks were, additionally, influenced by an anti-terror campaign, launched by the government, against the Kurdish opposition. The campaign included airstrikes against PKK-camps in northern Iraq, which were simultaneously carried out with the airstrikes against ISIS strongholds. This led to the eruption of a civil-war-like confrontation with the PKK and caused an intended re-securitisation of politics, an increasing polarisation and the intimidation of the opposition. This is to be interpreted as a tactical tool of the AKP to mobilise (ultra) nationalist voters for the upcoming snap elections. By carrying out airstrikes against the PKK, the AKP tried to affect nationalist voters who had been reluctant regarding the Turkish-

---

[65] The high voter turnout for the HDP, was facilitated by the AKP's reluctance to help the Kurdish protectors of Kobanî. When public protests against the government's stance emerged in south-eastern Turkey, the AKP violently cracked down the demonstrations, leaving 40 Kurds dead. Due to the government's FP failures many Kurds decided to vote for the HDP instead of the AKP in the upcoming elections. (Balta 2015; Tunç 2015: 12)

Kurdish peace process.[66] Furthermore, it was tried to establish a connection between the PKK and HDP, which would further alienate voters. In light of the increasing violence, the AKP's electoral promise of normalisation and the nationalist mobilisation, Erdoğan re-gained the majority in November 2015.[67] (Balta 2017; Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1295–1296; Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 56–58)

From 2015 on, another main challenger for the AKP had been ISIS. At the beginning of its attacks on Turkey, ISIS mainly hit Kurdish interests in Turkey: on June 5th, 2015, ISIS attacked an HDP rally in Diyarbakir killing two; by the end of June 2015, 32 activists who wanted to help rebuild Kobanî, were assassinated in Suruç; and in October 2015, almost 100 people were killed in a double-blast attack on a pro-Kurdish rally in Ankara. ISIS's focus on Kurdish interests gives the impression that the jihadists' aim was to increase Kurdish-Turkish tensions. In 2016, however, ISIS shifted its focus to tourist targets, which is e.g. visible with the Sultanahmet attacks of January 2016 wherein 13 tourists were killed in Istanbul. (Stewart 2016)

The rising number of ISIS terror attacks on Turkish territories sparked criticism on the government's FP, which was accused of having turned Turkey into a target for jihadists. On the other hand, the weakened national security and the rising instability's economic impact represented a threat to the AKP's reproductive strategy of maintaining its electoral appeal by guaranteeing stability and security.

Besides the antagonists from the jihadist and Kurdish side, the AKP's rule, legitimacy and power were challenged through an escalating conflict with the Gülen movement.[68] The AKP and the Gülen movement initially were closely affiliated. It is to be assumed, however, that the relationship between the two got flawed when Gülenists in the state apparatus got too independent and powerful (D'Amours 2016). The conflict between the former allies was fully underway when the AKP proposed a law that would have closed several private cram schools (Turkish: *dershane*), which can be considered as the backbones of the Gülen movement (D'Amours 2016). The extent to which the Gülen movement was able to challenge the AKP's rule became visible with the 2013 corruption scandal. This affair reached Tayyip Erdoğan's inner circle and evolved around an Ira-

---

[66] Carrying out airstrikes against both groups simultaneously is a tactical tool, since targeting ISIS alone would have strengthened the Kurds, enabled them to make territorial gains and would not have mobilised the nationalist voters. Solely bombing PKK-positions, on the other hand, would have further increased Turkey's international isolation, since more Turkish cooperation in the fight against ISIS was demanded. (Balta 2017)

[67] With reference to the EU it should be added that according to EC President Juncker, the release of the EC's Annual Progress Report on Turkey was postponed from the beginning of October to after the Turkish election, on 'President Erdoğan's request'. (Okyay and Zaragoza-Cristiani 2016: 56–58)

[68] The Gülen movement (Turkish: *Gülen Hareketi*) is also referred to as *Hizmet (Hareketi)* ('the Service (Movement)') by its followers or *Cemaat* ('the Community') by the broader public. After the attempted coup the government started calling it *Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü* (FETÖ; 'Fethullahist Terror Organisation). This paper will mainly use the English terms Gülen movement and network. Members of the movement will be called Gülenists. (Aydın 2017)

nian business man and the director of the state-owned *Halkbank*.[69] All the suspects were closely related to the AKP, some were even family members and accused of bribery, money laundering and fraud. The AKP identified the Gülen movement as the responsible organisation behind these investigations. Although four cabinet members had to step down, Erdoğan rejected the investigation and labelled it as a coup against his government. In the following thousands of policemen, prosecutors and judges were dismissed and the AKP started to tighten its control over the media landscape and the judicial system. In the subsequent years the conflict further picked up speed and climaxed in the attempted coup against the AKP government in 2016, that was allegedly carried out by Gülenists and led to a massive purge against Gülen supporters. (Orucoglu 2015)

The corruption scandal, furthermore, coincided with the *Gezi* protests of summer 2013. This wave of mass demonstrations against the government's increasingly authoritarian attitude, restrictions of civil liberties and anti-secular policy making, represented another major challenge to the AKP's strategy of ensuring its political survival. In reaction to these events, the AKP abandoned its idea of a 'conservative democracy' on the expense of a 'democracy of majoritarianism', wherein the government declared half of the population as its core constituency, while alienating the other 50%. (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1282–1295)

This section served the purpose of examining the historical constellation the AKP was facing and demonstrated that its reproductive strategy of remaining in power was increasingly under threat from various sides. Terrorist organisation like ISIS and the PKK represent a threat to Turkey's national security and have an important impact on Turkey's economy. Because of the latter they are a main concern for the AKP which had been primarily elected for economic reasons. The HDP and the Gülen network, moreover, challenged the AKP's primacy, in the electoral arena and the state apparatus. This was the domestic context wherein the AKP had to cope with the migration crisis and decide whether to cooperate with the EU or not. The subsequent subsection will demonstrate the interrelatedness of the various elements that were outlined in Chapter 6.

---

[69] Major outrage sparked over Turkey when audio recordings were published in which Erdoğan was telling his son to urgently get rid of millions of dollars. (Orucoglu 2015)

6.7 Interweaving the Complex Net: Interrelatedness and the AKP

Foreign policy (FP) outcomes manifest themselves as a "mess of things, where everything is related to everything else chaotically" (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 618). The world is an ever-changing complex that has to be understood as a whole, because every nodal point is related to every other part (Schipper 2015). So far, Chapter 6 analysed these nodes and showed that Turkey's decision was affected by a variety of agents and their motives as well as by specific constellations emerging from past and present interactions. Building upon this empirical investigation, this section will coherently interweave the different elements, in light of the AKP's reproductive strategy, to examine why Turkey signed the migration deal. The beginning of this section will briefly refer to the previous investigation, before describing this section's procedure and its theoretical underpinning. Subsequently, a coherent analysis will be developed, connecting the previously analysed elements and focusing on the AKP's strategy of reproduction.

Chapter 6 had been focusing on the entirety of agents, motivations, strategies, interactions and historically-emerged constellations that had an impact on Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement. The issue's multidimensional nature was analysed by focusing on contradictions, concrete contexts and historical developments. Building upon this, the separation of the interrelated, chaotic web – that the AKP was confronted with – served the purpose of revealing underlying dynamics as well as to discuss contextual and historical components in-depth. Each of the outlined elements contributed in a specific way to the AKP's decision to sign the agreement. Put in other words, the previous subchapters presented an attempt to unfold the entire, chaotic net of interactions, which affected the AKP's decision, by contextualising and historicising the separate nodes. The empirical puzzle was revealed by tracing back Turkey's strategies, disclosing the interrelatedness of different political decisions as well as by demonstrating the scope of interactions between agents and how they contradicted each other.

Based on this separate examination, the present subsection will demonstrate that it is the AKP's strategy of reproduction that connects all these different elements. Interweaving the separately outlined, yet interdependent, factors represents an attempt to illustrate how the world and the environment appeared in the eyes of the AKP. While connecting the dots, the incident of interest will be, methodologically speaking, further contextualised and historicised. It will be demonstrated how the distinct nodes, meaning the agents and their motives presented in Section 6.1 until 6.6, are interrelated and how this interrelatedness causes intended as well as unintended results. Related to the procedure of this section, it should be mentioned that the interweaving of the nodal points will proceed chronologically. This means that the different strategies and developments, now will be coherently structured to demonstrate how the spatial-temporal context

influenced the AKP's decision to sign the migration agreement. Methodologically this represents a step towards a concreted and dialectically structured analysis of the research object.

The procedure of interweaving the different elements reflects one of the theory's core premises, namely that reality should not be made conform to the theory, but the theoretical framework should be dynamic enough to capture the actual reality. Besides that, the interrelatedness of all elements requires a strong focus on agency, because the world presents itself to the agent (i.e. the AKP) in all its complexity. This agent has to deal with the various developments simultaneously. The process of interweaving, therefore, will reveal the set of interactions and strategies as well as the historically-emerged constellations the AKP was confronted with. Regarding the theory's focus on agency, it should be mentioned that FP decisions are the result of purposive and creative, but not necessarily rational, actions of agents. This purposiveness means that every actor has something in mind while acting. These motives merge into a larger strategy, which is the inner driver for the agent's actions. Building on this, it will be demonstrated that the AKP's purposive actions served its reproductive strategy. The changes in the AKP's policies indicate that in following its reproductive strategy the AKP was confronted with contradictions and had to react to them. The intersection of different contradictory strategies, made the AKP adapt its behaviour to secure the achievement of its goals.[70] With reference to Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) approach, it will be shown that the AKP's reproductive strategy is the red thread that relates all the elements coherently. Yet, the interweaved elements do not always have to logically match. Since they are resulting from and depending on concrete human praxes, the emergence of contradictions is an essential part of the web of social relations. Based on that, a specific constellation can have different scenarios of resolution.[71] Where different strategies intersect, interactions arise, contradictions emerge, and unintended results can be a consequence of each agent's pursuit of its own goals.

