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## **Turkey striving for status recognition: The role of emotions in the diplomatic dispute between Turkey and Germany in the time 2016-2018**

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**Universiteit  
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Master Thesis

## **Turkey striving for status recognition**

The role of emotions in the diplomatic dispute between  
Turkey and Germany in the time 2016-2018

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MA International Relations  
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## Chapter 1

### 1.1. Introduction

The relationship between Turkey and its Western allies increasingly generates headlines that make observers concerned that Turkey may drift away from its Western partners (Aydın-Düzgit 2020). While that perceived backsliding already started in the 2010s, depicted for example by a gradual decline on the liberal democracy index since 2006 (V-Dem data version 12), Turkey's relations with its Western allies - the European Union (EU), along with leading EU member states and the United States increasingly deteriorated since Recep Tayyip Erdogan became President of Turkey in 2014 (Haugom 2019; Kaliber & Kaliber 2019). The dispute became obvious in the increasing criticism on the country's deteriorating human rights conditions and autocratic tendencies (v-Dem, 2018). At the same time, Turkey and Russia began to converge, while Turkey also started taking a much more proactive and independent role in the Middle Eastern region which also became visible in its military role in Syria (Haugom 2019).

Alongside with drastic changes in Turkey's domestic policy making following the failed coup attempt in July 2016, claims have been made whether Turkey is taking a more fundamental change in its foreign policy away from the transatlantic community (Haugom 2019). As Aydın-Düzgit puts it, "[t]here is little doubt judging [...] from the rhetoric emanating from Ankara [...]" (2020) that Turkey's relation to the West has entered a new challenging era. This transformation became particularly evident to the public perception in the period after the so-called 'Refugee Deal' in 2015, when the Turkish – European bilateral dialogue mounted in unprecedented and exceptionally harsh rhetoric, alienating the broader public over the seemingly sudden and non-rational antagonism by Turkey (Dursan-Özkanca 2019, 3).

Germany became a notably particular target, and even more so in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt when Turkey accused Germany of supporting terrorists, and further employed hostile rhetoric and strong action-taking against the German government throughout 2016 and 2017 until in early 2018 the Turkish government announced that it worked towards normalizing relations with Germany again. It was repeatedly stated by German media that Turkey was angry over Germany's decision making and criticism towards Turkey: for example, when the German government approved the resolution on the Armenia genocide (Deutsche Welle 2016) or when Erdogan was restricted to speak in Germany in front of the Turkish diaspora (Deutschlandfunk 2017). The German news broadcast Deutsche Welle even raised the question whether Germany has become Turkey's "best enemy" (Deutsche Welle 2017) as the German government has become particularly targeted (Deutsche Welle 2017).

The contemporary Western perspective tends to ascribe this transformation to President Erdogan as an autocratic figure with an ambition to erect a nationalist system based on fundamentalist Islamic values (Oguzlu 2019). In recent research however, scholars contributed important insights to the complex and more nuanced reality of the coexistence of the Turkish adoption of an aggressive and confrontational policy vis-à-vis its Western allies with a simultaneously high and increasing level of cooperation and interconnection (Haugoum 2019, Dursun-Özkanca 2019, Oguzlu 2019, Aydın-Düzgit 2020). Their analysis suggests that Turkey's foreign policy in fact did not change its fundamental intention to cooperate with its allies but abandoned its foremost dominant maxim of Western integration for a rather self-confident policy in pursuing its national interests defined from an independent country's perspective (Aydın-Düzgit 2020). However, this raises the puzzling question why there is such a hostile and confrontational rhetoric, despite the continuous high level of cooperation? Especially towards Germany with whom Turkey holds a close long-term historically cultivated relationship based on mutual interests.

This thesis appreciates the strong findings by Dursun-Özkanca's 'inter-alliance framework' (2019) that illustrates on different case studies the patterns of how Turkey contested its Western allies by engaging in boundary breaking and adopting hostile policies against the transatlantic community. She develops a framework by combining the neo-realist theory on alliances with statecraft tools to explain the inter-alliance opposition of the Turkish government and identifies domestic, regional, and international factors that help explaining the changing behavior. Yet her findings struggle to make connections between the different factors and fail to explain where and how each of them mattered (Aydın-Düzgit 2020). Further, while her book contributes to an in-depth understanding of the different events in which Turkey contested its Western allies by investigating the role of classic statecraft tools, it does not look at the underlying mechanisms of what Dursun-Özkanca has identified as boundary testing, boundary challenging and ultimately boundary breaking. To close this gap of understanding this thesis proposes a constructivist approach on the nexus between discourse and emotions to reveal socio-emotional underpinnings of power hierarchies as proposed by Koschut (2020b). By defining three rhetorical patterns in the language used in the bilateral dialogue between Turkey and Germany as a proxy for the EU in the years 2016 to 2018, this thesis uncovers the role of emotions as the underlying mechanism in the negotiation process of re-articulating power relations between Turkey and its Western allies.

In this thesis I argue that the hostile rhetoric and assertive policymaking are the mechanisms through which Turkey is seeking for status recognition as a rising regional power. Based on the emotion discourse analysis applied on the diplomatic dispute between Turkey and Germany, I contend that Turkey's emancipation process from the supplicant position to an equal partner to Germany and

respectively the EU is underpinned by negative emotional representations in forms of threats, delegitimizing the other's moral authority and building and emotional othering that nurture a new narrative of power relations between Turkey and Germany on the international stage. Although the thesis does not claim that Turkey purposely employed emotions, it argues that the displayed negative emotions facilitated Turkey's attempt of re-articulating power relations and gaining a new status position in relation to Germany and the transatlantic community. It further contends that the refugee agreement signed in March 2016 has played a decisive role in giving Turkey enough leverage to outweigh the risk of challenging its long-term cooperation partner Germany.

Insofar the thesis provides an analytical proposal for enhancing our understanding of the puzzling Turkish behavior towards Germany in the time frame 2016 – 2018. The introduction to the relevant literature on Turkish – Western relations in Chapter 2 directs to the elaboration on the theoretical framework and methodology in Chapter 3 that is applied on the study's leading research question: "What role do emotions play in re-articulating power relations between Germany and Turkey?". Subsequently a historical contextualization in Chapter 4 provides the basis for the empirical investigation and emotion discourse analysis. The latter focuses on the emotional expressions and the emotional meanings that constitute power relations, status differentiation, and identity building in the political discourse. Finally, in Chapter 5 the thesis closes with a conclusion on the study's findings and a discussion of opportunities for further research.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1. Literature Review

Turkey has historically been deeply connected in alliances with the West and with Germany respectively. Yet, this relationship has strongly deteriorated over the last decade. Despite this striking and multifaceted change in Turkish foreign policy, there still is a significant gap in grounding the development on a sound theoretical fundament (Hatipoglu and Palmer 2016). Nevertheless, there are many scholars who have examined Turkey's relations with the West looking at different issues such as the EU accession, Turkey EU relations and Turkey-US-NATO relations (Oran 2010, Hale 2013, Kirisci 2018).

From the state-centric neoclassical realist perspective, the Turkish state's foreign policy decisions are determined by its domestic institutions' preferences on a variety of environmental constraints and opportunities (Sahin 2020). The Turkish state's policy decisions would be best understood as a pursuit of maximal utility and power in an anarchic world where inter-state cooperation is inherently difficult (Tsarouhas, 2021). It bases on the logic of the national state officials as the unified decision-makers of

the foreign policy and consequently ascribes puzzling policy decisions to the state's incapacities or miscalculations (Sahin 2020).

The neoliberalist approach, although appreciating the state-centric perspective, widens the analytical scope to the socio-economic level and introduces the capacity of institutions to facilitate interstate cooperation (Tsarouhas 2021). Once the national preferences are defined, it transfers to a bargaining process based on states' asymmetric power position towards one another, where institutions can provide mutual trust through regular interaction (Tsarouhas 2020). However, neither the realist nor the neoliberalist approach provides explanations for the ideational and normative dissonances apparent in the EU – Turkey relation and cannot provide a logic for the apparently irrational behavior of Turkey on the diplomatic stage between 2016 and 2018.

To better account for the wide complexity of a case and its temporal dimensions historical institutionalism embraces the whole of the Turkish – EU historical interaction by analyzing path dependencies and identifying meaningful events as “critical junctures” (Icoz & Martin 2021). That lens reveals security interests as a reoccurring and dominant theme for Turkish – European relations, that is likely to survive any diplomatic crisis (Yeneroglu et al., 2016; Turhan, 2018; Icoz & Martin, 2021). From this perspective, bilateral crisis is best explained by a (temporary) disruption of the balance between differences in interests and ideologies on the one hand and persistent mutual security interests on the other hand.

