

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

Permanent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/165005>

Copyright and reuse:

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

Germany's Contemporary Relations with China

Economic Interest, Ignorance, and Trust

Gert Hilgers

Resubmission of the thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Politics and International Studies

University of Warwick, United Kingdom

November 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
List of Tables.....	4
List of Figures	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
Declaration	7
Abstract	8
List of Abbreviations & Institutions.....	9
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	11
1.1 A Contextual Background for the Debate	11
1.1.1 An Overview of German Foreign Policy: An Inexperienced ‘Strategist’	13
1.1.2 Germany-China Relations in a Nutshell	14
1.2 Puzzle and Research Questions.....	15
1.3 Timeline, Arguments, and Structure	16
1.4 Added Value to the Field.....	19
1.4.1 Contribution to the Academic Literature	19
1.4.2 Adoption of Unique Scope	22
1.5 Limitation of this Research.....	24
1.6 Analytical Strategy and Methodology.....	25
1.6.1 Core Analytical Strategy: Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)	25
1.6.2 Data Acquisition	26
Chapter 2: Studying German Foreign Policy – An Evaluation of Current Approaches.....	29
2.1 Dominant Conceptual Approaches to German Foreign Policy	30
2.1.1 The Normalisation vs Continuity Debate	31
2.1.2 The Limitation of the Debate to Study Germany’s China Approach.....	38
2.2 Foreign Policy Analysis	43
2.3 Analytical Framework.....	50
2.4 Methodology	54
2.4.1 Research Approach	54
2.4.2 Data Acquisition	56
2.4.3 Further Considerations	60
Chapter 3: An Overview of Germany’s Foreign Policy Making	62
3.1 German Actorness in the Post-War Era	63
3.2 Foreign Policy Principles: Germany, a Civilian Power?	66
3.3 Foreign Policy Agency in the Context of the EU.....	71

3.3.1 An Overview of the EU's Engagement with China	72
3.3.2 The EU's Struggle with its China Policy	74
3.3.3 EU-China and the Role of Germany	76
3.4 Germany's Foreign Policy Factors on China	79
3.4.1 Individual Level.....	80
3.4.2 Bureaucratic Level.....	84
3.4.3 Societal Level.....	86
3.5 Key Themes	87
3.5.1 Economic Interest	88
3.5.2 Ignorance.....	89
3.5.3 Trust	90
Chapter 4: An Overview of the Germany-China Relationship and a Review of the Current Debate.....	92
4.1 Milestones of the Germany-China Relations	93
4.2 Germany-China Development Prior to 1998.....	95
4.3 China's Economic Significance for Germany	98
4.3.1 Economic Realities in Context.....	101
4.3.2 Germany-China Trade Ties.....	108
4.3.3 Germany-China Investment	115
4.3.4 Economic Tensions.....	124
4.4 A Review of the Existing Literature on Germany-China.....	130
Chapter 5: Individual Level.....	135
5.1 Schröder's Chancellorship.....	137
5.1.1 The Power of Individuals on Germany's Decision-Making Process	144
5.2 Merkel's Chancellorship.....	149
5.2.1 The Power of Individuals on Germany's Decision-Making Process	163
5.3 Evaluation of the Influence of Individual Factors through Thematic Analysis.....	169
5.3.1 Economic Interest	170
5.3.2 Ignorance and Trust	172
Chapter 6: Bureaucratic Level	174
6.1 The Executive Branch	175
6.1.1 Chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt)	175
6.1.2. Federal Ministries.....	176
6.1.3 BMWi and the KUKA Aftermath.....	179
6.1.4 The Rule of Law and Human Rights Dialogues.....	182
6.1.5 Federal States (Bundesländer).....	185

