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Framing the Israel-Hamas War:

Discursive Europeanization of German Foreign Policy in Times of Crisis

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On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorised assistance on it.

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Abstract

Over the past decade, EU Foreign Policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been marked by internal divisions, a lack of coordination, and indecisiveness. This assessment extends to the EU's reaction to the Israel-Hamas War since October 7, 2023. While German Foreign Policy since the 2000s had incorporated common positions such as the two-state solution and supported EU integration, it has often acted independently, favouring minilateral and bilateral initiatives over EU fora and enabling Israeli unilateralism. Despite growing frustration with the Israeli government since the 2010s, Germany's commitment to a 'special' relationship with Israel has remained unwavering. This has influenced Germany's aversion to imposing conditions or offering open criticism, including within the EU context. Given the highly intergovernmental nature of EU Foreign Policy, the role of supranational elements in connection with member-state-partaking in EU deliberations has been undervalued, particularly concerning the conflict and German Foreign Policy.

In response, the thesis investigates how German Foreign Policy has indeed adapted and projected its positions to the EU-level, employing the concept of Europeanization and discourse analysis. By examining the evolution of framing of problems, solutions, and motivations articulated by high-level German and EU actors, it investigates interdiscursive connections and pressures that permit and constrain foreign policymaking and potentially precede formal consensus. The crisis of EU Foreign Policy triggered by the Israel-Hamas War has led to the re-articulation and competition of new frames, creating unique opportunities for foreign policy change. By capturing and comparing frames in a variety of high-level texts including speeches, interviews, and press releases from early 2023 to March 2024, the thesis demonstrates how German and EU actors have initially been discursively disconnected, engaged in competition and articulation in October, and gradually aligned by March. Although German discursive projection has been limited and the EU's role in German discourse kept being disregarded, German actors have, nevertheless, progressively adopted frames initially developed at the EU level, in turn shaping German Foreign Policy. Thus, the thesis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the impact of EU membership on national foreign policy and vice versa.

Kurzfassung

In den letzten zehn Jahren war die EU-Außenpolitik gegenüber dem israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikt durch interne Spaltungen, mangelnde Koordination und Unentschlossenheit gekennzeichnet. Diese Einschätzung gilt auch für die Reaktion der EU auf den Krieg zwischen Israel und Hamas seit dem 7. Oktober 2023. Während die deutsche Außenpolitik seit den 2000er Jahren gemeinsame Positionen wie die Zweistaatenlösung inkorporierte und EU-Integration unterstützte, handelte sie oft unabhängig, bevorzugte minilaterale und bilaterale Initiativen gegenüber EU-Fora und ermöglichte israelischen Unilateralismus. Trotz wachsender Frustration mit der israelischen Regierung seit den 2010er Jahren ist Deutschlands Engagement für eine „besondere" Beziehung zu Israel ungebrochen, ebenso wie Deutschlands Ablehnung von Konditionalität und offener Kritik, auch im EU-Kontext. Angesichts des stark intergouvernementalen Charakters von EU-Außenpolitik wurde die Rolle supranationaler Elemente in Verbindung mit der Beteiligung an den EU-Beratungen unterbewertet, insbesondere im Hinblick auf den Konflikt und die deutsche Außenpolitik.

Als Antwort darauf untersucht diese Arbeit, wie die deutsche Außenpolitik ihre Positionen tatsächlich an die EU-Ebene angepasst und auf diese projiziert hat, indem sie das Konzept der ‚Europeanization' und Diskursanalyse anwendet. Durch die Untersuchung des Framings von Problemen, Lösungen und Motivationen, die von hochrangigen deutschen und EU-AkteurInnen artikuliert wurden, werden interdiskursive Verbindungen und Zwänge untersucht, die außenpolitische Entscheidungen ermöglichen und einschränken und möglicherweise einem formalen Konsens vorausgehen. Die Krise der EU-Außenpolitik, die durch den Krieg zwischen Israel und Hamas ausgelöst wurde, hat dazu geführt, dass neue Frames neu artikuliert werden und miteinander konkurrieren, wodurch sich einzigartige Möglichkeiten für außenpolitische Veränderungen ergeben. Durch die Erfassung und den Vergleich von Frames in einer Vielzahl von hochrangigen Texten, darunter Reden, Interviews und Pressemitteilungen von Anfang 2023 bis März 2024, zeigt die Arbeit, wie Frames von deutschen und EU-AkteurInnen, zunächst diskursiv voneinander getrennt, im Oktober miteinander konkurrierten und sich bis März anglichen. Obwohl die deutsche Projektion begrenzt war und die Rolle der EU im deutschen Diskurs immer wieder vernachlässigt wurde, haben deutsche AkteurInnen dennoch ursprünglich auf EU-Ebene entwickelten Frames übernommen. Damit trägt die Arbeit zu einem differenzierteren Verständnis der Auswirkungen der EU-Mitgliedschaft auf die nationale Außenpolitik und vice versa bei.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BMZ ..... *German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development*
CFSP ..... *Common Foreign and Security Policy*
CSDP ..... *Common Security and Defense Policy*
EC ..... *European Community*
ECSC ..... *European Coal and Steel Community*
EEAS ..... *European External Action Service*
EFP ..... *EU Foreign Policy*
EMP ..... *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*
ENP ..... *European Neighbourhood Policy*
EP ..... *European Parliament*
EPC ..... *European Political Community*
EU ..... *European Union*
EUBAM ..... *EU Border Assistance Mission*
EUCO ..... *European Council*
EUPOL COPPS ..... *EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories*
FAC ..... *Foreign Affairs Council*
GDR ..... *German Democratic Republic*
HR ..... *High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs*
ICC ..... *International Criminal Court*
IDF ..... *Israel Defence Forces*
MEPP ..... *Middle East Peace Process*
MFA ..... *German Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
MS ..... *EU Member State(s)*
PA ..... *Palestinian Authority*
PIJ ..... *Palestinian Islamic Jihad*
UfM ..... *Union for the Mediterranean*
UK ..... *United Kingdom*
UNGA ..... *United Nations General Assembly*
UNRWA ..... *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*
UNSC ..... *United Nations Security Council*
US ..... *United States (of America)*
WEU ..... *Western European Union*

Introduction

On October 21, 2023, representatives from over two dozen states and international organisations, met for the 'Cairo Peace Summit', discussing possible solutions for the Israel-Hamas War. The war had erupted after the killing of over 1,400 people by Hamas on October 7 and was followed by the "Operation Swords of Iron" by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), leading to an unprecedented crisis in Gaza. Guests of the summit included political leaders and foreign ministers from EU Member States (MS), the European Union (EU), the Palestinian Authority (PA), Arab States, and others. The officials present, however, could not agree on a joint statement to call for peace, the initial raison d'être of the Summit. Several drafts were allegedly proposed, but the political dissent was unbreachable, in particular between members of the EU. Was the statement to acknowledge the Israeli right to self-defence or/and to condemn bombardments and displacement in Gaza? Was it to call for a 'humanitarian pause', a 'ceasefire', or 'proportionality'?

Only six days later, still no unified European position was to be seen in voting on the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution ES-10/21. The resolution did not explicitly mention Hamas, Israel's right to self-defence, and called for an immediate "humanitarian truce". While France and Spain supported the resolution, Germany abstained, while the United States, Israel, and others rejected it. The EU showed remarkable disagreement. Later, High Representative (HR) Borrell (2024) commented: "Our lack of unity has weakened our credibility when it comes to defending international law. […] When 153 countries call for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, we struggle to see it the same way". Germany's Foreign Minister, on the other hand, released a statement arguing that Germany "was looking at this conflict from our own point of view and against the background of our own history", not even mentioning a common EU position (Baerbock 2023). As an unnamed EU diplomat is quoted (in Moens 2024): "It's a disgrace. Europe is nowhere in this discussion".

This thesis, therefore, investigates the claim whether 'Europe' or the EU were truly 'nowhere in this discussion'. Given the Israeli-Hamas War represents an unprecedent crisis of EU foreign policy in context of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), it studies how this crisis has affected German foreign policy and crisis response and, in turn, how Germany affected EU foreign policy. It therefore asks the question:

RQ: How has the development of the German foreign policy discourse during the Israel-Hamas War influenced and been influenced by its participation in processes of European foreign policymaking?

First, the thesis applies the theoretical framework of Europeanization, analysing national and EU foreign policy as subject to adaptational pressures ('downloading') and actors of projection ('uploading') in the EU-arena. Second, it builds on a social constructivist approach, understanding political discourse as producing meaning constitutive for foreign policy actions and decisions. It therefore connects to the important yet undervalued discursive dimension of

Europeanization. Third, on a methodological level, it introduces Framing Theory by Snow and Benford (1988) to Europeanization literature, i.e., the investigation of how frames of problems, solutions, and motivations are constructed, to observe how important German and EU actors have influenced and been influenced in discourse.

By analysing framing of the most saliant topics of the crisis in high-level 'texts', most prominently of the German Chancellery and Foreign Ministry as well as the European Council, the Foreign Affairs Council, Commission, and External Action Service from the beginning of 2023 to March 2024, the thesis examines whether and how discursive Europeanization processes are detectable and how different frames developed differently over a period of time.

The question is of high practical and empirical value. Although EU Foreign Policy processes are both intergovernmental and increasingly supranational, its decision-making has often been reduced to rational intergovernmentalism or methodological statism or, on the contrary, functional and unidirectional pressure. As Europeanization literature has addressed these shortcomings, it has primarily focused on non-discursive change of policy or procedures. Upon this, the studies that investigate discursive Europeanization often focus on the long-term substantial adaption of identity rather than (short-term) mobilisations for policy. While the thesis also addresses changes of policy, it takes a step back and investigates how policy is legitimised and located in discourse, i.e., how policy and discourse are connected, and how this discourse is subject to Europeanization processes, bi-directionally and in the short-term. It therefore contributes to a more comprehensive assessment of the internal 'power' of EU Foreign Policy, often disregarded as ineffective in context of the conflict, and to an assessment of the role of German foreign policy as part of EU Foreign Policy. As Germany has become increasingly more "central" to European integration and decision-making, its positioning in a high-level crisis is all the more important (Simón 2017).

In the following, the thesis first reviews the relevant literature on (discursive) Europeanization, framing, and a 'crisis', and outlines past German Europeanization and EU foreign policy in context to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Chapter I). Second, the methodology, including the conceptual framework and research design of this thesis are presented (Chapter II). Third, the thesis applies its framework to official and high-level 'texts' of foreign policy, investigates diagnostic, prognostic, and diagnostic framing, and assesses discursive Europeanization (Chapter III). Lastly, it draws conclusions from the analysis and answers the research question.

Chapter I: Literature Review

This chapter provides the necessary theoretical and empirical foundation for the analysis.

First, it will introduce the framework of Europeanization and discuss existing literature, in particular with regards to processes of EU foreign policy. Thereby, it reviews the framework's developments from a unidirectional to a bi- or multi-directional perspective of projection and adaptation. Further, it outlines the current understanding of Europeanization's discursive dimension and the thesis' theoretical use of and contributions to this important but under-utilised sub-field. Given this, it marries the concept of discursive Europeanization with framing theory as a promising methodological opportunity to investigate foreign policy change. It then highlights the discursive characteristics expected during a 'crisis' as an underlying condition of foreign policy, partly explaining the selection and conceptual context of the studied case.

Second, the chapter discusses literature on characteristics of the thesis' central subject, German foreign policy and EU foreign policy with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, After briefly introducing general features of German foreign policy and its relation to the conflict until German reunification, it discusses the developments of a pro-active Europeanized Europeanizing foreign policy from the 1990s to 2010 and a frustrated foreign policy from 2010 to 2023. This discussion introduces important frames to be referred to in the analysis. Lastly, the pre-crisis status of EU foreign policy is outlined, troubled by internal divisions, contestation, circumvention, and a lack of priority. The review will provide both historical context and an empirical starting point for the evaluation German and EU framing and Europeanization.

I.I Europeanization

There has been an extensive academic debate on the relationship of national policy and EU collective policy structures through the concept of 'Europeanization'. As Tsardanidis and Stavridis (2005: 219) point out, a clear definition of Europeanization is not easy, as "each study on the subject […] tends to present a preferred definition and then apply it to a specific case study". The many different conceptualisations of Europeanization may be summarised as "the impact of EU membership widely defined" (Tsardanidis & Stavridis 2005: 219), asking the hypothetical question: "what if the EU did not exist?" (Wong & Hill 2012: 13).

In the early 1990s, Europeanization was initially understood as bottom-up process of developing "distinctive structures of governance" at a European level (Cowles et al. 2001: 1). However, by the late 1990s, the concept had been primarily conceived as a top-down process, i.e. as "domestic change in which the EU is wholly or partially involved" (Ladrech 2014: 15). Given this, Europeanization has been predominantly employed to describe the EU's effect on domestic economic, social, and environmental policies, from state-industries (Tache & Neesham 2009) over immigration policy (Geddes 2005) or minority rights (Ongur 2014, Yilmaz 2017) to welfare (Martinsen 2005), workplace pensions (Hennessy 2013) or employment policy (Copeland 2016), traditionally referring to the subjects of the former, non-voluntary, 'European Communities' pillar.

To categorise the different uses of Europeanization, Wong (2006: 7) has identified three schools, the (bottom-up) national projection school, the (top-down) national adaptation school, and the school of identity reconstruction, however, with many overlapping assumptions. These perspectives are increasingly discussed not as opposed strains of thought but as descriptive of different phenomena, adopting Radaelli's (2000: 4) broad definition of Europeanization which includes both 'definitions' (projections) at an EU-level and 'incorporations' (adaptations) at a national level as well as processes of identity:

"Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies".

The connection of projection and adaptation can also be attributed to Börzel (2002). Against the clear distinction of the two former 'one-directional' schools, she argued for interlinking both dimensions in the case of environmental policymaking, establishing Europeanization as a "two-way process" of bottom-up "uploading" and top-down "downloading" (193), as MS are incentivised to upload their policies to the European level to minimize the costs of implementing them domestically. Her research complicates the picture of unilateral convergence in showing how MS chose different strategies at an EU-level to promote or obstruct environmental regulatory progress, depending on their uploading capacities and prospective downloading costs given their level of economic development.

This linkage has been particularly relevant to the research of Europeanized foreign policy which has burgeoned into a prominent and entrenched domain within the literature of Europeanization. It has since been employed as a useful bridge for the conceptual gap between realist or liberal intergovernmentalism and normative 'Europeanism' (Wong & Hill 2012: 5 f., Müller 2012: 14). The former approaches tend to frame EU foreign policy as a sum of its competing utility-maximising national parts, thereby denying the EU a status as an international actor or a preferred outcome of national foreign policies (Bull 1982, Hill 2003). Conversely, the latter understands the EU as a sui generis foreign policy actor, inter alia characterising the EU as a "civilian power" or "normative power", shaping norms such as 'democracy' and perceptions of 'normality' of other actors by means such as socialization and incentives (Manners 2002, Manners & Diez 2007, Whitman 2011). While rigid intergovernmentalism, therefore, tends to reduce EU-level diplomacy or 'EU foreign policy' (EFP) to a bottom-up and interest-driven momentary alliance, normative conceptions of the EU tend to focus on the effects of EFP rather than the complex processes of policymaking. As Wong and Hill (2012: 14) argue, both strands show severe limitations as they "advocate positions on what the EU should be rather than what the EU is actually doing".

Europeanization, understood as a 'two-way process' grasping how national foreign policies affect EFP and, vice versa, adapt to EU-demands, offers a useful lens to analyse the increasingly complex agency-structure relationship of EFP-making and the contexts in which national foreign policies are negotiated. Being without a coherent decision-making centre, Wong and Hill (2012: 3) have defined EFP as consisting of national foreign policies, external

trade relations and development policy, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (including the Common Security and Defense Policy [CSDP]). Given the highly intergovernmental, bound to unanimous decision-making and, therefore, more voluntary nature of CFSP compared to the hierarchical nature of, e.g., economic policy, EFP has traditionally been understood as one of the most static dimensions of Europeanization as touching upon "one of the last remaining core tenets of national sovereignty" (Major 2005: 183). However, previous Europeanization studies like Bátora's (2005) analysis of diplomatic practices show that the CFSP has exerted both procedural and substantive influence on national foreign policy, effectively constraining action while privileging others.

Especially since the CFSP's expansion through supranational elements such as the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the strengthening of the HR by the Lisbon Treaty, paired with EFP positions defined by the supranational Commission (with the HR as Vice-President) and the European Parliament (EP), and the intergovernmental Foreign Affairs Council (FAC; chaired by the HR), General Affairs Council (GAC), and the European Council (EUCO), Europeanization aims to highlight the "multilevel actorness" of the EU (Hadfield et al. 2017: 5) and understands EFP as a "multi-faceted system of governance" (Müller 2013: 114). In this system national interests are necessarily placed in frameworks of cooperation and competition, by virtue of their EU membership. For instance, aid policy under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) for Palestine is set by the EUCO and FAC, its implementation and monitoring ins mandated to the EEAS, and the Commission (alongside the EP) is in charge of expenditures, exemplifying the high degree of supranational and intergovernmental coordination required. With growing EU-level diplomacy where the EU has exclusive or shared competences, common EU foreign policy positions must increasingly be taken into account in the formulation of national foreign policy. On the other hand, EFP remains to be a "two-way street since it is equally important that the EU delegation staff are informed of emerging national positions and priorities" (Duke 2017: 2014). This has led to a "grey zone between the national and supranational […] with contention as well as cooperation" (ibid.).

Projection and Adaption

In this light, an analytical framework of both uploading and downloading has been used to accommodate these complexities.

On the one hand, uploading refers to processes of incentive of projecting national interests and preferences to the supranational level, promising gains in both influencing the foreign policy position and increasing the policy's effectiveness, especially to smaller MS. For instance, Tonra's (2001) seminal study analysed how Dutch, Danish, and Irish foreign policy can use the CFSP-framework to pursue objectives more effectively than on their own.
For France, Wong (2006: 193) has observed how has used the EU as a "power multiplier" with regards to its relations with the PRC, Japan, and Vietnam to further its national interests as an investor and trade partner in strong competition with the United States (US). In similar vein, Torreblanca (2001) has argued that Spain could benefit twofold from tying its foreign policy to the EU, first, by positioning itself as the Latin American spokesperson within the EU and, second, by becoming a representative of foreign investment in Latin America, thereby increasing its prestige and transforming its relation to the continent which had formerly been characterised by the colonial past.

However, Torreblanca's study also shows other reasons for uploading. Spain could outsource its conflictual relationship with Morocco to the EU, effectively transforming the bilateral tensions on fishing rights and Spanish enclaves. As fishing rights were governed under a new Euro-Mediterranean agreement, the enclaves developed into hubs of trade. Additionally, MS can use what Tonra (2000: 233) has called the "shield effect". France could use EFP as a disguise for its protectionist measures against Japan in the 1980s (Wong 2006: 193). Using the EFP to justify its interest in a referendum of Western Sahara, Spain transformed its position from being rendered as a considered attempt of destabilisation into a sign of Spain's alignment with the EU and international community pursuing common goals, thereby 'shielding' itself from unilateral responsibility. In all of these developments, Spain had made use of its agenda-setting capabilities or its "voice opportunities" (Müller 2011: 387), leading the EFP's formerly marginal interest in said regions. Although 92% of EU tonnage operated in Morocco were Spanish, the fishing agreements were negotiated by the Commission and the renting of Moroccan waters was budgeted by the EC. Thus, Spain had benefitted from projecting its national interests to the EU-level while, as Torreblanca (2001) shows, favouring to enhance EFP institutionalisation as a necessary requirement for the projection's success and effectiveness. Although not exhaustive, much Europeanization scholarship agrees that the interrelated indicators of uploading, therefore, include attempts of multiplying national influence (in the EU and the world), using the EU as justification (and shielding) of foreign policy, and using opportunities to influence positions of other MS (Wong & Hill 2012: 7).

Certainly, as Börzel (2002) has shown, the capacity to upload is also bound to different factors and constraints which may require different strategies to influence EFP. For instance, Luxembourg's foreign policy input has been largely focused on few issues, tied to its export-oriented economy, while the (pre-Brexit) United Kingdom's (UK), Germany's and France's capacities render them as the Europe's "main strategic powers", therefore, arguably with more

influence on EFP than smaller countries (Hadfield et al. 2017: 43), although these capacity dynamics are continuously revisited by Europeanization literature.

Through participation in EFP, national foreign policies in turn adapt to it or are Europeanized. This downloading is seen as mutually constitutive to uploading. In this sense, actors of MS could be understood as a Europeanized Europeanizers, both empowered and constrained by tying its foreign policy to a European level and committing to policymaking at EU-level policy institutions.

Top-down policy adaptation has been widely understood as a "goodness of fit" or "misfit" condition (Major 2005: 180), meaning a domestic need to adapt to pressures resulting of incongruencies between the national and EU-level's policies, institutions, and processes, especially apparent considering implementations of obligatory EU law. For foreign policy, Torreblanca's study (2001) shows how Spain developed remarkable foreign policy convergence with other EU states on positions relating to the Middle East, establishing relations with Israel, and South Africa as a result of downloading.

Adaption in the realm of foreign policy realm is not as clear-cut as in supranationally dominated areas of the EU, given its intergovernmental and voluntary features. From a rational institutionalist perspective, aligning oneself with common EU positions or easing formerly diverging positions increases the both the own uploading capacity for issues at heart of national interests, involving forms of bargaining (Checkel 2012), and the role and effectiveness of EFP itself. Much like Spain's uploading of Mediterranean interests paired with adapting its position towards Israel, Vasconcelos (1996) has observed how Portugal, in turn, uploaded its interest in East Timor while downloading EFP positions on the Mediterranean. These processes of Europeanization can come with significant limits to the MS' individual role and foreign policy autonomy, as, e.g., France had to act through the EU to engage with South-East Asia, e.g., through the ASEAN Regional Forum (Wong 2006). This is also influenced by following the EU's principle of complying to its previously defined positions (*acquis politique*), limiting foreign policy choices and leeway. These factors can be especially influenced by the CFSP's expansion by supranational elements such as the HR or the EEAS aimed at increasing EFP coherence and continuity. Following these factors, the indicators of downloading are the development of a salient EFP agenda, an adherence to commonly defined foreign policy objectives, and the increasing priority of these objectives and obligations over national *domaines réservés* (Wong & Hill 2012: 7).

Discursive Europeanization

Given a 'soft', non-hierarchical character of EFP decision-making mechanisms, EFP has also been understood as "only an arena for exchange of ideas, not a legislator" (Major 2005: 185 f.). For this purpose, Major has introduced "cross loading" to accommodate the "transfer of ideas, norms, and ways of doing things […] also *within* Europe", meaning between MS (and other entities) on a horizontal level (186). In this sense, the EU only *facilitates* integration exerting indirect impact. For some, this crossloading-perspective is a concept more suitable to describe 'downloading' in general (Czulno 2021: 1248). Wong & Hill (2012) have conceptualised it as part of a broader process of 'identity reconstruction', a third and separate dimension of Europeanization, being the result of both up- and downloading, and centre of sociological institutionalist and social constructivist interest.

These studies have highlighted processes of socialisation and logics of appropriateness as important factors in which national policymakers or elites undergo "a learning process about good policy practice" and internalising the habitus of consensus-making ('coordination reflex') and behavioural norms while interacting with(in) EFP processes (Major 2005: 186, see Tonra 2001, Smith 2010). An important aspect of this is what Tsardanidis and Stavridis (2005) have called the "pendulum effect", in which a common EFP positions function as a reference point with which 'extreme' national positions increasingly reconcile and unilateral actions are de-incentivised, following fears of 'soft' sanctions such as being isolated or made responsible for the EFP's incoherence. As mentioned, this is particularly relevant in context of processes involved in fostering a European normative identity vis-à-vis inside and outside actors as an international actor promoting democracy or peace (see Pace 2007, Manners & Diez 2007, Tocci 2009).

Connected to processes of social learning and appropriateness, Europeanization has also been analysed in its discursive dimension as MS define their "own identity – and identities are logically prior to preferences" in which they "increasingly endogenize the existence" of other MS and the EU (Ruggie 1993: 172). Studies of discursive Europeanization argue against, first, a disconnection of policy, interest, and discourse in Europeanization literature and, second, against methodological statism in discourse analysis, thereby combining the theoretical strengths of both perspectives.

First, scholars of Europeanization have differentiated the impact of Europeanization, inter alia, on bureaucratic procedures, styles, practices, policies, discourses, and identities. In this sense, a lively debate has involved the Europeanization of Greece. While Economides (2005: 487) argued that Greek foreign policy had developed increasingly "cooperative behaviour and policies", Tsardanidis and Stavridis (2005: 234) have concluded it to be a "superficial development" in rhetorical style rather than substance where it appears that Europeanization "amounts to 'selling' [Greek interests] as European interests". In similar vein, Wong (2006: 204 f.) has stated that French foreign policy could be cynically understood as a "post hoc justification for pursuing selfish national objectives" thereby also limiting the nature of Europeanization to superficial 'selling' without impacting policymaking or understandings national interests.

However, social constructivists have argued that a disconnection of policy, interest, and discourse is inadequate for grasping the complexities of Europeanization. This perspective goes against a purely rationalist view observing "just words" or "declaratory diplomacy" searching for clearly attributable non-discursive practices (Larsen 2004: 62). As mentioned with regards to the 'pendulum effect', discourses produce meaning through which possible practices and policies are in- or excluded and constrained or encouraged. In this sense, a discursive understanding of policy decision-making argues that "interests and derived policies are shaped within a particular framework of meaning and are not exogenously given" (Larsen 2004: 64). In this sense, Hansen and Sørensen (2005: 95) have defined the EU as a "discursive polity […] not constituted by a set of formal organisational features, but by a relatively stable structure of meaning […] that conditions the impact of the formal polity on governance processes".