A very prominent conceptual approach in Turkey – EU studies is the perspective of Europeanization, that studies the EU's ‘transformative power’ on EU member states and affiliated countries accompanied by larger domestic, regional, and global processes (Börzel & Risse, 2009; Alpan, 2021). That approach focusses on how the EU explains transformational processes in Turkey as well as the role of the EU in Turkish domestic discourse in the three dimensions of polity, policy, and politics (Alpan 2021). From the Europeanization perspective this process is naturally expressed in waves of convergence or divergence and unfolds explanatory power on institutional change the EU inflicts in political structures and people's minds (ibid.). The Europeanization theory thus sheds some light into developments in Turkish foreign policy in the beginning of 2000s, but it holds no longer any significant explanatory power for Turkish foreign policy vis-à-vis the West in the last decade, as Turkey increasingly distances itself from the EU (Dursan Özcanca 2019).

The constructivist literature however stresses that states, just as individual human beings, cannot be understood independently from their social environment and a shared system of norms, identities, and discourses (Rissen 2009, 145). The constructivists' perspective therefore is not satisfied with a state-centric explanation that relies on strict rational and self-interested characterization of actors that

merely pursuit utility maximization (Aydin-Düzgüt & Rumelili, 2021). Consequently, a state's foreign policy behavior is also shaped by norms, values, and identity. Constructivists therefore contribute an important facet in showing how and when identity matters in the Turkish – European relations (ibid.) and offer valuable insights for answering this thesis' puzzle.

Another valuable contribution to contextualize the thesis's approach to the puzzle of Turkey's confrontational rhetoric towards its Western allies is provided by Dursan-Özcanca in her work 'Turkey – West Relations: The Politics of Intra-alliance Opposition' (2019). She theoretically framed the latest developments of Turkey's changing foreign policy by introducing her framework of 'intra-alliance opposition' (ibid.). Dursan-Özcanca illustrates how the intensity of Turkey's intra-alliance opposition has increased between 2010 to 2019 and proceeded from what she calls "boundary testing" over "boundary challenging" to "boundary breaking" (ibid.). She argues that Turkey tested different foreign policy tools to broaden the scope of what is acceptable in interactions with the Western community. The tools ranged from "entangling diplomacy and strategic noncooperation to costly signaling, territorial/asset denial, compellent threats, blackmail, and collaborative balancing with Russia" (ibid.). Dursan-Özcanca's contribution misses however to provide an explanation for the underlying mechanisms of the tools that she identified.

This thesis derives from an emerging body of literature on Turkish foreign relations that already provides a state-focused, ultra-rational for Turkish policy decisions, a perspective on the importance of institutional integration and the influence of historic dependencies, as well as an extended understanding of socio-political processes that contribute to the construction of norms and identities. Inspired by the intra-alliance approach the thesis continues the constructivist thread by investigating the discursive role of emotions in inter-state relations as a proposal for making sense of the alienating Turkish behavior towards its Western allies.

While the literature on emotions in Turkish politics mostly focuses on domestic policy making and the role of emotions in the Turkish population, the literature on emotions in Turkey's foreign policy making is rather thin. Yet I still want to point out the research of Prakash and Ilgit who focused specifically on the Turkish government's responses to international criticism and have argued that criticism can provide opportunities rather than just crises for recipients as in the case of Turkey's relationship with Israel. The research made an argument against the common reading of Turkey being vulnerable to criticism as a weak state. Elicited emotions such as anger, scorn, indignation, or pride might in fact result in defiance and contestations as behavioral responses (Prakash and Ilgit 2016). This provides an important aspect also for this research, as to argue that the criticism targeted at Turkey provides opportunities to respond to and thereby shaping public discourse.



This thesis conducts an emotion-based discourse analysis contributing to empirically investigate macropolitical changes of power structures and status differentiation in the international system as proposed by Simon Koschut (Koschut 2018b). Koschut refers this to the accounts for the rise of emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil within 'Western' dominated global power structures based on Zarakol's findings on rising powers entering international society as 'outsiders' facing social constraints and stigmatization and feeling humiliated "because they seem to be either unable or unwilling to live up to the 'civilizational standards' of the established group" (Zarakol 2011 in Koschut 2018b, 517).

In this thesis I argue that Koschut's logic can equally be applied to Turkey as a rising regional power, emancipating itself from its supplicant position towards the EU as an equal partner on the international stage. This thesis illustrates the discursive power of emotional underpinnings in political discourse on the case of the Turkish-German diplomatic dispute between 2016 and 2018. While most accounts for Turkey's changing foreign policy refer to Germany merely as one example within the broader scope of Turkey's opposition towards the Western alliance, I particularly highlight the specific role Germany holds as a long-term and historically cultivated ally to Turkey, as well as a proxy for Turkish – EU relations due to Germany's position in the EU and its leading role during the investigated period. For these reasons I expect Germany to be of exceptional relevance as Turkey's preferred counterpart in its attempts for boundary-testing and boundary-challenging, as the deep historical, economic, social, and institutional connection of both countries provide a sufficiently stable environment that is resilient enough to survive temporary tensions and crisis.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

#### **Constructivism and the Emotional Turn in International Relations**

Constructivism is based on the belief that national interests are rather driven by shared ideas and identities than by material factors (Wendt 1994). While everything has a material base like a person has a body and states have territories, what really distinguishes and constitutes states and state actors are shared ideas and knowledge (ibid.). The constructivist approach was brought in contrast with the realist and liberal view of state relations being purely material based (e.g. Waltz 1979). Constructivists emphasize how realities, perceptions, relationships, identities, and intersubjective understandings in international relations are constituted through representation and discursive practices (Waeber 1990; Hutchison 2016). It should be noted that this thesis is based on the assumption that narratives and intersubjective meanings may be constituted through social discourse and hence shape actions, reactions, threat perception and social realities and perceptions (Wendt 1999).

As part of the Emotional Turn in IR which is marked in the beginning of the 2010s when emotions have increasingly been recognized as significant notions in IR, scholars have referred to the school of constructivism. They started to acknowledge emotions as constitutive of political discourses and hence as considerable factors impacting political behavior and international interaction (Åhäll and Gregory 2013; Fattah and Fierke 2009; Hall 2015; Hutchison 2016; Ross 2014; Solomon 2015; Van Rythoven 2015). The emotional turn in IR supposes that although emotions emerge in the individual body, they may exist on the collective level as they constitute and shape identities and discourses. This view is based on a constructivist understanding of emotions as cultural products that owe their meaning to the social and historical context (Koschut 2018b).

### **What is an emotion?**

Emotions are generally defined as “conscious manifestations of bodily feelings” (Bleiker & Hutchison 2017). However, even though the body is where emotions begin, “what people feel is conditioned by socialization into culture and by participation in social structures” (Turner and Stets 2005, 2). Crawford (2014) and Mercer (2014) highlight how emotions are intersubjective and relate to how people come to care about particular issues (Koschut 2017, 503). Based on this social dimension of emotions, one can say that emotions thus also have a collective dimension and contribute to the construction of inter-group identities (Koschut 2020, 186; Mercer 2006, 296 – 99). Regarding the question how collective emotions or even state level emotions are experienced, this framework refers to Mercer who argues that while emotions are produced by individual bodies, they can be experienced by groups and thus shape identities and discourse. Emotions similar as identities can exist at multiple levels – individual, group and state level (Mercer 2014).

Many empirical case studies have shown that there are various practical processes through which emotions become political, such as language, historical narratives, social structures, as well as openly displayed and more silent governance practices (Bleiker & Hutchison 2020). These cases emphasize the integral acknowledgment that emotions in IR can be studied at the collective level (Bleiker and Hutchison, 2008; Sasley, 2011; Eznack, 2012; Solomon, 2012; Crawford, 2014; Fierke, 2014; Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014; Mercer, 2014; Ross, 2014; Hall and Ross, 2014). The way through which emotions become a social phenomenon and thus are shared and collective is the representation of emotion, which in turn shape the political discourse and the interactions between communities such as state actors (Lupovici 2019).

### Emotions in discourse as productive of power relations

While the discourse-emotion nexus has been well accepted, only recently scholars have started to connect emotions and discourse with political power and theorized on how to empirically analyze

power relations (Koschut 2020b). Here the question of the power of language in IR is central: According to constructivist and poststructuralists, power relationships are constituted through the use of language as it produces identities and meanings (Milliken 1999; Hansen 2006; Epstein 2008). Though it is doubtful that this is solely due to their linguistic constitution. How could be explained that some utterances resonate and “stick” (Ahmed 2004) with audiences while others have rather little impact? Productive power via for example status differentiation is rooted in collectively shared emotions that underpin and reproduce power discourses and identities in world politics (Koschut 2020b). Consequently, language and emotions are linked together to be productive of discourses and power relations and thus can help us to better understand processes in world politics (Koschut 2017, Solomon 2017). In his handbook on the power of emotions, Koschut convincingly makes an account for the “socio-emotional underpinnings of power in the construction of hierarchies and status in world politics through language” (Koschut 2020b). Hence, this builds a valuable entry point to the research question of this thesis: What role do emotions play in re-articulating power relations? Hence the following sections shall give an overview of how emotions are connected with status and state identity, and thus can be productive of power relations.