6.2 The Legislative Branch.....	187
6.2.1 Legislative Knowledge on China.....	189
6.2.2 China’s Relevance in German Coalition Agreements.....	194
6.3 Political Parties.....	197
6.4 Political Foundations.....	199
6.5 Evaluation of the Influence of Bureaucratic Factors through Thematic Analysis	202
6.5.1 Economic Interest	202
6.5.2 Ignorance and Trust	203
Chapter 7: Societal Level.....	205
7.1 German Perceptions on China	206
7.1.1 Germany’s Overall Reservations	208
7.1.2 Economic Opportunities and Threats	211
7.1.3 Normative Values: Personal Freedoms and Human Rights	213
7.2 German Media Coverage on China	215
7.3 The Perception Gap: Politicians vis-à-vis Society.....	217
7.4 Business Associations.....	221
7.5 Think Tanks.....	224
7.6 Evaluation of the Influence of Societal Factors through Thematic Analysis.....	226
7.6.1 Economic Interest	226
7.6.2 Ignorance and Trust	227
Chapter 8: Conclusion	229
8.1 Added Value of this Research	230
8.2 The Analytical/Theoretical Approach and Methodology.....	231
8.3 Summaries and Empirical Findings	232
8.4 Empirical Analysis.....	238
8.5 Future Research	240
Bibliography	241

List of Tables

Table 1: Milestones of the Germany-China Relations	94
Table 1: Gerhard Schröder’s official visits to China as Chancellor	139
Table 2: Angela Merkel’s official visits to China as Chancellor	152
Table 3: China Visits by German MPs (partial)	191
Table 4: China’s Relevance in Coalition Agreements	196
Table 5: “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?” Polled Citizens Responding “Favorable” in %	209
Table 6: “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?” Polled Citizens Responding “Unfavorable” in %	210
Table 7: German Sentiments on Personal Freedoms in China – “Does China’s government respect the personal freedoms of its people?”	213
Table 8: Germany’s Position (Table 6) Relative to Selected Other Countries	214

List of Figures

Figure 1: Chapter Structure.....	19
Figure 2: Structure of Chapters 3 to 7.....	53
Figure 3: Nominal GDP of Selected Countries (in million USD).....	102
Figure 4: Nominal GDP Growth of Selected Countries (annual %)	102
Figure 5: Total Goods & Services Trade of Selected Countries (in million USD).....	103
Figure 6: Goods Exports to Goods & Services Exports Ratio of Selected Countries (annual %)	104
Figure 7: Goods & Services Trade Surplus of Selected Countries (in million USD)	105
Figure 8: Total Exports to GDP of Selected Countries (annual %).....	106
Figure 9: Total Trade / GDP of Selected Countries (annual %)	106
Figure 10: Chinese Nominal GDP (in million USD) & Annual GDP Growth (annual %)	107
Figure 11: Chinese and German Exports and Imports in 2017 (in million USD)	108
Figure 12: German Exports to China (in million Euro)	109
Figure 13: German Exports with Selected Countries (in million Euro)	110
Figure 14: German Exports to China (in million Euro)	111
Figure 15: German Imports from China (in million Euro)	112
Figure 16: German Total Trade with China (in million Euro)	112
Figure 17: German Share of EU28 Exports to China (in million Euro).....	113
Figure 18: German-Chinese & German-US Total Trade Relative to German-Non-EU28 Trade (in million Euro).....	114
Figure 19: German FDI in China	117
Figure 20: German Companies Operating in China (bars)	118
Figure 21: German Companies' Revenues in China (bars) & CN/World Share (line).....	119
Figure 22: German Companies' Employees in China (bars) & CN/World Share (line).....	119
Figure 23: Chinese Outward FDI (in million USD) & Chinese Percentage of World Outward FDI	122
Figure 24: Chinese FDI in Germany (in current million USD)	124
Figure 25: FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index – Total Restrictiveness.....	129
Figure 26: “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?” Polled Citizens Responding “Favorable” in %.....	209
Figure 27: “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?” Polled Citizens Responding “Unfavorable” in %.....	210

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the continuous support by my primary supervisor, Professor Shaun Breslin. His constructive and pragmatic advice throughout the past years has been of great help – as has been his humour. Thank you!

I also appreciate the initial support by my second supervisor, Dr James Brassett, and that Dr Catherine Jones and fellow East Asian Study Group colleagues kept me sane during the first years of this endeavour.

Further gratitude deserve Friedhelm Hilgers and Ursula Schnorrenberg for their unconditional support of my pursuit of knowledge; Elyna Ngu for her benevolent spirit and involvement in my decision to start this research project in the first place; Ivy (Zi) Yang, who has been instrumental for me seeing this research project through to completion and for having taught me a thing or two about China, life, and theory; and last but not least my former students at Warwick whose difficult questions and brilliant comments offered me new insights on a weekly basis.