Applying the idea of reproductive strategies to the case of the AKP, makes clear that its actions in the FP as well as domestic arena served the wider strategy of ensuring the party's political survival, which means to remain in power. This reflects Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) theoretical premise according to which agents follow a reproductive strategy to maintain or improve their position in relation to others. The aim to maintain or improve one's standing means to reproduce oneself.[72] Put in other words, the driver of the AKP's policy decisions was its endeavour to polit-

---

[70] The strategies of reproduction considerably vary for different agents, but since it has been the AKP government that decided to sign the migration agreement, other reproductive strategies will be neglected in this analysis.

[71] Based on this notion of agency and the fact that humans cannot entirely control their environment, different scenarios of resolutions can emerge: the specific agent can reach its goals; other agents can be successful; the agent might fail to achieve its goals; other agents might fail; or none of the agents might reach its intended goal.

[72] As already discussed, these reproductive strategies are conceptualised by a wide definition, involving all social actions reaching from various policy areas to the interplay and motives of different agents.

ically survive. This will to politically survive is based on the fact that the AKP initially had to consolidate its power against the background of the imminent threat of an intervention by the military-bureaucratic establishment. After having marginalised the influence of these elites, the AKP's main motivation was to preserve its power. The AKP's fundamental strategy took the shape of projecting its power, increasing its influence in the region and more importantly maintaining its electoral success. The following analysis will show that this strategy is reflected in the domestic arena, in the AKP's FP decisions, in its relationship with the EU and other (non-) state actors as well as in Turkey's responses to the migration crisis. Historicising and contextualising the AKP's strategy to remain in office and to project its power in external affairs as well as to address its constituency, will prove that it had been this strategy of reproduction that shaped Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement. Subsequently, the diverging and contradictory elements will be interweaved to place the decision in the context of the AKP's reproductive strategy. Based on the historical and social relational nature of the applied theory the process of interweaving will be carried out in a chronological, yet multidimensional way.[73]

As already mentioned, based on the historically-emerged dominance of the military-bureaucratic establishment, the religiously conservative AKP had to be careful not to offend the elites, in order to decrease the risk of being overthrown. This historical constellation is the reason why the party limited its political role to achieving economic stability and implementing EU-related reforms. This successful reform process provided the AKP with a much-needed external legitimacy from the EU against the elites. Based on that, the establishment could gradually be deprived of its powers and eventually be marginalised. During this process, the AKP forged an alliance with Fetullah Gülen and reached out to the Kurdish movement. Gülen's organisation contributed to the marginalisation by initiating trials against powerful, allegedly coup-plotting generals. These developments illustrate an important theoretical assumption, according to which social reality and an agent's world view emerge from a contradictory interplay between differently motivated agents. The root of the AKP's view of the world is therefore the conflict with the establishment.

Simultaneously, the AKP broke with the isolationist FP agenda of the Kemalists. The implementation of the neo-Ottoman doctrine, was at least partially motived by economic concerns. The reorientation of TFP enhanced economic growth by touching new markets in the Middle East. Against the background of the economically and politically traumatising 1990s, economic stability turned out to be the AKP's main source of electoral appeal. In light of the successful reform process, the public began to regard the AKP as the warrantor of economic growth and

---

[73] The interweaving will be based on the secondary literature that has been used to outline the main nodal points of the entire relational web in the previous subsections of Chapter 6.

prosperity. The FP realignment was, furthermore, fuelled by the party's desire to project its newly gained strength geopolitically. To consolidate its international and domestic legitimacy the AKP self-confidently tried to establish Turkey as a model country and humanitarian power. The AKP's fundamental realignment was a great success in the initial years: Turkey became the intended role model, the EU opened accession talks with Turkey, the electorate was satisfied with the unprecedented level of prosperity and the AKP's domestic challengers were silenced with the *Ergenekon* and *Sledgehammer* trials. In addition, Turkey became an active FP shaper, since Neo-Ottomanism turned it into an interconnector between the East and the West and enlarged Turkey's sphere of political and economic interest. In this context, Syria proved to be the role model for the positive impact and potential of the AKP's new FP. Early on the AKP, therefore, managed to establish itself as the sole source of power in Turkey. Based on historical experiences, however, the AKP began to interpret the strategies or motives of other actors as possible obstacles to its electoral success and as threats to its political survival.

By 2011, against the background of this peak phase, the AKP perceived the Arab Spring as a chance to project its power and promote its ideological model. Based on the prior success of its FP agenda e.g. in Egypt, the AKP assumed to have major influence on Syrian President Assad and tried to diplomatically persuade him until mid-2011. When the violence in Syria further increased, the AKP modified its FP strategy. Inactivity – considering the brutality of the Assad regime – would have weakened its image as a humanitarian and democratising country, as well as threatened its strategy of maintaining its power. Since Assad could not be diplomatically convinced, the AKP became one of the most important supporters of the Syrian opposition. Backing conservative movements, like the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), against authoritarian leaders was part of the AKP's strategy to increase its support among the conservative-religious factions in Turkey. This was intended to positively contribute to the AKP's electoral success. The Turkish government, additionally, aimed to demonstrate its power to its possible challengers, wanting to domestically and internationally present itself as an advocate of democracy. The support of the AKP for the MB was fuelled by the AKP's assumption that an ideologically affiliated government in Syria would increase Turkey's political and economic influence in the region. The increasing refugee movements, caused by the escalating violence, called for a reaction by the AKP. Initially, the AKP adopted an unconditional open-door policy for refugees, in expectance of a quick fall of Assad. On the one hand, this was a FP-tool to de-legitimise Assad and boost Turkey's reputation among Syrians, with regards to Turkey's intended influence in post-war Syria. On the other hand, Turkey wanted to present itself as a humanitarian leader and project its power. This policy was in line with the views of the AKP's core constituency. Especially, the religious parts of the society

saw welcoming and helping those in need as their moral duty. Besides granting Syrian refugees temporary protection to demonstrate its moral superiority, the AKP used its migration and border policies to support the opposition. Opening the borders for rebel fighters was intended to accelerate the fall of the regime and the establishment of an AKP-affiliated government in Syria.

The two latter FP goals, however, were contradicted by Assad's strategic move to withdraw his troops from Kurdish-dominated northern Syria, which brought the Kurdish question back to the top of Turkey's agenda. After this withdrawal, the PYD was able to autonomously control *Rojava*. An independent Kurdish entity at its southern border, shifted the AKP's focus away from democracy promotion towards national security. Kurdish expansionism and separatism are interpreted as a threat to Turkey's territorial integrity and to the AKP's political survival, because of their strong domestic implications. The situation in *Rojava* dragged Turkey entirely into the conflict and the AKP declared that it would not settle for anything less than regime change. Turkey's direct entanglement with the Islamist opposition, led to the dominance of the MB within the exile government. This in turn made liberal and Kurdish groups refrain from joining the SNC. The increasing militarisation of the conflict, raised the numbers of refugees seeking shelter in Turkey to 250.000. With the realisation that the conflict will last longer than expected and that the FP was failing, first thoughts on the restriction of migration arose.

In this context, the domestic developments of 2013 had serious implications for the AKP's strategy to ensure its electoral success. Although the Kurdish challenge was under control, through a ceasefire with the PKK, the *Gezi* protests and the (allegedly) Gülen-indicated corruption scandal represented severe threats to the AKP's power. Despite the challenge of this social movement, the public approval of the governments migration policy was still high. The migration discourse, however, began to shift from humanitarianism to economic concerns in 2013. The latter is also a manifestation of Turkey's increasingly unstable economic situation. Apart from these domestic confrontations, the AKP's strategy in Syria was challenged by the international community's disunity regarding substantial support for the insurgency. This disagreement led to a growing isolation of the AKP's strategy of supporting the Islamist/Arab opposition. Turkey's isolation was further enhanced by the increasing radicalisation in the conflict and the United States' stronger focus on terrorism. When ISIS declared the erection of its caliphate, the priority of the international community entirely shifted away from regime change towards fighting terrorism, which contradicted Turkish interests. Furthermore, Russia militarily backed Assad, which made Turkey's goal of regime change unattainable. On the ground, Turkey's strategy of projecting power and containing the Kurdish influence, led to an increasing number of clashes between Turkish-backed forces and the PYD-YPG. Terror attacks and violent (ISIS) spillovers, in addi-

tion, led to domestic criticism from opposition parties on the AKP's FP that allegedly had turned Turkey into a terror target.

The criticism on the AKP's FP strategy further increased with the battle of Kobanî in 2014. Initially, Turkey refused to agree on any form of support for the Kurdish forces fighting ISIS. The AKP finally agreed to let *peshmerga* fighters pass through Turkey, when domestic protests against the government's affiliation with Islamsits as well as its reluctance to save the city emerged and the international pressure simultaneously increased. This support for Kurdish forces was a major change in TFP and induced by the AKP's strategy to remain in power, because the domestic protests were perceived as a threat to the AKP's electoral success. In the aftermath, the US started to heavily support the PYD-YPG, which contradicted Turkey's strategy and caused a fundamental disagreement between Ankara and Washington. The AKP's rigid stance regarding the PYD-YPG enhanced its own geopolitical isolation.