Methodologically, this discursive perspective focuses on dynamics of language in foreign policy discourses, how foreign policy practices are legitimised or excluded, and how this is then translated into policy. It cannot take part in the discussion of potentially secret intentions as implied in 'selling' or 'selfishness' as outlined above or engages in a discussion of the differences of policy positions and practical policy implementation.

Second, it has been argued that national discourses "talk past each other" as they "do not threaten each other's identity because there are no open parts where they [discursively] penetrate" (Larsen 1997: 254 f.). Perhaps more convincing in the context of national discourses alone, many case studies have focused on how the EU as a discursive polity and 'Europe' and CFSP positions as reference points have entered national foreign policy discourses and reshaped national interests, preferences and derived foreign policy positions. This resembles the mentioned seminal definition of Radaelli (2000: 4) of observing how "formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms" are "incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse". Following this, discursive Europeanization in its direction is primarily understood as downloading (as incorporation) or the mentioned crossloading (as socialisation).

Given this perspective, Pomorska (2012: 170) has observed how the EU has gained discursive importance in "informal and public discourse, where officials no longer refer to the EU as 'them'". For France, Wong (2006) has shown how the discursive incorporation of "notions of the collective European good into the Gaullist 'France first' foreign policy is taking place". The mentioned Europeanization of Spanish foreign policy was accompanied by the declaration of Europe as "a frontier of our ambitions" by Prime Minister Gonzalez (cited in Torreblanca 2001), discursively connecting European integration with Spain's political fate. This led Torreblanca to the conclusion that EU membership played a larger role in Spanish foreign policy changes than the state's transition to democracy.

For Denmark, Petersen (2001: 13) has analysed how the EU has been proclaimed as "the cornerstone of Danish foreign policy" in dominant national discourse, increasingly surpassing the UN, NATO and Nordic setting in national importance. Actualising this, Larsen (2012: 109) has analysed official Danish documents, commonly formulating a "Denmark through the EU", in many areas the "substantial concepts in Danish foreign policy are close to the dominant EU

discourse". In many ways, Germany has been understood as "the model of a 'Europeanized' state, with a European identity" which makes it a particularly relevant subject of Europeanization analysis (Wong & Hill 2012: 8). Considering specific foreign policy discourses, Benke (2003) and Alecu De Flers (2011) have argued that Austria had sustainably restructured its discourse on neutrality towards a common EU security policy with Austrian participation, and, likewise, Palosaari's study (2016: 588) on Finnish foreign policy has shown how "neutrality was referred to as a policy of the past, replaced by 'active participation in international political and security policy cooperation'".

The thesis primarily connects to this social constructivist, i.e., discursive, analysis of Europeanization, observing how the official German national discourse on the Israel-Palestinian conflict, a specific foreign policy discourse, has been shaped by its relation to EFP where actors of MS and EU institutions 'talk with each other'. Building on this, the thesis takes one conceptual addition to the discussed conceptualisation of Europeanization into account which has been proposed by Palosaari (2016).

Discursive Europeanization has been primarily categorised as a third sociological institutionalist and discursive category separate to up- and downloading (as 'horizontal' crossloading) leading to a broader identity reconstruction; or as part of downloaded incorporation of 'Europe' in national discourses. However, Palosaari (2016: 585) has criticised that the former tends to understand discursive elements as either crossloading or non-directional, which appears to be a "logical incompatibility" across categories, and the latter underestimates processes of discursive uploading. Simply put, Palosaari argues that is not only 'Europe' which is incorporated in national discourses (downloading), but national discourses are as well engaged in influencing 'Europe' and are projected at the EU-level (uploading). For instance, Finland was partially successful in projecting "a Finnish understanding and narrative on what the CFSP ought to be" (592) when it influenced the discussion of a merger of the Western European Union (WEU) and the EU in order to exclude the 'hard' WEU's security guarantees in the 1990s, followed by a CFSP-framework that "has made it possible for Finland to stick to the concept of military non-alignment" (599). It is not only 'Europe' which is incorporated in national discourses (downloading), but national discourses are also engaged in influencing 'Europe' and discursively projecting their national interests at an EU-level (uploading). In this sense, the lens of discursive Europeanization is not limited to downloading as a directional concept or discursive 'identity reconstruction' as the *result* of up- and downloading. It can observe both processes of discursive up- and downloading and understands Europeanization bi-directionally and vertically. The question is not limited to changes of the German discourse (downloading) but expands to the discursive attempts of influencing EU discourses (uploading).

Before turning to the indicators of discursive Europeanization, another dimension of the Europeanization must be briefly mentioned. While the thesis focuses on these bi-directional discursive processes and whether and how they affect policy, interaction at the EU-level or EU membership cannot simply be understood as a teleological process necessarily leading to convergence or harmonisation. In this sense, two important additions have been made.

First, Major (2005: 178) has pointed out that "varying national political and cultural structures lead to different adaptations to the same EU-generated input". While the thesis underscores the specificities of the German discourse, it does not take a comparative approach of top-down Europeanization of several MS. Given this, this addition is not the primary focus of this study.
Second, growing scepticism of the pervasiveness of Europeanization, not at least given the intergovernmental vulnerability of CFSP and through the rise of renationalising tendencies of MS, has also resulted in scholarly interest in the reversal process, i.e., de-Europeanization.
This process, following Müller et al. (2021: 527), involves the long-term "re-construction of professional roles" in national terms, the "repudiation of fundamental norms" like consensus-seeking, and "structural disintegration" of collective policy-making institutions. While the thesis neither observes structural or long-term developments nor expect the German discourse to repudiate norms such as human rights, it maintains awareness of this dimension, in particular the construction of roles in national terms. Additionally, the connection of potentially de-Europeanising Euroscepticism and positions to the conflict will be outlined (Chapter I.II), which it premises, however, not to apply to the German government. Given this, de-Europeanization is not the focus of the thesis but widens its perspective and cautions any teleological conclusions.

Framing Theory

Turning to indicators, Wong and Hill (2012: 7) have proposed to assess "foreign policy positions" and "definitions of national and European interests". However, the focus on positions and definitions of interests, as they do not emerge ex nihilo, are only partly reflecting the discursive dimension of foreign policy, albeit a saliant one. As positions and definitions of interest are constructed in a 'framework of meaning', this thesis aims to analyse the construction of and influences on this framework. It, therefore, takes a wider discursive approach and understands positions and definitions of interest as part and the result of political discourse rather than its starting point.

It draws on Snow and Benford's (1988) theory of 'framing', analysing how political actors assign meaning and interpret events and other actors to exert influence on the discourse to mobilise support, reach consensus, and demobilise contrary interpretations. This lens of framing in context of foreign policy has been utilised by several studies, for instance, to explain processes of high-level negotiations (Levy 1996), military intervention (Vertzberger 1998) or as an instrument of manipulation (Hoyt & Garrison 1997).
In a recent study, Aran and Fleischmann (2018) have analysed how the Netanyahu government framed Arab uprisings in order to mobilise for a foreign policy position of "entrenchment" against external cooperative proposals.

Applying the lens of 'framing' as constitutive of the foreign policy process, framing is a discursive strategy that "sets the contours that define which foreign policy options can be considered plausible/implausible, responsible/irresponsible, moral/immoral among potential foreign policy alternatives" (616). To achieve this, a discursive agent must offer interpretations concerning themselves with three "core framing tasks" or functions, i.e. (1) diagnostic framing, (2), prognostic framing, and (3) motivational framing (Snow and Benford 1988: 200 f.).

First, the discursive actor identifies and reaches consensus on a problem and its attribution to political and moral causality (as part of the construction of a 'crisis'). Given this, an actor or development is blamed with causing the problem. Second, the actor proposes solutions, including strategies and targets, to solve the problem, not necessarily corresponding to the diagnosis. Third, a "rationale for action" (202) is framed, constrained by diagnostic and prognostic framing which themselves do not necessarily produce action. These rationales may "encompass material, status, solidarity, and moral inducements" (ibid.).

Since Snow and Benford's definition of these three framing tasks, many different variations or subtypes of framing have been introduced to the theory, especially with regards to International Relations, such as, inter alia, productive and counter-productive framing, successful and failed framing, thematic and evaluative framing, or revolving framing and sequential framing (Mintz & Redd 2003). Common to all typologies of framing is the conceptualisation of an 'initiator' and a 'target' of framing and the differentiation of 'framing' and 'framing effects'. This thesis takes diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing through narratives by political actors ('initiators') as its main analytical categories, observes how the EU has been constructed in these frames, compares these frames, and evaluates 'framing effects' as (attempted, successful or failed) interdiscursive processes of up- and downloading (see Chapter II).

The perspective of framing draws light on discursive processes involved in setting the 'framework of meaning' for foreign policy and allows for a conceptualisation of discursive Europeanization in narrative content as well as up- and downloading. Although the connection of narratives and Europeanization has been investigated, as shown above (e.g., Finnish and Austrian security narratives), this perspective has remained under-utilised and framing theory has not yet been introduced to Europeanization literature. However, framing theory offers valuable contributions as it allows for a structured analysis of the discursive construction and interaction of frames (followed by positions) rather than limiting this dimension to identifying broad policy orientations (e.g., of 'non-alignment') or context-less foreign policy positions (e.g., reiteration of support of the two-state solution).

Transferred to this thesis, German actors are expected to employ frames on the Israel-Hamas War, and the thesis investigates whether these frames are influencing and influenced by other discursive actors engaged in EFP and whether these frames align with (past and present) common EFP frames. The thesis does not conceptually exclude positions or definitions of interest from processes of framing but understands them to be complementary to the analysis. Simply put, the construction of a diagnosis, prognosis, and motivation entails the articulation of positions and definitions of interest. However, framing goes beyond this and discusses how these are made possible, capturing the discursive complexities involved in EFP-making.

In conclusion, the thesis contributes to the understanding of discursive Europeanization by analysing diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing in the German political discourse, evaluating processes of up- and downloading of frames, and interpreting this framing in the context of convergence and divergence. With this, it takes seriously the discursive dimension as a constitutive focal point of foreign policy, and not as a by-product or by-stander of 'hard' or 'real' Europeanization.

This analysis will be further developed and tailored in the thesis' conceptual framework. First, however, literature assessing the specific discursive features of a 'crisis' and why a 'crisis' has been selected as the focus of the case study.

Crisis and Discourse

Europeanization studies typically analyse how "dynamics unfold over time", mostly meaning decades of political development to address change and continuity (Müller 2012: 18). As changes of political structures, identities, and processes of policymaking tend to take time, a multi-level, long-term perspective promises most valid results in the context of European integration. As such, the longitudinal character of Europeanization has entered its numerous definitions. However, this does not determine that up- and downloading of national foreign policy, particularly discursive framing, cannot take place over a smaller period of time. While this thesis draws on past (long-term) analyses of Europeanization of Germany in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Chapter I.II), it has chosen to address the question of temporality by focusing on small-term discursive developments.

This focus is also valuable in relation to questions of causality. Causality is one of main "clusters of research problems" in the research of Europeanization (Wong and Hill 2012: 13). National foreign policy is subject to various and diverse influences on international, national, and subnational levels from changes of government, individual leaders, cultural specificities to pressures from other international actors or other multilateral institutions. Another factor is public (and elite) opinion, being frequently included in Europeanization literature (Tsardanidis & Stavridis 2005, Raimundo et al. 2021). This cautions to draw a deterministic picture of 'Europe's' influence on policy decision-making and makes it difficult to define "exactly what the causes, effects and results of Europeanization are […] as it blurs the boundaries between cause and effect" (Wong & Hill 2012: 11), given the complexities of multidimensional Europeanization, the "multi-faceted system of [EFP] governance" (Müller 2013: 114), and external influences. Major (2005: 185) has summarised that "reasons for policy, polity or politics changes at the national level will always be a mix of endogenous and exogenous factors".

This thesis does not claim to solve this problem but understands it as a necessary part of theorisation and as a potential for contribution. As Müller (2011: 389) has mentioned that Europeanization needs to be checked against "developments in the international context (and in the conflict itself)", the thesis specifically addresses one external influence, i.e., a drastic development in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, October 7th, which it analyses as leading to a 'crisis' as an underlying condition of the political discourse in question.

A crisis has been broadly defined by Della Sala (cited in De Rycker & Mohd Don 2013: 7) as "a sequence of events that have created turmoil, instability and/or conditions for upheaval and dramatic change". In the context of Europeanization, crises have been primarily studied by their wider, long-term effects on institutional (dis-)integration. The growing field of European crisis literature has proliferated given the interest in the impact of 'Eurozone crisis', 'Schengen crisis', 'Brexit crisis', or, recently, the 'Covid crisis' (Zachová 2022). Intergovernmentalist accounts

have analysed crises by their effect on state-preferences (Moravcsik 1998) while neofunctionalist accounts have focused on supranational agency, functional pressures, and socialisation, providing incentives for deeper integration, particularly through crisis, and leading to 'spill-over' effects (Haas 1958, Schmitter 1970). Postfunctionalist theory, instead, has focused on the influence of public discourses marking 'permissive consensus' and 'constraining dissensus' for policymaking, especially since Brexit (Börzel and Risse 2018, Kuhn 2019). As such, postfunctionalism accounts for crises as resulting in integration or disintegration, depending on their discursive negotiation.

The latter perspective on crises connects to this thesis as it focuses the discursive dimension. Given the short-term discursive focus of the thesis, however, a crisis' impact on developments of long-term institutional (dis-)integration cannot be observed. However, questions of discursive Europeanization and discursive frames permitting or constraining policy are at the thesis' core. With this, the thesis takes Börzel and Risse's (2018: 102) claim to heart, stating that "the more existing approaches take insights from social constructivism with regard to […] the framing of issues […] into account, the better they can deal with the subsequent European predicaments". Given this, the thesis can contribute to European crisis literature with a case study capturing the short-term 'framing of issues' as constitutive of foreign policy.

The underlying constructivist assumptions of the postfunctionalist perspective is that crises and the 'conditions for dramatic change' are "socially produced and socially embedded" through narrative and discourse (De Rycker and Mohd Don's 2013: 20). In this sense, a crisis can be analysed (1) in its discursive construction (e.g., the perception of threat, damage, emergency, or abnormality) and (2) as discursive processes involved in crisis response (e.g., competition on legitimate action).

Turning to the construction of a foreign policy crisis, Bergmann and Müller (2021: 1672) have differentiated between the "management of external crises that are at the core of the day-to-day business" or crises that "challenge the institutional status quo and enhance the pressure to find a solution and the scope for political compromise". Applying De Rycker and Mohd Don's (2013) typology of crises, the thesis assumes that the crisis at hand is a "global" (not "local") crisis "of" (not "in") a political and social configuration (ibid.). This construction is exemplified by what High Representative (HR) Borrell (cited in Gencturk & Bir 2023) said about one month after the October 7th: "This dramatic crisis […] shows the political and moral failure of the international community in failing to find a solution to this conflict". While the construction of a crisis is itself part of diagnostic framing, the gravity of the Israel-Hamas War leads to the presumption that this diagnostic framing is ubiquitous.

A global crisis is "not confined to a particular national context […] but registers wider […] states of affairs in the world" (Cottle 2008: 17) and enjoys global media visibility. Certainly, the crisis is 'local' as it refers to event(s) occurring locally in a distinct location and is influenced by specific historical contexts, which, however, can be said for each 'global crisis', as argued by Blommaert (2010). The conflict can be understood as affecting the so-called 'international community' and "engendered international forms of response" (Cottle 2008: 7). Given this, the thesis does not focus on the crisis' construction in Israeli, Palestinian or other discourses, but on German foreign policy discourse in its connection to EFP. In this sense, if distinguishing

between "crises *in* a given social configuration and crises *of* that configuration", the conflict challenges "existing crisis management procedures or policies", thereby seen as a crisis *of* EFP (De Rycker & Mohd Don 2013: 19).

Simply put, the Israel-Hamas War does not exclusively refer to an external crisis as part of the 'day-to-day business' of crisis management but is constructed as a far-reaching, 'global' crisis that 'enhances the pressure to find a solution'. It is, therefore, also not only a matter of CSDP and its instruments but constructed as a matter of EFP and its response to a crisis in general. The development of the conflict is affecting international policy, EFP or, to that end, German foreign policy, which makes the study of Europeanization during this period an important research desideratum.

Turning to discursive processes involved in crisis response, social constructivist studies of crises have analysed how 'triggering events' or 'disasters' are interpreted to "rhetorically frame crisis to mobilise action and to formulate and generate support for certain policies" (De Rycker and Mohd Don's 2013: 10). Following this, different actors compete in simplifying the complexities of crises informing "private and public strategic and policy initiatives to manage the crisis" (Jessop 2013: 7).

Crises are, therefore, expected to be unique opportunities for (foreign policy) change and represent critical junctures in discourse development, marked by intense negotiation on the right course of action. Following the Essex School, crises lead to a 'dislocation' of discourse, "during which an existing framework is shattered by […] decidedly traumatic experience" (Rogers 2009: 836).

In the following, discursive actors re-establish "relations among discursive elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" (Laclau and Mouffe cited by Rogers 2009: 837). During and after articulation, hegemonic actors compete in universalising their "vision", which incorporates respective foreign policy positions and interests, by making sense of the crisis and, importantly, for mobilising support (Rogers 2009: 837, see Howarth 2004). In the context of this thesis, this 'competition' refers to strategies of framing, offering 'problems', 'solutions', and 'motivations' connected to the crisis and aimed to mobilise support for foreign policy. The thesis differentiates in a pre-crisis situation, a situation of immediate crisis response in which new frames are proposed, and a period of a developing crisis in which frames compete.

Simply put, a crisis of EFP might lead to more saliant processes of Europeanization, as consistent frames (of a *frame*work) and positions in context of the EFP's *acquis politique* and consensus are potentially open for negotiation and processes of decision-making are intensified. Following this, it is expected that actors mobilise political support through framing to upload their interests and foreign policy positions to be downloaded by others.

In conclusion, the thesis examines the short-term discursive Europeanization conditioned by a crisis, thereby also contributing to European crisis literature with a short-term analysis. Drawing on a constructivist lens on crises and crisis response, the thesis holds the context of a global crisis of EFP to be a particularly valuable case study, as intense political mobilisation and re-articulations in the foreign policy sphere are expected. In this sense, the application of framing theory is beneficial in two strongly interrelated ways.

First, it sheds light on how a crisis is created by political actors, as employed through diagnostic frames. While this chapter has proposed the broad frame of a global crisis of EFP as a starting point of analysis, the particular framing of a 'problem' as a crisis can vary dependent on political actors engaged in EFP. Framing theory, therefore, includes a perspective on the discursive production of 'conditions for dramatic change'.

Second and at the same time, framing describes discursive strategies of political mobilisation explaining the crisis and proposing adequate forms of crisis response by offering a framework of meaning (or 'vision'). This encompasses all framing tasks and is the central raison d'être of framing. Both ways are, therefore, strongly interrelated, as the construction of a 'problem' as a crisis informs the urgency and content of political mobilisation of crisis response. In sum, a focus on framing is a useful lens through which discursive developments within a 'crisis' *of* EFP can be analysed.

I.II Europeanizing/-ed Germany and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This chapter evaluates how German foreign policy has been Europeanized and a Europeanizer and discusses pre-crisis EFP, both with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Germany's positioning in Europe has been primarily analysed against the historical developments of a state responsible for WWII, divided and with limited sovereignty in the post-war era, 'reunited' in 1990, and increasingly deep integration in multilateral/supranational organisations such as the UN or the ECSC/EC/EU. Seemingly refraining from 'traditional' forms of power such a military capacity usually expected by realist theory (Simón 2017: 76), Crawford and Olsen (2017: 592 f.) have argued how the German "puzzle" can be explained by a long-term construction of a "unique foreign policy identity" centred around the principles of multilateralism and anti-militarism, almost unshaken by external developments and "at the heart" German foreign policy discourses. Germany has been predominantly understood as a 'civilian' or 'normative power', constructing a moral self-commitment and framing its motivation through norms such as adherence to international law, human rights, peaceful and cooperative conflict resolution, and multilateral consensus to guide its foreign policy. Given this, Germany has been described as "Europe's 'patron' of integration", corresponding with the self-ascribed identity of, as former German Foreign Minister Steinmeier put it, being "Europe's Chief Facilitating Officer" (cited in Crawford & Olsen 2017: ibid.). With regards to CFSP in general, Germany, alongside France, has pushed for the creation of the HR's office (1999), and legal figures of 'Common Strategy' and 'Common Actions' (1999) and 'Enhanced Cooperation' (2001), and has advocated for the HR's position as the chairperson of the Council and the creation of the EEAS (2009) (Simón 2017). While also utilising minilateral fora and underlining its transatlantic ties, recent joint German-French initiatives have led to further CFSP integration, exemplified by the HR's assumption of the EU's external representation in 2013, a European Defense Fund (EDF) in 2017, and the creation of a civil-military headquarter under the 'Permanent Structured Cooperation' mechanism (PESCO) in 2018 (Harnisch 2018: 12).

In sum, there is a general agreement in literature that German foreign policy discourses have been strongly influenced by preferences for (1) intergovernmental and, especially, supranational integration and multilateral decision-making and (2) and norm-based, 'civilian' power championing international law. Whether Germany does "not match its potential as one of the largest EU countries" (EU official interviewed by Müller 2012: 76), "acts as a leader of the broad EU foreign policy" (Czulno 2021: 1257) or is even emerging as "Europe's unchallenged hegemon" through institutionalised integration (Fischer 2019: 26), remains to be a continuous research desideratum of Europeanization scholarship.

Germany's positioning in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been subject to several historical, social, and political developments, and its "attitude toward the Palestinians must be regarded as directly derivative of its ties to Israel" (Fischer 2019: 27). As West Germany has regarded itself as the legal heir to the German Reich (unlike the German Democratic Republic [GDR]), therefore inheriting the responsibility for the Holocaust, its stance towards the conflict has been strongly influenced by Germany's construction of a 'special' commitment to Israel's security

as the legal and moral representatives of Jews murdered and victimised by the Nazi regime (ibid.).

The conservative Adenauer government's foreign policy towards Israel was, thus, led by a moral obligation paired with the objective to rehabilitate West Germany's international legitimacy with the 'West' and, especially, the US. The Luxembourg Agreement in 1952 marked the beginning of official German-Israeli bilateral relations, however, as West German foreign policy was focused on preventing international recognition of the GDR, it was keen not to burden its relations to Arab states. Only with public media leaks of German arms shipments to Israel, West Germany established formal diplomatic ties with Israel in 1965 (Müller 2011: 389). By the end of the 1960s, German foreign policy shifted towards a more balanced approach to the conflict under the social democratic-liberal Brandt government, and, inter alia, due to the oil embargo of 1973 by Arab states, German foreign policy was faced with the intricate dilemma of reconciling its 'special' commitment to Israel with vital economic and energy interests.

Following Müller's (2011) analysis, this development marked the kickstart of German foreign policy Europeanization in the context of the EC and European Political Community (EPC) as it allowed Germany to address Palestinian and Arab affairs while 'shielding' its foreign policy against domestic and external pressures of the 'special' relationship by playing to the greatly popular pro-integrationist motivation. The German commitment to the first EC declaration in 1973 was remarkable against its former positions, as it called for Israel to "end the military occupation" since 1967 and to "account […] of the legitimate rights of Palestinians" (Federal Press Office 2013 [1973]). Nevertheless, Germany "did not act as a driver and initiator of EC policies toward the Israeli–Palestinian conflict" (Müller 2011: 392) and limited its uploading influence to averting declaratory text considered too critical of Israel. By supporting the EC's London Declaration (1977), it downloaded a call for the "need of a homeland for the Palestinian people" (EUCO 1977) and downloaded the acknowledgement of the Palestinian right of self-determination through the Venice Declaration (1980) (EUCO 1980). Nevertheless, Germany's 'special' commitment to Israel's security and 'right to exist' remained deeply ingrained in its foreign policy discourse and, although relatively passive, Germany positioned itself as one of the strongest pro-Israeli partners in the EC.

In the following, two subsequent phases of German foreign policy and its engagement in the EU since the 1990s will be discussed, as identified by the literature. These phases can be broadly described as a phase of pro-active Europeanization until the 2010s, and a phase of in-active frustration until 2023. At the end, the thesis will derive frames from this discussion, expected to be especially important for the analysis. Following this, the chapter will review literature on the pre-crisis status of EFP with regards to the conflict to lay the foundation and establish the starting point of the analysis.

1990s to 2010: Pro-active German Europeanization

During the transformative and, at first, euphoric developments of the 1990s for the conflict, Germany, and EFP, the Kohl government underlined its transatlantic orientation and 'self-restraint' by, in contrast to France, accepting a secondary role of EFP in the evolving MEPP. For instance, Germany insisted that the special EU envoy to the MEPP should not interfere in bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and not undercut the US' role as a mediator in 1996 (Fiedler 2003).

Nevertheless, given increasing EU-level aspirations for stronger engagement in conflict resolution, Germany became more pro-actively involved in EFP in order to underline its pro-integrationist interests and to reduce the potential costs of downloading, given Germany's strong investment in and commitment to Israel's security (Müller 2012). In this context, the EU participated in the so-called 'Middle East Quartet' with the US, Russia, and UN since 2002. In 2003, the European Security Strategy laid out by the Council underlined the strategic priority of conflict resolution for the EU. Germany became also supportive of international and CSDP peace-making missions such as the European Police Mission (EUPOL COPPS) in the Palestinian territories and EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Rafah, and even lifted its political taboo of refraining from sending military personnel under the Merkel government by contributing soldiers under UNIFIL following the Lebanon war in 2006.