#### Emotions and status

Status has gained considerable attention in IR in the last decade, focusing on the social-relational components, costs and benefits, and indicators of status (De Carvalho and Neumann 2015; Larsen and Shevchenko 2014; Wohlforth et al. 2018; Zarakol 2017). Status can be generally defined as an actor’s standing or rank within a particular community, while it is dependent both on the actor’s own perception of its rank as well as the perception of the other within the particular community (Renshon 2017, 4). Due to its subjective nature, status-seeking behaviour aims at influencing the others’ perception of its own relative standing as status can only be attributed in relation to another state’s recognition (Larson 2017). Status in contrast to a state’s interest has the characteristic of being “sticky” – once a state obtains a certain status, it maintains a presumptive right to that status – similar as power sticks with states (ibid.). When states are status-seeking this can happen through status markers that can be in form of material power and influence, like wealth or nuclear weapons or social through honour or prestige. Though, often status-seeking behaviour is aimed at enhancing one’s place in a perceived hierarchy, such as the international community (Solomon 2020). Hence, status-seeking can be also seen as “a subcategory of state identity politics” (Wohlforth et al. 2018) and thus aim for intrinsic or self-esteem reasons beyond strategic or instrumental benefits (Solomon 2020; Wolf 2011). This often is signalled through rhetoric, diplomatic activity and acquisition of certain status symbols (ibid.).

#### Emotions and state identity

Identity in IR is a highly controversial concept as there is not one definition or agreed-upon consensus for what constitutes a state identity (Koschut 2013, 54). What can be said though, is that identity and emotion depend on each other because “identification requires a feeling of attachment” to a group (Mercer 2014, 516). Without (emotional attachment, identities become meaningless and thus powerless. Therefore, emotions are inherent for identity building. Koschut sees identity in IR as an inside/outside dualism (2018a, 293). The inside group builds an identity reflecting norms, values and perceptions and thus delimits the specific identity to the outside (Koschut 2013, 59). Hence, state identity is not static but can always be contested by competing narratives, same as power attributions and status recognition (ibid.).

### 3.2. Research Design

This thesis takes a qualitative approach in a small scaled single case analysis on the research question: **What role do emotions play in re-articulating power relations between Turkey and Germany in the period 2016 - 2018?** The argument is made that the Turkish government aims at readjusting its status in the international community and building its identity in distinction to Germany and that these processes are underpinned through representations of negative emotions that can be traced through discourse.

To account for the hypothesis, this thesis bases its research design on the components suggested by Koschut (2020b) and adapted them to the case at hand: Step 1) Defining the conceptual framework of emotions in discourse. Step 2) Providing a methodological framework of how emotions and their contextualized meanings are expressed. Step 3) Describing the method how to trace these emotions in Turkish-German discourse. Step 4) Effect: What do emotions do and what do they help us to explain (ibid.). The latter does not refer to any causal relationship but rather aims to unravel the dynamics of emotional representations during the studied period, to reflect on the effect emotions had on the audience, and which conclusions can be drawn through the circumstantial correlations of events and heightened emotional representations. Step 4) will be discussed in the discussion of the analysis and in the conclusion of this thesis.

#### 3.2.1 Conceptual Framework of Emotions (Step 1)

This thesis relies on the understanding that emotions can be productive of establishing and maintaining status differentiation and creating identities among community members (Koschut 2020b). Based on this constructivist understanding of emotions, this thesis is not concerned with emotions of individual bodies, but with emotions that are collectively displayed as a state body. This is not to neglect the individual body as where emotions emerge and where emotions can also transgress and transform pre-existing constellations, but to focus on the discourse that was shaped through

emotional representations. It is therefore rather concerned with shared emotional patterns among collective actors, such as the Turkish government, than individual internal feelings or emotions displayed as a speaker through gestures or mimic.

This research assumes that these emotional patterns come apparent through language as well as symbolic gestures and action-taking (Koschut 2018a, 278). Further, this thesis attributes discursive power to emotions to be both constitutive and constituting of social hierarchies for example by praising or blaming an actors' behavior or by verbally contrasting various emotions with alternative emotion categories (Bleiker & Hutchison 2020).

### 3.2.2 Methodological framework of how emotions are expressed (Step 2)

Studying power relations through discourse analysis assumes that language contains an affective dimension which has to be analytically identified within the political discourse (Koschut 2018a, 278). This thesis, therefore, argues that the Turkish government's processes of status differentiation and identity building are underpinned with negative emotion categories. Hence, the following shall outline the linkages between these processes and the display of negative emotions. When one actor feels that his or her status recognition has been denied, this can result in anger expressed by verbal outrage or protest (Forsberg, Heller and Wolf 2014, 264). Depending on the situation upon the perceived threat or loss of status or respect, different emotions are possible. If the actor whose status recognition has been denied, holds another actor as responsible by withholding approval, humiliation, or denial of expected forthcoming benefits, the actor is likely to display anger together with expressions illegitimacy (Larson and Shevchenko 2014, 335). Wolf explains by referring to the closely connected notion of respect, that feeling respected reaffirms the own subjective sense of importance and value in relation to the society. While "disrespect, on the other hand, is always seen as an unjustifiable denial of social rank, as a symbolic attack on an actor's self-perceived place in and meaning for society" (2011, 116). When states perceive their status to be under threat, because others try to unmask their behavior or do not treat them according to the status position they hold or believe they hold, states can be expected to act particularly "touchy" (Forsberg, Heller, and Wolf 2014, 264).

As both social status and identity are relationally understood and defined, their legitimacy, maintenance and deterioration are subject to the flow of social interaction. As Wolf summarizes, identity, status, and respect are "attitude(s) we expect others to show by the way they treat us" (Wolf 2011, 113). Hence, this thesis is mainly concerned with emotion categories being productive of status differentiation and identities such as anger and resentment.

Anger in its most simple definition is a negative reaction (Heller 2017) that responds to a perceived or actual wrong violation or insult, unfair treatment, or disrespect by a blamable party (Averill 1982, 318).

Moreover, anger is often linked to a discourse of accusation and blame, signaling that the other is not behaving according to the actor's expectations or that they are behaving wrong, unjust, or unfair. Anger is temporary and can cool down as the triggering event passes. Yet, it might also escalate again if repeated violations occur, as the sending state is required to step into further escalation to maintain its credibility (Hall 2015, 47f.). Anger can be expressed verbally or through action-taking, such as for example withholding cooperation (ibid.).

As emotions and their meanings are socially constructed and contextually dependent, it makes sense to broaden the definition of emotional expressions in the given context and focus also on such that can be interpreted and contextualized as constituting status differentiation and identities. It is argued that these processes are underpinned through establishing new power narratives through threats, tarnishing the other's claimed moral authority by making reproaches and accusations and creating an inside/outside dualism through emotional othering.

While negative emotions are in particular focus as they constitute a period of unusual, heightened injections of emotional representations, also representations of positive emotions such as empathy are taken into consideration when they appear as they give hints for re-rapprochements and thus, may give valuable hints to what role emotions have played at which point under which circumstances.

### 3.2.3 Method of how emotions can be traced in discourse (Step 3)

To trace the representations of negative emotions described above through discourse, this thesis conducts an Emotion Discourse Analysis (EDA) based on Koschut (Koschut 2018a). This method allows to go beyond interpreting the meaning of particular words or phrases to contextualizing their meaning by identifying larger patterns and structures that have played a role in shaping the power relations and discursive narratives in the German-Turkish interaction. "Representations – ranging from political speeches to media images – are the mechanisms through which individual, embodied emotions acquire a collective dimension and, in turn, shape social and political processes" (Bleiker, Hutchison 2020 in Koschut's Power). Hence, the aim is to identify emotional representations that shape processes of re-articulating power relations, status-seeking and identity building and thus may enhance our understandings of underlying mechanisms. Koschut's approach (2017) of emotion discourse analysis is partly based on Lene Hansen's (2006) approach to discourse analysis and suggests the following three steps: a) Selecting appropriate texts which are produced by an actor or a group of actors with sufficient authority to be considered representative for the collective group. b) Mapping the potential of emotional expressions in the text – this means to search for emotional representations that are explicitly or implicitly expressed in the texts and c) Interpreting and contextualizing their potential effects – meaning how the texts may be received by its audience (Koschut 2017, 280).

#### a) Selection of sources

The analysis focuses on the public display of state-level emotional representations transmitted through language and action-taking by the Turkish government targeted at the German government and respectively the German public. Based on Koschut's recommendations, the speaker should be considered sufficiently charismatic or authorized to express the emotions of the collective (s)he represents (2017, 282). In the case at hand, the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan serves as the speaker to be scrutinized, as well as his inner AKP circle and official statements made by the Turkish government. The analysis will focus on press release statements published by the Turkish governments as well as direct quotes by the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan or AKP officials articulated during the period February 2016 – September 2018. These are drawn from newspapers or news agency sources in written format. Additionally, videos of official speeches by Erdogan are available with simultaneous translation into English or German. All quotes – both spoken and written formats that I am using are English or German translations from the Turkish original. The quotes that were only found in German translation, I have translated myself into English.