With its power projection strategy and ideologically-motivated opposition support, the AKP gradually had turned into a passive respondent to the developments on the ground. The AKP's heavy involvement to contain Kurdish influence and to overthrow Assad, led to the shooting down of a Russian jet in 2015. The Russian-Turkish incident limited Turkey's role in Syria and increased its geopolitical isolation. Additionally, it had severe economic consequences for the Turkish economy, caused by Russian sanctions. In economic terms, Turkey was already going through a downturn, while at the same time, the state budget was heavily burdened by hosting around 2 million refugees which costed approximately USD 8 billion (Ferris 2016: 27). The worsening economic situation further deepened the public's dissatisfaction with the AKP's policies and the population became a challenge for the AKP's electoral success. The reproductive strategy of remaining in power was further threatened with the June 2015 National Elections. Prior to the elections the AKP's anti-Kurdish FP and affiliation with Islamists had shifted many voters from the AKP to the HDP. With this realignment the HDP practically challenged the AKP's electoral success and entered the parliament. The AKP's response to the loss of its absolute majority consisted of an anti-terror campaign against the HDP as well as airstrikes targeting PYD-YPG/PKK positions. With these actions, the AKP intended to mobilise nationalist voters for the snap elections, to regain its majority and ensure its retention of power. Not only the HDP was challenging the AKP's strategy of reproduction. The latter, was endangered by an increasing number of terror attacks. This was problematic for the AKP, as a party that draws much of its electoral appeal from being able to guarantee stability and economic prosperity. In the aftermath of the June elections, Europe experienced skyrocketing numbers of refugee arrivals, partially caused by the AKP's open-door policy and weak border security. The European refugee crisis, the rise of right-

wing parties and the desperate search for solutions, changed the gridlocked relationship between the EU and Turkey.

All in all, the AKP's reproductive strategy had severe international and domestic consequences. Before the signing of the agreement, the AKP internationally found itself at odds with the US and Russia, resulting in Turkey's geopolitical isolation. This constellation made it almost impossible for the AKP to reach its goals of overthrowing Assad, establishing a MB government and containing the Kurdish influence in the region. These FP failures, in combination with Turkey's economic and financial problems that were caused by its open-door policy and the Russian sanctions, decreased the party's domestic credibility and infuriated the public against the government. The economically-dissatisfied public e.g. expressed its discontent by requesting the government to stop its excessive spending on refugees. These developments challenged the AKP's strategy of reproduction since economic stability is the core of the AKP's electoral appeal. This dynamic was enhanced by the re-occurrence of the Kurdish conflict and the HDP's rise as a challenger to the government's power. In the domestic arena, the AKP's primacy was additionally endangered by PKK/TAK and ISIS attacks as well as the Gülen movement, since these groups were threatening the very pillars of the AKP's electoral success: economic growth and stability. Put in other words, before the deal was signed, the AKP's reproductive strategy had led Turkey into political isolation, caused economic problems, burdened the state budget, dissatisfied the public, gave rise to domestic challengers and restricted Turkey's scope of action. At the same time Turkey and the EU had reached a dead end in their relationship. The occurrence of the migration crisis, however, unexpectedly increased the AKP's leverage over the EU. Since reproducing means to maintain and improve its position, the AKP had to tackle the above outlined problems, defeat its challengers and resolve the contradictions. The web of contradictory interactions and the emerged constellations brought the AKP into a position where it had to re-ensure its political survival. With its increasing leverage over the EU the AKP received a strong tool to maintain its primacy and remain the sole source of power in Turkey. The subsequent paragraph will demonstrate that Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement was fuelled by its desire to maintain in power and the result of the previously outlined reproductive interplay.

The AKP had a clearly identifiable material interest in the EU-Turkey agreement, which was based on the government's strategy to remain in power. The AKP's possibility to enforce its interests resulted from a purposive and creative response which the party developed to its failing FP agenda. Initially, Turkey's migration policies were based on the assumption of a quick return of all refugees, but when TFP in Syria failed, the realisation awakened the refugees were in Turkey to stay. The opportunist AKP decided to get the best out of this situation and exploited the

issue of migration to gain concessions from the EU. The AKP, therefore, used these complex interdependencies very well and became the bargaining party in EU-Turkey relations. The increasing leverage over the EU, enabled the AKP to ensure its reproduction. At a time, when the AKP's electoral success and its goal of establishing a presidential system were in danger, due to the emergence of capable challengers and a struggling economy, the government needed to appease the public and ease the financial pressure, it was confronted with. Considering the EU's historic role as an economic anchor for Turkey, maintaining good (economic) relations with Brussels can be considered as even more important for the AKP than the re-vitalisation of the accession process. The contradictory interactions and Turkey's approach in the Middle East not only generated economic problems, they also led to an increasingly migration-averse and dissatisfied Turkish public. Since the dissatisfaction mainly stemmed from economic concerns, the financial aid that was offered within the scope of the agreement and the accompanied rhetoric of burden sharing were important instruments to appease the public and ensure the AKP's electoral success. Based on its opportunism, the AKP realised that its increased leverage over the EU and the political exploitation of the migration crisis represented a chance to acquire the benefit of visa freedom for its citizens. At a point in time, when Ankara and Brussels had been going through a period of alienation and when it was questionable whether Turkey was still meeting the Copenhagen Criteria, the migration agreement was the only viable possibility for Turkey to benefit from visa-free travels in the short- or mid-term. Since visa liberalisation is psychologically important for the Turkish society, having visa freedom within reach is a major political asset for the AKP. Signing the agreement provided the AKP with an instrument to appease the public by delivering what the citizens wanted. Since the constituency would attribute the achievement of VL to the AKP, it is to be expected that the government's legitimacy and electoral success would strongly benefit. Since the migration agreement included financial assistance and the possibility of visa-free travels, signing the agreement was a comprehensible move by the AKP and part of its strategy of remaining in power.

The AKP's pursuit of its reproductive strategy along with the interactions with other agents and the emerging contradictions led to a specific constellation that had arisen before the signing of the migration agreement. The initial impulse was the AKP's strategy to appeal to its electorate by supporting conservative Muslim movements and the therewith connected goal of regime change. This induced a course of actions that was neither intended by the AKP nor by other agents. The AKP's reproductive strategy and its anti-Kurdish stance led it into clashes with Russia, the US, ISIS and the Kurdish PYD-YPG/PKK. The conflicts, which were fuelled by the contradictions emerging from interactions, resulted in Turkey's geopolitical isolation. To break

this isolation and stabilise its economy, the AKP was in need of an ally. This pushed Ankara closer to the EU. Against the background of its international and domestic challenges as well as its geopolitical isolation, the EU's approaches were welcomed by Turkey. It can be asserted that the rapprochement between the EU and Turkey is – at least partially – the unintended result of the AKP's reproductive strategy in general and its FP actions in particular. Interestingly, the fact that the EU had to approach Turkey to manage the refugee crisis, could be interpreted as an unintended result of the AKP's reproductive strategy, since part of its agenda was the open-door policy. It is plausible to assume that the skyrocketing numbers of refugees in Europe, were at least partially caused by the AKP's reproductive strategy that manifested itself temporally as an open-border policy. Following this line of reasoning, the EU's dependency on Turkey to manage the migration flows, is an unintended result of the AKP's actions. In addition, these strategies reversed the power asymmetries and enabled Ankara to i.a. bargain for visa freedom, which would strongly increase its popularity.

Interweaving the separately outlined nodes of the complex web of interactions, with reference to the theoretical framework, demonstrated that FP decisions do not take place in an empty space. The AKP's reproductive strategy of maintaining its power, manoeuvred it into geopolitical isolation, strengthened domestic challengers, dissatisfied the public and weakened the economy. To maintain in power the party had to address these challenges. The migration crisis and its increased leverage over the EU provided the Turkish government with a possibility to re-strengthen its primacy. The Turkish decision to sign the migration agreement with the EU is therefore, the result of Turkey's reproductive strategy. Based on this interim-summary, the subsequent chapter of this thesis will answer the underlying research question with regards to the line of argumentation developed in this section. After referring to the research question, the following section will additionally draw a concise conclusion.

7 Conclusion and Final Remarks: The AKP's Will to Power

The final chapter of the thesis initially will recapitulate the procedure and the achievements of the empirical analysis. This will be followed by a coherent conclusion, the answering of the research question and comments on the theory as well as the methodology. To conclude this research paper, final remarks will be presented and a brief outlook to the recent developments in Turkey, in light of this thesis' argumentation, will be given.

To comprehensively explain the incident of Turkey's decision to sign the migration agreement with the EU, which was outlined in the introductory chapter, this research started with outlining the socio-political and scientific relevance, before reviewing the extensive literature. By discussing the existing publications, it could be demonstrated that they mostly consist of legal analyses, (speculative) assessments of the implementation of the deal or 'EU-centric' approaches. Turkey's decision to sign the agreement only received limited attention in the academic discourse. The manageable number of works dealing with Turkey's decision on the one hand is composed of superficial accounts, descriptive analyses and mere collections of ideas. On the other hand, theory-guided approaches mainly rely on faulty abstractions and rigid classifications, which leave no space for creative human agency. Therefore, the empirical question why Turkey decided to sign the migration agreement with the EU has not sufficiently been explained yet. To comprehensively answer this question, the present thesis suggested that the historical, socio-relational as well as dialectical concept of Benno Teschke and Can Cemgil (2014) represents a unique approach to analyse Turkey's decision in all its complexity. The theoretical framework simultaneously bridges the shortcomings of traditional FPA or IR approaches. This theory depicts a new way of thinking about FP, because of its focus on processual social relations, historically-emerged constellations, reproductive strategies and contradictions that emerge when agents with diverging motives interact. Based on that, analysing the conflicting strategies of agents and their interactions, against the background of the main agent's reproductive strategy, was at the heart of this investigation. The first step of the analysis was to identify relevant agents, contextualise and historicise their actions and to structure the complex, chaotic web by outlining the most important nodal points. Discussing the Syrian crisis depicted the AKP's view of the world and illustrated the clashes emerging from the contradictory strategies of the AKP and the US, Russia, ISIS and Kurdish forces. These contradictory interplays led to Ankara's geopolitical isolation, economic problems and the reoccurrence of the Kurdish conflict. Subsequently, the AKP's responses to the migration crisis in light of its reproductive strategy were problematised, before examining the historical component, power balance and the importance of visas in EU-Turkey relations. The successive analysis of Turkey's domestic context, the historically-emerged constellations and rising challengers the AKP

was facing, demonstrated the interrelatedness of the foreign and domestic dimension. Separately discussing all these elements helped to coherently structure the complex situation the AKP was confronted with when it took the decision to sign the agreement. Based on this interrelatedness Section 6.7 interweaved the complex web of social relations by tracing the AKP's reproductive strategy.