German foreign policy highlighted Europe's primary role as a 'civilian' power supporting peace through developmental and economic instruments including both sides, which correlated with its pro-integrationist stance but had also been broad European consensus at the time. In this sense, Germany was a pro-Israeli "chief advocate" by supporting Israel's grant of a "special status" by the EU (1994), the EU-Israeli Association Agreement (1995), and Israel's inclusion into the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP; 1995) and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP; 2005) (Müller 2011: 393). Following a balanced approach as necessary for peace, Germany did also support the newly formed PA by opening a representation as the first EU MS in 1994 and being the largest EU-donor of aid to Palestinian territories. At the EU-level, the PA was also included in the EMP (1995), signed an Interim Association Agreement (1997), and was included in the ENP (2005). Especially the Barcelona process (EMP), initially designed as separate from diplomatic efforts, developed fora for political dialogue, such as the Association Council and Association Committee to discuss good governance and human rights, with negative conditionality, and added an increasingly political and comprehensive dimension to the EU's engagement in the region (Müller 2011). The ENP, then, represented an even stronger political and bilateral approach, even including positive conditionality (Del Sarto & Schumacher 2005).

Connected to this German participation and from an adaptational perspective, the most remarkable German development has been its political agreement with the two-state solution, constructed as best-serving Israel's security interests in German foreign policy discourse. Although long favoured by other MS, Germany only agreed in 1999, in context of the Berlin Declaration, to explicitly mention co-existing Palestinian statehood, although only agreeing to qualify the right to self-determination by the "option of a state" (EUCO 1999, see Müller 2012). With the Seville Declaration in 2002, the EU and Germany finally agreed on the establishment

of a "democratic, viable, peaceful and sovereign State of Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 borders" (EUCO 2002) as the objective of the MEPP, which has since been one of the most important elements of the EU position.

Another downloading development has been the German position regarding the controversial expansion of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories, one of the major disagreements between Israel and the EU institutions and MS in light of its norm-based commitment to international law and against the background of the majority opinion in international law, with numerous UN resolutions identifying settlements as "a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace" (UNSC 1979). Only in late 1997, the German UNGA delegation, representing the only EU MS abstaining a prior critical resolution, condemned the settlements; and has continued to vote with the European majority on this issue in relevant UNGA votes. In these instances, Germany's positions have been incrementally Europeanised.

From a perspective on projection and influence, Germany was instrumental in ensuring that EU-Israeli relations were kept relatively supportive, especially in economic terms, even with growing European dissatisfaction with Netanyahu government in the late 1990s. Accordingly, conditionality was mostly applied and invoked by EU institutions to the increasingly criticised PA while MS such as Germany uploaded its preference of economic cooperation (through EMP and ENP) over conditionality with Israel (Del Sarto 2019). During the second intifada and Israel's highly controversial 'Operation Shield' in 2002, Germany opposed calls for EU sanctions and the suspension of the Association Agreement.

Especially the Merkel government since 2005, more transatlantic and pro-Israeli than the previous government, managed to upload German positions, supported by the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 which included more pro-Israeli MS such as the Czech Republic and Poland. In this light, Germany had spearheaded the EU's decision to isolate the Hamas-led PA government after the Palestinian elections of 2006 and its refusal to officially acknowledge conditions laid out by the 'Quartet', including acknowledging Israel's 'right to exist'. While several MS has kept unofficial contact with the political wing of Hamas even after the inclusion on the EU terrorism blacklist in 2003 and given that the EU had sent an election observation mission which ensured that election has been free and fair, the German position (also supported by Israel, the US, and others) was uploaded to the EU-level and has been continued as a 'no-contact' policy (Ziadeh 2017: 73). Connected to this, the EU joined the US in its so-called 'West Bank First' strategy, in which Hamas in Gaza would face a non-humanitarian political and economic blockade while the Fatah-led government in the West Bank would be financially and operationally supported by direct transfers, developmental aid, and in its Security Sector Reform (also through EUPOL COPPS), also in line with the strategy of neoliberal state building by PA-PM Salam Fayyad (Müller & Zahda 2018, Del Sarto 2019).

Moreover, the Merkel government kept underlining the supportive role of the EU for US initiatives such as the Annapolis process, which collapsed in the wake of the Gaza War (2008-2009). In the negotiation of the EU response to the Gaza War, the French EU presidency failed to achieve agreement on criticising the legitimacy of the use of force in Israel's Operation Cast Lead, given German and Czech opposition, leading the EU to (only) call for a ceasefire,

i.e., explicating German and Czech positions. The following Czech EU presidency in early 2009 marked the end of hopes for unified mediation, and the EU sent three very different delegations to the region, which "created uncertainty as to actually who represented the EU, and so the EU's position was undermined from within" (O'Donnell 2016: 10). Another 'obstructive' upload could be observed in 2009, when Germany and others made the EU refrain from unilaterally recognising East Jerusalem as the future Palestinian capital, as proposed by Sweden. In 2011-12, Germany further undermined attempts for a unified European position regarding the Palestinian membership bid in the UN, supporting the US in rejecting the application in the Security Council. In 2012, it abstained alongside twelve other EU MS to vote on Palestine's status as a 'non-member observer state' (Fischer 2019). However, in contrast to the Czech Republic, Israel and the US, the German delegation did not vote against the resolution und underlined its commitment to the two-state objective (UNGA 2012).

This abstention exemplifies dialectical relationship of up-and downloading. On the one hand, Germany has incorporated common EU positions into its own foreign policy (e.g., two-state solution, criticism of settlements). On the other hand, it has limited common EU positions, especially with regards of Israel's 'right to exist', its legitimacy of the use of force as 'self-defence', and the role of the US as the peace broker as key orientations in discussions based on, e.g., the commitment to the two-state solution.

2010s: In-active German Frustration

There are two observations resulting from this dialectical relationship. On the one hand, Germany has been identified as a pro-Israeli "enabler of Israeli unilateralism" (Fischer 2019: 37), on the other hand, it has been argued that the "German government follows a strategy of Europeanization […] which enables Germany to follow a critical stance towards Israel without questioning the special relationship", i.e., as 'shielding' (Busse 2018: 79).

In domestic discourse, the 'special' Israeli-German relationship has been, inter alia, reinforced by Merkel's famous 2008 speech before the Knesset:

> Every Federal Government and every Federal Chancellor before me was committed to Germany's special historical responsibility for Israel's security. This historical responsibility of Germany is part of my country's *Staatsräson* [raison d'état]. This means that Israel's security is never negotiable for me as German Chancellor. And if this is the case, then these must not remain empty words in the hour of trial. (Merkel 2008; translated by author)

As Fischer (2019: 32) observes, the "special relationship with Israel has been met in recent years with near-universal approval among Germany's political class". He argues that different to prior discursive imaginaries associating Israel with German defeat and reparation, support of Israel was "gradually transformed into an element of German pride", morally legitimising German renewed assertiveness after the state's 'reunification' (ibid.). Support for Israel has also been equalled with the prevention of anti-Semitism, a connection frequently ritualised against Muslim immigrants, especially since 2015 (ibid.). In this sense, support of Israel and its security has been elevated and ritualised as a Staatsräson in the (hegemonic) majority of German political discourses, although public opinion polls caution against generalisations and hint at an élite-populace distinction, with the general public becoming increasingly less supportive of Israel (Stern 2017).

However, as Berenskötter and Mitrani (2022: 9) note in a recent study: "Berlin's support of Israel as a military power compromises Germany's self-image as a civilian power […]. We found little evidence of constructive dialogue, but, rather, complaints and frustrations that were increasingly expressed openly".

This hints at a saliant development, especially since PM Netanyahu assumed office again in 2009. As Germany, other MS, and the Lisbon-enhanced EU institutions have been committed to the two-state solution, Palestinian state-building and elections, and the differentiation of internationally recognised and occupied territory, there has been growing frustration regarding the intransigence and obstruction of the MEPP by increasingly neo-revisionist Israeli governments, importantly with the rapid expansion of settlements, humanitarian crises in the Israeli-controlled Area C in the West Bank, and the economic blockade of Gaza.

These developments have been regarded as counterproductive unilateralism, also by German governments (Fischer 2019, Del Sarto 2019). In combination with the lack of democratic legitimacy and autonomy of the PA, facing an increasingly popular Hamas, and several other spoilers, the conflict and European peace-making efforts faced a stalemate with the proclaimed "death of the two-state solution" (Fischer 2019: 32). As Del Sarto (2019: 381) has criticised, the EU, as the largest trading partner of Israel and the largest donor of the Palestinians, has been stuck "in the logic of Oslo", i.e., the assumption that "trust would emerge between the parties in the course of the negotiations, that violence would stop or at least recede, and that Israel was ready to relinquish its control over (most of) the occupied territories". These assumptions were not materialising.

In this context, the German-Israeli relationship has been increasingly conflictual, as analysed by Busse (2018). For instance, shortly after Germany informed Israel of its intention to reject Palestine's ambitions in the UN in late 2011, Israel approved 1,000 new housing units in East Jerusalem, leaving Merkel "furious […] because she expected Israel after the averted vote to take trust-building measures towards the Palestinians instead of settlement expansion" (Busse 2018: 81). The German abstention in the UNGA Resolution took Israel, nevertheless, by surprise. Already in 2010 and early 2011, Merkel had criticised Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem on the second and third round of German-Israeli joint cabinet meetings (ibid.). German re-orientation was remarkably apparent in 2012, when the German Minister of State of the MFA declared that the German government not only accepted but played an important role in drafting a Council conclusion that stipulated that "all agreements between the State of Israel and the European Union must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967" (Council cited in ibid.: 82). The German government further clarified in 2013 that it only considered products 'Made in Israel' if originating from the pre-1967 borders. However, it 'shielded' itself by referring this practice to be the implementation of EU legislation (Busse 2018). While the differentiation was reiterated by the EU Council in 2016, the German government framed the decision as an issue of consumer protection and underlined that labelling did not constitute a boycott. Simply put, while implementing and supporting common EU positions on settlements, the German government has remained cautious to openly criticise Israel given potential internal and external pressures.

Although the German government's policies have adopted an increasingly critical approach, political action seen as a directed against Israel, such as a boycott or controversial conditionality, have not found evidenced support of the German government. This preference has been remarkably stable, such as seen with Germany's firm rejection of a ruling of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2021 expanding its jurisdiction to open investigations of war crimes into Israel (ToI 2021). Nevertheless, criticism has been voiced increasingly more openly.
In 2016, the Foreign Minister Steinmeier commented in light of the latest settlement-specific Resolution 2334 of the UN Security Council (UNSC) that "Israeli settlements in occupied territories jeopardize the possibility of a peace process" (cited in Weinthal 2016); and Merkel cancelled a summit in 2017 allegedly because of the adoption of Israel's controversial

expropriation law (Ravid 2017). In the same year, PM Netanyahu cancelled a meeting with new Foreign Minister Gabriel due to his visits of human rights NGOs in Israel. In the aftermath, Gabriel downplayed the cancellation stating that "you have to know that there can be surprises but my relationship with Israel, and Germany's relationship to Israel, will not be changed by this in any way" (cited in Ahren 2017). These instances exemplify a new phase of German foreign policy with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, wherein the balancing of the 'special' relationship with downloaded and incorporated EU positions as well as with Germany's 'self-image as a [peace-making, European] civilian power' has become increasingly difficult. So far, German governments have employed the image of 'good' or 'special' 'friends' which, therefore, are allowed to very moderately criticise because of and without risking the 'friendship' (Schmid 2018).

Given this literature review, the thesis identifies specific frames that featured in German political discourse, explicated in its (limits of) up- and downloading in EFP.

First, regarding diagnostic framing, unilateral actions or spoilers such as violence by either party or anti-democratic tendencies obstructing the MEPP were featured as a 'problem'. These include terrorism (by Hamas), increasingly settlement expansion and illiberal Israeli reforms, and the legitimacy of the PA. Given that Germany's has been strongly committed to Israel's security, notably critical frames of military operations aimed at 'fighting terrorism' had not featured prominently in official and high-level German discourse.

Second, regarding prognostic framing, the two-state solution through bilateral negotiations and developmental and humanitarian aid by the international community featured as 'solutions'. While the former was downloaded through EFP, the later referred to Germany's self-image as a 'civilian power'. Strong conditionality or ambitious (diplomatic) EU intervention responding to unilateral actions did not feature, given the German aversion to risk its 'special' relationship.

Third, regarding motivational framing, the German discourse incrementally manifested the frame of the Staatsräson, the 'special' responsibility for Israel's security. However, the frame of a 'civilian power', championing international law, non-militarism, multilateralism, and European integration has been a dominant motivational frame of German foreign policy.

This informs the selection and interpretation of frames in the analysis, and the perspective on German foreign policy development through Europeanization and framing.

Pre-crisis Status of EU Foreign Policy

The prevalent inefficacy of EU peace-making efforts, i.e., the inability to positively influence the conflict parties and end international law violations has attracted much scholarly interest (see, inter alia, Pace 2009, Bouris 2014, Dajani & Lovatt 2017, Persson 2018, Akgül-Açıkmeşe & Özel 2024). As the International Crisis Group (2022) put it: "In reality, Europe has moved from efforts to build a Palestinian state to attempts at managing an ever-worsening 'status quo'". These articles share the general agreement that the EU is not leveraging its strong economic ties on both parties, partly because the conflict had lost much of its international priority, hopes for solutions have disappeared, and "European leaders mostly assess that the price for changing policy would outweigh any realistic benefit" (ibid.). With regards to the increasingly anti-democratic PA, EU MS have been reluctant to punish the Palestinian people. With regards to Israel, this 'assessment' has been, inter alia, attributed to the change of the international landscape and processes of de-Europeanization.

First, while the US has been acting as the prime mediator in the MEPP since the 1970s and Germany has underlined this role continuously, the perceived pro-Israeli partiality of Washington has been undermining its credibility as a reliable and realistic peace broker (Slater 2021). In this sense, transatlantic orientations have done only few favours for EU efforts of peace-making. Although not approving all parameters, the EU (and Germany) supported US-backed (relatively) genuine initiatives such as the 'Roadmap' (2003), the 'disengagement plan' (2005), the Annapolis conference (2007), President Obama's peace diplomacy (2013-2014), or the John Kerry Parameters (2016), the latter being met with immediate rejection from Israel (Becker & Friedman 2016).

Under the Trump administration, the US has adopted an openly pro-Israeli and unilateral stance, recognised the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights, and recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital by moving the US embassy. Further, it has ordered the PLO to close its Representation in Washington (Zomlot 2018). The following 'Peace for Prosperity' plan (2020) departed from key international consensus on the two-state solution and was met with immediate Palestinian rejection. These latter developments marked a rift between the new US administration with the majority of EU MS, including Germany, and EFP institutions. For instance, the German MFA noted that Trump's plan raised questions regarding "recognized international parameters and legal positions", which was instructive for the general little excitement of the Merkel government for the Trump presidency (cited in DW 2020). Under the Biden administration, none of these decisions had been reversed. Paired with a defunct Quartet and Arab-Israeli rapprochement through the Abraham Accords (2020), not containing any provisions towards peace, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had lost priority and any last attempts of quasi-symmetrical negotiation on a two-state solution, potentially part of an effective EU initiative or part of US mediation supported by the EU, had become politically unviable, as argued by Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel (2024).

Second, the EU had been severely limited to react to the conflict given growing internal divisions. Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel (2024: 66) have recently differentiated between three groups within the EU: a pro-Palestinian group (including Ireland, Belgium and Luxemburg), a balanced group (including Denmark, France, and Spain), and a pro-Israeli group (including

Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic). While the complex and increasingly more critical position of Germany has been highlighted, recent studies have shed light on the newly emerging connections of de-Europeanization or Euroscepticism and emerging trade relationships with support for Israel, given attempts by the Israeli government to capitalise on European disunity and right-wing populist changes of government.

Pardo and Gordon (2018) have shown in detail, how Israeli diplomats mobilised Greek and Cyprian support to successfully alter the Council conclusions of 2016 to soften criticism of Israel. Israel, thereby, spoke to Greek anti-German and anti-EU sentiments while enhancing the relationship with an energy alliance. Dyduch and Müller (2021: 582) have comparably observed that Poland, "rather than constructively engaging in consensus-building at the EU-level, […] was ready to prevent EU policies it considered harmful to Polish interests" and, partly, Israeli interests. The Viségrad group blocked a joint statement to criticise PM Netanyahu's announcement to annex 30 % of the West Bank in 2020, and Hungary, one of Israel's largest trading partners, blocked a joint call for peace during the Israel-Palestinian crisis in 2021 (International Crisis Group 2022). This mobilisation of Euroscepticism, thus, has undermined EFP decision making and "serves as a push back against certain norms that inform EU policy" (Pardo & Gordon 2018: 6). MS have also circumvented EFP frameworks by supporting US initiatives, with Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, and Romania rejecting a joint statement criticising Trump's peace plan and a common EU position on an UNGA Resolution critical of the US' embassy relocation (Dyduch & Müller 2021: 579). Simply put, Germany is not the most committed MS to Israeli interests and intra-European political developments have limited the EU's ability to react on the asymmetrical developments of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the "capacity of Israel […] and the parallel lack of advocacy power of the PA", a common EFP has been increasingly difficult to produce.

With regards to EU institutions, the EEAS and HR Borrell have shown significant support for a more pro-active and critical stance on Israel, and the EP has called for a European Peace Initiative and Palestinian elections, while the Commission has "formally displayed a balanced stance by calling on both sides to agree both on the 1967 borders and the terms of peace" (Akgül-Açıkmeşe & Özel 2024: 66). Further, Konečný (2024) has argued, actors within the EU institutions are also deeply divided, with the Commission's President Von der Leyen or Hungarian Commissioner Várhelyi aligning closely with Israeli interests, e.g., both having supported the Abraham Accords. Upon this, President Von der Leyen allegedly stalled HR Borrell's attempt to propose an options paper for potential measures to restrain Israel from annexing 30% of the West Bank in 2020. The joint statement, not including any EU measures, was blocked by the Viségrad group, as mentioned. On the other, more critical side, Konečný places EUCO President Michel next to Borrell. Additionally, disagreements among members of the EP have become more pronounced, hindering its ability to be a relevant actor in EFP (Levy et al. 2023).

In the context of intra-EU and inter-MSs disagreements, the intergovernmental FAC and EUCO has not formulated any new conclusions on the MEPP from 2016 until October 2023, compared to 14 FAC conclusions from 2007 to 2015 alone. Thereby, the conflict-specific EFP *acquis politique* remained to be based on the 2012, 2015, and 2016 EUCO conclusions, which

have been relatively 'soft' as discussed by Pardo and Gordon (2018). EFP institutions have had only limited autonomy with regards to ENP and EMP to launch actions with regards development programmes, such as adopted by the Southern Neighbourhood Communication in 2021. While the EU has been incapable to come up with joint statements and EUCO or FAC conclusions, Borrell has been similarly unable to produce joint statements and has limited himself to statements on his own or the EEAS' behalf with less political weight (Levy et al. 2023). Additionally, it has become increasingly difficult to find consensus on EU declarations at the UNSC as well as in negotiating the so-called 'Palestinian package', negotiated each year prior to the UNGA session (ibid.). At the same time, MS have been reluctant to voice EU positions in bilateral relations with Israel, and either did not support the HR or "mostly left it to the High Representative to explain EU approaches" (Asseburg cited in ibid.: 23). Given the incapability of EFP to find new common positions, other minilateral fora have also been increasingly sponsored, next to the support by some MS of US initiatives. For instance, the foreign ministers of Germany, France, Egypt, and Jordan created the so-called Munich or Amman Group to circumvent EFP or the Quartet, with the EU not being involved.

In sum, the pre-crisis status of EFP has been one of intensified internal contestation and division, hindering its capacity to (re)act according to developments, to adjust common foreign policy, and to impact the MEPP. While MS have up- and downloaded the two-state solution, the illegality of settlement expansion, and the developmental support for Palestinians through EFP, this has not resulted in a unified and coordinated foreign policy approach. MS have been (1) incapable to agree on joint 'texts', (2) unable to show unity in multilateral contexts, (3) negligent of EFP positions in relations to Israel, and (4) circumventing EFP fora and EU institutions to address the MEPP. Above all, the MEPP had also lost priority over other crises, such as the Russo-Ukraine War.

This status makes it particularly relevant to study as a crisis of EFP. As discussed, crises may represent critical junctures in foreign policymaking, demand political responses, and may open unique opportunities the renegotiation of foreign policy. Given the perceived 'stalemate' or increasing asymmetry of the conflict over the last decade, the change of the international environment, and the growing disunity of the EU on the conflict's resolution, a perspective on discursive practices in EFP processes engaged in the crisis' response(s) contributes to the discussion of the EU's capacity to engage in the MEPP as an 'international actor', with its complex intergovernmental and supranational processes, and the question whether the EU has, indeed lost its capacity to influence and coordinate its MS.

Drawing light on German and EU institutional framing and its up- and downloading dimensions is, in this context, particularly relevant, given Germany's strong commitment to and position in EFP-making, its past foreign policy Europeanization, and its ongoing negotiation of growing frustration with a longstanding commitment to a 'special' relationship to Israel and with EU disunity. Given the development of the conflict since October 7th, the overarching question remains how actors of German foreign policy actors have framed the conflict, and how this has influenced and has been influenced by its placement within structures of EFP. With this, it investigates how the aforementioned frames have developed and how this contributes to a reflection on the status of EFP.

Chapter II: Methodology

This thesis aims to analyse the German foreign policy discourse and its Europeanization in context of the Israeli-Hamas War, both in its up- and downloading dimensions. To achieve this, it will conduct a discourse analysis drawing on framing theory to investigate how political actors have discursively influenced foreign policy in times of crisis. In this chapter, the thesis will present its conceptual framework and research design, informed by the literature review, and informing the following analysis. While the framework presents the analysis' interpretative lenses, the design section will discuss the selection of actors, 'texts', and timeframe of the case study.

II.I Conceptual Framework

In general, the thesis adopts the three claims of discourse analysis categorised by Milliken (1999: 228, 231) and Larsen (2004: 67) understanding discourses as systems of representation, i.e., meaning, discourses as producing subjects and objects, i.e., constraining and enabling action (including policies), and discourses as changeable and historically contingent, i.e., influenced by discursive practices and other discourses. Based on this, the subject of the thesis is a (meaning-constructing, action-constraining, and changeable) foreign policy discourse on the Israel-Hamas War and its interdiscursive connections (within EFP). The discourse constructs meaning through interpretative lenses on the conflict's actors and events, this meaning constrains actions, and is changeable (inter alia) in the context of EFP.

The thesis analyses three different forms of framing in text, as constructing these interpretative lenses, as its overarching analytical categories. In the context of discursive Europeanization, the thesis conceptualises framing as attempts by political actors at national and EU levels to mobilise support for positions and legitimate actions of crisis response by offering explanations and interpretations of the Israel-Hamas War. Given the thesis in interested in instances of discursive *influence* or *development*, it excludes frames that are presumed to be consistently consensual and commonly shared. The thesis differentiates diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing and has chosen the following frames for the analysis.

(1) Diagnostic framing describes the identification of a problem and causality. Given the polarised nature of a conflict or war, one can expect two diametrically opposed diagnoses to exist in political discourse, explaining a failure of the MEPP by blaming Hamas, Islamist extremism and terrorism, or, in general, Palestinians or by blaming the Israeli government, occupation and displacement or, in general, Israel. As EFP and Germany have been self-proclaimed mediators and supporters of both Israel and Palestinians in the MEPP, the analysis of diagnostic frames can be fruitful rather than presumed, as would be the case with diagnostic framing by the conflict parties. The thesis focuses on diagnostic framing of (a) Hamas' terrorism, the attack on October 7, and Palestinian complicity on the one hand, and (b) on Israeli military disproportionality, settler violence, and settlement expansion on the other hand.

(2) Prognostic framing describes the identification of solutions and strategies of how to achieve them. The thesis focuses on prognostic framing of (a) short-term solutions such as Israeli 'self-defence' and military operations, humanitarian aid, as well as a ceasefire or a pause, and (b) long-term solutions, i.e., the two-state solution which, although being a central part of the EU's *acquis politique* for over two decades, includes diverging questions on the future status of Gaza, the role of the PA, and the role of the EU in achieving a long-term solution. As a consistent and shared call for the immediate release of hostages and the prevention of a regional crisis by all actors is presumed, these frames are not included in the analysis.

(3) Motivational framing describes the identification of reasons of political action. This may include material, solidarity, and moral reasons. In this sense, motivational framing also explicates dimensions of self-construction, self-imagery, and status. The thesis focuses on motivational framing of (a) a 'special' relationship of solidarity between Germany and the EU with Israel. Although this part focuses specifically on the Staatsräson frame, it understands the interpretation of a solidary, bilateral relationship as non-exclusive to German actors and, most importantly, changeable. The thesis further analyses (b) motivational frames connected to the self-construction of a 'civilian' power, including the championing of international law, 'even-handed' mediation, and 'humanity'. Here, the remarkable developments also lie in the balancing act between framing a 'special' relationship and 'civility'.

Importantly, these frames are understood as potentially strongly interconnected, meaning that a specific diagnostic frame (e.g., Israeli disproportionality) may affect specific prognostic frames (e.g., the objective of self-defence) and may affect motivational frames (e.g., international law).