#### b) Mapping the verbal expressions of emotions

In the next step researchers shall indicate how the expressions of emotions can be traced through the texts (Koschut 2018a, 280). This thesis is concerned with expressions of emotion categories such as anger, resentment and frustration. Yet, most of the time these emotion categories are not explicitly expressed but become rather apparent through emotional connotations or linguistic tools like analogies or sarcasm (Koschut 2020). Thus, it is not enough to only assess what is being said but the underlying connotations that signify an expression of a negative emotion such as anger, resentment, or frustration as response to perceived status contestation, identity building or as power demonstration must be identified. The task is to contextualize emotional meaning in the political discourse of the Turkish-German relationship at the time of analysis: Through which framings and lenses of interpretation can emotional expressions be identified? This shifts the attention to the larger patterns and interdependent structure of the texts under scrutiny. Koschut names different realms for contextualizing emotional meanings such as 'emotional narratives' and 'emotional othering', which I build upon to code the sources in the given case.

#### c) Interpreting and contextualizing the effects of emotions

Step three recognizes the effect of emotions and looks at how the emotional representations resonate with the audience, as the German government and respectively the German public (Hansen 2006, 30). As Hansen explains, 'contextualized discourse analysis combines the analysis of how texts seek to create stability with analysis of whether these constructions are being accepted or contested within

the political and public domain” (2006, 30). As step b) and c) are closely connected, both steps will be conducted simultaneously as part of the analysis.

### 3.2. Scope and limitations

#### Cultural perspective on emotions

As mentioned above, emotions are subjective, and a matter of interpretation based on one’s own social and cultural background, thus it is imperative to hold a critical perspective when studying emotions. Even though collective emotions are often intersubjective across different groups, cultural differences must be taken into account (Koschut Handbook). What might be interpreted as ‘angry’ in one culture, might unfold a connotation of rather ‘normal behaviour’ in another. Hence, I am clearly pointing out here that this thesis is written by a German citizen with a Western-European socialization and cultural background. To be transparent in my interpretations and contextualization of emotional expressions and meanings, the sources will be clearly marked and coded. It could be argued that the coding process in itself is highly subjective, yet the framework of meanings and interpretations of emotions also add considerable value to the analysis as it offers a reference system and an entry point to the discourse analysis. Nevertheless, this framework represents my own subjective understanding and interpretation of the textual sources, and it certainly does not claim to be the only reasonable approach to the given discourse.

#### Time frame

The discourse analysis looks at Turkish-German discourse in the time frame February 2016 until September 2018. Yet, the analysis does not claim to be comprehensive, but attempts to highlight key events to illustrate the overall dynamic of underpinning emotional representations in the discourse. #

## Chapter 4

### 4.1. Historical Background

#### Turkish – German relations

The relationship between Turkey and Germany is exceptional complex and dating back for three centuries (Turhan, 2017). The labor recruitment agreement of 1961 particularly deepened that relationship and led to a significant Turkish diaspora in Germany (Holzmann et al., 2016; Turhan, 2017). Economically Germany remains the most important trading partner for Turkey (Tsarouhas, 2021) and both countries are closely connected by institutions (Wulf & Turhan, 2021) and shared common



interests in security politics, stabilization of the MENA region, and energy dependencies (Turhan, 2017). As for this highly interconnected relationship on historical, economic, political, institutional, and societal dimensions, this thesis focusses on the unusually hostile diplomatic dispute between Germany and Turkey in the period 2016-2018.

To account for the whole complexity, this thesis elevates the scope to EU-Turkey relations due to the ongoing membership negotiations between Turkey and the European Union (Turhan, 2017). Given the strong interconnection of German and EU politics, Germany can be reasonably assumed as a proxy for EU positions (Turhan & Wessel, 2021). Especially the EU-Turkey refugee deal illustrates a vivid example of EU-decision-making that rests ultimately with member states – in this case with the alignment of interests between the German and the Turkish government (Reiners & Tekin 2020). For that reason, this thesis focuses on Germany, but nevertheless ascribes EU positions and statements to Germany and vice versa as well, if it is appropriate to use them both interchangeably.

#### Turkish-German dialogue

Turkish German dialogue has often been labeled as a ‘rollercoaster ride’ with times of big tension followed by signs of rapprochement (Turhan 2016). One of the reasons for this dynamic relationship is that the countries’ connection is rather based on mutual interests than on a “historical friendship” (Inat 2016, 21). Simultaneously, the EU narrative changed from merely being an economical community towards a community of values where Turkey’s “European Identity” was increasingly questioned concerning the level of human rights and democracy in Turkey (Yeneroglu et al., 2016), while close cooperation continued also during periods of tensions (Turhan, 2018).

Still the period between 1999 and 2005 can be perceived as the “golden age of Europe – Turkish relations” (Yeneroglu et al., 2016) especially due to the green-social coalition’s German foreign policy towards Turkey envisioning a “postmodern cosmopolitan Europe”. Due to the social parties’ “symmetric membership policy” and economic, social, and political improvements in Turkey, the power asymmetry between Germany and Turkey increasingly flattened and climaxed in the opening of the EU accessions negotiations in 2005. The climate changed however with the election of the Christian democratic party in Germany with its Chancellor Angela Merkel who introduced a “privileged partnership” instead of a full membership, as a reaction to increasing right-wing tendencies throughout the EU and with an alienating affect to the Turkish audience (Kaya 2018, 19).

The onset of the MENA crisis and the Syrian civil war in 2011, Turkey initiated a rather proactive policy towards the geopolitical challenges while Germany, still dealing with the aftermaths of the financial and Eurozone crisis, maintained to restrain from entering the conflict (Turhan, 2018). This reasoned a positive German attitude towards Turkey to manage the crisis in the MENA region, and in turn once

again increased German support for the accession process (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013; Turhan, 2018). Those moments of rapprochement were interrupted by incidences perceived by the German government as rather questionable like the Turkish handling of the 2013 Gezi protests that caused Germany to decelerate its support for Turkey's accession again (Turhan, 2018).

The Turkish population in Germany with 3 million is both, a potential for partnership and for conflict within Germany, balancing between assimilation and preserving ties to the Turkish society (Yeneroglu et al., 2016). Furthermore, both countries do have divergent perspective on Turkish security interests concerning the Kurdish minority, when Turkey alleges Germany to not credibly condemn the Kurdish militant opposition and Germany being suspicious towards the repressive tendencies in Turkish security policy (Yeneroglu et al., 2016).

Turkey as the everlasting supplicant to EU membership bid

Having left Turkey in the waiting room for so long, changed Turkish attitude towards the European Union. Nathalie Tocci argued that the EU had placed the bar too high for Turkey to meet the requirements and hence, Turkey felt pushed away (Tocci 2010, 6). When Germany and France both called for privileged partnership in 2009, the AKP began to focus on consolidating its domestic power (Cornell et al. 2012, 21). The former Turkish foreign minister Davutoglu expressed Turkey's frustration that the obstacles for EU accession "undermine the credibility of the EU" (2010, 14-15). The EU-Turkey deal elicited some cynicism among Turkish policymakers that suddenly Turkey was again recognized as an important partner (Bozkır 2016).

The meaning of the refugee deal for both Germany and Turkey

The transformation of the crisis of the MENA region in 2011 into a "European Crisis" (Turhan, 2018) due to the refugee movements of Syrian refugees towards Europe in 2015 added a totally new complexity to the Turkish – German relations with both countries as central actors (Turhan, 2018). At the height of the refugee crisis in Europe, EU countries refusing to lock into Germany's open-door policy and domestic tensions due to the right-winged party's "Alternative for Germany" rise to political importance, Merkel turned to Turkey for the management of the refugee crisis (Turhan, 2018). Turkey, aware of Germany's "strategic dependency on Turkey" (Akkaya 2016, 40), offered its cooperation in exchange for a reward-mechanism that includes monetary support, deepening collaboration between Turkey and the EU, and concessions concerning visa liberalization (Turhan, 2018). Despite great progress in fulfilling the legal requirements, the process stalled when Turkey struggled to meet personal data protection standards (Turhan, 2018).

Conclusively, Turkish – German relations are highly complex on bilateral and EU levels and, although the cooperative connection persists as a constant, the day-to-day diplomatic communication changed

quite drastically according to the political circumstances of both countries. The refugee-deal however marks a crucial turning point where Germany entered in a direct strategic dependency on Turkey due to its isolation from its European partners resulting its refugee-policy and Turkey as the single possible partner left to manage this crisis with multi-level political implications. Turkey on the other hand found itself at the core of the crisis with Germany as the sole partner to negotiate it with while also being under stress by the destabilised neighbourhood. The refugee deal therefore is of great importance to understand the further developments in Turkish – German relations as both parties became highly interconnected and their bilateral dialogue got drastically influenced by the deal.