The Transatlantic Network on the Politicization of Europe (RESTEP), with support by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, also deserves acknowledgement for their generous writing grant which helped me to complete this thesis.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university. The thesis contains no work published elsewhere.

Abstract

This thesis assesses how Germany piloted its relationship with China during the two Schröder administrations from 1998 to 2005 and the first three Merkel administrations from 2005 to 2017. Its core focus is the foreign policy decision-making process in Germany. It examines how factors within the country had constructed Germany's engagement with China.

As a research project evaluating Germany's agency in the decision-making process, it adopts Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as its core analytical framework. Factors at three levels of analysis are identified and examined: the individual, the bureaucratic, and the societal level. The analysis of the chosen factors is further carried out through three identified key themes – economic interest, ignorance, and trust – which played a profound role in assessing the existence of an underlying strategy in Germany's China approach.

The core contribution of this thesis is two-fold. First, this research fills a gap in the existing literature. Examining the relations across five terms provides an updated and holistic analysis of the recent evolution of the Germany-China relationship. Moreover, in contrast to the more common structure-based approaches in the field, it deconstructs Germany's agency to unveil existing factors influencing the country's decision-making process. Second, its assessment and findings offer empirically valuable insights that can act as a foundation for rethinking and navigating the existing, and future, Germany-China relationship from a strategic perspective.

List of Abbreviations & Institutions

BMU	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
BMWi	German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BND	German Federal Intelligence Service
BPM	Bureaucratic Politics Model
Bundesbank	German Central Bank
Bundestag	German Federal Parliament
CCP	Chinese Communist Party (sometimes also referred to as CPC)
CDU	Christian Democratic Union (<i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands</i>)
CFSP	European Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSU	Christian Social Union (<i>Christlich-Soziale Union Deutschlands</i>)
Destatis	German Federal Statistical Office (<i>Statistisches Bundesamt</i>)
DGAP	German Council on Foreign Relations (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik</i>)
DIHT	Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (<i>Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag</i>)
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDP	Free Democratic Party (<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i>)
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (affiliated with the SPD)
FFO	German Federal Foreign Office (<i>Auswärtiges Amt, AA</i>)
FNF	Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation (affiliated with the FDP)
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany/West Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic/East Germany

GFC Global Financial Crisis

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies

Greens Alliance '90/The Greens (*BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN*)

HSS Hanns-Seidel-Foundation (affiliated with the CSU)

KAS Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (affiliated with the CDU)

MdB Member of the German Federal Parliament (*Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages*)

NRW North Rhine-Westphalia (*Nordrhein-Westfalen*)

OAV German Asia-Pacific Business Association (*Ostasien Verein e.V.*)

OFDI Outward Foreign Direct Investment

SPD Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

SME Small or Medium-sized Enterprise

SWP German Institute for International and Security Affairs

The Left The Left Party (*Die Linke*, merger of PDS and WASG in 2007)

UN United Nations

Union Unofficial term for the alliance between CDU and CSU

UNSC United Nations Security Council

WIPO World Intellectual Property Organisation

WTO World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 A Contextual Background for the Debate

When considering Germany's contemporary bilateral foreign relations, a number of well-established bilateral pairs come to mind: Germany and the United States (US), Germany and Russia, and, of course, Germany and other European states, particularly France. Depending on current events and/or specific interest, other countries may share the spotlight to varying degrees. China, with its increasing economic and political weight on a global scale, claimed its seat on the German bilateral partner table only relatively recently. Although relations between Bonn and Beijing had been established following China's opening up policies in the 1970s, the formal bilateral relations between the two countries followed a steep upward trajectory starting in the early 1990s only. They were then elevated repeatedly under the Schröder (1998-2005) and first three Merkel (2005-2017) administrations. However, in contrast to the vigorous discussions concerning the other high-profile bilateral relations pairs mentioned above, China received comparatively minor attention within German policy debates throughout most of the 1998 to 2017 timeframe.

This limited attention on China and its role for German interest primarily resulted from Germany's strategic commitment to, and prioritisation of, the European project in the post-war era. Moreover, Germany's established alliances with Western powers after World War II, and (West) Germany's absolute reliance on these partnerships, had only improved further soon after reunification to secure a peaceful and well-integrated Europe.