Throughout the analysis of framing, elements of discursive Europeanization, which the thesis differentiates in reflective, comparative, and interdiscursive analytical dimensions. While this perspective guides the analysis of framing, an assessment of these dimensions will be specifically addressed after the discussion of frames.

(1) Considering the reflective dimension, the focus lies on the framing of the EU in the context of the war by German actors. Regarding the diagnoses, the EU and EFP per se could be identified as part of the problem, as prominently done by Eurosceptic parties and marking de-Europeanization. On the other hand, contestation within EFP could be framed as a problem, thereby providing arguments for either one's own national unilateralism or further deliberation and consensus-building. EFP and a common strategy can also be framed as being part of the solution (or prognosis) and, lastly, EFP can be framed as a reference point (or motivation) of political action potentially explicating 'shielding', as mentioned. However, the EU could also be neither part of framing the problem, solution, or motivation.

(2) Considering the comparative dimension, the focus lies on a comparison of different frames of different German and EFP actors to investigate whether they show similarities or differences. If frames are different, the thesis expects either subsequent up- or downloading, consistent contestation, or, if showing strongly incompatible differences, de-Europeanization.

(3) This leads to the interdiscursive dimension which analyses 'framing effects', drawing draws attention on how diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames relate to each other. Framing effects are conceptualised as the empirical consequence of framing, i.e., describing the adoption or influence of frames by or on the 'target'. Differentiating between the national and EU level, the analysis of framing effects is particularly relevant for the analysis of inter-discursive change and continuity and failed or successful discursive up- and downloading. Although the analysis does not argue for isolated or direct causality, it can, nevertheless, highlight the developments of political discourse and *propose* a lens on the "opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts" (Fairclough 1995: 132). In this sense, it conceptualises the term 'effects' in its broadest understanding and draws on the concepts of intertextuality, a lens on how texts draw from other texts through reference, and interdiscursivity, a lens on how discourses are interrelated. Simply put, frames could be discursively deployed by one group of actors and downloaded by another group of actors, to be detectable in text and policy (leading to a 'pendulum effect'). The thesis defines discursive uploading as the incorporation of national frames at the EU-level, and discursive downloading vice versa. As mentioned, it is also well possible that inter-discursive connections of frames are not observable, potentially explicating contestation or, if understood as incompatible, de-Europeanization.

In sum, the analysis will focus on (1) diagnostic, (2) prognostic, and (3) motivational framing and will assess Europeanization throughout these framing tasks. To assess discursive Europeanization, it analyses (1) the reflective role of the EU in these frames, (2) compares frames at the German and EU-level, and (3) with regards to framing effects, aims to retrace potential interdiscursive, up- and downloading, interactions of frames and their explications in policy. It will also consider superficial, processual characteristics of the discourse, i.e., the frequency of the (common, minilateral, national) way in which texts are produced.

II.II Research Design

Following these interpretative lenses, the timeframe, selected a range of discursive texts, and selected actors of the discourse analysis are presented.

Considering the timeframe, the analysis observes foreign policy discourse from the start of 2023 until the end of March 2024. Given that the status of EFP with regards to the conflict has been comprehensively analysed until January 2023 (see Levy et al. 2023), it takes this literature as a starting point for its contribution. It has chosen the limit of March 2024 given the EUCO conclusions on March 22, the second relevant conclusions after those in October 2023, which represent a highly important text for EFP, potentially underlining successful or failed up- and downloading. Within this timeframe, the thesis has differentiated three periods alongside the usual categorisation of crises: First, a pre-crisis period from January to October 6, 2023, second, a period of immediate crisis response in October 2023, and third, a period of an ongoing or developing crisis until March 2024.

Considering the text genres, the thesis has selected texts it considers of a high degree of political authority as well as articulating frames to explain foreign policy positions, following Hansen (2006: 25). Certainly, different genres of texts show different degrees of both criteria. The thesis has analysed political speeches, interviews, editorials, and press conferences which, next to political authority, are particularly expected to articulate frames and explain foreign policy. On the other hand, political declarations, statements, and conclusions have been analysed, which, as they are typically the product of negotiations, are expected to show less articulation of frames, however, given their higher political importance, they are instructive to assess consensus-building and the connections between discursive developments and formal policy change, e.g., up- and downloading of frames and policy. General press releases have also been analysed, which are typically a mixed genre, including (press) statements, excerpts of speeches, and descriptions by the institution.

Considering the institutions, the thesis focuses on high-level, mostly executive foreign policy discourse, meaning text from governmental and institutional actors understood as hegemonically partaking in German foreign policy and EFP discourses. At the German level, texts from the German Federal Chancellery and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been selected, complemented by texts from Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), given its responsibility for aid. At the EFP level, texts from the HR, EEAS, and the Commission have been selected, while texts of the EP, given its limited impact on EFP, have been only analysed peripherally if considered especially relevant. Additionally, texts from the intergovernmental EFP institutions/fora EUCO and the FAC have been selected. Lastly, it considers other texts if relevant in context, and is, therefore, flexible. This includes, inter alia, multilateral organisations such as the UN, or 'minilateral' and ad-hoc initiatives and conferences such as the Cairo Peace Summit or the Munich/Amman Group.

Considering the specific selection of texts, the discourse analysis focuses on different selections, emphases, and nuances of frames in German and EU foreign policy texts. This also entails rhetorical, linguistic figures and, as it expects these texts to be prepared and tailored, detailed changes of wording and expression. Very importantly, this also requires an examination of *what remains unspoken*. Given this requirement, the research has analysed all accessible texts published by the selected institutions, while not all are specifically mentioned in the analysis. In sum, the thesis has analysed 237 texts. This included 136 press releases, 60 interviews, speeches, or press conferences, and 41 conclusions and statements. It has only focused on written text accessible online, e.g., not on recorded press conferences without a transcript. For the presentation of the analysis, all German texts have been translated by the author. Further, the citation of data will be marked numerically to improve readability, with the numbers corresponding to the separate bibliography of data.

Chapter III: Analysis

In the following, the analysis of discursive framing at the EU and German level and the assessments of Europeanization will be presented. As the thesis has differentiated the timeline in three periods (of a [pre-]crisis), each period will be discussed separately. Given that different frames have been differently dominant (or existent) in each period, *not all chapters discuss all frames outlined above* but inductively focus and *combine* the frames prominent at a given period. In additions to the analysis of framing, each period will be introduction with a brief historical context of the conflict that will also make the specific focus on frames in each period comprehensible.

III.I Pre-Crisis (Jan-Sep 2023)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2023, until October 7, was, as in the years prior, by far not a 'cold' conflict. Until the July 11th, more than 130 Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were killed in confrontations with the IDF, five Palestinians killed in conflict with Israeli settlers, while 31 Israelis were killed by Palestinian perpetrators (1). The causes included several terrorist attacks such as on a synagogue in East Jerusalem on January 27 with seven victims or on June 20 near the settlement Eli with four victims. On the other hand, the IDF started several 'military search and arrest operations' in the West Bank, for instance in Jenin from July 3 to July 5, with at least twelve Palestinian victims and over 100 people injured. More confrontations included the Nablus incursion in February with eleven victims and the Al-Aqsa clashes in April, with approximately 50 people injured.

The ceasefire between Israel and Gaza that was brokered by Egypt and Qatar after the last two-week long major escalation in May 2021, broke down on May 2, 2023, after a prisoner of the Hamas-allied Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) died in Israeli imprisonment due to a hunger strike (2). After the PIJ launched over 100 rockets on Israeli territory, mutual bombings with 33 Palestinians and one Israeli killed continued until a renewed ceasefire was brokered on May 13.

In context to these violent escalations, Israel rapidly reportedly increased the practice of demolitions, evictions, and settlement expansions and legalisations, with around 13,000 settlement units announced in the West Bank from January until July (1). This included the legalisation of nine settler outposts on February 12 and several proposed changes to Israeli law.

Diplomatically, there had also been initially promising developments, most importantly through the Aqaba Joint Communique and Sharm El Sheikh Communique of February and March, respectively, brokered by Jordan, Egypt, and the US and without European participation. In these, Israel and the PA committed to refraining from unilateral actions for three to six months, including an Israeli commitment to stop discussion of new settlements or legalisation of outposts. However, the commitments soon broke down given the myriad of violent spoilers (3). Another dominant topic had been the Israeli judicial reform, limiting the Supreme Court and leading to large civil protest within Israel. The bill was passed on July 24.

Diagnostic Framing

Terrorism, Settler violence, and Israeli Disproportionality

The strongest similarities of diagnostic framing of the conflict could be observed in the condemnation of terrorism with Israeli victims. Following the attack on the synagogue in January, the MFA issued a statement, strongly condemning the "horrific terrorist attack" (4). The German statement also underlined the religious dimension of the attack, describing the victims as "Jewish believers on International Holocaust Remembrance Day" (4). The HR also called the attack an act of "insane violence and hate", although refraining from mentioning the Remembrance Day (5). Following the killing of four settlers in June, the MFA stated that "nothing can justify such terrorist attacks" (6) while the EEAS issued a press statement declaring that "terrorism in all its forms is unacceptable and never an answer" (7). As such, both the German level and EEAS agreed in the condemnation of terrorism with Israeli victims, identified as a senseless and abhorrent problem.

However, the note of 'terrorism in all its forms' already hinted on significant differences in diagnostic framing, particularly regarding attacks with Palestinian victims. At a state visit of Netanyahu in Berlin in March, Scholz remarked that Germany was "dismayed by the blind violence" in context of the mentioned terrorist attacks, although also warning against "unbridled vigilante justice" (8), hinting on violence against Palestinians. However, German governmental institutions never released press statements specifically reacting on settler violence or Israeli military operations. In context of the Jenin incursion in July, the MFA or the Chancellery, at first, remained silent. Only after a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv on July 4 amidst the incursion, the MFA released a statement, condemning the terrorist attack "in the strongest possible terms" (9) and argued that "Israel […] has the right to defend itself against terror", while adding that the operation "must respect the principle of proportionality under international law" (9). Throughout the period in question, bilateral talks between Germany and Israel have, according to the press releases, largely focused on the Israeli judicial reform and terrorist attacks, while peripherally focusing on violence with Palestinian victims. A case in point has been a press release describing the meeting of Netanyahu and Scholz in context of the 78th UNGA session, mentioning the "difficult situation in the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue" as a topic, although emphasising that the meeting was primarily centred around "the status of the reorganisation of the judiciary" (10). In this sense, violence against Palestinians had only rarely been diagnosed as a central part of a problem by the German government.

A notable exception has been a joint declaration in context of the Munich group, together with Egypt, France, and Jordan. The 'minilateral' group, especially Egypt, had been mediating the ceasefire between the PIJ and Israel on May 13. The group declared that a ceasefire needed to "end Israeli military operations in Gaza and indiscriminate rocket firing against Israel", emphasising that all "triggers of violence must end" (11). This was the only time in the discussed period when the German MFA specifically agreed to call for an end of Israeli military operations, presumably downloaded from the other parties of the declaration.
Against this, the EEAS and the HR have been remarkably critical. In a long statement, Borrell described in March that "extremism is rising on both sides", stating that "Israeli settlers in the

West Bank [are] increasingly threatening Palestinian lives" while "Israeli military operations frequently cause civilian Palestinian deaths, often without effective accountability" (12). This diagnostic difference has been exemplified with the attack near Eli killing four Israelis on June 20 and reacting settler violence killing one Palestinian on June 21. While the MFA only published a statement regarding the terrorist attack with Israeli victims (6) (see above), Borrell added to this condemnation on June 23 that the EU "equally condemn[s] attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank", recalling that "Israel has the obligation to ensure the protection of civilians in the occupied territory" (13). Regarding the Jenin incursion, the EEAS statement, first, highlighted the number Palestinian deaths and injuries involving the "largest-scale airstrikes on the city in decades" (14), and only secondly the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, while thirdly condemning attacks by settlers, and only fourthly committing to Israel's security. The number of Palestinian victims and the scale of the operation had not been part of the German statement. In general, statements by the EEAS largely built on repeatedly describing a "spiral" or "vicious cycle of violence" (5, 14) that had been fuelled both by Palestinian and Israeli violence. Even with the terrorist on the synagogue in January, the EEAS called on "Israeli and Palestinian leaders […] to refrain from actions that will increase the already high level of tension" (5). Germany's framing largely built on the rhetorical repetition of the "terrorists' intention to sow hatred and spark further violence", limiting the critique of Israel to "unilateral measures" (4, 6, 8) and showing less convergence with the positions of the EEAS.

Settlement Expansion

These 'unilateral measures' mostly referred to the expansion of settlements, which have prominently featured as a problem in both German, EFP as well as 'minilateral' texts. After the Israeli government announced that it was to approve 10,000 new settlement units and legalise nine outposts on February 14, Germany, France, Italy, the UK and the US released a joint statement stating that they "strongly oppose these unilateral measures, which will only serve to exacerbate tensions" (15). The consequence of this statement, then, could be seen in the Aqaba Joint Communique on February 26. However, as the Israeli government continued to expand settlements, and the FAC published a statement on March 8, stating that "settlements are illegal under international law", that "Israel must stop settlement expansion [and] prevent settler violence", and that "all parties should observe the agreements in Aqaba" (16). Speaking in front of the EP, Borrell explained that "we face a difficult situation on the ground with increasing violence and extremism" and underlined that, for "the first time in many years […] we managed to reach an agreement of the 27" MS (17).[1] The statement regarding the expansion's illegality was missing in the earlier 'minilateral' statement with German participation and did not feature in subsequent exclusively German press releases except once.

[1] Remarkably, the statement has been removed from the official webpage of the Council. The statement could only be identified through its mentioning by Borrell at the EP and only be retrieved from the website 'reliefweb' by the OCHA. The validity and originality of the statement could be confirmed through the internet archive 'Web-Archive' which had made the latest copy of the statement featured on the Council's webpage on April 20, 2023.

For instance, at the visit of Netanyahu on March 16, Scholz only called to refrain from unilateral measures adding, on a sidenote, that this "also includes the construction of further settlements" (8). Borrell, on the other hand, clearly stated in March that "illegal settlements are expanding on occupied land" and that the "Israeli right increasingly denies that the occupation even exists" (12). Following the Sharm El Sheikh joint communique on March 19, effectively reiterating the communique of Aqaba, the Knesset, however, repealed articles from the 2005 Disengagement Law only two days later, allowing access to four formerly evacuated settlements. While the EEAS repeated parts of Borrell's clear statement in a following press release (18), the German government reacted unusually strongly to the decision, being "very concerned" about a "dangerous step", questioning Israel's "contractual reliability", and stating that Israeli settlement constructions are "illegal under international law" (19). This hints on growing German frustration with Israeli unilateralism and growing convergence of the EEAS and German framing. Nevertheless, settlements did not feature in the joint declaration of the Munich group in May, and, contrary to the EEAS, Germany refrained from criticising the Israeli announcement of 4,000 new settlement units on June 19. Remarkably, the term 'occupation' did only feature once in exclusively German texts analysed, after the Jenin incursion, compared to being utilised numerously by the EEAS or 'minilateral' texts.

Palestinians and Palestinian complicity

Neither the Hamas nor the PA have frequently and specifically been included in the diagnoses analysed. In all relevant texts, the threat to the peace process has largely been framed through the imagery of unspecified 'senseless terrorism' or 'indiscriminate rocket firing'. For instance, the EEAS urged for an end of "current rocket firing against Israel" amid the clashes in May without specifying the perpetrators (20). Certainly, German and EFP texts have included 'Palestinians' it their plea for refraining from unilateral actions, however, the PA was rather included in prognostic framing (by the EEAS) and Hamas had been barely mentioned at all. The rare instance where the Palestinians have been significantly framed as part of the problem is the statement of Borrell in March, stating that, on the "Palestinian side, there is a lack of unity, as well as insufficient democratic legitimacy" and that "Palestinian factions will need to renounce terrorism and overcome their political divisions" (12). In the same month, Scholz called on the PA to fulfil its "responsibility to build a peaceful and democratic Palestine" (8). However, these framings have been rare instances. Additionally, at both levels, neither developmental aid nor humanitarian aid to Palestinians had been framed as a problem but as a necessity.

Prognostic Framing

Long-term Solutions

While short-term solutions regarding the clashes between the PIJ and Israel were ritually framed as a "comprehensive immediate ceasefire" and an increase humanitarian aid by both the German government and the EEAS (11, 20), both largely framed the long-term solution, as discussed, as the two-state solution. After terrorist attacks as well as announced expansions of settlements, texts at both levels ritually emphasised the need of a two-state solution which, as Scholz put it, "enables Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security" (8). To this end, the German government underlined unilateral actions by Israel and the PA should be averted through "cooperation and dialogue" (4). The framing of the EEAS has been largely similar, usually unspecific and calling for, how Borrell put it, "meaningful efforts to restart peace negotiations" (5) and "a political solution to the conflict, which allows Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, dignity, and prosperity" (14). However, there have been some nuances to this long-term prognostic framing.

Both the German government and the EEAS have only referred to the solution being based on 1967 lines in 'minilateral' contexts. The Munich group specified that the solution must be "based on June 4, 1967, lines and consistent with relevant UN Security Council resolutions", hinting at Egyptian and Jordanian uploading (11). Similarly, the EEAS only mentioned the 1967 lines as a basis in a joint press statement with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Arab League in September, whose context will be explained below (21). While both the EU and, with-it, Germany have been committed to this basis, it did not feature in their respective press releases if exclusively formulated.

Another nuance describes the reasoning for a two-state solution. While the MFA and BMZ generally referred to the solution as a "shared international understanding" (22) consistently adopted by Germany, the EEAS took a more active frame describing "Israeli obligations under international agreements" and calling for "respect of international law" (14). In this sense, German texts commonly 'shielded' its position as being consistent and international consensus while the EEAS more frequently framed the solution as a necessary 'hard' consequence of the rule of law. The exception to this was on March 22 after the frustration with the 2005 Disengagement Law amendments (see above), the only time a German press release clearly stated a less 'shielding' position. Testifying of consistent frustration, the EEAS frequently used the term 'meaningful' or 'credible' with regards to negotiated peace, a hint at 'too many statements and too little action' and unilateralism.

Common to both levels, however more frequent in the German discourse, the two-state solution has also been framed as "in Israel's security interests" (22). In context of the 'minilateral' statement with France, Italy, the UK and the US, Germany framed the two-state solution also as a condition to "realise the vision of a state of Israel fully integrated into the Middle East" (15). However, both levels differed in their framing of ongoing solutions regarding Palestinians. While the German government underlined development cooperation activities in the Palestinian territories as helping to "improve the living conditions" and as "intended to contribute to the establishment of a future Palestinian state", however, always

'shielding' it by stating that this was in Israel's security interests. The EEAS was not frequently linking the solution to developmental aid and had been more specific with its demands, for instance, to "strengthen the Palestinian Authority so that it can re-establish security control of all of Area A" (14). The PA has not been frequently featuring as a prominent part of the solution in German texts, in line with its general minimal discursive role. On the contrary, in context of developmental aid, the BMZ even underlined that it was not directly funding the PA and remarked that "projects are only implemented by German state organisations and non-governmental organisations" (22).

Another part of this prognostic framing has been the role of the EU as well as other international actors. In March, Borrell argued that all EU actors and MS "share the same ultimate goal: to see a safe, secure, globally recognized state of Israel live in peace alongside a safe, secure, globally recognized state of Palestine" (12). In line with this, the EEAS frequently stated that the "European Union stands ready to support such [peace] efforts" (14). However, the EU had not been a relevant actor in any of the diplomatic missions during the period. Likewise, the EU did only feature one time in a relevant German press release, when a high-ranking MFA-official remarked a "changing role of Germany and the EU in the international security architecture" (23) on a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories. Apart from this, the EU has not been mentioned by the German government in context of the peace process, as Germany had primarily acted through 'minilateral' contexts.

In reverse, the EEAS commended the efforts of the US, Jordan, and Egypt with the Aqaba communique or commended "Egypt for facilitating the [Israeli-PIJ ceasefire] agreement, and the United Nations for its positive role in this context" (24). Further, it declared that "the EU subscribes fully to the joint declaration of the 'Munich group' today in Berlin, where it was represented" (20). Here, the fact that two MS, France and Germany, were part of the Munich group sufficed to frame EU participation, blurring the admission that the EU as a foreign policy actor was less relevant than the minilateralism.

However, the EEAS had initiated a new initiative to support the two-state solution in March. In a statement, Borrell announced that he had instructed EU Special Representative Koopmans to develop "concrete proposals for a comprehensive regional process to achieve peace both between Israel and Palestine and between Israel and all its Arab neighbours" (12). Together with Saudi Arabia and the Arab League, Borrell aimed to revive the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and proposed to work on an "unprecedented package of economic, political and security support" (16), that would come into effect immediately after the two-state solution was reached and would entice both Israelis and Palestinians to pursue peace. This package had already been agreed upon in FAC conclusions of 2013, however, never materialised in detail. As a reason, Borrell framed a new role of the EU for the peace process, arguing that "we can no longer leave most of the hard work to American diplomats" and, since "we cannot force the parties to make peace", a future package with promises of regional integration was needed (12). However, in March, Borrell made clear that he was "not announcing a European peace initiative" but "simply reaching out to others and considering how we can prepare for the day when Israelis and Palestinians are ready" (12). The initiative remained, at first, without consequence and was only mentioned in a speech by the Commissioner for International Partnerships in July (20).

However, at UNGA78 session in September, the 'Peace Day Effort' initiative was launched as a 'side-event' by the mentioned parties in cooperation with Egypt and Jordan, with almost 50 ministers present, establishing 'Political and Security', 'Economic and Environmental', and 'Human Dimension' working groups to identify elements of a 'Peace Supporting Package', with progress to be assessed every three months (21).

However, there is no reference to this initiative in German discourse or press releases. While unofficial photos of the event attest that FM Baerbock was present at the launch, the German government did not endorse the initiative (25). Scholz rather met Netanyahu bilaterally one day after at the UNGA78. Several reasons could be expected for this, such as dissatisfaction with Israeli non-participation. In any case, it further underlines that the German government did not frame the EU as a prioritised or relevant actor in the peace process, while the EEAS remained interested in fostering a common initiative and framing an important role of the EU in the achieving a solution.

Motivational Framing

'Special' Relationship

As outlined earlier, a 'special' commitment to Israel has been framed as the central motivation for German engagement in the peace process. This has been saliently exemplified with the press release's headline of Netanyahu's visit in March in Berlin, citing Scholz with the sentence "Israel's security is and remains the German Staatsräson" (8). In the press conference, Scholz spoke of the "already good relations", a "unique connection between Germany and Israel", that Germany recognises its "special responsibility towards Israel as a Jewish and democratic state", and that Germany was "very grateful" for the "precious gift" that "Israel and Germany are friends", given the "immeasurable crimes against humanity of the Shoah". Scholz concluded that "Israel can rely on that". On the other hand, Scholz also remarked that Germany "recognised the Palestinians' right to self-determination", especially because it was the only possibility for peace and the unthreatened security of Israel. The same motivation has, albeit only once, been mentioned in an EEAS press release in context of the Jenin incursion, stating that the "EU has consistently reiterated its fundamental commitment to Israel's security" (14). However, this sentence was a pretext to strong political demands to strengthen the PA and, apart from this, no EFP text containing a 'special' relationship or even this commitment could be identified.

The German 'special' commitment to Israel's security did not feature frequently in the other press releases commenting on violent attacks or settlement expansions. Certainly, these releases underlined the need of security for both sides, especially civilians, however, a 'special' commitment as a general frame as motivation could not be identified.

There are several possible reasons for this. First, attacks against Israelis and Israeli military operations have been largely framed, as mentioned, under the frame of the general "prevention of and fight against terrorism" (14). These have been framed by the German government to refer to Israel's right to self-defence under international law rather than any bilateral commitment. Second, the statements regarding events framed as non-terrorist, such as the Gaza

clashes in May, have been 'minilateral', together with partners such as Jordan and Egypt which could not refer to a 'special' relationship. Third, many other commented instances were referring to unilateral settlement expansion, thereby explicating frustration rather than support. Fourth, in general, press releases contained less motivational framing than, e.g., political speeches, which were rare during the period.

'Civilian' Power

More frequently, motivations were framed with regards to being a reliable actor on the world stage, respecting international law and ensuring international security. When the German government presented its 'National Security Strategy' in June, it defined three dimensions of German foreign policy, namely the 'capability to act, resilience, and sustainability' ("Wehrhaft. Resilient. Nachhaltig") (26). Certainly, the strategy had been primarily referring the Germany's role with regards to the Russo-Ukrainian War. In a speech regarding the continuation of German participation to UNIFIL, however, Baerbock reiterated the strategy as Germany's central motivation, framing Germany as a "strong and rich country" had the "special responsibility to do its part to contribute to an international order, to strengthen international law and the United Nations" (27). She followed that "at UNIFIL, we are making a contribution to precisely this - reliably and responsibly". She derived the multilateralist motivation from security interests as "our security depends on the solidarity of others and because the security of others depends on our solidarity". Referring to "partners", she stated that they "rely on us to ensure that the law of the jungle does not apply" (27). The speech as well as the strategy framed Germany's motivation as a pro-active international actor and framed solidarity and reliability (through international law) as two sides of the same motivation. This corresponded with German prognostic framing of a two-state solution, a case of international reliability, that benefits Israel's security, a case of solidarity.