## 4.2. Emotion Discourse Analysis

The previous section offered a historical contextualization of the German-Turkish relationship in which the diplomatic dispute between the two states is situated. The following analysis explores the role emotions have played in Turkey's attempt to re-articulate power relations with Germany. The analysis will first offer some general observations and reflections on the sources, then explain the identified contextualized patterns and structures of emotional representations, as well as linguistic and stylistic patterns in the coded sources. It then proceeds to the empirical section's core – the emotion discourse analysis which traces the coded emotional representations in the bilateral interaction between Turkey and Germany. The analysis is structured chronologically as I contend that the sequences of incidents build upon one other in a spiraling dynamic of increasing escalation. The final section finally discusses the results of the analysis and identifies correlations of certain circumstances in terms of power re-articulations and heightened emotional representations in the discourse, to enhance our understanding of when do emotions actually do work.

### 4.2.1. General observations of coded sources

The analyzed sources contain of direct quotes by the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan or other state representatives in front of the parliament or on public speeches in Turkey. The immediate audience therefore was most of the time domestic, however all statements were reported on in the international and specifically German press. Hence, although the immediate audience was not German, the statements reached the German public. Additionally, there are several bilateral interviews given by Erdogan or AKP officials to German newspapers or news broadcast stations.

### 4.2.2. Coding of sources

#### Contextualized patterns

As described in the methodological section, emotions do not only appear in explicit forms of emotion terms or connotations, but also through framings and lenses of interpretation in the given context. Hence, the task was to identify contextualized emotional representations in the political discourse at

hand, that referred to the three key themes, that I define as crucial in Turkey's behavior towards Germany during the time under scrutiny: 1) Power hierarchies. 2) Referring to status adjustment. 3) Referring to state identity. The analysis of the sources has identified three recurring rhetorical patterns and structures, which are codified as follows: 1) Sending threats – as referring to power hierarchies. 2) Delegitimizing as referring to status adjustment and 3) Emotional Othering as referring to state identity.

*1) Threats to establish new power narrative (Pattern 1)*

The first theme to address the status quo in power hierarchies is the rhetoric pattern of sending threats. Since the EU-Turkey refugee agreement was signed, Turkey consistently threatened Germany as the agreement's main architect Turkey's borders to the European Union.

*2) Delegitimizing Germany's claim to moral authority as a mechanism to status adjustment (Pattern 2)*

The second theme of status adjustment corresponds with the rhetorical pattern of delegitimizing Germany and the EU as a norm giver and denying Germany the authority to articulate criticism in the realm of human rights, press freedom and democracy by flagging Germany's own shortcomings. It's a strategy for Turkey to redefine its status as a legitimate and norm-conform power, liberated from the 'paternalistic attitude' (Kaya 2018, 17) of its European partners. This pattern of delegitimization usually appeared when Turkey was criticized for its human rights and democracy violations to neutralize the criticism by public denial of Germany's normative power due to Germany's own shortcomings in history. It was expressed through reproaches and accusations targeting Germany and the EU in their role as a norm giver.

*3) Emotional Othering to build state identity (Pattern3)*

The third pattern identified is "Emotional Othering" through which Turkey rhetorically distinct itself from Germany and the West by highlighting its unique identity in contrast to the Western community. This refers to what Koschut has described as inside/outside dualism (2020). As state identity is inevitably linked to the process of status adjustment, the emotional representations described in the previous section also relate to identity building.

#### Linguistic patterns

Apart from the contextual structures of the analyzed sources, I identified the following linguistic and stylistic patterns: Erdogan's repeatedly used stylistic tools that is to address Germany, the EU, or even official persons like Angela Merkel directly by using the Turkish informal way of saying "you" has very impolite and pretentious connotations in the given context. Responses to criticism from Germany or the EU were accompanied by rhetorical questions such as "Who are you to talk to the president of

*Turkey?*” (Hurriyet Daily News 19.08.2017) using a condescended use of language. Further, when commenting Germany’s behavior Erdogan prefers descriptive words such as ‘hypocritical’, ‘irrational’ or ‘shameful’ to indicate his resentment and evaluate the behavior as completely inappropriate and not disrespectful. Also, emotional terms with a specific negative or positive connotation such as “terrorists”, “genocide”, “Nazism” or “friendship” repeatedly appear in the analyzed texts as key words eliciting negative or positive associations. Another frequent rhetorical form is sarcasm in polemical rhetorical questions to express anger and discontent with the target’s behavior. For example

“We can open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria anytime and we can put the refugees on buses ... So how will you deal with refugees if you don’t get a deal? Kill the refugees? [*provocation and stressing dependency through sarcasm*]”  
(Reuters 11.02.2016)

In the following these linguistic patterns are marked as “*negative*” or “*positive*”, “*emotion term/emotionally connotated term*”, or as “*provocation through sarcasm*”.

#### Timely patterns

The analysis starts in February 2016, shortly before the refugee deal between Turkey and the EU has been signed and scrutinizes in depth the exacerbated rhetoric underpinned with emotional representations of anger and resentment throughout 2016 and reaching its epitome in 2017. The analysis ends with the first signs of rapprochement and the initial steps of normalizing the bilateral relations in 2018.

#### 4.2.2. Analysis of emotional expressions and contextualized emotional meanings in the discourse between Turkey and Germany from 2016 – 2018

##### The refugee deal as an entry point for a new power narrative: Reversed dependency and threat of open borders

Given the complex and multidimensional bilateral relationship between Turkey and Germany as described in the historical overview, the refugee deal offered an ideal opportunity for Turkey to gain leverage and bargaining power over the EU and Germany. Being aware of the agreements’ importance for the EU’s inner stability, the Turkish government grasped the opportunity to take advantage of the EU’s weak position in the negotiation. The Turkish government repeatedly threatened the EU to let the deal fail and “open the borders” to establish a new narrative of power symmetries. Although the used words themselves do not necessarily have an emotional connotation, I argue for their potential to elicit the emotion “fear” among the audience – the European Union and respectively the German government and its public. The prospect of more refugees entering the EU was indeed a threatening scenario to many at that time and became the main security concern, with significant implications for the inner stability of the EU and Germany. In February 2016, even before the agreement was signed,

Erdogan told EU Commission's president Jean-Claude Juncker at the G20 summit in Antalya: "We can open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria any time and put the refugees on buses" [*Pattern 1: threatening EU and targeting emotion of fear in EU*] (Euro Observer 11.02.2016). Only a week later Erdogan added:

"We do not have the word 'idiot' [*Connotation of negative term 'idiot' implying EU does not expect Turkey to act upon its threats*] written on our foreheads. We will be patient, but we will do what we have to. Don't think that the planes and the buses are there for nothing" [*Pattern 1: re-emphasizing power position and emotional threat of opening borders*] (Euro Observer 11.02.2016)

Erdogan signaled Turkey was running out of patience waiting for the EU to make concessions regarding the "refuge deal". The Turkish government made its gained lever position clear and did not shy away from continuing to use this threatening scenario in the upcoming months, also emphasizing that these are no empty threats, but ready to be implemented. Thus, the narrative of "open borders" is employing an emotional threat, understood the context in which it was displayed.

Satirical Poem from Comedian Jan Böhmermann

Turkey's gained leverage through the refugee deal had significant implications for the political discourse in the following months. In March 2016, when two comedy programmes in Germany mocked Erdogan and his politics, the Turkish government reacted by demanding to delete the television broadcast online (The Guardian 29.03.2016) and to prosecute the comedian Jan Böhmermann for a satirical poem. The whole incident mounted in broad public indignation after the German public became aware of Angela Merkel admitting to the Turkish minister Ahmet Davutoglu that the poem was indeed a "deliberately abusive text" (Deutsche Welle 15.04.2016) and allegedly abandoned core principles of liberal democracy as it was not on her to make a judgement (ibid.). Her reaction was interpreted as an appeasement of Erdogan at a difficult juncture due to the refugee crisis and the negotiations of the refugee deal on the cost of free speech (ibid.). Allegedly, the refugee deal made the EU and Germany dependent to an extent, that they were even willing to give in on fundamental norms. It is unclear whether Erdogan felt personally offended, yet he did react in an angry manner by demanding to prosecute Böhmermann for the satirical piece and forced a reaction that unraveled unvarnished the weakness of the EU as a norm giver. Hence, the Turkish government's reaction can be contextualized as pattern 2 of analysis, the delegitimizing of the counterpart.

In the context of the increasing autocratic backlash at the time while having become an important cooperation partner to the EU through the refugee deal, Selim Yenel, the Turkish ambassador to the EU in an interview with Deutsche Welle is asked about Turkey's changing behavior and he explains how it has always been made clear by the EU that no matter what Turkey would do, they would not be seen as Europeans: "We were always seen as an outsider." (Deutsche Welle 20.04.2016) [*Referring to emotional narrative as Turkey being in the supplicant position representing a sense of frustration.*] He

further explained, that even if the EU were to accept Turkey, it would be solely out of interest and not because of a mutual feeling of belonging: “We are not actually part of the family [*positively connotated emotion term of belonging*], we are not accepted into the European idea [*expression of feeling excluded*].” (ibid.). He referred here also to the migration crisis, which brought Turkey suddenly back at the center of attention. In the interview, Yenel made clear that Turkey intends to emancipate from its supplicant position and wants to be seen as an equal partner to the EU and to Germany (ibid).