Yet, with its fast-paced economic growth, China's relevance to a reunified Germany had increased dramatically over time. In the mid-1990s, China had been a minor trading partner with no significant political or strategic value to Germany (apart from its United Nations Security Council [UNSC] seat). However, within just twenty years, a *comprehensive strategic partnership* had been formed between the two countries (Bundesregierung 2014). China had become Germany's largest trading partner (Destatis 2018) and a *systemic conflict* between Western democratic

and liberal market systems on the one side and China's state-controlled approach on the other had started to loom on the horizon (BDI 2019).

At time of the submission of this thesis, the Germany-China bilateral relationship might very well be considered as the third most important bilateral relationship globally (after US-China and US-Russia) for three reasons. First, both countries have become leading global exporters and have been highly invested in global trade and investment architectures. Thus, the relationship between the two is directly linked to shifts in global trade and the economic climate. Second, considering the weight of Germany within the European Union¹, its engagement with China carries significant weight for shaping EU-China relations. Given China's substantial growth since the 1990s and its expected future economic and political weight within its region and globally (Breslin 2009), China's role in Asia can hardly be understated. In other words, in Europe and Asia respectively, Berlin and Beijing represent the countries with the relatively highest relevance in economic, and often political, terms in today's world – which places the Germany-China bilateral relationship at the core of challenging global dynamics. Third, with Germany's *change through rapprochement* (*Ostpolitik*) tradition and cooperative foreign policy approach to countries with different values and political systems (Maull 2007), in combination with its global weight, Germany possesses a higher potential than other major Western powers to support China with its full integration into the existing international political system. The engagement between Berlin and Beijing has, therefore, the potential to become a defining factor in balancing *East* and *West*.

Hence, Germany's contemporary relations with China deserve closer examination due to their global relevance for scholars and practitioners alike. As mentioned below (and in Chapters 2 and 3), this research is designed to contribute to the existing yet limited literature on the relations between the two countries. It provides complementary value to the dominating structural. The objective of the following chapters is not to discuss why the relationship between the two countries matters, although this thesis provides the required contextual foundation to do so. The goal is not to substantiate claims on the implication of the Germany-China

¹ See, for instance, Baumann (2007). Chapter 3.3 provides further information.

relationship for today's changing global climate. Instead, this project scrutinises the motivation and intention behind Germany's chosen steps towards China. Instead of tracking what had happened to the bilateral engagement, this research's focus is on Germany. The deconstruction and scrutinization of the narratives of 'Germany decides' in the context of China is at the core of this research project: what does it mean when 'Germany decides' something? How did it decide? It therefore focuses on examining Germany's actorness as a decision maker in the bilateral context with China from 1998 to 2017. Or, in other words, this thesis centralises the role of Germany and its policy making process in shaping its engagement with China, creating a unilateral focus within a bilateral context.

1.1.1 An Overview of German Foreign Policy: An Inexperienced 'Strategist'²

Prior to reunification, West Germany (from here on: Germany) had been severely constrained in its foreign policy making process by the Western alliance (Hilz 2009). Although this changed following reunification, Germany's unique soft power approach it had established over time prevailed as the primary foreign policy doctrine. The most famous example of this approach is Chancellor Willy Brandt's (SPD) *Ostpolitik*, or *change through rapprochement*, approach from the 1970s. It aimed at normalising the relations with East Germany and other member states of the Warsaw Pact through communication and cooperation wherever possible. Due to its success and Germany's commitment to "promote world peace" (Deutscher Bundestag 2017a, p. 13) laid out in the preamble of its Basic Law, most German policy makers in the 1990s (and, indeed, also in the following two decades) retained their views for Germany to base its foreign policy on a strong soft power approach, namely posing as a civilian power and as an economic power instead of a military one (Watzal 2000). Such views were also reflected in the continuity vs normalisation debate which Chapter 2 introduces in detail.

² See Chapter 3 for an extensive discussion on the topic.