With regards to the investigation and the interweaving, this research paper is able to comprehensively answer the question why Turkey (or the AKP respectively) signed the March 2016 Migration Agreement with the EU. The coherently outlined line of reasoning provides a new type of explanation for the occurrence of the EU-Turkey deal. By applying the theoretical concept developed by Teschke and Cemgil (2014) and based on the previous analysis, this research is able to confirm the hypothesis that was outlined in Section 5.3. The answer to the research question on basis of the developed argumentation and hypothesis, therefore, evolves as follows: the empirical analysis based on a dialectical framework shows that the AKP's policies in Syria, its interactions and clashes with various other (non-) state actors, its relationship with the EU and Turkey's domestic context are all part of a complex and chaotic web of interactions, which was induced by the AKP's reproductive strategy of maintaining its power. These different developments led to the (un)intended consequence of a rapprochement between the EU and Turkey, that resulted in the March 2016 Agreement. Briefly spoken, the key argument that this paper develops is that the AKP's pursuit of its reproductive strategy caused different types of confrontations and constellations that threatened the AKP's power position. The signing of the agreement by the AKP was intended to ease these pressures. Based on this summary the Turkish decision was the result of a specific constellation emerging from the AKP's reproductive strategy. The AKP perceived this constellation as a threat to its strategy of maintaining in power. The latter took the shape of projecting strength, satisfying its electorate and guaranteeing economic prosperity.

Firstly, its reproductive power retention strategy dragged the AKP into the Syrian war, causing confrontations with the US, Russia, ISIS and the PYD-YPG/PKK. The occurring contradictions led to Turkey's geopolitical isolation, economic problems due to the Russian sanctions and increasing instability in Turkey, resulting from jihadist and Kurdish attacks.

Secondly, the AKP's ambitious refugee policies and FP failures, that were provoked by the party's desire to present and consolidate its power, burdened Turkey's state budget and led to an increasingly migration-averse as well as dissatisfied constituency.

Thirdly, besides the challenges to the AKP's key sources of electoral appeal, namely stability and prosperity, its electoral success was threatened by the HDP.

Finally, the partially AKP-enhanced migration crisis in Europe and the therewith connected reversal of the power asymmetries provided the Turkish government with a possibility to resolve these outlined contradictions and to eliminate the threats to power. With the, initially unintended, rapprochement with the EU, in the form of the migration agreement, the AKP broke free from its international isolation and re-stabilised its economy by establishing closer ties to the EU. In the domestic arena, the AKP furthermore appeased the public and ensured its electoral support by presenting EU financial assistance and the possibility of visa freedom. Having the EU as a partner, in addition, was a viable instrument for the AKP to demonstrate its power and legitimacy to its domestic challengers.

On basis of these points, this paper gave evidence that Turkey's (material) interests alone are not to be seen as the profound explanatory factors that illustrate why Ankara signed the migration agreement. The AKP's concrete interests in the agreement are manifestations of a certain constellation that emerged from the interactions of different agents. The AKP's strategy of reproduction and its actions in Syria pushed Turkey into a situation where a rapprochement with the EU was inevitable to ensure the AKP's political survival. The EU-Turkey Migration Agreement was the result of a complex web of interactions or of an intricate interplay between different agents with contradictory strategies, taking place in the wake of the Syrian crisis. By applying an unconventional theory to a highly relevant FP incident, this thesis has been able to explore new horizons. Using a dialectical and multidimensional approach, demonstrated that this given FP outcome is the consequence of contradictory interactions of different actors with diverging motives (see Cemgil 2015). Instead of selecting single factors that are assumed to be decisive, the previous investigation revealed the entire net of social relations.

Put in other words, this thesis demonstrated that Turkey's decision to sign the agreement was shaped by the incentives the EU offered as well as Turkey's main strategy in the FP arena, including its neo-Ottoman power aspirations. In contrast to the mainstream approaches, however, this research paper contextualised and historicised this current decision formation process. The entirety of factors was placed in the broader trajectory of the AKP's strive of legitimising itself and – later – of maintaining its primacy. What appears as the AKP's susceptibility to the EU's incentives, was in fact the AKP's (active) exploitation of a historically, socially and politically emerged conjuncture, resulting from its own strategy of reproduction. The importance of the AKP's reproductive strategy, furthermore, indicates that the "explanatory locus" (Cemgil 2015: 94) of this decision is to be found in Turkey's domestic context, wherein the AKP's rule had repeatedly been challenged from various sides. Due to that, the AKP's strategy of reproduction was problematised in its various manifestations and the therewith connected policy decisions. The repeat-

ed existential challenges to the AKP's reign indicate a lack of consolidation of the Turkish state as a "social institution" (Cemgil 2015). The state, considered as the "real abstraction" (Cemgil 2015: 119) by Teschke and Cemgil, was repeatedly challenged by various social forces and their contradictory strategies.

In conclusion, it should be repeated that after the marginalisation of the secular military-bureaucratic establishment, the AKP had to respond to its challengers, which were emerging in the period of the Syrian conflict. The clashes with the military, the Gülen movement, the HDP, different terror groups and the public are indicators for the lack of consolidation of the Turkish state.[74] In response to that, the AKP carried out different actions to ensure its political survival. This led to FP decisions that manifested themselves as the result of a contradictory interplay, but steadily influenced by the AKP's strategy of reproduction. In the wider dialectical sense, the AKP's decision to sign the agreement with the EU was one tool to resolve the immanent contradictions, that were caused by the clash of its strategy of reproduction with other agents.

Before turning towards recent manifestations of the AKP's strategy of reproduction, in line with the presented argumentation, a few comments on the applied theoretical framework and methodology should be added. This thesis offered a unique perspective on the incident by concretely historicising and contextualising Turkey's decision in the light of a present-day empirical analysis. What this paper contributes to the academic discussion is a demonstration that Turkey's decision to sign the EU-Turkey Migration Agreement is part of the AKP's wider strategy of reproduction and the result of the interplay of different agents with different motives and strategies. The case of the Turkish decision, additionally, is a highly suitable case to demonstrate that scientific research can dispense closed theoretical models and analyse empirical problems by examining them in their entire complexity. This also illustrates that a theory-guided analysis can develop a coherent argumentation without abstracting the actual content. This research showed that this current incident can only be fully examined by focusing on history. The actual reasons for the occurrence of the FP outcome are to be found in historical constellations. Tracing back the steps and actions of the main agent, furthermore, enables readers to discover correlations between different developments, that were neglected by other research. Another case-specific contribution of this thesis is its proof that the AKP did not simply exploit the issue of migration based on a diffuse form of Euroscepticism. This thesis established a correlation between the AKP's current FP and historical developments within the Turkish state. As the importance of the Kemalist establishment shows, the historical roots of TFP are important to trace, not only be-

---

[74] This is also one of the reasons, why the Turkish state as such was not at the centre of attention for this research. On basis of this development, this paper decided to apply a sub-unit level analysis focusing on the AKP as the primary actor.

cause of its complex and complicated Kurdish dimension. This also shows that in this case a FP decision does not have to logically arise from a state's rationale, it can be the more or less unintended result of a variety of factors including a government's pursuit of staying in power.

Additionally, concerning its theoretical orientation, this analysis's focus on the strategies of reproduction has had various distinctive advantages over classical FPA. Applying Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) approach allows focusing on a plurality of agents and their – over time and space – varying rationales. The present thesis examined the AKP's strategy of reproduction, but not without relating it to the contradictory praxes and strategies of other agents. Furthermore, the historicisation and contextualisation of this specific situation, which was generated by the agents' praxes and which mediated the contradictory strategies of the same agents, led to an improved understanding of the environment in which agents reproduce themselves (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1298). Finally, this thesis has demonstrated that Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) socio-relational and historical concept helps to overcome disciplinary boundaries imposed by economics, IR, FPA, sociology and history. Bridging these restrictions was possible through "relating agents to socio-historically specific and malleable structures" (Hoffmann and Cemgil 2016: 1298), instead of attaching pre-defined roles to them or applying structuralist theories, which do not leave any space for agency. Another advantage of this agency-based analysis is that the inconsistent behaviour of agents does not have to be eliminated, but is part of the complex web that contributes to the emergence of a FP decision.

Regarding the theoretical dimension, it should be added that the present analysis offers one attempt to explain Turkey's decision to sign the agreement in line with Teschke and Cemgil's (2014) concept. In this work it is demonstrated how one possible, coherent explanation and narrative, based on the outlined theory can look like. This thesis did not aim to provide a generalising answer, but wanted to explain a specific FP constellation in a comprehensive manner. The results of the present investigation, therefore, represent one way of interpreting the incident. The weighting of the importance of specific incidents, agents and motives might differ in other analyses. The question of the weighting of the different contradictions and the conclusions that are to be drawn remains open and dependent on the respective scholars' vantage point. Additionally, it could be added that further, theoretically compatible research could refrain from focusing on the Kurdish question and the developments in Syria and e.g. follow a more political economy-centric approach.