This motivational framing was equally present in the texts of the EEAS. Borrell stated that "we want peace because ending the conflict would be much better for international security […] because we stand up for international law" (12). And as security and the rule of law have been priorities of the EU, peace in the Middle East is a priority as well. And as the EU, as analysed as a prognostic frame, aims to be a reliable and pro-active actor, it needs to act on the peace process. On both levels, international law featured as the prominent motivational frame for political action.

There have been slight differences with regards to Palestinians. For instance, Borrell argued that "we share ties with all peoples in the Holy Land", German texts did not highlight this solidarity as a motivation. Aid to Palestinians, therefore, was explained as a de-politicised general support for civilians as a reliable international actor, and in the context of "*recognising*" the Palestinian right to self-determination, against "*being responsible*" (23) for Israel and its security. However, relations to Palestinians as well as the humanitarian situation have had a minimal role on both levels, as discussed.

Assessment of Discursive Europeanization

From the start of 2023 until October 7, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been a priority in European or German foreign policy discourses, despite numerous opposite claims in text. This is evident given that the conflict was not mentioned by the Commission or in any meeting (let alone conclusions) of the EUCO. Likewise, the conflict only surfaced twice on the agenda of the monthly FAC meetings. First, in June, when EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions had been ritually extended for one year (28) and, second, in July, when the FAC "touched on, amongst others, China, the EU-CELAC summit […], Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the MEPP" under the peripheral agenda point "current affairs" (29). There was one notable exception, the FAC statement in March, whose framing was, however, not commented on by German or EFP actors.

The conflict and its developments had only been a sidenote of EFP. The most salient example for this has been an informal meeting of the FAC on May 12 amidst the Gaza-Israel clashes and the breakdown of the ceasefire. Although the EEAS and the German government had published demands and described a deep concern over the "grave escalation of violence" (20), the topics of the FAC meeting were exclusively (and officially) comprised of "Russia's aggression, support to Ukraine [and] EU-China relations" (30). Political action, then, followed through the Munich group and without the EU one day later. While the German government had been engaged in two 'minilateral' contexts concerned with the conflict and facilitated two bilateral meetings of Scholz and Netanyahu, the meetings were largely centred around the Israeli judicial reform and, although Germany supported Egypt with regards to a ceasefire, it did not show any initiative or plan to support talks leading to peace negotiations. When the EEAS started the 'Peace Day Effort' initiative, Germany did not endorse it, and the initiative remained to be a political sidenote.

In sum, until October 7, the conflict did constitute crisis *in* EFP "at the core of the day-to-day business", *without* challenging "the institutional status quo and enhance[ing] the pressure to find a solution" (31). Certainly, both German and EFP texts highlighted the need to find a solution, but there is little evidence to support a claim of enhanced pressure and substantial re-articulations, except for a one-time German frustration with Israeli unilateralism after Israel disregarded the Sharm El Sheikh communique in March.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that the analysis confirms the discussed literature on the pre-crisis status of EFP and Europeanization.

First, regarding the reflective dimension, German texts have framed the EU neither as part of the problem, solution, nor motivation of foreign policy towards the conflict. Concerning diagnostic framing, the EU has not been mentioned. Although having historically downloaded the two-state solution in the context of EFP, the EU, in discourse, has not been framed as a relevant actor contributing to this solution and, in practice, 'minilateral' contexts have been preferred to construct foreign policy texts. Although the EU has been mentioned with regards to a general security strategy and the capability to be pro-active, it has not been part of the German framing of motivation, apart from belonging to the need to support the 'international

community' and 'partners', although not explicitly mentioned. The EEAS and Borrell, the only relevant actors at the EFP-level during the period, have framed the EU as part of the problem and solution, outlining internal divisions and inaction, and offering EU-assistance and an initiative while, in practice, having to commend 'minilateral' initiatives given a lack of EU relevance.

Second, regarding the comparative dimension, although both the German government and the EEAS subscribed to the same basic frames, such as the problem of terrorism and settlements, the two-state solution, and international law and security as a motivation, relevant differences and emphases could be identified. German discourse was more reluctant to frame Israeli military operations and settler violence against Palestinians as part of the problem than the EEAS, given a comparison of detail and frequency of press releases, and has refrained from criticising them in bilateral meetings. Germany effectively reduced any critique to an urge to 'refrain from unilateral measures'. However, even regarding the settlement expansion, the German government has been more reluctant to comment on new settlement units, to call them illegal, and to underline the status of occupation than the EEAS, which frequently underlined the conflict's asymmetrical nature. There were notable exceptions in minilateral declarations and after growing frustration in March. However, the dominant discursive tone reflected a concerned description rather than a demanding critique compared to the EEAS. In line with this, the German government, in comparison to the EEAS, had been more reluctant to formulate 'obligations', more prone to refer to an 'international understanding' rather than to 'international law', and was discursively more concerned of the benefits for Israel's security while depoliticising its aid to Palestinians and underlining that the PA was not funded by Germany. The EEAS did not comment on developmental aid and was more concerned with demanding both parties to meet international agreements and supporting the PA. As mentioned, Germany did also not frame the EU as part of the long-term solution. Regarding motivational frames, the gratitude for Israeli friendship and the need to meet a historic responsibility have played an exclusive role in the German discourse, while the HR also framied ties to Palestinians as a motivation. However, on both levels, international security and international law, generally, had been framed at the overarching motivation to engage in the peace process.

Third, an analysis of an interdiscursive dimension of up- and downloading has proven difficult, given that the frequency of deliberations, both on the EFP and German level, has been relatively low. Certainly, the similarities mentioned, especially regarding general positions, have be subject to prior up- and downloading, as discussed in the literature review. The fact that neither the FAC nor the EUCO officially discussed the conflict and the FAC published only one statement, only very limited attempts of up- and downloading (in the context of the EU) can be assumed. The agreement on common general frames such as the two-state solution or the importance of international law, framed by the German government as fully compatible with and fruitful for Israel's security, has remained stable at both levels. The growing criticism of settlement expansion at the EFP level had surfaced at the German level, showing potential downloading, however, clear criticism in German texts, reflecting the EEAS' or Borrell's position, could only be identified once.

In this sense, the German discursive positioning could be described as disregarding EFP, with little to no evidence of active discursive Europeanization. The German government had discursively ignored the EEAS, has not used fora like the FAC and EUCO to address the conflict, and adopted a less Israel-critical framing. This difference in framing has shaped political action, as evident in German minilateralism and bilateralism as potentially both a consequence and cause for difference. It has also influenced relations on a minor level. For instance, the EU called of a reception celebrating Europe Day with its host Israel in May, given that it did not "want to offer a platform to someone whose views contradict the values the European Union stands for" (32). Earlier, the Israeli government had named the far-right Minister of National Security Ben Gvir to attend the reception on its behalf. One month later, Germany received high-ranking Israeli officials of the ministry for the second "German-Israeli Strategic Dialogue" (33). This explicates how relations and foreign policy-making are entangled with framing, in this case, showing acceptable but notable differences between the German and EFP-level.

III.II Immediate Crisis Response (Oct 2023)

Early on October 7, at least 3000 rockets were launched by Hamas from Gaza on Israeli territory. At the same time, around 3,000 Hamas militants breached the border barrier, attacking 21 Israeli communities and military bases, indiscriminately killing 1,139 people, among them 695 Israeli civilians, 373 security forces, and 71 foreigners, and taking approximately 250 hostages back to Gaza (34). On the same day, the IDF declared a "state of readiness for war" and in the night to October 8, Israel's Security Cabinet voted on the "destruction of the military and governmental capabilities" of Hamas and PIJ in Gaza, officially declared the state of war, and called 300.000 reservists to duty (35). On October 11, the new Israeli emergency government was formed to oversee the "Operation Swords of Iron" which had been announced by the IDF. This marked the beginning of the to date ongoing Israel-Hamas War.

The first phase of the war, subject of this chapter, was characterised by the "total blockade" of the Gaza Strip, as announced by Defence Minister Galant on October 9, i.e., the blocking of entry of electricity, food, medicine, water, and gasoline. This included the closure and bombardment of Gaza's southern crossings to Egypt, most importantly the Rafah Border Crossing, which was, in consequence, also closed by Egypt. It also included, until October 21, the blocking of humanitarian aid.

Next to the blockade, the IDF conducted continued airstrikes on targets in Gaza that were claimed to be connected to Hamas or PIJ operational structures. According to the Gaza health ministry, whose neutrality is questioned by Israel and others, 5,087 people were killed and over 15,000 injured through the airstrikes until October 23 (36). On October 13, the IDF issued an evacuation warning to the residents of the northern Gaza Strip and announced a six-hour window to flee south along specified routes while Hamas called on the residents to remain in place. In the following, Israel accused Hamas of blocking civilians to flee and 70 people died along one of the routes through an explosion with disputed origin. On October 17, an airstrike hit the Al-Ahli Arabi Baptist Hospital, also with disputed origin.

Internationally, the attacks of October 7 as well as the following war quickly became one of the most salient and discussed political issues. In October and the 'first phase of the war' alone, the UNSC debated six draft resolutions, none of which were adopted, followed by the adoption of the UNGA Resolution ES-10/21 on October 27. At the European level, two FAC meetings (October 10 and 23) and two EUCO meetings (October 15/17 and 26) were organised, and several high-ranking officials, including Commission President von der Leyen, visited Israel and neighbouring states. The EUCO on October 26 has been especially relevant, since official conclusions were decided upon. Another important forum included the mentioned Cairo Peace Summit on October 21 with participation of both the German government and EFP actors. At the German level, Scholz and Baerbock travelled to Israel and neighbouring states multiple times, issued two declarations in a minilateral setting (including, inter alia, the US, France, and the UK), and 'published' multiple texts nationally, including speeches in front of the national parliament.

Diagnostic Framing

Hamas' Attack

When the international arena got news of the attacks on October 7, the 'problem' was very clear for both German and EFP actors. On the same day, the MFA published a statement condemning the "unprecedented terror" and "heinous violence against civilians" (37). At the same time, the FAC published a statement stating that the EU "condemns in the strongest possible terms the multiple and indiscriminate attacks" (38) and von der Leyen described the attacks as a "senseless" and "pure terrorism" (39). On October 9, Germany, together with France, Italy, the UK and the US issued a joint statement, calling the attack "appalling" and Hamas as offering nothing "other than more terror and bloodshed" (40). The condemnation of the attacks as 'terror' and their diagnoses as a detrimental crime responsible for human suffering has been the most stable frame in German and EFP texts throughout the period analysed. As Borrell, on a press conference after an informal FAC meeting on October 10, summarised: "So, the [EU] ministers discussed among us, and the common denominator was a strong condemnation of terrorism" (41). On October 26, the EUCO conclusions agreed on reiterating "its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel", which repeated an EUCO statement of October 15 (42, 43). However, some differences and developments of diagnostic framing of the attack could be identified.

As more information on the details of the attack was published daily, the framing of the attacks became more detailed and personified, underlining the brutality of the attacks. For instance, in a speech to the Bundestag on October 11, Baerbock described "hundreds of young men and women celebrating life at a music festival [were] chased through the desert by terrorists, slaughtered, a massacre" while "old people, families celebrating Shabbat in their living rooms [were] brutally attacked, killed, desecrated" (44). On day later, Scholz repeated these vivid descriptions, referring to "images of inhumane brutality [with] old people and little children abducted and taken to the Gaza Strip [and] humiliated in the most repugnant way" (45). Neither Borrell nor EUCO President Michel did partake extensively in this framing of brutality, mostly referring to the condemnation of terrorism and employing a more descriptive discursive tone. Already a speech by Borrell on October 10 at the EU-Golf Cooperation Council has been a case in point. Here, he spoke of a "shocking" situation for the Middle East, and showed concern about the "suffering that this attack caused and is causing to innocent civilians" (46). The speech did not include any vivid stories on Israeli victims, nor did it single out Israelis as the predominant victims of the crisis. Likely, the nature of the forum contributed to this framing, however, this framing, although underlining the 'problem' of Hamas' terrorism, continued to dominate texts by Borrell in the period analysed. On the same day, he even implied that Hamas' attack, although its "scale of aggression" was taking "everyone by surprise", was somewhat expected, as "we were always aware, and vocal about the fact that moving forward without peace, or any political horizon was not sustainable" (46). Although not repeating this implication, Michel also issued a balanced statement on the matter as the invitation on October 14 to the EUCO on October 17, condemning both the "tragic loss of over a thousand innocent

Israeli civilians" while describing the "unfolding tragic scenes in the Gaza Strip resulting from the siege" (47).

On the other hand, von der Leyen's framing of Hamas' terrorism was extraordinarily different. While she shared the emotional framing of terrorism with the German government, her framing exceeded the German framing in two ways. First, on October 11, she stated that "innocents were killed for one single reason", for "being Jewish and living in the state of Israel" (48). The attack had been "an ancient evil, which reminds us of the darkest past" and "the worst attack inside Israel since the creation of the State". She first openly compared the attacks to the Holocaust on her visit to Israel on October 13, describing the attack as "the most heinous assault against Jews since the Holocaust" (49). She remarked that "we thought this could never happen again", connecting to the so-called 'Never again' discourse. In contrast, the German government mostly refrained from comparing Hamas' terrorism with the Holocaust in its diagnostic (not motivational) framing, likely to avoid the minefield of relativising the Holocaust, deeply unpopular in Germany and illegal under German law. The comparison to the Holocaust did also not feature in any EFP texts of other actors.

Second, on October 11 and throughout the period, she described the attacks as "an act of war" (48, 49). The reasoning for this framing was made clear a connection she added on October 13: "Therefore, Israel has the right to defend itself" (49). While all other analysed texts have featured the Israeli right of self-defence, none have explicitly shared the diagnostic framing of the attack as an 'act of war' but have derived this right as a reaction to terrorism. Undisputedly, an 'act of war' constitutes a more robust legitimacy to exercise the right of self-defence than an 'act of terrorism' under international law. However, von der Leyen was the only actor directly mirroring the Israeli diagnostic framing of the attack.

Thus, these actors exemplify differences of diagnostic framing of Hamas' terrorism in the EFP discourse. As mentioned, the EUCO conclusions on October 26 condemned the terrorist attacks, however, without describing them as an 'act of war' or mentioning the Jewish dimension of most of its victims. The German priority of the clear condemnation and the framing of the attacks as the cause of the war was made clear at the Cairo Peace Summit on October 21, which failed to agree on a joint statement, inter alia, because Arab states refused to share this framing. As Baerbock declared in her speech after the Summit: "In my view, [the disagreement] was clear from the outset. As important as it is for the European Union, for us, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, it is also important to clearly condemn Hamas' brutal terrorism as the cause of the crisis" (50). Here, Baerbock discursively uploaded the German prioritised frames to condemn the attacks as a cause of the war to the EU-level, a rare instance. Reportedly, however, Borrell and the Spanish FM favoured a joint statement, which contained the condemnation of a "military escalation in Israel and Gaza", while Baerbock, the Canadian FM, and the French FM remained steadfast in insisting on condemning the terrorist attack as a causation (51). The EUCO conclusions on October 26, then, did reflect a common European condemnation, however, did not reflect on its priority for EFP actors and MS to achieve joint statements or resolutions. This divergence in priority became evident with the UNGA Resolution ES-10/21 on October 27, when Baerbock partly explained the German abstention "because the resolution does not clearly name Hamas-terror" (52), while numerous MS voted in favour.

In conclusion, the general diagnostic framing of the attacks was shared by the MS, EFP actors, and Germany, however, its priority and vividness differed, and the German government instrumentalised common statements and the EUCO conclusions to upload its diagnostic framing as a priority, if possible. Evidently, this priority was not shared by all MS who, however, did not oppose the framing per se. Although sharing this priority with the US and Israel governments, the German government, nevertheless, did not simply mirror the Israeli diagnostic framing, in contrast to von der Leyen.

Palestinian Complicity

Another diagnostic frame referred to Palestinian complicity, as actors questioned whether financial aid to Palestinians had benefited Hamas. On October 8, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development announced that, although it supported the Palestinians, it would "scrutinise its entire commitment to the Palestinian territories" given a "terrible turning point" (53). One day later, the Hungarian Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Várhelyi announced that the Commission would "suspend all payments" (54). However, the latter announcement reportedly led to strong reactions by other MS, including France, Ireland, and Spain, reportedly not consulted on the decision. The Commission, on the same day, announced an "urgent review of the EU's assistance for Palestine" while clarifying that it would not review humanitarian aid provided under European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (55). After the informal FAC on October 10, Borrell hinted on a press conference on the conflictuality of Várhelyi's announcement, stating that he could not comment as "not everything has to be public" (41). However, "the overwhelming majority was against the idea […] of suspending the payments" and that "collective punishment against all Palestinians will be unfair and unproductive" (41). At the informal FAC, Baerbock reiterated that the German government, "like the European Commission" would review developmental aid "but also our humanitarian aid". Here, she legitimised the German decision through 'shielding', however, in fact going beyond the Commission's scope of review, as payments for the UNRWA were frozen. In this sense, the German government diagnosed a potentially stronger connection of humanitarian aid and the financing of Hamas as a 'problem'. However, while this diagnostic frame was employed immediately and prominently after the attack, it would soon be peripheral against the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, both at the German and European level, and only resurface with renewed allegations against the UNRWA in late January. On October 18, von der Leyen concluded that "EU funding has never gone to Hamas […] and it never will" (56).

While the differentiation of Palestinians and Hamas played a secondary role on October 7, soon, the MS, all German actors as well as Borrell, von der Leyen, and Michel laid strong emphasis on this differentiation. Already with a minilateral statement on October 9, together with the US and others, Germany underlined the "legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people" while stating that "Hamas does not represent those aspirations" (40). The next day, Borrell remarked that "not all the Palestinian people are terrorists" (41), a remarkable statement in its own right, that the "PA is our partner", and that "an overwhelming majority – with maybe two or three exceptions – of the MS" made a "clear distinction between Hamas, the Palestinian people, and

the Palestinian Authority" (41). However, while the 'Palestinian people' featured in every German text analysed, the PA was only mentioned in context of requested distancing from Hamas, as Baerbock stated at the informal FAC: "we say clearly to the Palestinian leadership: distance yourselves from this terror. […] As the Palestinian Authority, you have a duty - also towards your own people" (57). As discussed in the previous chapter, the German government itself kept its discursive distance from the PA, and the PA did not feature in the EUCO statement of October 15 (43). However, in its conclusions on October 26, the EUCO "recalls […] to engage with partners […] including with the Palestinian Authority" (42). While it is unclear whether Germany was one of the opposing MS, it is evident that the German government included the PA rather in its diagnostic than its prognostic framing, thereby potentially re-downloading the emphasised partnership with the PA only through EFP, which however, was not detectable in German framing.

'Human Shields' or Israeli Disproportionality

The second and ubiquitously important diagnostic framing referred to the situation of Palestinians in Gaza. In the EUCO conclusions on October 26, the MS agreed on expressing "its gravest concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza" (42) and the concern has been voiced in every analysed text since October 9.

The first to underline this was Borrell after the informal FAC meeting on October 10, stating that "150,000 people are internally displaced, and the humanitarian situation is dire" (41). At first, the German discourse remained focused on the release of hostages as well as the description of Hamas' attack. In his speech at the Bundestag on October 12, Scholz did not mention Palestinian civilians at all. However, on October 14, Baerbock remarked on a visit to Egypt that "the people there lack everything right now, water supplies are running out, food is becoming scarce, and the power supply has been interrupted" (58). One day later, the EUCO statement reiterated "the importance to ensure the protection of all civilians at all times" (43), and, as the blockade and airstrikes kept continuing, Palestinians kept being included in German texts when speaking of the horrors of the war. For instance, Scholz claimed on a visit in Egypt on October 18 that Germany "will not leave the people standing alone" (59). Likewise, in her speech at the Cairo Peace Summit, Baerbock started with describing a "teary-eyed Israeli father" but followed with a "mother in Gaza who is desperate because she cannot find drinking water for her little baby" as "the humanitarian situation is desperate" (50). As apparent, these framings were preferably employed in communications with Arab States, however, not exclusively. They were also increasingly echoed by other actors, including Michel and von der Leyen, although the latter made her priority clear at the first EUCO meeting when she described the "immense suffering to the Palestinian people" (60). However, she continued with explaining her priorities in the next sentence: "Let me be very clear: I was on Friday in Israel in the kibbutz Kfar Azza. This was the first place I went to. I saw the blood, I saw the burnt-down houses" (61). Given the increasing priority of the humanitarian situation in Gaza in all texts, there were several diagnostic frames interpreting the reason for the 'desperate situation'.

The German government and von der Leyen underlined that Hamas was to be held exclusively responsible for the humanitarian situation, reiterating the official Israeli position. For this, they employed two discursive figures repeatedly, namely the 'perfidious script of terror' ('das perfide Drehbuch des Terrors') and the 'human shield'.

Already at the informal FAC meeting on October 10, Baerbock explained that "the suffering and death of Palestinian civilians is part of the terrorists' strategy", i.e., the "script of terrorism" (57). In front of the Bundestag, she repeated the condemnation of this "perfidious" script that "plays with lives in the most brutal way" and, for the first time, described "innocent Palestinian women and children, whom the Hamas terrorists abuse as human shields" (44). Scholz used the term on October 12 in the context of hostages, fearing that "Hamas would continue to abuse them as human shields in the coming weeks" (62). The next day, von der Leyen repeated this framing (63). In this sense, the framing of 'human shields' did not only blame Hamas for the war but also for the humanitarian situation in Gaza. At the Cairo Peace Summit, Baerbock summarised this position: "the reason for all the suffering of the past weeks - the suffering that brings us together here today - has a name: Hamas" (50).

Another case in point are two German press releases on conversations between Scholz and Netanyahu on October 14 and 18. In the first instance, a call, "Netanyahu reported on Israel's efforts to protect civilians in the Gaza Strip, which were, however, being thwarted by Hamas" (64). In the second instance, Scholz' visit in Israel, the press release characterises the actors as "democratic states governed by the rule of law" and, therefore, "not indifferent to the humanitarian plight" in Gaza. It concluded that "in contrast to Hamas, which holds the population as human shields, Germany and Israel want to avoid civilian casualties" (59). After Scholz' visit, and two days after the bombing of the Al-Ahli Arabi Baptist Hospital, Baerbock detailed the reason of Hamas' script, as the "death, hardship, and suffering" in Gaza was "perfidiously calculated" to "create the breeding ground for further terrorism" (65). It follows that the German government did not mention Israel once when describing the reasons for the humanitarian situation in Gaza. On the contrary, Israel was "currently doing everything it can" to improve the humanitarian situation and "to control the trucks at the border so that Hamas has no opportunity to obtain supplies through them", according to Baerbock (66).

Neither Borrell nor Michel had shared this framing in the period analysed, and von der Leyen used it less frequently than (other) German actors. Remarkably, neither the FAC statement of October 7, the EUCO statement of October 15, nor the press release of the FAC on October 23 (without a statement) included the term 'human shield' or comparable. However, the EUCO conclusions of October 26 agreed on parts of this framing in the first paragraph: "the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas is a particularly deplorable atrocity" (42). Note that this sentence does not directly mirror the German (or Israeli) framing as Hamas was not made exclusively responsible for the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Therefore, the emergence of this sentence, then, can be interpreted as limited German (and other MS') uploading. In a statement by von der Leyen explaining the conclusions, she summarised that "it was clear [to the MS] that […] Hamas is bringing harm to the Palestinian people [and] has provoked a humanitarian crisis in Gaza" (60). Given the non-statement in Cairo, diverging EU voting on the UNGA

Resolution, and no indication of 'human shields' in other EFP discourses, one can assume different levels of priority of MS and EFP actors attributed to this frame.

The other diagnostic frame referred to the blockade and the operations by the IDF as disproportionate, and responsible for or contributing to the humanitarian situation in Gaza. This frame was first introduced by Borrell after the FAC meeting on October 10, stating that the attack "has provoked a reaction from the IDF that will also cause human suffering" (41). There is fine but important difference between this framing and von der Leyen's framing above. In her case, Hamas had provoked the humanitarian crisis, and, in Borrell's case, Hamas had provoked the IDF to cause or contribute to the crisis. He continued to state that, already by October 10, "some [Israeli] decisions are against international law" (41). He clarified that "cutting water, cutting electricity and food to a mass of civilian people, is against international law" (41). Neither in texts from the German government nor the Commission President, this framing could be identified and von der Leyen was criticised for not mentioning restraint during her visit to Israel (67). In any case, von der Leyen underlined that she "knows how Israel responds will show that it is a democracy" (49). When the Commission announced its emergency assistance on October 16, it referred to the "disastrous humanitarian situation" as following "the horrific attacks […] *and the aftermath*" (68, emphasis added). When describing that the humanitarian aid was "piling up in hundreds of containers at the border in Rafah" (50) at the Cairo Peace Summit, Baerbock diplomatically appealed "to all sides" to open the crossing for aid. While underlining the importance of the humanitarian situation, Israel was not mentioned. Similarly, the airstrikes and bombardments were not mentioned.

This, however, did not apply to, inter alia, Michel and, especially, Borrell. After the EUCO meeting on October 17, Michel remarked that the Rafah crossing point "has, in any case, been bombed and seems to have been destroyed" (69). At the same time, he expresses his "emotion following the recent information that a hospital in Gaza was bombed, leading to many casualties" (69). Although not mentioning airstrikes by the IDF, he acknowledged bombardments. At the Cairo Peace Summit, Michel made the even more remarkable statement: "I will say it now: a complete siege violates international law" (70). The introduction of the sentence hints at an awareness of overstepping common aversions. He continued with complementing the UN Secretary-General Guterres on his efforts, who, four days later, would be declared 'persona non grata' by Israel after describing "epic suffering" in Gaza and calling the blockade and operation "collective punishment" through "relentless bombardment by Israeli forces" in front of the UNSC (71). Certainly, Michel did not connect to the gravity of these frames and adjusted to a changed environment in Cairo, however, employed different framing than the German government.