Bonn's lack of autonomy over its foreign policy and its reliance on the United States for protection prior to reunification, however, led to a sustained lack of experience, expertise, and ownership in developing foreign policy strategies on its own after reunification (Link 2000; Schöllgen 2000). Moreover, foreign policy positions were also a result of cross-departmental collaboration that were not solely set by the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) or Chancellery, but also by various other ministries such as the Federal Economic Affairs Ministry (BMWi), the Federal Environment Ministry (BMU) or the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). What further complicated and reinforced Germany's limitations in developing foreign policy strategies was the need for coalition governments. Important foreign policy related ministries, first and foremost the FFO, were traditionally held by the junior coalition partners and thus remained more dependent on volatile party politics – in particular prior to federal or important state elections – than the Chancellery (Ismayr 2012).

As such, the development of long-term foreign policy strategies in Germany remained a particularly complex and difficult process which had not been on top of the priority list of most members of the *Bundestag*, Germany's Federal Parliament, during the 1990s and the time frame of this thesis. Instead, more attention was given to completing the reunification process and overcoming economic difficulties, while simultaneously pushing for further inclusion and cooperation within the EU (Baumann 2007). It is therefore not surprising that German foreign policy prioritised EU and the transatlantic partnership matters and that relations beyond these borders were limited and largely overlooked (Jäger et al. 2011) – including China.

1.1.2 Germany-China Relations in a Nutshell³

The modern relations between West Germany and China were established in 1972, soon after the first steps of Sino-US reconciliation efforts (Cho and Crowe 2014b). Only in 1993, however, well after Germany's reunification, the FFO developed a first 'Concept for Asia' (*Asienkonzept*). It remained largely vague and

³ This topic is covered in detail in Chapter 4.

did not include dedicated sections for individual Asian countries (Bundesregierung 1993), although Chancellor Kohl (1982-1998) had ordered its issue on a return from one of his visits to China.

While trade flows with China increased during the 1990s, it was only after China's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 in Schröder's first term that the economic relations accelerated quickly (Destatis 2018). China became Germany's biggest Asian trading partner in 2002. These intensified trade relations with China, especially German exports to China, helped Schröder to get the German economy back on track. Soon thereafter, the political relations improved further when both countries declared their *partnership in global responsibility* in 2004 (Chinesische Botschaft 2004).

Despite of rising tensions in the first few years under Merkel, partially related to her having received a private visit by the 14th Dalai Lama to the Chancellery in 2007 (FAZ 2007) and the broader value-based criticisms she and other senior politicians had voiced at the time, the economic relations developed well during the first two Merkel administrations. In particular, China's financial support during/immediately after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) for the EU had been appreciated and helped the relations to be upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2014 (Bundesregierung 2014). In Merkel's third term, however, around 2015/2016, a range of events including major Chinese investments into German key sectors led to increased German criticism and a change of sentiments towards China. While China had by many been seen as offering brilliant business opportunities with some negligible risks beforehand, its state-controlled industrial and investment policies came under increased scrutiny during this time (Delcker 2016). This eventually caused a tightening of domestic investment policies in Germany and a more ambivalent stance towards China's leadership and China's global role.

1.2 Puzzle and Research Questions

Research on the political bilateral relations between Germany and China appeared to substantially differ from those on Germany's relations with the European Union and the transatlantic partnership. This is perhaps no surprise

considering the long-standing foreign policy priorities of Germany and lack of focus on China. Before long in the research process, a puzzle emerged. How had such relationship of high regional and global importance evolved since reunification? How did German governments see China and how and why had their perceptions shifted over time? What role did China play in Germany's contemporary foreign policy making? And most importantly, did an underlying strategy exist – and how had it evolved? This notion of strategy is a vital point. Rather than short-term, temporary, or spontaneous tactical developments, this thesis aims at evaluating Germany's strategic approach as “a cohesive core [for] guiding decisions” (Strategic Direction 2020, p. 35).

To identify the existence of Germany's strategy and to scrutinise its approach with China, this research adopts an agency-focused approach: Foreign Policy Analysis. The goal is to unpack Germany's practice of agency by relying on factors influencing the decision-making process. As such, rather than examining how Germany's practice of agency affected the general development of the relationship, it focuses on Germany's agency: how was it constructed and how did it develop. As such, it complements the existing bilateral relations debate with a much-needed agency-oriented analysis. To do so, the core research question is:

Why did Germany's relationship with China evolve in the way that it did from 1998 to 2017?