Turning back to the empirical incident that was the result of the AKP's strategy of reproduction in line with the party's aim to consolidate its power by achieving high electoral support, it should be added that the line of arguing is still visible in Turkey's current political sphere. This

means that the strategy of reproduction did not stop with the signing of the agreement. In light of Turkey's still volatile economic system, the AKP's dependency on economic prosperity is still highly relevant. With Turkey's currency hitting a historic low and the vanishing of the construction sector-induced economic boom, the AKP's main challenge remains to ensure economic stability. Considering the challenges from the Kurdish side and the Gülen movement, especially with regards to the failed coup attempt of 2016, improving and tightening the relationship with the EU could send a powerful message (Barnhisel 2016: 53–60).

The latest developments in Turkey, especially the purges against the AKP's opponents and the 2017 constitutional referendum, as well as Erdoğan's aim of strengthening his personal power, made it plausible to assume that the agreement with the EU plays into Erdoğan's hands. The AKP and Erdoğan himself increasingly turned towards unorthodox measures to ensure their political survival and their retention of power. Restrictions of individual freedoms, democratic rights and the rule of law as well as the imprisonment of thousands of journalists, intellectuals, bureaucrats and army personnel, contributed to Turkey's abandonment of EU values. In light of the deterioration of Turkey's credentials in these areas, Ankara has no interest in being confronted with heavy criticism and interventions from Brussels. The migration agreement gives Erdoğan a strong hand to silence the EU regarding his strategy of establishing himself as the sole source of power (Isik 2016). It can be argued that it is in Erdoğan's interest that the EU is "turning a blind eye" (Kingsley 2016) on the developments in Turkey.

With regards to this dynamic and the previous analysis, it is proven that one agent's reproductive strategy and its respective policy decisions change the conditions for all agents in the system. The AKP's strategy of reproduction, which led to the signing of the migration agreement, changed the environment for the EU's actions. With the signing of the agreement the EU's dependency on Ankara's decisions increased.

The AKP's strategy of reproduction, however, not only transformed the conditions for the EU, it also reconstructed Turkish politics. Earlier, it was mentioned that the AKP launched an anti-terror campaign against the political left and Kurdish movement, which served the purpose of mobilising (ultra-)nationalist voters. Pointing out the importance of this strategy did not lose its credibility lately. The AKP's further hardening of its approach towards Kurdish separatists and nationalists, reflects the government's strategy of increasing its appeal to nationalist voters, which are needed by Erdoğan to implement his presidential system (Çağaptay 2016) The support of the nationalists and especially their parliamentary representative – the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) – are a crucial part of Erdoğan's agenda. Erdoğan needed to increase the AKP's popular vote to make sure his project of a Russian-style presidential system would be approved in the

national referendum. Additionally, having leverage over the EU or 'holding the EU hostage' (Kanter 2016), fits in the AKP's strategy of mobilising these nationalist voters. The result of the Turkish constitutional referendum, which was held on 16th April 2017, demonstrated that Erdoğan's plan to appeal to nationalist voters in order to increase his power base was successful. Despite the AKP's success and the prevailing actuality of the AKP's reproductive strategies, its future manifestations and implications for Turkish, European and international politics remain open.

Bibliography

Adam, Laura Batalla (2016): *The Refugee Card in EU-Turkey Relations: A Necessary but Uncertain Deal*. Global Turkey in Europe, Working Papers 14. Retrieved from: http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/gte_wp_14.pdf (accessed: 17.07.2017).

Adler, Emanuel and Vincent Pouliot (2011a): "International practices". *International Theory*, 3 (1): 1–36.

Adler, Emanuel and Vincent Pouliot (2011b): "International practices. Introduction and framework". In: Adler, Emanuel and Vincent Pouliot (eds.): *International practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 3–35.

Akbulut, Hakan (2016): *Die Syrienkrise. Die Auswirkungen auf die Beziehungen der EU und der NATO zur Türkei*. oiip Arbeitspapier, Nr. 90. Retrieved from: http://www.oiip.ac.at/fileadmin/Unterlagen/Dateien/Arbeitspapiere/AP_90_Arbeitspapier_Auswirkungen_Syrienkrise_EU _NATO.pdf (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Akmehmet, Hande M. (2015): *The Costs of Turkey's Foreign Policy in Syria*. Atlantic Council. Retrieved from: http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-costs-of-turkey-s foreign-policy-in-syria (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Aktürk, Şener (2017): "Turkey's Role in the Arab Spring and the Syrian Conflict". *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 15 (4): 87–96.

Altunışık, Meliha Benli (2016): "The Inflexibility of Turkey's Policy in Syria". *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2016, Turkey at Crossroads*: 39–44.

Amnesty International (2016): *EU-Turkey Refugee Deal a historic blow to rights*. Retrieved from: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/03/eu-turkey-refugee-deal-ahistoricblow to-rights/ (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Anas, Omair (2016): *Turkey-EU Refugee Deal. Reviving Turkey's European Union Hopes*. Indian Council of World Affairs, Policy Brief. Retrieved from: http://www.icwa.in/pdfs/IB/2014/TurkeyEURefugeesDealIB270616.pdf (accessed: 13.07.2017).

Aras, Ela Gökalp and Zeynep Şahin Mencutek (2015): "The international migration and foreign policy nexus: the case of Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey". *Migration Letters*, 12 (3): 193–208.

Aydın, Engin (2017): *Cemaat – Hizmet – Feto – FETÖ*. Cumhuriyet, 31.05.2017. Retrieved from: http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/751349/Cemaat_-_Hizmet_-_Feto__FETO.html (accessed: 03.11.2017).

Bach, Robert L. (1987): "The Cuban Exodus. Political and Economic Motivation". In: Levine, Barry B. (ed.): *The Caribbean Exodus*. New York: Praeger: 106–130.

Bal, Pinar Gedikkaya (2016): "The Effects of the Refugee Crisis on the EU-Turkey Relations. The Readmission Agreement and Beyond". *European Scientific Journal*, 12 (8): 14–35.

Balta, Evren (2015): *How the Turkish elections changed the foreign policy of Turkey*. Open Democracy, 27.07.2015. Retrieved from: https://www.opendemocracy.net/evren-balta/how-turkish-elections-changed-foreign-policy-of-turkey (accessed: 14.11.2017).

Barnhisel, Giulia (2016): *The effects of political framing. Who is a 'refugee'*. Retrieved from: http://scholar.colorado.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2347&context=honr_theses (accessed: 02.11.2017).

Baume, Maïa de la (2016): *Post-coup crackdown throws doubt on Turkey migration deal*. Politico, 20 July 2016. Retrieved from: http://www.politico.eu/article/post-coupcrackdown-throws-doubt on-turkey-eu-migration-deal-recep-tayyip-erdogan/ (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel (2012): "Process Tracing. From Philosophical Roots to Best Practice". *Simons Papers in Security and Development*, 21 (2012).

Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman (2010): "Case Study Methods". In: Reus-Smit, Christian and Duncan Snidal (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 499–518.

Benvenuti, Bianca (2017): *The Migration Paradox and EU-Turkey Relations*. IAI Working Papers, 17 (5). Retrieved from: http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwp1705.pdf (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Benvenuti, Bianca (2016): *Two months since the EU-Turkey Statement: An unsuccessful partnership?* Reset Dialogues on Civilizations, 19.05.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022653 (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Biltekin, Gonca (2014): *Understanding Turkish Foreign Affairs in the 21ˢᵗ Century. A Homegrown Theorizing Attempt.* Retrieved from: http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0006731.pdf (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Breuning, Marijke (2007). *Foreign Policy Analysis. A Comparative Introduction.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bryant, Rebecca (2016): *Bargaining bodies. The EU's deal with Turkey has sacrificed Europe's principles to appease domestic politics.* Retrieved from: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/03/10/bargaining-bodies-the-eus-deal-with-turkey-has-sacrificed-europes-principles-to-appease-domestic-politics/ (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Bürgin, Alexander (2016): "Why the EU Still Matters in Turkish Domestic Politics. Insights from Recent Reforms in Migration Policy". *South European Society and Politics*, 21 (1): 105–118.

Çağaptay, Soner (2016): *Why Erdogan is on a Nationalist Path.* The Globalist, 26.05.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.theglobalist.com/why-erdogan-is-on-a-nationalist-path/ (accessed: 14.11.2017).

Cankaya, Seda (2016): "EU Turkey Relations in the Context of the Migration Case". *Acta Universitatis Danubius, Relationes Internationales*, 9 (1): 55–66.

Carrera, Sergio; Hertog, Leonhard den and Marco Stefan (2017): *It wasn't me. The Luxembourg Court Orders on the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal.* CEPS Policy Insights No. 2017/15. Retrieved from: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/EU-Turkey%20Deal.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Carrera, Sergio and Elspeth Guild (2016): *EU-Turkey plan for handling refugees is fraught with legal and procedural challenges.* Retrieved from: https://www.ceps.eu/publications/eu-turkey-plan handling-refugees-fraught-legal-and-procedural-challenges (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Castles, Stephen; De Haas, Hein and Mark J. Miller (2014): *The Age of Migration.* 5ᵗʰ edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Cemgil, Can (2015): *Dialectic of Foreign Policy and International Relations. A Social Theory of a Disciplinary Gap.* Retrieved from: http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/56096/1/Cemgil,_Can_M.pdf (accessed 11.09.2017).

Cetingulec, Mehmet (2016): *How did Ankara's spending on Syrian refugees jump to $25 billion?* Al-Monitor, 30.09.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turkey-syriarefugees-mindblogging-increase-expenses.html (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Chopra, Riddhi (2015): *Effect of Syrian Refugee Crisis on Turkey.* 2nd International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research Practice. Retrieved from: http://www.rsisinternational.org/2ICMRP2015/155-157.pdf (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Collett, Elizabeth (2016): *EU cooperation with third countries. Rethinking concepts and investments.* Retrieved from: http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/destination europe/collett.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Collier, David (2011): "Understanding Process Tracing". *Political Science and Politics*, 44 (4): 823–830.

Cook, Steven A. (2016): *How Erdogan Made Turkey Authoritarian Again.* The Atlantic, 21.07.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/07/hoerdogan made-turkey-authoritarian-again/492374/ (accessed: 02.11.2017).