After the FAC on October 23, Borrell also connected the EU to this diagnostic framing, arguing that "once again, we said that Israel has the right to defend itself […] in accordance with international law – which cannot be a rhetorical sentence" (72). Here, he referred to his diagnostic framing of European inaction in the previous period, arguing that the sentence "has to be full of sense [and] cannot be repeated as we have been repeating for years that we support the two-state solution" (72). The right of self-defence had "limits" (72). The same was applying to the IDF's evacuation warning which he referred to as the "forced displacement of persons

[that] cannot be done in the short time that the warning was delivered" (72). On October 13, he had already called the warning "utterly unrealistic" which was seconded by Commissioner for Crisis Management Lenarčič (73). Referring to the numerous calls by leaders, including the US President Biden and the Spanish PM, for respecting the dignity of Palestinians, he believed "that this is a call that must be made" (72). Certainly, neither Borrell nor Michel commented on the Israeli operation per se but focused on the humanitarian aspects of the blockade. To counter these frames of Israeli recklessness, Baerbock argued in Cairo that "in my political discussions in Israel, I have not heard anyone seriously demand that we should stop water deliveries now" (66).

The critical diagnostic framing was not surfacing in the EUCO conclusions except for a call for respecting international humanitarian law and for allowing humanitarian aid to access Gaza, after ensuring that it "is not abused by terrorist organisations" (42). In this sense, Germany's diagnostic framing was partially uploaded while framing more critical of Israel's operation was peripheral, and the conclusions did not mention the blockade or airstrikes. Corollarily, framing critical of the EU's inaction was equally peripheral.

Prognostic Framing

Self-Defence

Already on October 7, the FAC statement underlined that Israel has "the right to defend itself in line with international law" (38). While the minilateral statement on October 9, by Germany, France, Italy, the UK and the US did not mention international law, on October 10, the EU, represented by Borrell and the FAC, and the Gulf Cooperation Council published a statement that did not even feature the right of self-defence but reminded both "parties of their obligations under the universal principles of international humanitarian law" (74). Exclusively German texts did also not mention the right of self-defence until October 11, when Baerbock stated that "Israel has the right, indeed the duty towards its citizens, to defend itself against this terrible terror within the framework of international law" (44). The right of self-defence in line with international law would, in the following, feature in every FAC statement, the EUCO statement and conclusions, every press release by the Commission, and every forthcoming German text in the period analysed. However, the frames differed in the emphasis on either "the right of self-defence" or "in line with international law" and were, naturally, tied to the discussed differences in diagnostic frames.

At the FAC meeting on October 10, Borrell concluded that "all ministers insisted on the idea that [the right of self-defence] has to be done according to international humanitarian law" (41). However, he did not underline that all ministers agreed on the prognostic framing that exercising the right of self-defence would contribute to a solution. He even framed that this exercise would continue the 'cycle of violence' as discussed in the earlier chapter, as he underlined that it was "the fourth time in my life that I witness a war in Gaza, the bombing of Gaza, and terrorist actions which have been retaliated by Israel on their right of defence" (41).

On the contrary and as shown above, the German government did not only emphasise the right of self-defence but framed it as a duty as Israel's security had "absolute priority" (44). This framing was supported by von der Leyen who also described Israel's duty to "defend and protect its people" (63) and reiterated by Scholz who made this "absolutely clear" (42). In this sense, Israel's operation had to be understood as a necessary consequence rather than the state's decision to exercise a right under international law. However, at first, von der Leyen and (other) German actors did not specify what this duty entailed except for referring to the boundaries international law. Connected to the diagnostic framing of Hamas as holding Israelis as well as the Palestinian civilians hostage, however, it implied that Hamas-terror had to be 'defeated'. Von der Leyen stated on October 13 that Hamas should release all hostages *and* "refrain completely from taking civilians as shields" (63). This implied that the release of hostages would not have sufficed to end the crisis. After a week of non-specificity, Baerbock stated on her travels to the UNGA on October 23 that "there can be no security with Hamas-terror - neither for Israel nor for the Palestinians - [as] terror must be fought" (72). Earlier that day, after the FAC meeting, Borrell complained: "I have heard many times: 'this time, we are going to finish Hamas'. I have heard it too many times. It is important […] that we also take into account the situation of the Palestinian people" (72). In this sense, the Israeli right of self-defence was not entailed in his prognostic but diagnostic framing.

As Germany abstained from the UNGA Resolution partly because it did "not reaffirm Israel's right to self-defence", while other MS voted in favour, these differences in priority and in diagnostic and prognostic framing of Israeli self-defence became apparent. In retrospect, on December 13, Scholz mentioned that it was "difficult in some cases to reach a European consensus on key foreign policy issues" in the EUCO and that the right of self-defence was only agreed upon after "long, difficult negotiations" (75). Given this, the integration of this right can be understood as successful German uploading. Although the German government did not upload the 'duty' of self-defence, it did not download any actionable or conditional 'limit' entailed in the addition of international law, i.e., a harsher position on the blockade and airstrikes, and contributed to the sustainable integration the right of self-defence at the EFP-level. The discussed differences in framing of this right would also play a larger role in discussing a pause or ceasefire.

Humanitarian Aid

As discussed, all analysed actors agreed that the 'Palestinian people' were increasingly suffering and agreed that humanitarian aid was needed to solve this 'problem', except for the short Várhelyi-intermezzo. Although the German government had announced that it would review its humanitarian aid, Baerbock agreed at the FAC meeting on October 10 that "it would be completely wrong to stop providing vital humanitarian aid to the civilian population now" (57). In this sense, a review did not constitute a stop. Von der Leyen announced the next day that "our humanitarian support […] is not in question" (48). The EUCO statement of October 15 reiterated that the EU stood "ready to continue supporting those civilians most in need in Gaza" (6). And indeed, on October 14, the Commission announced that it was tripling of humanitarian aid to EUR 75 million for civilians in Gaza (76), and, two days later, it launched

the “EU Humanitarian Air Bridge” operation, delivering supplies to Egypt intended for Gaza (77). In line with their diagnostic framing, von der Leyen, together with Scholz, pledged that Palestinians “cannot pay the price of Hamas’ barbarism” (77). On October 19, Germany followed suit and announced immediate humanitarian aid of EUR 50 million (78). Here, the German quickly downloaded the Commission’s clear stance on humanitarian aid, however, without mentioning the EU initiatives.

The most important issue, however, was the question of how humanitarian aid was about to enter Gaza. The crossings had been closed since the beginning of the war, however, an agreement brokered by the US between Egypt and Israel allowed for the first convoys to enter on October 21. The allowance of aid was the most repeated prognostic frame for both EFP institutions and the German government, next to the immediate release of hostages, to alleviate the crisis. However, there had been some development. While, on October 10, Borrell called for opening “humanitarian corridors” and suggested that Palestinians “could leave the country through Egypt” (41), the German government was, at first refraining from calling for corridors. Likewise, the EUCO statement on October 15 did not include a sentence referring the need of a corridor for humanitarian aid but simply “reiterate[d] the importance of the provision of urgent humanitarian aid” (43). Only on October 17, Scholz remarked that “we are committed to ensuring that there is humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip” (79) on a visit to Jordan and repeated this on his visit to Egypt one day later. As mentioned, on October 21, Baerbock appealed for a “permanent opening of the Rafah border crossing” (50). Here, Baerbock added the permanence of access, an addition repeated by Scholz in a call with the President of the UAE on October 25 (80). In short, the German prognostic framing developed from calling for aid over calling for access to calling for permanent access. This development was shared by von der Leyen and Michel, although earlier. At the EU-level, it was also reflected in the EUCO conclusions which called for “continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures including humanitarian corridors” (42). Given the statements prior to these conclusions, they can be interpreted as a general, although differently fast developed, EU consensus. Although the diagnostic framing of the blockade was diverging, the prognostic framing of humanitarian access aligned with all diagnoses equally. Conclusively, this prognostic frame was less conflictual.

Ceasefire or Pause

While the EU and Germany were focusing on condemning Hamas’ terror, reiterating Israel’s right of defence, calling for the immediate release of the hostages, and discussing ways to provide humanitarian aid to the Palestinian civilians, an end to the fighting was, at first, not discussed. However, on October 18, Guterres called for “an immediate humanitarian ceasefire” framing an end to the intense hostilities as the best solution to end the humanitarian crisis. The call was echoed in a joint statement by the UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO on October 21 (81). This contributed to opening the EFP discourse for this short-term ‘solution’ which directly opposed the prognostic framing of ending Hamas(-terror) through the “Operation Swords of Iron” (82). While the EUCO had agreed to ‘support civilians’ on October 15 and called for respecting humanitarian law, the German government was remarkably early

in formulating ideas of distinct spaces safe for civilians. Already on October 11, Baerbock declared that "it is equally important […] that there are safe spaces for women and children in Gaza" (44) and, on her visit to Egypt three days later, she spoke of "safe havens" (58). However, the German government did not favour a ceasefire, given its interpretation of Israel's duty of self-defence, the fact that hostages were not released, and, in general, its diagnostic framing of Hamas as the ultimate spoiler to be fought. It also did not repeat the calls for "safe havens". Reportedly, Baerbock strongly opposed a call for an 'humanitarian pause' at the Cairo Peace Summit, which was feared to alienate Israel, in contrast to Borrell and Michel (Becker & Schult 2023). In her speech and statement, she, therefore, underlined the necessary fight against Hamas and the duty of self-defence (50, 66).

However, on October 23, three days after the summit, Borrell surprisingly announced that the FAC would discuss a "humanitarian pause". Pressed on this announcement and after the FAC ended without any statement, he remarked that "there was a lot of talk in Cairo about the need to stop the violence" (72). As Guterres spoke of a ceasefire, he clarified that this would be "more, much more, than a pause [i.e.] a less ambitious goal and an interruption of something that then continues [which] can be agreed more quickly" (72). Although he 'thought' that "ministers have understood that such a pause is necessary", the question would be discussed again at EUCO meeting, "as they will be the ones to set the position". While the issue was "far from a vote", he anticipated that there was "basic consensus" on ending "warlike action". And indeed, in the EUCO conclusions, the EU, for the first time, called for "pauses for humanitarian needs" (42). This was certainly not a position Germany had pushed for, as Scholz, in his speech at the EUCO, did not mention a pause, let alone a ceasefire, once (83). Given this, the German government was downloading the call for a pause while uploading its aversion against a ceasefire. In any case, the German government publicly remained silent on this matter. The following UNGA Resolution called for "an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce", arguably one of the most important parts of its text. Baerbock, in her explanation why Germany abstained, did not mention a pause, truce, or ceasefire once but referred to the lack of Israel's right of defence, as mentioned (84). In this sense, the German government committed to a call it did not publicly support nor obstruct, thereby downloaded from the EFP-level (or 'shielded' its true priorities through the EU).

Long-term Solution

Although the most important prognostic framing referred to short-term solutions, the two-state solution was also mentioned, ritually at the end of a speech or press release. However, there have been differences in degree and timing of this prognostic framing. Texts from the German government did not contain the two-state solution until the Cairo Peace Summit on October 21. A case in point has been the minilateral statement of Germany, France, Italy, the UK, and the US on October 9, only referring to a "peaceful and integrated Middle East region" (40). In the other texts, diagnostic frames as well as short-term prognostic frames were prominent. At the summit, then, Baerbock was "pleased that we […] agree that this region ultimately needs a new peace process that will allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live […] in two independent states" (50). She directly tied this solution with her framing of Hamas "script of terror" and necessary

end, as "only a just and lasting solution would also seal the final defeat of Hamas and its plan" (50). She also referred to the future control of Gaza that "will not and must not be Hamas, nor Israel [which] has publicly declared exactly that" (66). She further asked the for the international community to develop a plan and think about a "horizon" based on the two-state solution, although "it seems almost presumptuous to think about it" (66).

In contrast to this relatively 'late adoption', Borrell, already on October 10, made clear that it was vital to "make sure that [the] long-term commitment to a political solution based on two states survives these tragic events" (85). The EUCO statement, then, on October 15, reiterated the commitment "to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the two-state solution through reinvigorated efforts in the MEPP". This commitment was repeated in every subsequent statement emanating from the FAC and the EUCO. While the German government did not re-download this commitment, as it had downloaded it before, it certainly downloaded the discursive emphasis on this solution. In this regard, three developments have been analysed.

First, as mentioned, no German text mentioned the PA as a candidate to rule Gaza or a Palestinian state after the war. This has certainly been consistent with German diagnostic framing as well as its pre-crisis distancing from the PA, however, very different from EFP texts.

Second, neither Scholz, Baerbock, nor von der Leyen mentioned the two-state solution in its communications with Israeli actors or at visits in Israel in the period analysed. This has been a difference to the pre-crisis situation when Scholz as well as the MFA underlined the solution's importance. Given the disagreement of the Israeli government with the two-state solution, the imminent crisis, and these actor's intent to show support for Israel, this is not surprising. However, it underlines that the priority mentioning the solution had decreased. As no communication of Borrell or Michel with Israeli actors could be identified, their communication could not be tested in this regard.

Third, neither Scholz, Baerbock, nor von der Leyen mentioned the EU "Peace Day Effort" initiative, nor, regarding the first two actors, the EU as an important factor in achieving a long-term solution. In contrast, Borrell declared already on October 10 that "we have to recalibrate and upgrade the initiative that we took some months ago […] because we do not know other solutions" (41). At the Cairo Peace Summit, Michel also highlighted the initiative. Borrell continued with arguing for an upgrade with claiming that "we need a real push for peace" (46) and a "re-launching" of a political process as the objectives of the initiative were "far too short". He argued that the EU needed to "reinvigorate, reinforce and raise the level of ambition" (72), together with Arab partners. While this relaunch did not materialise in the period, the initiative was, nevertheless, included in the EUCO conclusions, stating the EU's readiness "to contribute to reviving a political process on the basis of the two-state solution, including through the Peace Day Effort" (42). In this sense, although not actively pursued or commented on by the German government, it further committed itself to the initiative by partaking in EFP. However, the German negligence of the initiative remained comparable to the pre-crisis period as well as the rarity of mentioning the EU in providing a long-term solution.

Motivational Framing

'Special' Relationship

Immediately after the attacks became public, the German MFA, the FAC, and the Commission declared their "full solidarity" with Israel on October 7 (37, 38, 29). On October 9, the minilateral statement with German participation described that the parties will "remain united and coordinated, together as allies, and as common friends of Israel" (40). Shortly after, von der Leyen also underlined that Europe "stands with our friend and partner" (48). Baerbock, at the FAC meeting, reiterated this claim in her first sentence: "Europe stands united at Israel's side [as] our special meeting today is an expression of our solidarity with Israel" (57).

Already the next day, she emphasised in front of the Bundestag, that "Israel's security in Germany's Staatsräson", offering "Israel all our support in every area (44). On October 12, Scholz would famously state that "at this moment, there is only one place for Germany: firmly at Israel's side [which] is what we mean when we say that Israel's security is the Staatsräson of the German state" (62). He continued explaining that "our own history, our responsibility arising from the Holocaust, makes it our perpetual duty to stand up for […] Israel". Given this, the motive of the Staatsräson was immediately emphasised and the central part of German motivational framing and the crisis, further, was seen as an opportunity of proof that this Staatsräson was meant seriously. While this framing was continuous through the period and domestic antisemitism became a part of the German diagnostic framing, Israel also became increasingly portrayed as a Jewish state. Scholz had underlined the "friendship with the Jewish state of Israel" in his speech (62). The discursive importance of the responsibility for the Holocaust for the German motivation reached its peak when Baerbock stated in front of the UNSC on October 24: "Never again - *to me as a German*, that means that we will not rest knowing that the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors are now being held hostage by terrorists in Gaza" (86; emphasis added). In this sense, the German government employed the responsibility for the Holocaust in its motivational (not diagnostic) framing. Following this, Baerbock underlined both at the Cairo Peace Summit and in front of the UNSC that "each of us looks at this conflict from our own perspective and history" which needed to be respected (86). EFP actors largely refrained from this framing except for von der Leyen, who, as mentioned, also used it in her diagnostic framing. For Europe, however, she underlined that "Jewish values have shaped our common European values" in front of the EP (56). This was reminiscent to Borrell's statement that all peoples of the region shared ties with Europe as mentioned in the previous chapter, however, von der Leyen underlined Europe's Jewish ties.

'Civilian' Power

While the German government frequently mentioned its position's historicity and traditional solidarity at the international stage, it also increasingly also underlined motivations for its foreign policy connected to 'civilian' power. The Staatsräson motive was predominantly employed for the domestic discourse or in bilateral talks with Israeli actors, however, as issues

of the humanitarian crisis were becoming more pressing, these frames were highlighted in both German and EFP texts.

At first, German actors as well as von der Leyen needed to react to criticism on German or the EU's support for the Palestinians, especially within the German domestic discourse and against the construction of the Staatsräson. Given this, German actors underlined that humanitarian aid delivered to the Palestinians was done "through the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the many other sub-organisations of the United Nations" (66), therefore 'shielding' themselves through the credibility of its partners. At the same time, they argued that not helping the Palestinians would play in the hands of Hamas and its 'script of terror'. This was echoed by von der Leyen who stated that "there is no contradiction in standing in solidarity with Israel and acting for the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians" (61). This was clearly a reaction on criticism of not supporting Israel enough as "some voices in the political arena are currently rejecting any help", as remarked by Baerbock (66). As a reaction, she made "it very clear: it is literally a matter of life and death". She continued arguing, directed at the German public, that no humanitarian aid would burden the "cooperation with other European countries, the USA, Canada, the UK and all the neighbouring countries in the region, […] the UN, the […] Red Cross" as well as Israel, which was also interested in allowing humanitarian aid for the Palestinians (66). Note that the EU was at best implied here. This motivational framing strongly referred to Germany self-image as a multilateralist and 'civilian' power and referred to a "human imperative" and the preference to be a pro-active international actor (66).

However, criticism from the other side was also increasingly addressed, i.e., the accusation of double standards, denying Israeli wrongdoing. This was especially apparent with Arab interlocutors. At the Cairo Peace Summit, Baerbock made clear "without any doubt" that "the lives of all civilians are of equal value" (50). Here, she argued that everyone at the summit would "speak the language of international law, of humanity ['Menschlichkeit'], of peaceful coexistence [which] is what unites us". Importantly, Israel had the right to defend itself and to protect its population under international law "like every country in the world". "That is why the German government stands firmly […] with Israel" (50). Simply put, it was international law that predominantly motivated Germany's positioning, not the particularities of the German-Israeli relationship. However, as Germany championed 'humanity', it did everything, through the UN and others, to "prevent a humanitarian catastrophe […] just as we do in every other humanitarian disaster elsewhere in the world". She repeated this framing at the UNSC, when she, again, underlined that all civilians mattered, stated that "humanity is universal, and so should be our empathy", and claimed that "we must seek to understand each other's pain" (86). In his call with the President of the UAE, Scholz reiterated that "every individual life is equally worthy of protection" (80).

In this sense, German motivational framing employed the value of 'humanity' to address Arab concerns but added the value of 'international law' that almost replaced the Staatsräson frame. Germany's motivational framing of 'humanity' alongside its prognostic framing of humanitarian aid had been consistent, and Staatsräson, international law, and multilateralist

motivations had been adjusted to the recipients, although never being exclusively employed. The motivation of 'humanity', however, became increasingly predominant alongside the growing importance of the issue of humanitarian aid. Given that Hamas was framed as an opponent to this value and international law was framed as supporting Israel's case, this did not contradict the German support for Israel or constitute double standards. Von der Leyen had also reacted to this criticism in the EP and argued that "we first have to listen, if we want to be listened to", and as "Europe will always be on the side of humanity", it naturally supported "Israel's efforts to protect civilian lives" (56).

As the EFP-level did not fully subscribe to a 'special' relationship, the motivation of international law was more predominant. The EUCO statement on October 15 did not even mention special solidarity with Israel, as the FAC had done, but plainly referred to its right to self-defence. However, it underlined that "all civilians at all times" needed to be protected (43). Shortly after the statement, Michel declared that the EU was guided by "two principles: unity and consistency" (69). With unity, he referred to a "Union of values" such as peace, security, and prosperity, and with consistency, he referred to credibility in standing up "everywhere, at all times […] for peace and international law". It was important "not to lose sight of the essence of this political project" (69). The intention of mentioning credibility was made clear as his speech almost exclusively featured the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Simply put, he hinted at a stronger stance towards ensuring that Israel's operation was conducted under international law. Borrell had employed these frames since the beginning of the crisis and Michel reiterated this call at the Cairo Peace Summit by citing the European Treaties. He directly referred to the, already by-then, largest accusation against EFP within the conflict: "There can be no double standards" (70). This sentence was remarkable as this was the first instance, where the potentially conflictual relationship between supporting Israel's right of self-defence and supporting humanitarian law was openly and strongly addressed on a high-level and open stage.

In this sense, the EUCO conclusions on October 26 added the sentence that the EU "deplores all loss of civilian life", repeated right of self-defence "in line with international law" (42), while kept refraining from explicitly repeating its solidarity to Israel. Given this, one can interpret the motivational parts of the conclusions as failed or unattempted German uploading while German actors did not need to download motivations of equalling 'humanity' or international law, as this was consensus, increasingly important, and, in any case, differently interpreted through diagnostic and prognostic framing. Simply put, championing international law or 'humanity' as a motivation did neither contradict German nor other EFP's framings of the 'problem' and 'solution'.

Assessment of Discursive Europeanization

The attack on October 7 and the following Israeli operation have been the predominant topic of articulation for both German and EFP actors and institutions. This has been evidenced by the number of texts and the frequency of meetings and visits discussing the conflict. For the first time since 2016, the EUCO published both a relevant statement and conclusions, indicating dramatically enhanced pressure to find a solution and therefore a global crisis *of* EFP. At the same time, the EEAS did not publish statements regarding the conflict, given the conflict had

become a high-level and prioritised issue and not a 'day-to-day business'. While German actors also importantly articulated policy in minilateral and bilateral settings, they partook in the FAC and EUCO meetings and statements and with the EU at the Cairo Peace Summit, showing some degree of a 'coordination reflex'. Publicly, this reflex was highlighted after the EUCO conclusions, when Michel lauded the EU's "ability to show unity, and to send a message" (87) while Scholz later called the "clear stance [of the EU] very, very valuable" (88).

However, already on processual terms, actors within the EFP have shown a lack of coordination. For instance, von der Leyen travelled to Israel reportedly without asking for Michel's or Borrell's participation, which was later criticised by Borrell as a unilateral action "with an absolutely pro-Israeli stance, without representing anyone but herself" (89). At the same time, the EU and its MS could not agree on a common position at the Cairo Peace Summit or the UNGA vote, a development discursively ignored by all actors but Borrell. This lack of coordination has also been reflected through framing, which, however, allows for a more complex analysis than simple voting behaviour.

First, regarding the reflective dimension, only Borrell has briefly framed the EU as part of the problem referring to the EU's past inaction in the conflict, which was consistent with his pre-crisis remarks, and argued for political action. In this sense, neither the German government nor the selected EFP discourse has participated in Euroscepticism or open criticism of the EU. However, also with regards to the solution, the German government has remained calm from engaging with the EU with regards to humanitarian aid programmes, as a possible peace broker in the war, or other initiatives such as the "Peace Day Effort", in contrast to EFP actors excluding von der Leyen. As such, the German discourse almost exclusively referred to one's own national or multilateral contributions. And even with the framing of motivation, the German texts did only once mention the 'cooperation with other European countries', inter alia, rather focusing on the UN. Given this, no reflective discursive Europeanization could be observed, which was, however, consistent with the pre-crisis period.

Second, regarding the comparative dimension, several differences could be identified. Although all actors framed Hamas' attack as unjustified and detrimental terrorism to be condemned, German actors as well as von der Leyen put a strong and emotional emphasis on Israeli victims and brutality, in the latter case loosely comparing the gravity to the Holocaust and describing a 'state of war', while Borrell and Michel adopted more descriptive and Gaza-inclusive framing. While all actors rejected the initial frame of Palestinian complicity, only EFP actors underlined the support for the PA and did not question humanitarian aid. With regards to the situation in Gaza, again, German actors and von der Leyen frequently employed the frame of 'human shields' and Hamas' culpability, while Borrell and Michel, in contrast, refrained from this framing, talked about the realities of the Israeli operation, and hinted at Israeli disproportionality as a problem.

Although all actors agreed on the right of self-defence as applicable to Israel, only German actors and von der Leyen framed it as a short-term solution to the conflict. The other solution, humanitarian aid to Gaza, was, after a short period, framed by all actors as important, given they were targeted for the 'Palestinian people' whose suffering could be acknowledged

by all actors, despite differences in diagnostic framing. The question of a pause or ceasefire was more conflictual, as Borrell had framed the cessation of fighting at the FAC as a solution after the UN agencies had opened the discourse. However, German actors and von der Leyen publicly ignored and, reportedly, opposed this frame, given their prognostic framing of self-defence and were averse to formulate any practical obligations or substantive proposals. While EFP actors frequently framed the two-state solution as a long-term solution, German actors adopted this emphasis almost two weeks later, and in discussion with Arab states while not mentioning it in bilateral talks with Israeli actors. At the same time, they did not frame the PA or, as mentioned, European initiative as part of the solution but refrained from concretely referring to a peace process.