Revolving around this core question are the following sub-research questions:

- What are the defining factors within Germany that drove the decision-making process?
- What are the main issue areas that shaped the bilateral relationship (and if they changed over time, why and when)?
- Did a consistent China strategy exist during the time frame?

1.3 Timeline, Arguments, and Structure

This research covers Gerhard Schröder's two terms in the Chancellery from 1998 to 2002 and from 2002 to the snap election he called in 2005. During this time,

Schröder headed the coalition between his Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Alliance 90/The Greens (Greens) as their junior partner. The thesis further covers the following three terms of Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose Christian Union (Union) teamed up with the Free Democrats (FDP) as their junior partner to form a coalition from 2005 to 2009, and with the SPD as their junior partner from 2009 to 2013 and from 2013 to 2017. This time frame including five terms was chosen as it covers China's rise as a major German trading and political partner over a prolonged period and the arrival of China on the global stage, including significant events for German, Chinese and international politics such as China's World Trade Organisation accession in 2001, 9/11, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) as well as the Eurozone Crisis.

This thesis deconstructs Germany's actorness and its agency when constructing its policy approaches towards China. In doing so, it examines factors at the three identified levels of analysis under a Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) framework: the individual level, the bureaucratic level, and the societal level (see below). Once again, it is important to note that this research evaluates Germany's agency from a strategic point of view rather than a tactical one. Based on this, in contrast to factors at the individual and bureaucratic levels, factors at the societal level were found to have limited influence on the decision-making process, and therefore, on the formation of Germany's agency with regard to China. Three themes were identified to be embedded in the strategic considerations throughout the evaluation: economic interest, ignorance, and trust. Each of them is of high relevance to the discussion. Combined with the FPA levels of analysis structure introduced below, these themes are evaluated at each level to add to the holistic assessment of the factors at play.

The figure on the next page (Figure 1) demonstrates the overall logic flow of this research which is structured based on the research questions above. To scrutinise Germany's foreign policy making, Chapter 2 provides a conceptual review of current approaches to study Germany foreign policy and justifies the use of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as the core analytical framework to compensate limitations in existing discussions with an agency-oriented analysis.

Based on this conceptual analysis, Chapter 3 offers a contextual analysis to German foreign policy development in the context of its global actorness. To assess its decision-making agency, Germany's actorness as a decision maker is deconstructed. Following FPA's three levels of analysis structure (individual, bureaucratic and societal), core factors at each level are identified and the conceptualisation of the three key themes (economic interest, ignorance, and trust) introduced at the end of Chapter 3.

Furthering the examination of Germany's foreign policy on the prior two chapters, Chapter 4 continues the discussion in the context of Germany and China, providing contextual mapping of the relationship. It starts with an overview of the relationship during the period prior to the start of the chosen time frame in 1998 and highlights the increasing economic relevance prior and during the 1998 to 2017 period. A more extensive evaluation of the implications of trade and further economic ties then follows. Chapter 4 ends with a review of the current literature on the Germany-China relationship which further strengthens the value of this research both conceptually and contextually.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 follow a similar structure combining thematic analysis with specific levels under the FPA framework. Each Chapter analyses how factors at their respectively assigned level impacted and constructed Germany's decision-making agency and its actorness as a decision maker towards China. Given the relatively long time span of this research, the analyses are grouped based on the administrations' terms: Schröder I and II, and Merkel I, II, and III. Factors at each level during the specific terms are identified and examined. Their influence on constructing Germany's China foreign policy and on their role in shaping an underlying strategy are further evaluated through the lenses of economic interest, ignorance, and trust.