#### Armenia genocide resolution

Two months after the refugee agreement was signed (18 March 2016), the German parliament adopted the resolution on declaring the killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 a genocide. The Turkish government responded with a press release, referring to the resolution as “a disgrace to the reputation of this body” [*explicit use of negative emotion term and explicit expression of anger*] (Republic of Türkiye 02.06.2016). It further defamed Germany’s resolution stating that “Turcophobia and Islamophobia reaching to the level of racism [*negative emotional connotation*], current developments in domestic politics and foreign policy, some arrogant and opportunist politicians [*negative emotion terms*], and the deep trauma created by Germany’s record of past crimes against humanity and genocide extending from Namibia to the Holocaust [*negative emotional connotation*] may possibly be mentioned among the reasons lying behind this policy” (ibid.). Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu further tweeted: “The way to close the dark pages of your own history is not by defaming the histories of other countries with irresponsible and baseless decisions” [describing Germany with negatively connotated adjectives] (Twitter in New York Times 02.06.2016). By framing the resolution as being based on Germany’s own problematic history and accusing Germany of being *racist* and *turcophobic* and its decision making as *irresponsible* and *baseless*, the Turkish government reverses the norm discourse on the genocide according to the logic of pattern 2, delegitimizing the moral integrity of Germany, which has a large significance for Turkey to readjust its status in an attempt to deliberate itself from the paternalistic attitude of Europe (Kaya 2018, 17). If Turkey were to adopt the Armenian genocide as such, it would have not only implications about repair funds but also on Turkey’s entire historiography. Hence, the AKP government’s framing of the issue unvarnished displays the governments’ anger and disapproval upon the resolution. It was a diplomatically delicate situation for Germany as it had been under pressure because of the refugee agreement while simultaneously being accused to be seen as caving to pressure from Turkey to compromise on Western values following the recent incident with the German comedian Jan Böhmermann (New York Times 02.06.2016). Shortly after the resolution had passed, Turkey denied permission for a senior German official of defense and some parliamentarians to visit the Incirlik military base which shall have increased importance later

(Deutsche Welle 23.06.2016). This can be labeled as a form of withholding cooperation, which is also a form of displaying anger and disapproval.

#### The failed military coup on 15 July 2016 and its aftermath

On 15 July 2016, Turkey experienced a coup attempt by parts of the military that led to a major domestic crisis. Erdogan immediately declared the state of emergency, which substantially enlarged the president's scope of action, and which eventually lasted until 19 April 2018 (Spiegel Online 18.01.2018). The Turkish government took drastic measures that also affected its opposition: more than 100,000 people were detained, and almost 50,000 people have been arrested for specific charges (CNN 02.06.2016). The German government strongly condemned the coup and its perpetrators, yet the German government also stressed that Germany stands on the side of those who "defend democracy and the rule of law" (France24 16.07.2016) and urged the Turkish government to deal with the aftermath of failed coup attempt "according to the rule of law" (ibid.). The coup attempt changed Turkey's domestic and international politics and has been described as the turning point in which Turkey's anti-Western discourse became more drastic and when the hostile rhetoric towards Germany intensified (Kaliber 2019).

Interestingly shortly after the failed coup, the Turkish government asked for an interview with President Erdogan on German public broadcast station ARD (Schramm in Tagesschau 26.07.2016). Erdogan displayed a very calm and even sympathetic image of himself serenely answering all questions of the journalist. He still pointed out the parts of the EU-Turkey agreement that from his perspective the EU did not hold onto yet, but he did not display any angry emotions at that point (ibid.). This interview can be interpreted as a strategic attempt to maintain its just newly gained status of an important partner to Germany.

Turkey interpreted the official state visit of German state secretary Markus Ederer after the coup attempt as a sign of disfavor, when after such a deep crisis the ally does not send its highest-ranking officials to demonstrate its support (Deutsche Welle 08.08.2016). Looking back at that time, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu also told in an interview that he was disappointed about the reactions coming from Europe in the night of the attempted military coup and speculated that Europe might have hoped for a regime change (Deutsche Welle 31.05.2018). Here a feeling of frustration becomes apparent.

Moreover, Erdogan had planned to speak on a video feed at a pro-Erdogan demonstration on 31 July in Cologne shortly after the military coup, but the live speech had been banned due to security reasons. Erdogan commented this by saying: "I don't believe in the German judiciary and I don't have any respect for the German judiciary in this context." (Deutsche Welle 13.08.2016) [*explicit expression of disrespect to Germany and its rule of law*] Referring to Merkel who said that the German judiciary is



independent, he added: "But what kind of independent judiciary is that? An independent judiciary must decide and judge fairly" (ibid.). *[using rhetorical question to emphasize his disrespect for Germany's judiciary]*.

#### Gülen Movement

Responding to Germany who had granted members of the Gülen movement to seek asylum, Erdogan commented this in the framing of rhetorical pattern 2 with: "Germany, we are concerned by your stance. You are encouraging terrorism) *[negative coding for disapproving the other's behavior and emotionally connotated reproach]*" (Euronews: 15.11.2016) questioning Germany's moral integrity. Throughout the following months Erdogan continued to portray the Gülen movement as a sinister force supported by foreigners seeking to undermine Turkey and thus, demanded Germany to extradite these persons; however, the Federal Government did not comply with this demand (Deutsche Welle 28.07.2017). Erdogan thereafter challenged Germany at a conference:

„Germany is abetting terrorists. [term with negative emotional connotation]. We gave them the dossiers. We gave Merkel 4500 dossiers but have not received an answer for a single one of them [reproach that Germany is not supporting the fight against terrorism]" (Euronews 07.08.2017).

#### EU parliament and freezing membership talks

Responding to Turkey's autocratic and undemocratic dealing with the coup's aftermath, the European parliament urged its member states' governments to freeze EU membership talks by a symbolic vote shortly before a crucial meeting of EU ministers on Turkey's membership bid would take place (The Guardian 24.11.2016). The parliament's vote was non-binding but yet, it caused an angry reaction by Erdogan reminding the EU of its power position:

"You clamored [sarcastic reference to the EU's fear of refugees] when 50,000 refugees came to Kapikule [border crossing between Bulgaria and Turkey] and started wondering what would happen if the border gates were opened. [...]. If you go any further, these border gates will be opened. Neither I nor my people will be affected by these empty threats [emphasizing emotional connotation of open borders in the EU; threatening EU and emphasizing the seriousness]" (Reuter 25.11.2016).

He added: "Don't forget, the West needs Turkey *[emphasizing the other's dependency]*" (ibid.), pointing out once again the EU's and Germany's dependency due to the refugee deal. This exemplifies the use of pattern 1 'threatening' and referring to changing power hierarchies and the dependencies of European countries on Turkey's good will.

#### Deniz Yücel

In early 2017, the German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yücel was accused to be a German spy and a supporter of the PKK and got arrested (The Guardian 28.02.2017). Erdogan addressed Germany directly criticizing the Istanbul-based German consulate's decision to grant Yücel refuge, before delivering him to the Turkish authorities:

“They need to be put on trial for aiding and abetting terrorism [*negative emotional connotation*], the situation is so obvious and clear. Now they are asking us: ‘why are you whipping up the issue?’ Just you wait, we have only just started. We are going to expose all that you have done one by one in several international meetings. [*threat to unravel all norms that Germany has not lived up to*]” (euronews 04.03.2017).

In this note Erdogan utilized a combination of rhetorical patterns 1 and 2, in threatening Germany on revealing alleged misconduct that has so far remained hidden, while denying Germany's integrity by playing a false game in secretly sabotaging on Turkish security interests.

#### Turkey's referendum campaign

In April 2017 Turkey hold a constitutional referendum which proposed 18 amendments to the constitution that liberalized the president's power. Given the large Turkish diaspora in Germany of over three million people of whom a large number is entitled to vote in Turkey, the AKP decided to campaign for the referendum in Germany and other European countries (Deutsche Welle 05.03. 2017). However, many local authorities in Germany banned Turkish political campaigns to take place in their jurisdiction, citing security concerns for the event's locations. [...]. This decision elicited a very angry response of President Erdogan who accused both the Netherlands and Germany of applying “Nazi methods” [*negative emotional connotation*] (ibid.), by prohibiting Turkish people to pursuit their democratic rights (ibid.). The German government clearly stated that this kind of rhetoric has got to stop: “These comparisons of the federal republic of Germany with national socialism must stop. They are not worthy of the close ties and relations between Germany and Turkey and our two countries politically, socially as NATO partners and economically.” (Der Spiegel 09.03.2017).

Shortly after, Erdogan even targeted Chancellor Angela Merkel directly in a televised speech: “When we call them Nazis, they (Europe) get uncomfortable. They rally together in solidarity. [*being sarcastic about European norm community*] Especially Merkel. But you are right now employing Nazi measures.” – Erdogan said the last sentence using the unofficial, personal way of saying “you” in Turkish addressing Merkel (Deutsche Welle 19.03.2017). He claimed, “A new page had been opened in the ongoing fight [*negatively connotated term*] against our country” (ibid.).