Cuhadar, Esra; Kaarbo, Juliet; Kesgin, Baris and Binnur Özkececi-Taner (2015): *Examining leaders 'orientations to structural constraints. Turkey's 1991 and 2003 Iraq war decisions.* Retrieved from: http://yoksis.bilkent.edu.tr/pdf/files/7949.pdf (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Daily Sabah (2015): *Devastating images of Syrian boy washed up on Turkish shore show desperation of refugees.* 02.09.2015. Retrieved from: https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2015/09/02/devastating-images-of-syrian-boy-washed-up-on-turkish-shore-show-desperation-of-refugees (accessed: 31.07.2017).

D'Amours, Jillian (2016): *Analysis. Dissecting Turkey's Gulen-Erdogan relationship.* Middle East Eye, 21.07.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/analysis-dissectingturkeys-gulen-erdogan-relationship-528239159 (accessed: 03.11.2017).

Dal, Emel Parlar (2017): "Impact of the transnationalization of the Syrian civil war on Turkey. Conflict spillover cases of ISIS and PYD-YPG/PKK". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29 (4): 1396–1420.

Dalacoura, Katerina (2017) *A new phase in Turkish foreign policy: expediency and AKP survival.* Future notes, 4. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Retrieved from: http://www.iai.it/en/pubbli cazioni/new-phase-turkish-foreign-policy-expediency-and-akp-survival (accessed: 25.09. 2017).

Demir, Imran (2017): "The Turkish Policy to Remove Syrian President Assad. Overconfidence Obscures Risks and Magnifies Failure". In: Demir, Imran: *Overconfidence and Risk Taking in Foreign Policy Decision Making. The Case of Turkey's Syria Policy.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 41–79.

Didić, Ajdin (2017): "Realism in Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syrian Refugees". *Savremena politika i upravljanje (Contemporary politics and governance)*, 3 (1): 6–28.

Dimitriadi, Angeliki (2016): *The Impact of the EU-Turkey Statement on Protection and Reception: The Case of Greece.* Global Turkey in Europe, Working Papers 15: Retrieved from: http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/impact-eu-turkey-statement-protection-and-reception -case-greece (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Egle, Julia and Patrick Theiner (2015): *Leitfaden zur Entwicklung von Forschungsdesign und Arbeitsplan für Bachelor- und Masterarbeiten in den Internationalen Beziehungen.* Uni Göttingen. Retrieved from: http://lehrstuhlib.uni-goettingen.de/tl_files/files/lehre/IB-Leitfaden%202015.pdf (accessed: 26.11.2017).

Eralp, Nilgün Arisan (2016): "Challenges of the German-Led Refugee Deal between Turkey and the EU". *CESifo Forum*, 17 (2): 21–24.

Erdoğan, Emre (2014): *Unwanted, Unwelcome. Anti-Immigration Attitudes in Turkey.* Retrieved from: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/unwanted-unwelcome-anti-immigration-attitudes-tu rkey (accessed: 23.10.2017).

Erdoğan, Murat M. (2014): *Syrians in Turkey. Social Acceptance and Integration Research.* Retrieved from: https://mmuraterdogan.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/hugo-report-syrians in-turkey-social-acceptance-and-integration-november-2014-04122014-en1.pdf (accessed: 01.11.2017).

Ertuğrul, Doğan (2012): *A Test for Turkey's Foreign Policy. The Syria Crisis.* TESEV Foreign Policy Program. Retrieved from: http://tesev.org.tr/en/yayin/a-test-for-turkeys-foreignpolicy the-syria-crisis/ (accessed: 05.10.2017).

European Commission (2016): *EU-Turkey Statement. Questions and Answers. Factsheet on the EU Turkey Statement.* Retrieved from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16 963_en.pdf (accessed: 01.08.2017).

European Council (2016): *Statement of the EU Heads of State or Government. 07 March 2016.* Press Release. Retrieved from: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/pressreleases/2016/03/07-eu-turkey-meeting-statement/ (accessed: 01.08.2017).

European Council (2015a): *Introductory remarks by President Donald Tusk at the meeting of EU heads of state or government with Turkey, 29 November 2015.* Press Release. Retrieved from: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/29-introductoryre marks-eu-turkey/ (accessed: 31.07.2017).

European Council (2015b): *European Council Conclusions. 15 October 2015.* Press Release. Retrieved from: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/10/16-euco-con clusions/ (accessed: 31.07.2017).

Ferreira, Joana (2017): *Turkish Unemployment Rate steady at 10.7% in July.* Retrieved from: https://tradingeconomics.com/turkey/unemployment-rate (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Ferris, Elizabeth (2016): "Syrian Refugees in Turkey. Challenges and Impact on Turkey's Regional Policies". In: Kaya, Zeynep (ed.): *The AKP and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Volume 5, Middle East Centre, LSE: 25–30.

Frelick, Bill; Kysel, Ian M. and Jennifer Podkul (2016): "The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants". *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 3 (4): 190–220.

Funk, Marco; Mc Namara, Frank; Rose, Norma and Yves Pascouau (2017): *Policy Update February 2017.* European Policy Centre. Retrieved from: http://www.epim.info/wp-content /uploads/2017/02/February-Policy-Update.pdf (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Gatti, Mauro (2016a): *The EU-Turkey Statement. A Treaty that Violates Democracy. Part 1.* Retrieved from: https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-eu-turkey-statement-a-treaty-that-violatesdemocracy part-1-of-2/ (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Gatti, Mauro (2016b): *The EU-Turkey Statement. A Treaty that Violates Democracy. Part 2.* Retrieved from: https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-eu-turkey-statement-a-treaty-that-vio-latesdemocracy part-2-of-2/ (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Geddes,   Andrew   (2009):   *Migration   as   Foreign   Policy*.   Retrieved   from:
http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/528-2009-2rapport.pdf (accessed: 07.08.2017).

Geertz, Clifford (1973): *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York:
Basic Books Inc.

George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005): *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social
Sciences*. Harvard, MA: MIT Press.

Gloannec, Anne-Marie le (2016): *Holding the borders, holding the centre. The EU and the refugee crisis*.
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Policy Brief (11/2016). Retrieved from:
http://spire.sciencespo.fr/hdl:/2441/3msc623vd091qq12eugj36ckti/resources/nupipolic
brief-11-16-le-gloannec.pdf (accessed: 13.07.2017).

Gourevitch, Peter (1978): "The second image reversed". *International Organizations*, 32 (4): 881–
912.

Greenhill, Kelly (2010): *Weapons of Mass Migration. Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Guéhenno, Jean-Marie (2017*): 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2017. From Turkey to Mexico, the list of the
world's most volatile flashpoints got a lot more unpredictable this year*. Foreign Policy, 05.01.2017.
Retrieved   from: http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/05/10-conflicts-to-watchin-2017/
(accessed: 03.11.2017).

Gürsel, Kadri (2016): *EU-Turkey refugee deal gives Erdoğan case of 'political amnesia'*. Al-Monitor,
17.05.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/turkey
european-union-refugee deal-in-jeopardy.html (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Gurcan, Metin (2017): *Turkey targets 30% hike in military spending next year*. Al-Monitor, 18.10.2017.
Retrieved   from: https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/turkey-military
government-adopts-war-budget-for-2018.html (accessed: 22.10.207).

Hakura,   Fadi   (2016):   *Refugee   deal   solves   little*.   Retrieved   from:
https://www.chathamhouse.org/system/files/publications/twt/EU%20Turkey%20refuge
e%20solves%20little.pdf (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Heisbourg, François (2015): "The Strategic Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis". *Survival.
Global Politics and Strategy*, 57 (6): 7–20.

Heller, Sam (2017): *Turkey's 'Turkey First' Policy in Syria.* Retrieved from: https://tcf.org/content/report/turkeys-turkey-first-syria-policy/ (accessed: 06.10.2017).

Hellmann, Gunther (2014): *Strategien der Problemformulierung.* Uni Frankfurt. Retrieved from: http://www.fb03.uni-frankfurt.de/48211294/Strategien-der-Problemformulierung-August-2001.pdf (accessed: 26.11.2017).

Hermann, Margaret G. (1980): "Explaining foreign policy behaviour using personal characteristics of political leaders". *International Studies Quarterly*, 24 (1): 7–46.

Hewitt, Gavin (2016): *Have Turkey and the EU struck a dirty deal.* BBC News, 10.05.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36246807 (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Hill, Christopher (2003): *The changing politics of foreign policy.* London: Palgrave.

Hintz, Lisel and Caroline Feehan (2017): *Burden or Boon. Turkey's Tactical Treatment of the Syrian Refugee Crisis.* Middle East Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.mei.edu/content/map/burden-or- boon-turkey-s-tactical-treatment-syrian-refugee-crisis (accessed: 13.07. 2017).

Hoffmann, Clemens and Can Cemgil (2016): "The (un)making of the Pax Turca in the Middle East. Understanding the social-historical roots of foreign policy". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29 (4): 1279–1302.

Holsti, Ole R. (1976): "Cognitive dynamics and images of the enemy". *Journal of International Affairs*, 21 (1): 16–39.

Hudson, Valerie M. (2005): "Foreign policy analysis. Actor-specific theory and the ground of IR". *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1 (1): 1–30.

Icoz, Gulay (2016): "The interconnectedness of the past, the present and the future. Where Turkey-EU relations have been, and where they are heading". *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 24 (4): 494–508.

Ifantis, Kostas and Ioannis Galariotis (2017): Turkey's Foreign Policy Towards Syria, 2011 – 2017. In: Ifantis, Kostas and Ioannis Galariotis (eds.): *The Syrian Imbroglio. International and Regional Strategies.* Florence: EUI RSCAS: 27–35.