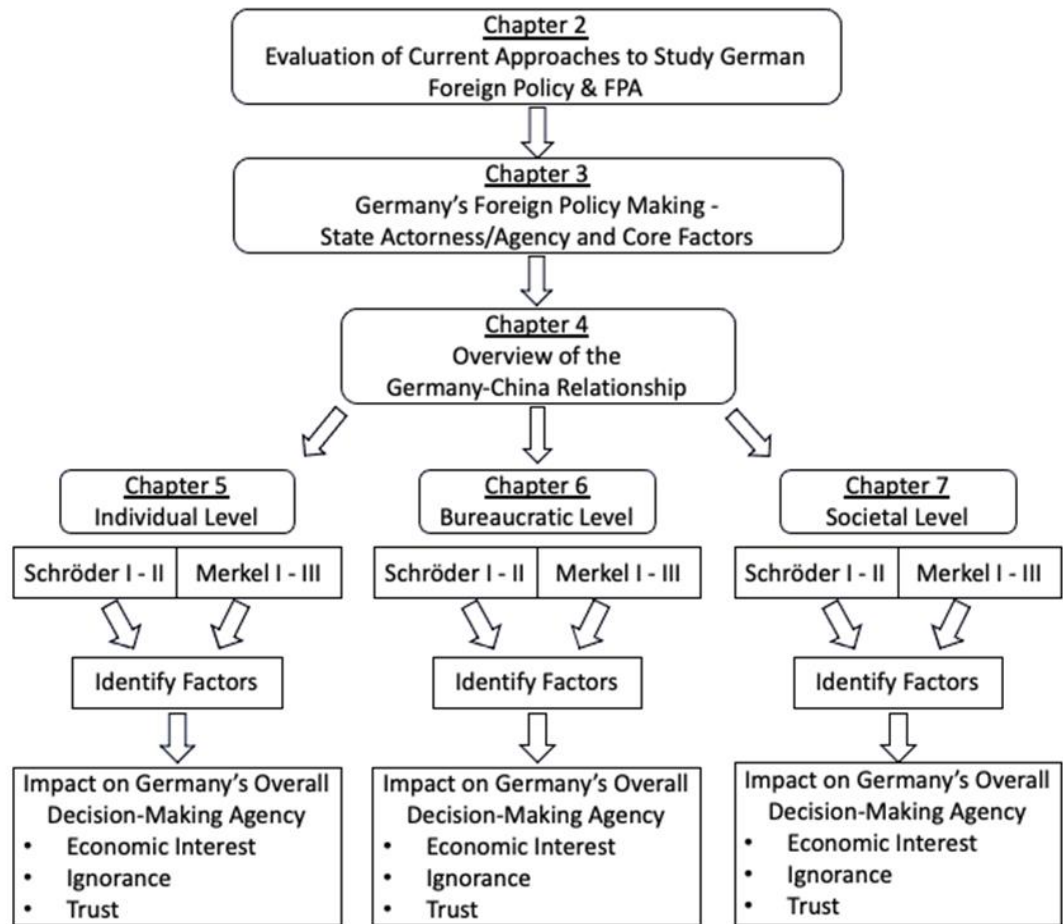


Figure 1: Chapter Structure

Source: own illustration

1.4 Added Value to the Field

1.4.1 Contribution to the Academic Literature

Following up from the high relevance of the Germany-China bilateral relations for both regional and global considerations above, contributions to academic debates can be aggregated into two dimensions.

First, as mentioned in the contextual section, given the weight of Germany and China in today's world, the study of the Germany-China relationship poses great significance to answering big questions such as the role of Germany or China in an international context, the changing dynamic of the existing global order, and the future of the economic and political climate between West and East, to name a few.

Second, as this research primarily focuses on Germany's actorness and agency, it aims at making sense of the construction of Germany's policy-making process. This project thus adds important and significant research findings to debates on German foreign policy as well as German (foreign) policy making in a wider sense with an agency-oriented approach. China has become the most important non-Western German partner by far, which, in 2016, 46% of German political decision-makers and 58% of the German population believed to be "of equal importance" (Huawei 2016a, p. 69) to the US for Germany. Therefore, by deconstructing and examining Germany's agency in its decision-making with China, this project contributes to the examination of German policy making from a strategic perspective.

There has also been a rather limited amount of academic literature on the modern Germany-China bilateral political relations on their own. For the time span covered, only a handful of journal articles and book chapters in either English or German exist. These are often reasonably short (about ten pages, a few are about 20 pages long) and focus on specific (niche) aspects or periods of the relations. For instance, Heberer and Senz (2011) gave an overview about the relation's key events from 1998 to 2010, Gottwald (2005) talked about trade promotion and European disunity, and Heiduk (2014, 2015) covered the global financial crisis and Eurozone crisis period with brief assessments. Similarly, Heilmann (for instance in Schmidt et al. 2007), as one of the leading China experts in Germany and founding President of MERICS, contributed a few shorter pieces to the debate over time. In addition to books and journals, some reports and policy briefs were published in think tanks, e.g. by Bartsch (2016) and Jungbluth (2018) for the Bertelsmann Foundation, and by Kundnani (2016) for the German Marshall Fund.