These accusations and denunciations can be related to the second pattern of status adjustment through delegitimization, intermingled with the third pattern of ‘othering’ by drawing a distinct line

between Turkey and Germany clearly being on the 'wrong side'. Erdogan further referred to Europe's fear of refugees as a source for their in his perception unreasonable behavior. These baseless and hostile accusations can be marked as the peak of escalation between both countries and for the first time evoked a strong reaction from the German government, who hereafter made clear that Erdogan had crossed a line. The Foreign minister at that time, Sigmar Gabriel said he warned the Turkish Government not to continue this "shocking" rhetoric (Deutsche Welle 19.03.2017).

Yet, at an event for local journalists, after rallies in Germany had again been cancelled, Erdogan said at an event for Turkish journalists: "If Europe continues this way, no European in any part of the world can walk safely on the streets [threatening EU]. If you clear the way to this dangerous path, you will sustain the biggest damage. We, as Turkey, call on Europe to respect human rights and democracy." (Reuters 22.03.2017), clearly applying the pattern 1 as a harsh threat to Europe as well as pattern 2 that quite aggressively challenges the normative high ground of the addressee. Erdogan pointed out again his view of Germany's decision-making regarding the campaigning as anti-democratic and the right of assembly. While he is restricting these rights gradually for Turkish citizens, he constructs Germany as the state applying double standards and not granting these rights to the Turkish German community. Cavosoglu explained later in 2018 that this statement was meant as a warning towards Germany that if they are hypocritical about terrorism and allow terrorists like the PKK to be active in their country, Germany will be not safe anymore (Deutsche Welle 01.08.2018).

Yet it must be evaluated as a compelling threat against the EU and respectively Germany, that intended to target emotions of fear. Furthermore, this is a complex example of all three patterns of analysis present, by threatening to exploit the situational power hierarchy favoring Turkey (pattern 1), delegitimizing European states by presenting Turkey's status morally uplifted (pattern 2), and othering the opposite to establish the Turkish identity to be the superior side in this situation, lecturing Europe on human rights and democratic values (pattern 3).

On 6 July 2017, Erdogan gave a one-on-one interview with the large German newspaper 'ZEIT Online' in which he commented on the incidences of 'Nazi' accusations of the referendum campaign referring to the large number of Turkish populations in Germany:

„ (...) German authorities have issued directives everywhere that Erdoğan should not be allowed to speak. What kind of a mentality is that? That is extremely ugly. I have never experienced such a thing. Germany is committing suicide. That is political suicide.“ (ZEIT Online 06.07.2017).

During that interview Erdogan further emphasized that despite being disappointed with the West due to the EU process that has been ongoing since 1963, Turkey is going to remain patient and persistent:

“The EU has been giving us the runaround since 1963 [indicating frustration]. And they are still making us wait at the door. But we have patience; we will see what happens. We aren't just any country. [emphasizing self-perception of deserving a certain status] We have a deeply rooted tradition in our state that prevents us from reacting emotionally [denying any reference to being emotional]. Before we take a step, we deliberate and calculate.” (ibid.).

#### Granted Asylum for Turkish soldiers in Germany

In the aftermath of the attempted coup, high ranked Turkish militaries have been granted asylum in Germany to escape Turkish legal persecution (Deutsche Welle 08.05.2017). In a press statement released by the Turkish government, the decision is deplored as “a step that is incompatible with the spirit of alliance and harmful” (Republic of Türkiye 11.05.2017) for the relationship of Turkey and Germany. The statement goes on to say, the German government has “disregarded the democratic principles and values” (ibid.), challenging the German side's narrative to be concerned of the individuals' basic rights, in best manner of rhetorical pattern 2. Turkey accuses Germany of not doing justice to their alliance by granting asylum to those soldiers. It frames Germany as the enemy who supports the terrorists trying to overthrow the Turkish government. This framing is underpinned by representations of anger through the choice of words. While constructing Germany as the terrorist supporter, Turkey simultaneously distracts from the question of investigation on the coup. Since the suspects are not extradited, a trial cannot take place and therefore the question of validating their guilt becomes obsolete.

#### Visiting ban of military base

As a response to Germany's decision on granting asylum to military personnel, Turkey revived the problem of Incirlik military base and denied German parliamentarians that intended to visit German troops, access to the base (Reuters 15.05.2017). Sigmar Gabriel hereafter made clear that visiting rights must be provided, otherwise the troops will be removed from Turkey. Eventually, the German troops were moved from Turkey to a new base in Jordan (ibid.). The visiting ban posed another an angry signal in form of withholding cooperation in a realm in which the two NATO allies have been cooperated for decades.

#### Arbitrary arrests

After in July 2017, the German Human Rights activist Peter Steudtner was set under arrest by Turkish authorities who accused him of having links to terrorist groups and at that time, nine other German citizens, including Deniz Yücel and Mesale Tolu were being held in Turkish custody (New York Times 2017), the German Foreign Office called its citizens to be cautious when travelling to Turkey. It further warned it might cut off export insurance guarantees and other forms of economic cooperation with Turkey, due to the arbitrary behavior of Turkish authorities (New York Times 20.07.2017). Cavusoglu

responded by calling Gabriel's remarks "threats and blackmail" that were not "worthy a serious country" [*pattern 2 of delegitimizing the other's actions*] (Ney York Times 20.07.2017) and repeated the accusations of Germany supporting terrorists and the PKK.

In July 2017, besides the rather negative emotional expressions in forms of contextualized threats, accusations and reproaches, also first signs of reproachment occurred when Turkish state officials referred to the normally good and close friendship:

"The friendship between Germany and Turkey dates back centuries [*positive emotional connotation and stressing length of good relation*]. Yes, at the moment we have some disagreements [*stressing that disagreements are temporary*]. Yes, we in Turkey would like more solidarity from Germany in the fight against terror [*pointing out main issue of disagreement*]. But German-Turkish ties will survive this stress test [*stressing again relationship will be back to normal*]" (Spiegel Online on 01.07.2017).

This is an important indicator that shows that Turkey is in no way turning its back to Germany, but it is assuming that its cooperative alliance will remain, and the relationship will go back to normal once the disagreements are overcome.

#### German National Elections

In the campaign period of German national elections in September 2017, Erdogan has called on the Turkish people living in Germany not to vote for "those parties who have been engaged in such an aggressive disrespectful attitude towards Turkey" (euronews 19.08.2017). Gabriel hereafter, condemned Erdogan's comments as an "unprecedented act of interference" (Deutsche Welle 04.06.2017) in Germany's sovereignty. Erdogan in turn reacted to Gabriel's comment during an advisory council meeting: "Now they have a foreign minister who does not know his limits. Who are you to talk to the President of Turkey? Talk to the Foreign Minister of Turkey. Know your limits. He is trying to teach us a lesson. What is your background in politics? How old are you? [*very condescending language*]" (Hurriyet Daily News 19.08.2017).

In September 2017, in a TV debate Merkel both Merkel and her Social Democrat rival Martin Schulz called for an end to Turkey's membership negotiations as part of their party programme for the upcoming election (Reuter 04.09.2017). This was a step that Foreign Minister Gabriel along with several EU foreign ministers had discouraged as he feared it would give Erdogan "more anti Europe ammunition" (Hintz 2019, 166).

#### Signs of rapprochement

End of 2017, something that was called a 'silent rapprochement' began between Turkey and Germany (DW 25.12.2017). After in July German Foreign Minister had announced a "reorientation" of

policymaking towards Turkey, Germany had taken some sharper measures against Turkey: German businesses were advised not to invest and do business in Turkey, further travel warnings were updated (Deutsche Welle 15.08.2017).

Beginning of November both the German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and Turkish Foreign minister met informally in Antalya to talk about their relationship. Finally in the beginning of December Yücel was taken out of isolation in prison, and Mesale Tolu was released (Deutsche Welle 25.12.2017). 2018 began with a reproachful statement by Turkish foreign minister Cavusoglu: "I think that both sides are ready to normalize relations [*positive emotion term*]". Also, Erdogan had announced: "There were problems, but our last talks were extremely good." He further added: "Of course, we want our relations with the EU, with the countries of the EU, to be good. (...) We are forced to reduce enemies and increase friends [*using negatively and positively connotated terms*]." (Deutsche Welle 01.01.2018). During a visit in the German city Goslar visiting Sigmar Gabriel Cavusoglu said that "his government expects Germany to "consider Turkey as an equal partner." He further added: "If Germany takes one step toward us, Turkey takes two steps toward Germany. This is not weakness; this comes from the heart. But if Germany threatens Turkey, Turkey will strike back. [*pattern 1 – threatening Germany*]" (ibid.) Yet it has been argued that the prospects of normalization between both parties, remain limited (Hintz 2019). Turkish-German relationship remains to be mainly interest-based: Germany seemed to be concerned about Turkey's willingness to host Syrian refugees as the welcoming attitude of Turkish citizens towards Syrians had shifted. Turkey on the other side urgently needed the international legitimacy to stabilize the Turkish lira and to encourage foreign and especially German investment that had declined due to the shaken-up relationship (Hintz 2019).