IKV - İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı / Economic Development Foundation (2016): *Perception of Europe and Support for EU Membership in Turkish Public Opinion. Public Opinion Survey 2016*. Retrieved from: http://www.ikv.org.tr/images/files/Public%20opinion%20survey%202016(1).pdf (accessed: 24.10.2017).

Imai, Kohei (2016): "Rethinking the Insulator State: Turkey's Border Security and the Syrian Civil War". *Eurasia Border Review*, 7 (1): 19–29.

Isik, Ebubekir (2016): *The EU-Turkey refugee deal and the Kurdish issue*. Al Jazeera, 05.03.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/03/eu-turkeyrefugeedeal kurdish-issue-160302113254551.html (accessed: 02.11.2017).

Islam, Thowhidul (2015): "Turkey's Foreign Policy of the AKP Government to Syria and the Rea sons behind its Shifting Policy during the Arab Spring". *Journal of Global Politics and Current Diplomacy*, 3 (2): 5–30.

Itani, Faysal and Aaron Stein (2016): *Turkey's Syria Predicament*. Retrieved from: http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/turkey-s-syria-predicament (accessed: 06.10.2017).

Jervis, Robert (1968): "Hypotheses on misperceptions". *World Politics*, 20 (3): 454–479.

Jones, Dorian (2016): *Refugee Influx Turns Part of Istanbul Into 'Little Damascus'*. Voanews, 11.03.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.voanews.com/a/refugee-influx-turns-part-ist anbul-littledamascus/3232430.html (accessed: 27.07.2017).

Kadir Has University, Turkey Research Centre (2016): *Social and Political Trends Survey – Turkey. Quantitative Research Survey Summary*. Retrieved from: http://www.khas.edu.tr/uploads/social-and-political-trends-survey-b-v2.pdf (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Kalin, Ibrahim (2016): *Turkey is not the world's richest country but the largest refugee hosting country. Carrying the burden of humanity*. @Ikalin1, Twitter. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/ikalin1/status/778325744514727938 (accessed: 13.07.2017).

Kanter, James (2016): *European Parliament Votes to Suspend Talks With Turkey on E.U. Membership*. The New York Times, 24.11.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/ 11/24/world/europe/european-parliament-turkey-eu-membership.html (accessed: 07.12. 2017).

Kapalidis, Polychronis (2017): *The refugee crisis of the Mediterranean refugee crisis and its exploitation as a foreign policy tool.* Retrieved from: http://blogs.plymouth.ac.uk/dcss/2017/06/06/theeffects-of-the-mediterranean-refugee-crisis-and-its-exploitation-as-a-foreign-policy-tool (accessed: 10.07.2017).

Katzenstein, Peter J. (1976): "International relations and domestic structures". *International Organization*, 30 (1): 1–45.

Kfir, Isaac (2017): *A Faustian Pact. Has the EU-Turkey Deal undermined the Human Rights in Turkey and threaten its own security.* Retrieved from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2985217 (accessed: 13.07.2017).

King, Gary; Keohane, Robert O. and Sidney Verba (1994): *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kingsley, Patrick (2016): *Merkel accused of turning a blind eye to plight of Syrian refugees in Turkey.* The Guardian, 23.04.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/23/merkel-accused-turning-blind-eye-syrian-refugees-turkey (accessed: 02.11.2017).

Kirişci, Kemal and Sinan Ekim (2016): "Turkey and EU Relations in Light of Recent Political and Economic Developments in the Region". *IEMed. Mediterrenean Yearbook 2016 – Turkey at crossroads*: 50–57.

Knafo, Samuel (2010): "Critical approaches and the legacy of the agent-structure debate in international relations". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 23 (3): 493–516.

Knaus, Gerald (2016a): "Keeping the Aegean Agreement Afloat". *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 15 (3): 43–50.

Knaus, Gerald (2016b): *On the Edge - Refugees, Europe and the Turkey Deal.* Presentation at the Aspen Ministers Forum on 22nd April. Retrieved from: http://www.esiweb.org/rumeliobserver/wpcontent/uploads/2016/05/EU-TR-deal-Oslo-Albright-meeting-22-April-Knaus-2.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Knaus, Gerald (2015a): *The Merkel Plan. Restoring Control. Regaining Compassion. A Proposal for the Syrian Refugee Crisis.* European Stability Initiative, 04.10.2015. Retrieved from: https://de.scribd.com/document/349547406/ESI-The-Merkel-Plan-Compassion-andControl-4-October-2015 (accessed: 07.12.2017).

Knaus, Gerald (2015b): *Why People Don't Need to Drown in the Aegean. A Policy Proposal for the Syrian Refugee Crisis.* European Stability Initiative, 17.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20%20Why%20people%20drown%20in%20the%20Aegean%20-%2017%20September%202015.pdf (accessed: 07.12.2017).

Koenig, Nicole and Marie Walter-Franke (2017): *One year on. What lessons from the EU-Turkey 'deal'.* Retrieved from: http://www.delorsinstitut.de/2015/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/20170317_EU-Turkey-deal-one-year-on-NK-MW.pdf (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Kutlu-Tonak, Zümray (2016): "Endless Escape. From Syria to Turkey, Then to Europe". *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 16 (1): 121–134.

Lepeska, David (2015): *The AKP's Golden Opportunity. Erdogans's Victory and Turkey's Open-Door Policy.* Foreign Affairs, 02.11.2015. Retrieved from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-11-02/akps-golden-opportunity (accessed: 13.07.2017).

Levaggi, Ariel González (2015): "Forced Humanitarianism. Turkey's Syria Policy and the Refugee Issue". *Caucasus International*, 5 (1): 39–50.

Maricut, Adina (2017): "Different narratives, one area without international frontiers. Why EU institutions cannot agree on the refugee crisis". *National Identities*, 19 (2): 161–177.

Memisoglu, Fulya and Asli Ilgit (2016): "Syrian refugees in Turkey. Multifaceted challenges, diverse players and ambiguous policies". *Mediterranean Politics*, 22 (3): 317–338.

Mitchell, Christopher (1989): "International Migration, International Relations and Foreign Policy". *International Migration Review*, 23 (3): 681–708.

Münz, Rainer and Myron Weiner (1997): "Migrants, Refugees and Foreign Policy. Prevention and Intervention Strategies". *Third World Quarterly*, 18 (1): 25–51.

OECD (2017): *OECD Data. Real GDP Forecast.* Retrieved from: https://data.oecd.org/gdp/real-gdp-forecast.htm (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Okyay, Asli and Jonathan Zaragoza-Cristiani (2016): "The Leverage of the Gatekeeper. Power and Interdependence in the Migration Nexus between the EU and Turkey". *The International Spectator*, 51 (4): 51–66.

Orucoglu, Berivan (2015): *Why Turkey's Mother of All Corruption Scandals Refuses to Go Away*. Foreign Policy, 06.01.2015. Retrieved from: https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/06/why turkeys-mother-of-all-corruption-scandals refuses-to-go-away/ (accessed: 03.11.2017).

Osborne, Samuel (2017): *Turkey threatens ending EU refugee deal amid diplomatic crisis with Germany and the Netherlands. President and Foreign Minister both threaten to scarp deal*. The Independent 16.03.2017. Retrieved from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/ world/europe/turkey-eu-refugee-deal-end-germany-netherlands-dutch-diplomatic-crisis recep-tayyip-erdogan-a7633526.html (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Lovett, Ashleigh; Whelan, Claire and Renata Rendòn (2017): *The Reality of the EU-Turkey Statement*. Oxfam. Retrieved from: https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bn-eu-turk ey-statement-migration-170317-en.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Peers, Steve (2016): *The final EU/Turkey refugee deal: a legal assessment*. Retrieved from: http://eulawanalysis.blogspot.de/2016/03/the-final-euturkey-refugee-deal-legal.html (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Phillips, Christopher (2017): "Eyes Bigger Than Stomachs. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Syria". *Middle East Policy*, 24 (1): 36–47.

Phinnemore, David and Erhan İçener (2016): "Holding the door half (?) open. The EU and Turkey 10 years on". *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 24 (4): 446–462.

Portes, Alejandro and John Walton (1981): *Labor, Class and the International System*. New York: Academic Press.

Putnam, Robert D. (1988): "Diplomacy and domestic politics". *International Organization*, 42 (3): 428–460.

Rodriguez, Joaquín Ferrero (2016): *Paris, Berlin, Ankara. A Deal Driven By Populism*. Retrieved from: https://www.iedonline.eu/download/2016/schengen/FERRO-RODRIGUEZ.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Roman, Emanuela; Baird, Theodore and Talia Radcliffe (2016): "Analysis. Why Turkey is Not a 'Safe Country'". *Statewatch Analysis*, 18 (4): 1–26.

Rosenau, James N. (1968): "Comparative foreign policy. Fad, fantasy or field". *International Studies Quarterly*, 12 (3): 296–329.

Rygiel, Kim; Baban, Feyzi and Suzan Ilcan (2016): "The Syrian refugee crisis. The EU-Turkey 'deal' and temporary protection". *Global Social Policy*, 16 (3): 315–320.

Şahin, Nur Muhammed (2016): *Dealing with Refugee Crises. Why Turkey had to sign the refugee agreement*. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/25808477/Dealing_with_Refugee_Crises_Why_Turkey_Had_to_Sign_Refugee_Agreement__Nur_Muhammed_%C5%9EAH%C4%B0N_-_02.06.2016 (accessed: 10.07.2017).

Sano, Akihiro (2017): *Turkey's domestic strife punishing tourism sector*. Retrieved from: https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Economy/Turkey-s-domestic-strife-punishing tourism-sector?page=2 (accessed: 22.10.2017).

Schipper, Arthur (2015): *Book Review of Shannon Brincat's (ed.) Dialectics in World Politics*. Retrieved from: https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/48947/ArthurSchiper ManuscriptDialecticsinWorldPoliticsforMarxandPhilosophyReviewoBooksprepublication version.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed: 07.09.2017).