With regards to motivational framing, only German actors and, newly, von der Leyen framed a 'special' relationship between (Jewish) Israel and Germany/EU as a dominant motivation, and German actors emphasised general 'humanity' and multilateralism as a motivation with regards to the people in Gaza. While Borrell and Michel also referred to common European values, they primarily focused on international law and credibility, i.e., applying equal standards. German actors also referred to international law, however, only to emphasise Israel's right of self-defence.

In sum, the frames have differed greatly between the selected actors and text, and, in particular, from the pre-crisis period. Settlements, settler violence, or illegal occupation had not been mentioned by any actor. While the German discursive tone had reflected a concerned description of the conflict prior to the crisis, it had now developed into a demanding condemnation of Hamas and the focus on solidarity and friendship with Israel. In turn, Borrell and Michel's demanding critique of Israel had been transformed into a concerned critique. While German actors had referred to an 'international understanding' of the two-state solution, they now referred to 'international law' and a 'duty' with regards to self-defence. While German actors were not anymore depoliticising aid to Palestinians, now the politicisation referred to, at first, complicity, and then, 'human shields'. These shifts in articulations underline the discursive character of a crisis, challenging the pre-crisis status quo.

Third, regarding the interdiscursive dimension of Europeanization, already several short-term developments could be identified in the period analysed. For instance, Baerbock 'shielded' Germany's utmost priority to underline Hamas' terrorism as the cause of the crisis by referring to a common EU policy at the Cairo Peace Summit. Nevertheless, although this priority had been part of the EUCO conclusions, many MS voted in favour of the UNGA resolution and the priority did not develop in the selected EFP discourse. Therefore, this uploading remained to be a unilaterally claimed justification with very limited short-term framing effects on EFP. With regards to Palestinian complicity, again, Baerbock 'shielded' the German review of aid by referring to the Commission, although the reviews differed remarkably. In reality, the German announcement of review preceded the Commission's announcement significantly, potentially hinting at German uploading of diagnostic frames. However, no significant discursive up- and downloading could be identified with regards to Israeli proportionality or the argument of 'human shields'.

Nevertheless, both von der Leyen and German actors downloaded the gravity of Gaza's humanitarian crisis. While no discursive up- and downloading could (yet) be identified with regards to self-defence, humanitarian aid, or a humanitarian pause (although with downloading from the UN by Borrell) as a solution, it is evidenced that German actors mentioned the two-state solution long after it had been reinvigorated by Borrell and Michel. With regards to motivations, only von der Leyen and (other) German actors championed as 'special' relationship and 'humanity', while all actors subscribed to international law, with no up- and downloading.

Given the very short timeframe, however, interdiscursive developments were relatively rare and the new frames of the crisis relatively stable or attempted to be stabilised through repetition. However, given the EUCO conclusions defining the common positions at the end of the period, the successful or failed translation of frames and their up- and downloading into official common foreign policy, rather in formality of the highest authority than in repeated discursive practice, have also been analysed. As such, German frames of 'human shields' and the right of self-defence were uploaded, as explicitly stated by Scholz, and a critique, (testable) limitation of the Israeli operation, or a ceasefire were averted. However, it failed to upload a 'duty' of self-defence and explicit solidarity with Israel, which had been included in prior FAC statements. In turn, the German government formally downloaded a call for a humanitarian pause, the role of the PA as a partner, and the support for the 'Peace Day Effort' initiative. As mentioned, the FAC statements and EUCO conclusions have been texts representing formal consensus rather than discursive up- and downloading or discursive practice. While not being understood as evidence of framing effects, they can, nevertheless, be starting points of Europeanization processes, as actors adjust discursively to their formal commitments. The claim by Michel that these conclusions have set a "common position and established a clear unified course" (69) will be tested in context of the next period.

As such, the period rather marks the construction and articulation of new frames than their interaction and, given the differences of frames, the period can be described as a period of discursive contestation and 'dislocation' rather than a phase of discursive Europeanization. However, given the crisis of EFP, all actors have made use of the European fora, marking at least short-term processual Europeanization, and new EUCO conclusions, given the pressure to find a solution, could be decided upon.

III.III Developing Crisis (Nov 2023-Mar 2024)

On October 28, the IDF launched its ground offensive into the Gaza Strip and PM Netanyahu had explained that the "this is the second stage of the war" (90). In the following, the IDF advanced with several divisions into northern Gaza and, on November 2, began the to date ongoing siege of Gaza City. The offensive was complemented with the blockade and airstrikes and the IDF managed to secure several key districts within Gaza City. Meanwhile, Hamas continued its rocket attacks on Israeli territory. From November 24 to 30, a temporary ceasefire was brokered by Qatar, including the release of 50 Israeli hostages and 150 Palestinian prisoners. However, the ceasefire was not extended, and the war continued.

The IDF continued its militarily 'successful' advance into central and southern Gaza. In early February, as the IDF declared "victory" in Khan Younis, it indicated to extend its offensive to Rafah and began bombarding the last major Palestinian city not partly in control of the IDF (91). However, the ground offensive in Rafah would not be started until May 6. Until the end of March, heavy fighting continued while the offensive against Rafah was prepared.

During the war, the humanitarian situation in Gaza deteriorated rapidly. Until mid of March, the UN reported at least 31,000 Palestinian fatalities in Gaza, including at least 13,000 children, and over 70,000 reported injuries (92). 75% of Gaza residents, around 1,7 million people, were reported to be displaced. On the other hand, 247 IDF soldiers were killed and nearly 1,500 injured in the war (excluding the victims of October 7), and 134 hostages remained in captivity of Hamas. An updated Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment estimated that 100 % of people were acutely food insecure and, in northern Gaza, 70 % were facing imminent famine (93). Next to this, clean water, electricity, and medicine shortages were ubiquitous and necessary civilian infrastructure was destroyed. The UN (92) reported the destruction of 155 health facilities and 126 ambulances. 165 UN staff members as well as 125 journalists were killed.

While the IDF frequently published media claimed to show military structures of Hamas, including tunnel systems under the Al-Shifa hospital that the IDF searched/raided in November and March, the humanitarian crisis as well as allegations of Israel breaching international law in Gaza became the predominant issue of the crisis. This was further exacerbated on February 29, when at least 118 Palestinians were killed while waiting for humanitarian aid trucks (94).

Additionally, settlement expansion and violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem increased rapidly. From October until March, 434 Palestinians were killed, predominantly through the IDF but also nine by settlers, and 15 Israelis were killed, according to the OCHA (95). The Israeli government further approved, from December until March, 4,780 new settlement units and demolished 300 Palestinian structures (96).

On the international stage, the crisis sparked increasingly strong reactions. On November 15, the UNSC, for the first time, adopted the Resolution 2712 calling for 'humanitarian pause'. The UNGA Resolution on December 12 called for an 'immediate ceasefire', and Germany abstained. On December 29, South Africa brought the case of genocide against Israel before the ICJ that, on January 26, ordered Israel to take measures to prevent acts of genocide.

At the EFP level, the crisis remained the most saliant topic at the monthly FAC meetings and the FAC formulated several statements. Further, the crisis was discussed at three EUCO meetings which, however, only published new conclusions on March 22. Additionally relevant, the EU co-chaired a ministerial meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), planned under Spanish presidency, in Barcelona on November 22, agreeing on a joint communiqué. The ministerial meeting of the G7 as well as other minilateral fora in which the EU and/or Germany participated also issued statements on the crisis.

Diagnostic Framing

Hamas' Terror and Complicity

As the EUCO had agreed on the framing of the people of Gaza as 'human shields', the images of tunnels and claims of the IDF to have found military structures in hospitals added another detailed dimension to this frame. In early November, von der Leyen described that Hamas "bunkers, hides fighters and stores weapons below refugee camps and civilian infrastructure" (97) while Baerbock reiterated that "Hamas terror is the cause of this suffering" (98) and Hamas was "deliberately burying itself directly under schools and hospitals", abusing "2.2 million Palestinians for its terrorist purposes" (99). The FAC statement of November 12 also added to this framing, condemning "the use of hospitals and civilians as human shields" (100).

This diagnosis was continued by German actors throughout in January and February, as Baerbock stated that Hamas had no "shred of passion for the Palestinian women, men, and children" and was "cowardly entrenching" or "hiding behind the civilian population" (101, 102). Michel, initially downloading this frame, had repeated the claim of 'human shields' on December 12 at an EUCO meeting, which ended without relevant conclusions (103). And although the statement by Borrell on February 16 on behalf of 26 MS (due to Hungarian opposition) mentioned 'human shields', it did not feature prominently in any other EFP text, and was not mentioned at the FAC meeting three days later (104). The new EUCO conclusions in March dropped the mentioning of 'human shields' altogether (105). Although German texts had continued to emphasise this frame until mid-February, this diagnostic framing became increasingly peripheral against the diagnosis of a humanitarian crisis in German texts. After the FAC meeting on February 19, no German selected text featuring this diagnosis or mentioning 'human shields' could be analysed, potentially representing German discursive downloading.

After this, the frame of Hamas' terror primarily referred to October 7 and families mourning their losses in German texts. The frame of the attack, however, was only rarely used to argue for the military operation in 2024. Given these developments, Hamas' terror and the condemnation of October 7 became rather ritual than a vehicle to mobilise for positions, i.e., a dominant diagnostic frame. In this sense, the German priority to 'clearly name Hamas-terror' of the prior period also became peripheral, because it had become consensual and ritualised, also not being contested by a UNGA resolution in 2024.

Beyond this, the diagnostic frame of complicity with terrorism resurfaced. New allegations by Israel against the UNRWA became public by the end of January that indicated that 10% of the

agency's workforce had been involved in Hamas' terrorism. Earlier, German and EFP texts had underlined the important role of the UNRWA for ensuring humanitarian aid. In the joint communiqué of UfM on November 27, the EU and Arab States had "underlined the indispensable role of UNRWA and reaffirmed the need […] to allow it to fulfil its UN mandate" (106). However, the agency's credibility, alongside the credibility of other developmental and humanitarian aid was question by Israel and in the EP, although not on the high-level EFP and German stage. On December 12, Borrell addressed this critique in the EP by arguing that "UNRWA is an agency that 5 million refugees depend on to live […] that is part of the problem?" (107). The US, Germany, and the EU were the agency's three largest donors and Germany, which, on November 11, increased its commitments to the UNRWA by EUR 20 million (108).

When the allegations surfaced in late January, Borrell and the Commission stated on January 26 that they were "extremely concerned" by the "allegations", however, only demanded "full transparency" and as no additional funding was planned until the end of February, no freezing or suspension was decided on (109). On March 1, the Commission announced it would proceed with the funding given the UNRWA had agreed to an external audit of the EU (110). The German reaction had been remarkably different. One day after the Commission had announced its concerns, the MFA and BMZ declared that Germany "will temporarily not authorise any new funds" (111). Certainly, Baerbock underlined that this was not a cut-off, however, on January 31, she stated the "fact that UNRWA staff had obviously been involved in these barbaric acts" (112). On February 3, she demanded "clear consequences after these incredible incidents" (113). Here, the EFP and Germany differed strongly in the credibility given to these allegations and, therefore, in their diagnostic framing. However, after the Commission had approved the funding in March, the MFA switched to the description of "serious allegations" while underlining that the Commission had demanded an audit rather than approved funding (114). While Michel, at the EUCO in March, noted the decisions "by many MS with regard to the financing", he concluded that "we agree that the role of UNRWA is essential" (115). This was also reflected in the EUCO conclusions (105). Given this, Germany, initially underlining the credibility of the allegations, slowly downloaded the Commission's diagnostic framing and, in late April, announced it would resume the funding, in contrast to the US.

Israeli Disproportionality

As mentioned, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza became the predominant topic of the discourse during the period analysed. Baerbock and von der Leyen both described "terrible suffering" as "tragic", however, at first, as the fault of Hamas (116, 98). However, in November, the disproportionality of Israel's operations became increasingly important in diagnostic framing, not only of Borrell. For instance, French President Macron complained that "these babies, these ladies, these old people are bombed and killed […] there is no legitimacy" (67). At the same time, Spanish President Sánchez compared the violation of human rights by Putin with Israel's violations in Gaza (67). The FAC statement in November reiterated the gravest concern about the crisis and emphasised that "international humanitarian law stipulates that hospitals, medical supplies, and civilians inside hospitals must be protected" (100). Already by then, Borrell spoke

of an "overreaction" and "carnage" with "Israelis losing the support of the international community" (117) and stated that "one horror does not justify another" (118). In contrast to von der Leyen's comparisons to the Holocaust, he stated that "we will not survive another Nakba". Lenarčic reiterated that "it is quite obvious that international humanitarian law is not being respected" and that Israel (and Hamas) would violate the UNSC Resolution 2712 that demanded humanitarian access (119). In December at the EP, Borrell had also implied that Netanyahu aiming to prevent the two-state solution had supported Hamas, and compared the level of destruction with the Allied bombardments of Dresden and Cologne, arguing that the destruction in Gaza "was greater" (107). However, diagnostic framing criticising Israel disproportionality did not feature in German texts in 2023 which, however, intensified describing the horror of a situation where "streets were reduced to rubble, people are covered in blood and dust searching for parents, children and neighbours, with thousands of dead and injured" (99).

The first instance of this diagnostic framing in German texts was on January 7 when Baerbock, prior to a visit to Israel and Arab states, argued that "far too many people have already died" and "Israel […] must protect civilians *much better* in its military action" (101; emphasis added). However, this development was thwarted by the case filed in the ICC, diametrically opposed to German framing, when the Chancellery published a statement underlining that "different countries have different assessments" and was "firmly and explicitly rejecting the accusations of genocide" (120). Borrell, at the meantime, commented at the FAC meeting in January that "ministers have said that there are 'too many' [civilian victims] […] how many it 'too many'? What does it mean? [Is] too many 25,000 people?" (121). Interestingly, by the end of January, German texts changed their diagnostic framing as Baerbock remarked that "Israel must abide by these rules just like all other states in the world" (122). The formulation 'as other states in the world' was earlier used by her, however, only to underline the right of self-defence.

This marked the general shift of German diagnostic framing. In the same statement she asked Israel to "adapt its operations" and argued that a "call to leave these places is not enough" (122). Asked in an interview, she stated that she heard the plan to advance against Rafah "with horror" (113). Similarly, she stated that "the situation in Gaza is simply hell" (112). However, the sentence was quickly followed by the description of "the people whose loved ones […] are still being held captive by Hamas terrorists". As such, the German diagnostic framing became remained emotional but now always included both Palestinian and Israeli victims, usually with Palestinian victims mentioned first: "the suffering is unbearable […] we cannot ignore the fact that children are currently being amputated without anaesthetic [and] a one-year-old child is still being held captive by Hamas" (112). In February, she said that the situation was "unacceptable" and demanded that "the Israeli government must immediately allow safe and unhindered access", implying that it did not (123). On February 16, then, the statement of 26 MS demanded that Israel would not attack Rafah, which was, for the first time, an explicit demand to Israel. In this context, Baerbock framed the 'problem' of people that "cannot simply vanish into thin air" as "many of them have followed the Israeli evacuation orders and fled […] with nothing more than their children in their arms" (102).

The German diagnostic development was continued by Scholz' visit in Israel in March, when he "expressed his concern [about] the number of civilian casualties" that were high,

"many would say too high" (124). In view of the crisis, "the question arises whether the goal can justify such terribly high costs". He continued demanding that the humanitarian aid from Israel to Gaza "must also be urgently and massively improved" and that Germany "cannot stand by and risk Palestinians suffering from hunger" (124). Additionally, Baerbock argued that "the way in which the Israeli army, the Israeli government, defends itself makes a difference" (125).

In this sense, the German government became increasingly critical, albeit less than most of its European partners and the EFP-level. Whether it is unclear to which degree this was caused exclusively by the developments of the conflict, it is demonstrable the German government adopted some diagnostic framing on Israeli disproportionality that was earlier voiced at and mobilised at the EFP-level, thereby hinting at being subject to adaptational pressure (among other pressures). The German criticism and framing were still relatively amicable and did not openly criticise Israel. However, in the EUCO conclusions in March, the EU was "appalled by the unprecedented loss of human life and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and its disproportionate effect on civilians". The use of the 'appalled' and 'unprecedented' were unique to these conclusions, formerly showing 'strong concern'. In this sense, it represented a climax of common EU critique of Israel and further German downloading. Nevertheless, as it did not clearly attribute disproportionality to Israel, the German framing was also partly reflected in the conclusions, potentially a case of uploading.

Settlements and Settler violence

During the 'first' period of the war, settlements and settler violence were not mentioned in the EFP context. The only remnants of this pre-crisis critique could be observed in speeches by MS in front of the UNSC on October 24, among them the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Ireland (86). Baerbock had not mentioned the settlements.

However, on October 31, the EEAS published a press release condemning the "upsurge of settler terrorism in the West Bank" (126). This was especially remarkable since the connection of settlers and terrorism had not surfaced before in any analysed text of the periods. And in the following, this connection would not resurface but being limited to 'extremism'. In early November, the G7 foreign ministers, including Borrell and Baerbock, described the "increase in violence […] by extremist settlers" as "unacceptable". Borrell further remarked, speaking for the leaders he met in Ramallah, that "they struggle to explain why […] illegal settlements flourish and settlers are free to attack them" (118). Here, the German government showed convergence in late November, as Baerbock called on Israel "to do more to prevent extremist settlers […] from exploiting the situation" (127). However, Borrell and Baerbock different as the former called on Israel to do 'something' while the latter called to do 'more'.

Following this diagnostic framing, sanctions of individual settlers became a discursive topic. Von der Leyen agreed with Borrell on sanctions on violent settlers (128), while the German government remained silent on this question. At the EUCO in December, Michel only remarked that the leaders were consensual in condemning attacks by settlers but did not mention any sanctions.

The strongest push on sanctions came from the EP which, on January 18, called for "EU restrictive measures to be imposed on extremist settlers" (129). When the IDF demolished the home of the Palestinian "community leader" Fakhri Abu Diab in mid-February, the EEAS, again, issued a statement declaring the "continuation of Israel's settlement policy […] a grave violation of international law" (130). However, neither the EUCO nor the FAC could find consensus on sanctions. At the FAC in February, Borrell explained that there was no unanimity given the opposition of one MS (most likely Hungary) and the FAC "decided to continue studying how to proceed against the extremist settlers" (131). When Israel's High Planning Committee approved 3,426 new housing units on March 6, both the MFA and the EEAS commented very critically. The MFA, for the first time since March 2023, called the construction of settlements illegal, and was in unison with the EEAS to demand the reversal of the decision (132, 133). For the first time, the FAC agreed on sanctions on extremist settlers on March 18, as Borrell remarked on the press conference that "this time it has been possible" (134).

The following EUCO conclusions, then, strongly condemned "extremist settler violence" and "Israeli government decisions to further expand illegal settlements" and called on "the Council to accelerate work on the adoption of relevant targeted restrictive measures" as "perpetrators must be held to account" and on Israel "to reverse the decisions" (105). While the German government had earlier committed to the illegality of settlements, it showed increasingly strong reactions to Israel's policies, increasingly comparable to criticism of the EEAS. The Israeli settlement policy was now not an 'unproductive unilateral measure' but a clear breach of international law. While this strong reaction had been voiced once prior to the crisis, the development after the crisis represented a downloading of the EFP's (pre-)crisis discursive tone of frustration. The conclusion's connection of accountability and sanctions further implied that Israel was not willing or capable to secure accountability. In this sense, the German government downloaded strong diagnostic framing that, prior to the crisis, was largely weak and, amidst October, was non-existent.

Prognostic Framing

Self-Defence

As the humanitarian crisis became predominant in discourse, the underlining of the right of self-defence featured either ritually or in the context of its limits. A case in point is von der Leyen's speech already in early November stating that "while Israel has the right to fight Hamas, it is also essential that it strives to avoid civilian casualties, and to be as targeted as possible" (97). She repeated the exact same words when commenting on the EUCO conclusions of October in the EP on November 8 (135). In this sense, von der Leyen was moderated by other actors and the criticism that she had been partisan, that was voiced, inter alia, in an internal letter signed by 842 staff members by the end of October (136). While the 'solution' of Israel's self-defence was, in the following, not mentioned in the EFP discourse, it still featured occasionally in German texts alongside the "duty to protect its population" (98). When Israel had bombarded hospitals, Baerbock remarked that "international law also recognises the risk of such places being misused for military purposes" which demanded to make a difficult decision (137). On December 1, Baerbock underlined that "Israel will never be able to live in security if terror is not combated" and that the operations had to resume until "Hamas' terror of annihilation no longer has a chance to regroup" (138). On the contrary, Borrell remarked in the EP that "eradicating Hamas by bombing and destroying Gaza will not be a solution" (107). And although Baerbock would reiterate the solution that "Gaza [not Hamas] must no longer pose a threat to Israel" in early January, framing of such a solution quickly became, such as the diagnostic frame of Hamas' terror, peripheral, especially after the ICJ ruling. From then on, Baerbock underlined that she was aiming to build "international pressure on Hamas […] so that the terrorists finally lay down their weapons" (139). While EFP actors, Baerbock, and Scholz still mentioned the right of self-defence, the primary goal was, in the following, 'downgraded' to the release of the hostages and a pause. In this sense, neither the FAC nor the EUCO published a statement with a short-term goal in this regard other than the release of hostages, and the German government, later than EFP actors, refrained from formulating more ambitious goals of the self-defence or mirroring Israel's goal of Hamas' destruction or defeat. With-this, the German government fell in line with the EU majority and downloaded the disinterest in the operation's objectives but however, at first, not with regard to a ceasefire.

Humanitarian Aid and Ceasefire

In late October and early November, it became increasingly clear that humanitarian aid was not distributed and hostages not exchanged if the Israeli bombardments and, especially, the ground offensive, was not interrupted. Given this, the discussions of humanitarian aid, humanitarian access, and a humanitarian pause or ceasefire were strongly interlinked, a matter that had earlier been understood separately by German texts. Throughout the period analysed, both Germany and the EU steadily increased their pledges for humanitarian aid, both to neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Egypt but also to the West Bank and Gaza, except for the UNRWA incident. Already in early November, von der Leyen announced that the Commission was working on a

maritime corridor from Cyprus, in addition to the airbridge. Calls for humanitarian access were equally unison.

This, however, did not apply to the prognostic framing of a ceasefire as a 'solution'. As outlined in the chapter above (III.II), the German government had tacitly downloaded the call for a humanitarian pause in the EUCO conclusion on October 26, after reportedly campaigning against it at the Cairo Peace Summit. However, after the pause was downloaded, German actors fully incorporated the call. On November 7, only two weeks after the summit and prior to the G7 meeting, Baerbock explained that she had been "campaigning so intensively in favour of humanitarian pauses […] over the last few weeks and days" (98) and declared that in an interview that "I, and the Federal Chancellor, have made it clear that we are in favour of humanitarian pauses" (108). As outlined in the earlier analysis, neither Scholz nor Baerbock did not publicly mention a pause prior to or at the EUCO meeting that decided upon the call and neither did any other German text analysed. In this sense, the German intentions were, at that point, either voiced in private or non-existent. In any case, this framing was downloaded.

However, in the same interview, Baerbock made clear that Germany was not supporting "the blanket call for a ceasefire, because Israel must be able to defend itself". Following this, the G7 statement and FAC statement of November supported humanitarian pauses and corridors, mirroring the EUCO conclusions. After the FAC meeting in November, Borrell stated commented that "pauses, ceasefire, truces, the name does not really matter" (117). However, it clearly mattered to German actors given their interpretation of self-defence (at first). At the end of November, a temporary pause between Israel and Hamas was agreed on, which the Commission aimed to "use for a humanitarian surge to Gaza" (140). Borrell called this pause a "truce" which mirrored the UNGA resolution but, however, did not correspond to the majority EFP, German or US understanding of the deal. During the pause, the prognostic framing was adjusted. Now, the EU, for the first time, engaged in the formulation of the need of an "extension of the humanitarian pause leading to a permanent ceasefire" in the joint communiqué of the UfM on November 27 (106). Israel boycotted the event, and although Baerbock attended, the German government did not report on her participation nor refer to the communiqué in any text. Additionally, the call was introduced with 'it was stressed' rather than 'they stressed' which indicated disagreement. However, the ministers could agree that 'they' would, in the long-term, work for the achievement of a permanent ceasefire. A second G7 statement at the end of November, formulated the call for the extension of the pause "and future pauses" (141), which reflected the German framing. After the breakdown of the pause, German framing remained limited, as Scholz, speaking to Netanyahu in December only "discussed the necessary efforts to maximise the protection of civilians" (142). At the same time, Baerbock repeated that Germany could not support a ceasefire "which would be empty talk" as "Israel must defend itself as long as this terror continues" (143). Michel at the EUCO meeting in December confirmed that members had "different views" regarding a ceasefire (103) and at the EU-Egypt Summit in late January, "Egypt called for an immediate ceasefire; the EU stressed the urgency of humanitarian pauses" (144).

On the contrary, the EP had adopted a resolution calling for a "permanent ceasefire" while Borrell had also remained consistent with this demand. In February, Baerbock stated that "we are doing everything we can with the USA, the UK, and our Arab partners to finally bring

about a humanitarian pause" (113). Note that the EU was not mentioned. Simultaneously, the MFA underlined that the ICC had required that the "Israeli government must immediately allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid" (123, 145).