#### 4.3. Discussion of Analysis

The emotion discourse analysis has traced the German-Turkish discourse in the time frame 2016 – 2018 for emotional representations that underpinned the processes of status differentiation and identity building. The following discussion aims at summarizing the identified emotional expressions and the contextualized emotional meanings that have shaped the discourse, and by that drawing initial conclusions. As described in the theoretical framework, taking emotions seriously broadens the scope of meanings in discourse and thus opens additional realms of our understanding (Koschut 2020).

The following discussion first looks at the dynamics of the identified negative and positive emotional representations in the discourse, then looks at the effect emotions had on the audience and finally discusses what work emotions did in the diplomatic dispute.

Dynamic of increasing anger and signs of rapprochement

Looking at the chain of events outlined above, one can observe sequences of several little fires that have created a spiraling dynamic of increasing escalation between Turkey and Germany, constituted through hostile rhetoric and withholding cooperation. As part of the hostile rhetoric, one can repeatedly determine representations of anger and frustration publicly displayed by Turkey as responses to perceived disrespect of its international status and as part of the identity-building process. Interestingly the rather extreme statements of Erdogan or his inner AKP circle that transmitted threats and accusations have all been articulated in front of a domestic audience or in front of the Turkish parliament. Whenever the president or one of the government's representatives addressed a non-Turkish audience in interviews with German newspapers, they still did not deny these statements, but always were reasoned in a context always accompanied with emphasizing the long-term relationship and the importance of a continuing partnership. From that I conclude a dynamic of publicly displaying an angry attitude towards the German government, delegitimizing any criticism concerning its new domestic policymaking by pointing out the other's shortcomings, but just in so far as it does not seriously put the partnership at risk.

In the situation of changing domestic politics, constructing an 'other' as the enemy is with no doubt an important element and thus, it is also normal that domestic politics influence foreign politics and diplomatic relations. The national government seeks to maximize their own credibility among the domestic population while it simultaneously tries to minimize the adverse consequences of foreign developments. It is a constant dilemma whether one chooses to respond to an attack or criticism in this case, or whether one lets the criticism uncommented which potentially plays into the hands of the other, as not responding could be interpreted as "loss of face, reputation, and deterrent capacity" (Adler 2019, 201, 2014). This effect can be applied in both directions – be it from the Turkish or the German perspective. While the Turkish government had to maintain credible in light of changing domestic politics and the accompanied international criticism, the German government had to preserve its normative credibility by facing the refugee crisis and has thus become dependent on a state with a weaker normative reputation.

Looking at it from a Turkish perspective, it seemed like Erdogan pays close attention to well balance the advantages of an angry behavior towards Germany with the potentially severe consequences of lasting damage to the bilateral relations. Hall argued that one characteristic of displaying anger is also that the party displaying anger easily falls into a dynamic where it feels required to step into further escalation to maintain its credibility (Hall 2015, 47). This might help explaining the spiraling dynamic of increasing escalation one could observe on the public display.

Effects on German audience

Following step 3 of Koschuts's theoretical framework as described in the methodological section, I consider the effect emotions had on the German audience. Without expanding into a comprehensive analysis, I briefly outline the German government's general response to Turkey's behavior and offer some reflections on what immediate effects could be observed.

The German government and the Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel chose to take a de-escalation approach and tried to balance between the constraints of domestic policy and the necessities of foreign policy (Deutsche Welle 25.12.2017). The New York Times has argued that German officials have sought throughout "to maintain a calm, patient tone", even when they expressed their concerns (New York Times 20.07.2017). However, this rather reserved attitude has also led to a lot of criticism within the German parliament. Many political commentators wished for a stronger response towards Turkey and criticized the refugee deal as a mistake that had put Germany and the EU in the dependency of an anti-democratic state. Hence, Turkey's behavior has arguably led to much discord within the German parliament and pointed out the shortcomings of the German government's way of dealing with the refugee crisis that had caused much inner destabilization during 2015. The Spokesman of the German Foreign Ministry, Martin Schäfer explained the government's prudent approach in a time with little room to maneuver: "Who benefits, if we answer with the same sort of language the Turkish president uses? (...) Our impression is the harder we strike back, the more we fall victim to the tactics of the governing party in Turkey." (Deutsche Welle 20.03.2017). In his view responding with insults and threats would only benefit Erdogan to gain more support among the Turkish population. Hence, it might be possible that the Turkish government had calculated for a stronger reaction for maximal benefit. In any case, the Turkish government managed to be at the center of German political attention for almost two years and successfully anchored the narrative of Germany's and the EU's dependency in public German discourse. Even though the developments have shown that also the German governments had several levers towards Turkey, the refugee deal has successfully been established as the reason why Germany has not reacted more strongly. Furthermore, Turkey's behavior also seemed to have elicited disagreements within the European Union about whether to continue or end Turkey's EU membership bid. This also unravels that the EU who has always claimed its position as a norm giver, does not hold up to this image, but that it is equally interest-based.

## Chapter 5

### 5.1. Conclusion

The rather general research question of what role do emotions play here, has been answered by conducting a discourse analysis that unraveled the emotional underpinnings in the discourse and identified repeating patterns and structures. I have illustrated how the Turkish government



underpinned its processes of status adjustment and identity building with representations of negative emotions of anger and resentment, in forms of threats, reproaches and accusations and how it tarnished Germany's claim to moral authority by pointing out its shortcomings. In the following, I intend to point out correlations between certain circumstances in the diplomatic row and points of increased emotional representations in the discourse, to approach the question how we know that emotions did play a role in re-articulating power relations.

What the discourse analysis has shown clearly, is that the refugee deal made in March 2016, was a decisive gain of power for Turkey, that builds the foundation for the whole process of status adjustment and identity building throughout the upcoming months. After years of being in the supplicant position as an EU membership applicant, and several ups and downs in the EU-Turkey and German-Turkish relationships, the position as the gatekeeper of the EU has given Turkey considerable impetus in its development as a rising power. The refugee deal finally gives Turkey the status it perceives to deserve – being seen as an equal partner to the EU and Germany. This is also what Foreign minister Cavosoglu stated in early 2018 after he signaled that the Turkish government wants to normalize its relations with Germany. The Turkish government does not shy away from repeatedly emphasizing this new dependency and using the emotional threat scenario of opening the borders as leverage against the EU and Germany. It was a moment where Turkey gained actual bargaining power that gave Turkey momentum in its attempt to re-position itself in the international community. Yet, this momentum of strength did not remain for long. The Armenia genocide resolution subdued that newly gained status and the reaction was underpinned with very hostile language and angry denunciations of Germany being turcophobic and Islamophobic. A few months later, the attempted military coup displayed a significant weakness of the Turkish government, same as its aftermath that elicited lots of international criticism and led to a democratic backlash. Undergoing fundamental domestic policy changes, while constantly receiving criticisms from the Western alliance concerning human rights violations, has put Turkey into a politically delicate situation where it had to simultaneously defend its status inside and outside to the international community. Hence, constructing the other as the 'enemy' who is misbehaving and not grasping the seriousness of the situation Turkey sees itself in, is a strategic mechanism to create a feeling of community among the inside – the Turkish population. Simultaneously building its new state identity in contrast to the other – the transatlantic community and in particular the European Union which Turkey had been trying to enter for so long. These processes of reasserting status and building were injected with emotional representations of anger in form of reproaches and accusations that mainly intended to point out the moral shortcomings of the EU and respectively Germany. The accusations worked to reverse the narrative of who is holding the moral integrity and holds to the norm of respecting human rights and

democratic principles and anchored an image of a Turkey that is not being rightfully treated by the West.

While some of Turkey's reproaches towards Germany and the European Union reasonably pointed out their shortcomings – especially concerning the refugee deal, the accusations of Germany using Nazi measures were out of line and so absurd, that they seem to have rather weakened Turkey's stance. They were rather seen as tantrums that could not be taken seriously. Maybe, these incidents were in fact not strategic but real feelings of anger and outrage that Erdogan displayed publicly.

On the other side, the effectiveness of Turkey's newly gained power is made clearly visible when the EU and Germany showed its willingness to continue its cooperation with Turkey despite the serious violations of human rights in Turkey in exchange for managing the number of refugees coming to Europe. Further, Turkey's displays of anger in forms of withholding cooperation on the Incirlik incident or the arbitrary arrests of German-Turkish citizens who were held as hostages, Turkey attempted to demonstrate its power once again. Yet this behavior overstepped a line that Germany quickly responded to with putting economic pressure on Turkey.

The thesis concludes that the display of negative emotions did not lead to an actual power shift as power and status recognition are sticky and relational and hence cannot be changed easily. Yet, the display of anger in public discourse has led to a lot of attention in German public discourse, and thus at least challenged the power relations and established awareness among the German government and the European Union that Turkey's self-perception has changed. While the refugee deal has given Turkey the needed scope of action, the mutual interest-based relationship with Germany simultaneously also served as a relatively safe ground for Turkey's emancipation process of adjusting its status in the international community.

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