Seeberg, Peter (2017): *'The migration crisis' and the 'return to Africa'-discussion. New refugee regimes and practices under way in the Mediterranean*. Videnscenter om det moderne Mellemøsten. Retrieved from: http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets/33e058a3-106c-48f5-852574c9a235453b/ gte-wp-16pdf.pdf (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Seeberg, Peter (2016): *The EU-Turkey March 2016 Agreement as a Model. New Refugee Regimes and Practices in the Arab Mediterranean and the Case of Libya*. Global Turkey in Europe Working Papers, No. 16. Retrieved from: http://www.fepseuropeeu/assets/33e058a3-106c-48f5-8525- 74c9a235453b/gte-wp-16pdf.pdf (accessed:12.07.2017).

Seibert, Thomas (2011): *Turkey losing patience with Syria*. The National, 08.08.2011. Retrieved from: https://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/turkey-losing-patience-with-syria-1.448739 (accessed: 14.09.2017).

Şenyuva, Özgehan and Çiğdem Üstün (2016): *A Deal to End 'the' Deal. Why the Refugee Agreement is a Threat to Turkey-EU Relations*. Retrieved from: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/deal end-%E2%80%9Cthe%E2%80%9D-deal-why refugee-agreement-threat-turkey-eu-rela tions (accessed: 23.10.2017).

Seufert, Günter (2016): *Turkey as partner of the EU in the refugee crisis. Ankara's problems and interests.* German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Comments Nr. 1. Retrieved from: https://www.swpberlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2016 C01_srt.pdf (accessed: 13.07.2017).

Silva, Cristina (2016): *What Visa-Free Travel to Europe means for Turkey's Elite.* International Business Times, 18.03.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.ibtimes.com/what-visa-free-travel-europe-means-turkeys-elite-2339432 (accessed: 25.10.2017).

Soykan, Cavidan (2016): "Turkey as Europe's Gatekeeper. Recent Developments in the Field of Migration and Asylum and the EU-Turkey Deal Of 2016". In: Hess, Sabine; Kasparek, Bernd; Kron, Stefanie; Rodatz, Mathias; Schwertl, Maria and Simon Sontowski (eds.): *Der lange Sommer der Migration.* Berlin: Grenzregime III: 52–60.

Spencer, Richard (2016): *Turkish town at centre of Syrian refugee crisis says: 'We're full'.* The Telegraph, 16.04.2016. Retrieved from: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/19/turkish-town-at-centre-of-syrian-refugee-crisis-says-were-full/ (accessed: 06.11.2017).

Spijkerboer, Thomas (2016): *Fact Check. Did the EU-Turkey Deal Bring Down the Number of Migrants and of Border Deaths.* Oxford University, Faculty of Law, Border Criminologies, Nr. 28.

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin (1990): *Basics of Qualitative Research. Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Stewart, Scott (2016): *Untangling the Threads of Terrorism in Turkey.* Stratfor, 22.03.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/untangling-threads-terrorism-turkey (accessed: 03.11.2017).

Strik, Tineke (2016): *The situation of refugees and migrants under the EU-Turkey Agreement of 18 March 2016.* Council of Europe, Doc. 14028. Retrieved from: http://www.refworld.org/docid/5836fb994.html (accessed: 12.07.2017).

Teitelbaum, Michael S. (1984): "Immigration, Refugees, and Foreign Policy". *International Organization*, 38 (3): 429–450.

Teschke, Benno and Can Cemgil (2014): "The Dialectic of the Concrete. Reconsidering Dialecttic for IR and Foreign Policy Analysis". *Globalizations*, 11 (5): 605–625.

The Guardian (2016): *Turkey threatens to block EU migration deal without visa-free travel.* 24.05.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/24/turkey--eumigration deal-visa-free-travel-recep-tayyip-erdogan (accessed: 23.10.2017).

Tisdall, Simon (2016): *Turkey-EU refugees deal may be biggest casualty of Erdoğan supremacy.* The Guardian, 05.05.2016. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/05/turkey-eu-refugees-deal-may-be-biggest-casualty-of-erdogan-supremacy (accessed: 30.08.2017).

Tolay, Juliette (2016): "Mass Migration and Images of State Power. Turkey's Claim to the Status of a Responsible Rising Power". *Rising Powers Quarterly*, 1 (2): 135–149.

Toygür, Ilke and Bianca Benvenuti (2016): *The European Response to the Refugee Crisis. Angela Merkel on the Move.* IPC-Mercator Policy Brief, June. Retrieved from: http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/IlkeToygur_BiancaBenvenuti_FINAL.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Toygür, Ilke and Melih Özsöz (2016): *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. 5 + 1 Steps Away from Visa Free Travel for Turkish Nationals.* Retrieved from: https://eu.boell.org/en/2016/06/14/good-bad-and-ugly-5-1-steps-away-visa-free-travelturkish-nationals (accessed: 25.10.2017).

Tür, Özlem and Mehmet Akif Kumral (2016): "Paradoxes in Turkey's Syria Policy. Analysing the Critical Episode of Agenda Building". *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 55: 107–132.

Tunaboylu, Sevda and Jill Alpes (2017): *The EU-Turkey deal. What happens to people who return to Turkey.* Retrieved from: http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/resettlement/tunaboylu-alpes.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Tunç, Hüseyin (2015): Turkey's Kurdophobia as a Precursor to Kurdish Genocide: The Case of Kobani. *Research Turkey*, 4 (7): 69–96.

Tunçay, Mete (2017): *Kemalism.* The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Retrieved from: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0440 (accessed: 23.11.2017).

Üstün, Çiğdem (2017): *Twitter as a Platform to Reflect Eurosceptic Views in Turkey.* Retrieved from: http://www.e-ir.info/2017/03/05/twitter-as-a-platform-to-reflect-euroscepticviews-in turkey/ (accessed: 01.11.2017).

Ulusoy, Orçun (2016): *Turkey as a Safe Third Country*. Retrieved from: https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centrebordercriminolgies/blog/2016/03/turkey-safe-third (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Wahnberger, Anne (2017): *The EU-Turkey Agreement in Migration. Objective and Reality*. MES-Perspektiven 2/2017. Retrieved from: https://www.kuwi.europauni.de/de/studium/master/es/MES-Publikationen/MES-Perspektiven/MES_Perspektiven_02-2017_final_3_.pdf (accessed: 31.07.2017).

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1979): *The Capitalist World-Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1974): *The Modern World-System*. New York: Academic Press.

Waltz, Kenneth (1979): *Theory of international politics*. Reading, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Werz, Michael (2017): *The European Union and Turkey in 2017 Move on or Apart*. Retrieved from: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/07/24/436488/european-union-turkey-2017-move-apart/ (accessed: 30.10.2017).

Williamson, Andrew (2016): *An Examination of the Legal Issues Surrounding the Migration 'Deal' Between the European Union and Turkey*. Retrieved from: http://peaceandjustice.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2016/10/Legal-Issues-in-EU-Turkey-Migration-Deal-Final.pdf (accessed: 11.07.2017).

Willis, Ben (2014): *The Advantages and Limitations of Single Case Study Analysis*. Retrieved from: http://www.e-ir.info/2014/07/05/the-advantages-and-limitations-of-single-case-study analysis/ (accessed: 11.09.2017).

Yalvaç, Faruk (2014): "Approaches to Turkish Foreign Policy: A Critical Realist Analysis". *Turkish Studies*, 15 (1): 117–138.

Yeni Şafak (2014): *Turkey sees upsurge in anti-Syrian refugee protests*. 16.07.2014. Retrieved from: http://www.yenisafak.com/en/news/turkey-sees-upsurge-in-anti-syrian-refugeeprotests-2022141 (accessed: 06.11.2017).

Yilmaz, Gözde (2016): "From Europeanization to De-Europeanization. The Europeanization Process of Turkey in 1999 – 2014". *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 24 (1): 86–100.

Yin, Robert (2009): *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Yorulmazlar, Emirhan and Ebru Turhan (2015): "Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Arab Spring. Between Western Orientation and Regional Disorder". *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 17 (3): 337–352.

Zahariadis, Nikolaos (2017): Migrexit and its Consequences for the European Union. *European Policy Analysis*, 3 (1): 11–19.

Zaragoza-Cristiani, Jonathan (2015): *Analysing the Causes of the Refugee Crisis and the Key Role of Turkey. Why Now and Why So Many*? Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI Working Papers, BORDERLANDS Project, RSCAS 2015/95. Retrieved from: http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/38226/RSCAS_2015_95.pdf?sequence=1 sAllowed=y (accessed: 24.09.2017).

Zolberg, Aristide (1983): "Contemporary Transnational Migrations in Historical Perspective. Patterns and Dilemmas". In: Kritz, Mary M. (ed.): *U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy. Global and Domestic Issues*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books: 15–51.

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that the present master's thesis with the title:

"EUROPE'S GATEKEEPER:

a dialectical analysis of Turkey's signing of the March 2016 Agreement"

had been written autonomously and no other than the indicated resources were used. In each individual case, the parts that were extracted from other works in terms of wording or meaning were indicated as borrowings through providing the source, including the secondary literature used.

Freising, December 9th, 2017

_____   _____
Place/Date   Signature – Dominik Pollner

Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Masterarbeit mit dem Thema:

"EUROPE'S GATEKEEPER:

a dialectical analysis of Turkey's signing of the March 2016 Agreement"

selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Die Stellen, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen wurden, habe ich in jedem einzelnen Fall durch die Angabe der Quelle, auch der benutzten Sekundärliteratur, als Entlehnung kenntlich gemacht.

Freising, 9. Dezember 2017

_____   _____
Ort/Datum   Unterschrift – Dominik Pollner