As the German diagnostic framing became increasingly occupied with the situation in Gaza and faced with an imminent offensive against Rafah, the calls for a humanitarian pause intensified. Prior to her visit to Israel on February 14, Baerbock spoke about the people of Rafah that "need more humanitarian aid and they need a pause" (102). At the G20, she, for the first time, aligned more closely to the EU framing in the UfM communiqué, calling for a pause "so that we can work towards a long-term ceasefire" (146). Baerbock framed this call with the prognosis as the only possibility to ensure the access of humanitarian aid. At the FAC in February, Borrell equally announced a FAC statement that would call for "an immediate humanitarian pause that would lead to a sustainable ceasefire", however, not supported by Hungary (131). This call was also mirrored by von der Leyen at the EP (147). In this sense, both German actors and von der Leyen gave green light for the term 'ceasefire', adapting to other MS, the EP, Borrell, UNGA resolutions, and others. This also coincided with the diagnostic framing of Hamas terror and prognostic framing of self-defence becoming increasingly peripheral. Moreover, Scholz, on his visit to Israel on March 17, argued that "what is needed is […] a longer-lasting ceasefire" (124). While the implication of 'longer' as ending still reconciled with Germany's earlier prognostic framing, this first mentioning of a ceasefire completed a remarkable shift. Borrell commented on Scholz visit, stating that "I think [Scholz] put a lot of pressure" on Netanyahu, implying that Germany had changed its position (134). This downloading shift immediately opened the gates for a new European consensus, as one day later, Baerbock, at the FAC, now called for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" (148), explaining at the Bundestag that "the dying, the starvation, it must come to an end" (125). Now, the ceasefire was also framed as the best solution to free all hostages instead of the military operation. While this reflected, at least sequentially, the climax of German downloading, the EUCO conclusions in March only called for "an immediate humanitarian pause leading to a sustainable ceasefire" (105). This, certainly, represented Hungarian policy up- and downloading. It also marked the result of a long-term development of the German government to adjust to the crisis as well as to download frames dominant in EFP discourse, and marked the development of EFP towards a more far-reaching consensus.

Long-term Solution

While the long-term solution to the conflict was largely peripheral in October, prognostic framing of the 'day after' became increasingly important and the ritual underlining of the two-state became ubiquitous, and, if formulated with Arab states, also included the 1967 lines (106). Beyond this, already on November 6, von der Leyen formulated the Commission's objectives for this solution, demanding a Gaza without terrorism, the PA to control a Palestinian state, no long-term Israeli presence in Gaza, no displacement of Palestinians, and no sustained blockade of Gaza as "this policy has not worked" (97). Only two days later, Baerbock formulated Germany's objectives at the G7 ministerial meeting, that repeated von der Leyen's points in all but two frames. First, Baerbock added that Gaza should not be territorially reduced. Second,

while von der Leyen argued for the PA to control a Palestinian state, Baerbock only remarked that "there must be no solution over the heads of the Palestinians" (149).

This continued the German government's aversion to include the PA in prognostic framing. At the following FAC, Borrell proposed a "set of principles" to the ministers that added a "no to the dissociation of Gaza from the overall Palestinian issue" and specified a "yes to the installation of an interim PA in Gaza". Later, he also remarked that "we should avoid weakening the PA" (118). He framed this as a necessity, as if "neither Hamas nor Israel governs Gaza, and neither should, the power vacuum will quickly be filled by uncontrolled forces". As mentioned, the PA was also included in the EUCO conclusions in October, however, did not feature in the following FAC statements. Likewise, it took the German government until February to refer to the PA, when Baerbock stated in an interview that a "genuine Palestinian administration needs to be established" (113). Given the need for a 'genuine' actor, she underlined that "the reform of the PA plays an important role in this" (113). In this sense, the German government emphasised that the current PA was part of the 'problem'. While the PA had only been mentioned as a partner in October, the March conclusions, then, underlined that the EU was ready "to support the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes the necessary reform" (105). This was also mirrored by Michel (115). While this was certainly no highly controversial claim, it corresponded well with the German framing of the PA and its necessity to reform to be part of the 'solution'. Given that this sentence was added, one could assume German (and other's) uploading. Nevertheless, German prognostic framing remained tacit on the future role of the PA.

Another prognostic frame, in line with Borrell's announcement to intensify the 'Peace Day Effort' initiative, had been the prospect of a peace conference which was first introduced into the EFP discourse by the UfM communiqué (106). This coincided with Borrell's statements on keeping the initiative alive and was echoed by von der Leyen who argued in the EP, in December, to focus "on the organisation of an international peace conference" (128). Given Germany's aversion of a ceasefire, it mentioned neither the idea of this conference nor the initiative in any text analysed. In January, a so-called "10-point peace roadmap" of Borrell was leaked to the press (150) which should have led to an "independent Palestinian State 'living side by side' with Israel and 'full normalization' of relations between Israel and the Arab world". However, at the Special EUCO in February, Michel only remarked that the leaders "discussed the parameters […] put forward by HR Borrell as part of the idea of launching a peace conference" (151). He only announced that the EUCO would "revisit the issue" (151). Again, no German text mentioned the plan or a conference. In the EUCO conclusions in March, however, the EUCO stated that it was "ready to contribute to reviving a political process, including through the Peace Day initiative and a Peace Conference to be convened as soon as possible" (105). While this could be potentially understood as German formal downloading, this could, more likely, be understood against the background of German disinterest in the EU as being part of its (prognostic) framing and, therefore, relative indifference to a hypothetical conference being included.

Motivational Framing

'Special' Relationship

While the motivational frame of the Staatsräson remained to be central to German argumentation, it developed remarkably in this period, especially in speeches and interviews of Baerbock. At first, the German government had faced domestic and Israeli criticism regarding its abstention at the UNGA in October. Baerbock, however, argued in November that the Staatsräson was exactly the reason why "Germany abstained […] and did not vote in favour of" the resolution (98). Asked whether the German government should comment on the Israeli operation, she continued to argue that "it is not for us to give advice […] as a deep friend, I see it as our duty to assure the country […] of our full support" (98). Against this, Borrell remarked that "the best friends of Israel are not those who push for revenge, but those who push for constraint" in an editorial piece (117). And already by the end of November, Baerbock hinted at a slight shift in motivational framing when remarking that "it is not enough to make bold statements of solidarity, but rather to guarantee Israel's security beyond this day" (137). The understanding of the Staatsräson connected to the pre-crisis framing, when the Palestinian state and unilateral restraint was framed as serving Israel's security. Baerbock underlined that "Israel can have no interest in causing even more grief and anger in the Arab world with even more victims" (127). She also argued for her involvement in the UNGA discussions and discussions with Arab states, "because otherwise hardly anyone raises their voice in favour of Israel" (143). In this sense, "precisely because Germany is clearly on Israel's side and enjoys the trust of Arab countries, we must act as a bridge builder" (127). With-this, as German diagnostic framing did not include Israeli disproportionality in 2023, the motivation of the Staatsräson remained to stipulate aversion to 'give advice' and the legitimacy to negotiate on Israel's behalf while taking a more balanced position.

The early hints of a shift in motivation, however, became more saliant in February, when Baerbock repeated that the "security for Israel will ultimately only come about if the Palestinians also live in security and dignity". Asked whether the current Israeli government recognised this, she bluntly remarked: "the good thing about democracies is that the people themselves can decide on such major issues in elections to form the government" (113). This was the most explicative separation of the interests and security of Israel and of the Israeli government, which would continue to persist and be underlined. In this sense, the Staatsräson applied to Israel's people rather than its political decision-makers and hinted at the growing or revived German frustration of 'unilateral actions'. In the following, Baerbock would cite a Holocaust survivor at the G20 who stated that there "is no Muslim [or] Jewish blood" (146). While she mentioned the historical responsibility of the Holocaust in March, she also, for the first time, remarked that Germany championed international law as a "lesson from our history and the monstrous crimes of the SS and the Wehrmacht", referring to Israel's "way" of self-defence (125). In the same speech, she recalled a conversation with a parent of a hostage who "whispered" to her that "my beloved child […] will not come back because another mother in Gaza loses her child" (125). In these instances, Baerbock drew legitimacy of Israeli or Jewish victims of terror and German history to argue that the Staatsräson was applicable to criticising

Israeli disproportionality and to championing international law. Given this, the 'special' relationship and international law were "an 'and', not a 'but" and did not exclude the diagnostic frame of disproportionality any longer (125).

'Civilian' Power

With this incremental change of the Staatsräson frame, the value of international law became the predominant motivational frame of German actors, aligning with the EFP level, which did not change its motivational framing of international law. At the G7 on November 7, Baerbock underlined that this was the moment when "we take responsibility […] as strong democracies for the international, rules-based order" (116). In similar vein, Borrell described that "Europeans must be among the keepers of international law" (117). While both the EFP and German level increasingly agreed that the crisis in Gaza was unbearable, the framing of motivational reasoning remained slightly different. On the one hand, Borrell argued that a discussion was needed transcending "the emotions inevitably affecting us all […] and seek a means of ensuring that rationality prevails" (107). Certainly, the description of the crisis at the EFP employed emotional frames, however, more often included citations of reports, the ICJ ruling, as well as UN resolutions. On the other hand, Baerbock criticised that "we are increasingly no longer concerned with humans, but rather with statements", continuing her motivational framing of 'humanity' as allowing to understand the suffering on both sides (137). In February, the MFA human rights representative Amtsberg summarised the strategy as follows: "I ask in my conversations: imagine it was your child. Because if we are prepared to see the suffering of the other, our own child in the child of the other, then we make different decisions. Then we cannot help but be human" (113).

However, this 'humanity' also played into international law as the "task of international and therefore European and German foreign policy […] to promote our universal vision" (127), thereby underlining the multilateralist frames of German foreign policy as well as including shared European values in motivational framing. Note that she aligned European and German foreign policy. In short, she said, "our standard is the law [and] humanity that guides us" (125) and argued for an "universal view" (143). In this sense, Staatsräson also meant "facing up to the accusation of double standards" and to live up to this standard as the centre of a "responsible, value-led foreign policy" (125, 127). This would mean that "German foreign policy [was] actively accepting its responsibility for its role in the world" as well as acknowledge both Israeli and Palestinian suffering (127), as mirroring EFP statements. This motivation, alongside the change of the Staatsräson, legitimised the diagnostic and prognostic developments described during this period. In this sense, this motivational framing as such had not been remarkable different to the other periods analysed, however, included more calls to action, the discussion of double standard, which had been already discussed by EFP actors, as well as the self-image to understand both sides as the impetus of a universal standard. This frame had become predominant to the Staatsräson frame in German texts, partly downloading its emphasis and also its justification from the EFP level already analysed in the previous period.

Assessment of Discursive Europeanization

From November 2023 until March 2023, the war had developed dramatically, with the humanitarian crisis and rise of civilian deaths in Gaza increasingly becoming the prevailing lens of international action and observation. Against this development, formal common European foreign policy, however, was not notably actualised. In December, the EUCO merely "held an in-depth strategic debate on the Middle East" (152) and at the Special EUCO meeting in February, it only "discussed the latest developments" (153). Additionally, no FAC statement on behalf of all MS could be published from December to March, highlighting Hungarian contestation. Certainly, the crisis had lost some of its initial and climactic priority, which could also be observed with a lack of texts by von der Leyen and the reintroduction of texts through the EEAS. In this sense, the crisis *of* EFP had entered a new phase after its initial dislocation, and after formal consensus on the EU's position had been reached in October. Nevertheless, the war still remained a salient issue of EFP, especially after the ICC case, the UNRWA allegations, and, in particular, the operation's potential extension to Rafah was announced. Still, German actors, now rather Baerbock than Scholz, engaged prominently in discourse while also engaging limitedly in minilateral contexts, alongside Borrell, Michel, and others. As such, the frequency of frame-articulations was only slightly reduced. The lack of formal decision-making, next to marking a new phase, could also be understood as European division and a lack of coordination and Europeanization. This claim is, however, too simplified if analysing discursive Europeanization, particularly through comparative and interdiscursive analytical dimensions, in effect contributing to the EUCO conclusions in March.

First, regarding the reflective dimension, no significant change could be observed. The EU barely featured as a problem, part of the solution, or motivation in German texts and only EFP actors focused on the role of the EU. The 'Peace Day Effort' initiative was, again, not mentioned. In this sense, German actors have remained discursively disinterested in the EU, as, for instance, Baerbock underlined that Germany was working towards a pause with "the USA, the UK, and our Arab States" (113). Only once, European foreign policy with regards to 'promoting a universal vision' was mentioned. As such, no substantial Europeanization with regards to a reflective dimension could be observed.

Second, however, regarding the comparative dimension, framing had developed significantly. While the diagnosis of Hamas' terrorism in connection with 'human shields' was still, at first, framed by German actors, strengthened by the conclusions in October, other EFP actors did still refrain from this framing. However, von der Leyen dropped her comparisons of Hamas' attack with Holocaust and her diagnosis of an 'act of war'. She and German actors increasingly refrained from employing the frame of 'human shields' or blaming Hamas for the civilian casualties in Gaza. With regards to the new frame of UNRWA's complicity in January, German actors framed the allegations as credible facts, while the Commission, from the start, framed them as testable allegations. Although German texts in 2023 remained tacit on Israeli disproportionality while Borrell framing became more critical, German actors adopted some degree of this framing in 2024, especially concerning the Rafah offensive. Additionally, the re-

emerging diagnostic frame of settlement expansion and settler violence became salient in both EFP and German texts, and although differences remained, German texts also framed the issue increasingly critical. With regards to prognostic framing, the solving exercise of the right to self-defence became increasingly peripheral in German texts. The German government framed a pause rather a ceasefire as the solution given the general need for Israeli self-defence, while other EFP actors were relatively indifferent to this differentiation. By the end of March, both German and EFP actors framed an 'immediate ceasefire' as the short-term solution. Additionally, despite German actors not mentioning EU initiatives, all actors engaged in the framing of long-term solutions with relative congruency except for the framing of the PA. With regards to motivational framing, the 'special' relationship was only framed by German actors, although strongly altered to respond to the overarching frame of 'humanity', multilateralism, and international law, already dominant in EFP discourses during the immediate crisis response, and corresponding to the self-image of 'civilian' power.

Third, given these changes in framing, several interdiscursive connections and potential connections could be analysed. Although the frame of 'human shields' had been included in the EUCO conclusions despite being rejected by other EFP actors, the frame became increasingly peripheral, hinting a German discursive downloading, resulting in the exclusion of this frame in the March conclusions. Certainly, German actors downloaded the Commission's framing of the UNRWA's complicity, as, after the Commission re-approved funding, the MFA directly commented and changed its framing. While Israeli disproportionality in German texts was peripheral during October and the rest of 2023, German actors increasingly adopted this frame, albeit less explicit than EFP actors. Although it is unclear to which degree this was caused by the development of the conflict, it is certain that this shows at least sequential (not causal) discursive downloading which was also reflected in the March conclusions. With regards to settlement expansion and settler violence, German texts downloaded the diagnostic framing of Borrell and the EEAS and showed an unprecedented degree of German criticism and frustration. While the wording of EEAS and MFA texts was, by February, almost similar, German texts, however, did not download the term of 'settler terrorism' but now referred to 'settler extremism'.

With regards to prognostic up- and downloading, the clearest discursive downloading could be observed with the frame of a 'humanitarian pause'. Although German actors had reportedly opposed and evidently refrained from mentioning this frame in October, it was, nevertheless, formally downloaded through the October conclusions. Shortly after, Baerbock proclaimed that they had championed this short-term solution from the beginning. In this sense, the German government did not only download the frame formally, but discursively and sustainably. Although initially against a ceasefire, this stronger frame was incrementally implemented into the German discourse, at least sequentially downloading EFP, UNGA, and EP frames. A mixed formulation, stronger than a pause and weaker than a ceasefire, was then consensus in the March conclusions. Here, however, the German government had already become a pro-active agent attempting to upload a ceasefire, failing due to (at least) Hungary's opposition. With regards to self-defence as a solution, the increasing German disinterest in this frame also, at least sequentially, followed EFP framing. With regards to prognostic framing, there has been also failed discursive downloading. For instance, while Germany was formally

re-committed to a partnership with the PA, and this was reflected in the EFP discourse, German texts did not feature the PA in their prognostic but diagnostic framing. This was, in turn, uploaded, loosely into the EFP discourse, and formally into the March conclusions. While the German motivational frames changed as well, they aligned increasingly with the frame of a 'civilian' power, particularly the EFP reading of international law and multilateralism in conjunction with its diagnostic framing, and the frame of a 'special' relationship or solidarity was not only an upload-failure but was altered through this alignment.

In sum, the period discussed could be largely identified as a period of (inter-)discursive Europeanization of German framing, as articulations became more hegemonic in discourse. Although the October conclusions functioned as the formal baseline of EFP until March, the framing of the conflict and war was neither static nor diverging but, in contrast, showed increasing movement of German framing towards EFP frames which were already existing in October but manifested in the following period. This development was finally and formally explicated in the March conclusions. However, this development was already apparent in the statement by 26 member states in February. When Hungary, at least formally, ceded its opposition to many common positions in March, the German government had either followed suit, already adopted more consensual frames, or already refrained from underlining past controversial frames. Although there have been notable but minor exceptions and deviations, many frames were aligned. As such, this hints at a possible pendulum effect, however, with more German down- than uploading. In any case, German framing had become more critical of Israel's military operations and settlement expansion, also and particularly compared to the pre-crisis period, and had adjusted its framing of the 'special' relationship accordingly.

Conclusion

The EU and its role(s) in the Israel-Palestinian conflict have been subject to much scrutiny, criticising inaction, disunity, and double standards. In March, Konečný (2024) described the EU response as a "tale of contradiction and division", echoing the dominant opinions of observers. And certainly, this observation is accurate. MS have long held different positions on the conflict and its parties, increasingly over the last decade, EU institutions such as the Commission, the EEAS, and the EP have shown strong disagreement, bilateral relations have trumped the priority of a common and unified EU foreign policy, and minilateral fora have been preferred to progress the MEPP over EU channels. The EU had largely refrained from positive conditionality, from addressing the increasing asymmetry of the conflict, or even from deciding on new conclusions in the EUCO, leading to growing frustration.

However, by analysing EFP-discourse and its connections to German discourse in times of crisis, the thesis draws another picture. By utilising the concept of discursive Europeanization and framing as pre-ceding policy and highlighting the constructions of a framework of meaning in which policy becomes possible or constrained, it could detect a considerable amount of discursive change influenced by virtue of German membership and articulation within the EFP discourse. As such, it has contributed to answering the simple question: 'What if the EU did not exist?'. Without Borrell's and other's push for a humanitarian pause already on October 23 and the EUCO, would German actors have fully incorporated this short-term solution already in early November, proclaiming to have championed this solution for weeks? Without the EEAS' and other's strong criticism of settlement expansion and settler violence, would the MFA have adopted an unprecentedly critical stance? Without the Commission's discursive backing of the UNRWA, would German actors have moderated their belief in the allegations this quickly?

The definite answers can only be given by the actors themselves. Nevertheless, an in-depth analysis of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing has shown many (more) instances of comparable discursive influence, in effect paving the way for new policy. Given this, the thesis has shown that a perspective on common policy conclusions, statements or voting behaviour might not be sufficient to grasp EFP-making and Europeanization but can be complemented and read together with other texts, capturing the development of what is framed, what remains unspoken, and when it was said. This, then, offers one useful perspective on underlying discursive developments potentially leading to formal decisions or policy action. The criticism of 'contradiction and division' is also simplified because it applies an insufficient standard to review EFP. The lens on discursive Europeanization underlines that EFP has both supranational and intergovernmental elements interacting with each other and does not reduce EFP to the 'divided' sum of national foreign policies or the 'contradicting' actions of a single, unified foreign policy actor. It emphasises the complexity of EFP's multi-level actorness.

The thesis has also contributed to the discursive understanding of a global crisis leading to a crisis of EFP, analysing the pre-crisis situation, the immediate crisis response, and the developing crisis. The pre-crisis literature proclaiming a stalemate and MS's disinterest in EFP with regards to the conflict could also be discursively confirmed during the first period.

However, the crisis has led to remarkable dislocation and re-articulation, thereby challenging the status quo of EFP. During the period of immediate crisis response, new or re-emerging frames were articulated and stabilised in a remarkable frequency given a 'coordination reflex'. These included, inter alia, the German (and other's) framing of Hamas' terror, self-defence, 'human shields', or the 'special' relationship or frames of a pause and peace effort by other EFP actors. During this period, only few interdiscursive links were established, however, frames were translated into formal EUCO conclusions of October explicating the pressure to find a solution. Given that actors were competing with these diverging frames, this period largely marked discursive contestation. Nevertheless, until the EUCO conclusions in March, the analysis has demonstrated how German texts have increasingly aligned with former EFP frames, albeit not completely, explicating a degree of downloading and Europeanization. By the end of March, German actors, inter alia, championed a ceasefire or reinterpreted the 'special' relationship by distancing itself from the Israeli government, hinting at a 'pendulum effect'. The German framing still contested some frames, such as the partnership with the PA or an open critique of Israeli disproportionality as a crime against international law and showed a degree of capacity to upload this contestation. Yet, this capacity was limited and showed limited framing effects.

Against this, also several continuities in a lack of discursive Europeanization could be observed. For instance, the EU only featured very rarely in German framing of problems, solutions, or motivations. This hints at a general aversion to frame national foreign policy as EFP. Additionally, EU initiatives with regards to the long-term solution of the MEPP were (still) ignored and Germany remained committed to minilateral formats and bilateral negotiations, to which it attributed more efficiency to intervene in the conflict. This underlines that Europeanization is not a unidimensional or teleological process. Nevertheless, the analysis has shown many instances of potential interdiscursive influences both by German actors on EFP and EFP actors on German foreign policy, in particular in the third period.

Given these conclusions, the main limitations of the thesis and its analysis must be discussed. As the thesis has utilised perspectives of Europeanization and discourse analysis, it has also inherited their conceptual and methodological limits. With regards to Europeanization, the main limit has been the mentioned question of causality. While developments of discourse could be detected and presented, the thesis cannot claim with absolute certainty that these developments are inherently causal to other specific discourses, framings, or texts. This limitation also refers to other factors that need to be considered, such as the degree of importance of specific developments of the conflict. For instance, the analysis has shown that German framing included Israeli disproportionality after the offensive against Rafah was announced and has shown that the framing was existent in EFP discourse. However, it could not evaluate the degree of influence of the announcement per se or prior EFP discourse on German framing. Therefore, the analysis has refrained from stating certain causal connections, except explicit, and has rather referred to potential influence or sequential development. This limit will be further elaborated below.

Another methodological limit has been connected to the research design of the discourse analysis. As the discourse analysis focuses on text or language, in this case official and high-level text, 'real' intentions as well as non-public text could not be evaluated. Certainly, the thesis amounts a high value to public, official texts as explicative for foreign policy change. The thesis has not conducted interviews with relevant actors. Although interviews are also representations, they provide valuable insights on policy-making and discursive practice. This has limited the analysis twofold. First, it has limited the accessible discourse and, therefore, the analysis. Baerbock remarked in a speech that "we must […] think concretely about the path to a two-state solution […] not just publicly, perhaps not publicly, but in small circle" (cited in Auswärtiges Amt 2023). In this sense, many instances of framing could not be evaluated, potentially important for EFP and German foreign policy development. Second, more specifically with regards to Europeanization, it made it difficult, in some instances, to differentiate between downloading and 'shielding'. Following this, the thesis could not evaluate whether German actors argued for a pause 'in secret' while refraining from mentioning it in public discourse to prevent alienating Israel or to avert domestic criticism, thereby 'shielding' their 'true' intentions through the EUCO conclusions. The degree of German frustration with Israel could, therefore, not be finally determined. Given this, a discourse analysis including interviews to contribute to this analysis remains a research desideratum.

Coming to the circumstantial limitations of this thesis, the thesis has focused only on a limited number of actors and institutions it considered particularly relevant for the discourse. Given the thesis aimed to determine what remained unspoken, it decided to analyse all accessible texts by these actors and institutions which, naturally limited the selection. However, other actors could be equally relevant, in particular actors from other MS important for EFP which remains the most important limitation of this thesis. Others could include actors from the US, Israel, the PA, Hamas, Arab states, or the UN. This circumstantial limitation also refers to the problem of causality as, theoretically, the analysis of more texts from more actors would improve the analysis' accuracy to trace interdiscursive developments and, therefore, to assume influence. Another important discourse could include the domestic discourse, particular relevant for the German government as the main opposition party had adopted more frames from the Israeli government and the German media sphere elevated the crisis to a national issue.

Lastly, the circumstances have limited the timeframe of the analysis. Given the recent developments within the EU, including the decision by Ireland, Spain (and Norway) to recognise Palestine or Spain's decision to join the ICJ genocide case against Israel, the analysis of this thesis could already be actualised. At the same time, the war developed, Israel started its ground offensive against Rafah, the ICC prosecution filed a case against Israeli and Hamas' leaders, and currently, on June 6, a ceasefire agreement has been proposed by the US. All these developments require newly adjusted framing and policy-coordination which, therefore, can be valuable subjects to the study of discursive Europeanization.

Despite these limitations, the thesis has provided considerable answers to the research question, underlining that the EU, indeed, was not 'nowhere' but a relevant factor in German foreign policymaking, as explicable in discourse. Future research should continue to explore these discursive undercurrents and their implications for EU foreign policy, particularly in crises

where rapid and coherent responses are paramount. This approach can provide a more comprehensive perspective on how EFP and German Foreign Policy navigate the delicate balance between adaptation and projection, and how EU Foreign Policy exists despite being ignored as a part of the solution or motivation, despite an initial lack of unity, and beyond common statements and conclusions.

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