While the above does not constitute an exhaustive list, the amount of academic literature focusing on the relations itself has been rather limited considering the importance that China gained for Germany over time – especially within the German-speaking field of academia. This is not to say that no work had been done on China and Chinese foreign relations. On the contrary, plenty of work was published by German researchers on China and Chinese foreign policy. However, the vast majority of it simply does not relate to the bilateral relations directly. Much work that did relate to Germany mostly focused not on the contemporary political

relations, but on pre-modern China, on comparative studies on culture or education, or on scientific research cooperation topics. Additionally, a wide range of work has appeared on EU-China relations in the 2000s and 2010s. Such work sometimes included certain aspects of the Germany-China relationship, but did not focus on providing a comprehensive analysis (see, for instance, Berkofsky 2005; Casarini 2009; Sandschneider 2002).

Additionally, the foci of these pieces remain on the bilateral or structural level, for instance assessing how Germany had influenced the relationship or what the implication of the bilateral relationship for the bigger global environment had been. Evaluation of German policy procedures in these works are therefore treated more as a *factor* or a given process. Within even fewer works attempting to focus on examining German decision-making, either the focus stayed on how externalities affected decisions, or the arguments mainly existed in journal articles where analyses were overly summative.

This thesis, therefore, on the one hand treats Germany as the core actor of interest to examine how the construction of its own agency had affected Germany's decision-making activity. Factors thus are identified within the state. When mentioning structural changes like the increase of China's economic significance or other global events such as financial crisis, the attention remains on how Germany responded to them rather than how they had affected Germany. There is a subtle difference. In short, this research focuses on Germany's agency itself and is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis with the support of FPA's analytical framework. It is to identify and make sense of factors within Germany which had played a role in affecting the construction of its decisions towards China during 1998 to 2017. Certainly, this agency-oriented approach is commonly seen in studying Germany's policy making in areas such as its EU or migration policies. However, there is a clear lack of discussion of such in the context of China. This research aims at filling this gap.

1.4.2 Adoption of Unique Scope

In addition to the above, this thesis also contributes its unique scope to the existing debates to assess how and why the Germany-China relations developed from 1998 to 2017. This can be explained from three fronts.

First, in terms of comprehensiveness of the chosen scope. With its coverage of five Chancellery terms, Schröder I & II and Merkel I II, & III, this research examines the development of the relationship for a substantial period – whether one wants to call it the post-Kohl era, the early 21st Century, or Germany’s bilateral relations since China’s accession to the WTO. In the core mapping chapter (4) and throughout the discussion of the three analytical chapters (5, 6 and 7), key developments are identified based on a contextual timeline to direct the analysis. However, beyond simple identification, these events are also evaluated as a whole in examining factors’ impact on Germany’s decision-making across the five terms. This is especially relevant for assessing key events such as China’s WTO accession, the Global Financial Crisis, and the Eurozone Crisis that occurred across multiple terms. The goal is therefore on the one hand to acknowledge the happening of these events and examine how the factors at each level had responded to them and how they had affected Germany’s decisions on China. In addition, and most importantly, this thesis further enables the reader to take a step back to observe the grand evolution of events and changes of factors in context of Germany’s search for a strategy. Rather than standing independently, these individual events are examined as a process of development. Thus, not only does it contribute a more updated review of the bilateral engagement in a more contemporary era to the debate, but also it complements the current debate with a shift of focus towards a longer-term strategy.

Second, the chosen scope’s uniqueness is shown in the approach used to structure the analysis. While most existing literature merely outlines how the relations developed over time or link it to a certain issue, this thesis also enquires why the relations evolved in a certain way with sole focus on Germany’s own agency. The added value therefore is to use the FPA’s levels of analysis framework to deconstruct Germany’s actorness as a decision maker to scrutinise its agency in search for approaches with China. Shown in the figure above, Chapters 5, 6 and 7

are dedicated in providing holistic analysis at each level. This structural deconstruction among individual, bureaucratic, and societal levels allows a more in-depth examination of changes of and among factors. Furthermore, the identified three themes, economic interest, ignorance, and trust also provide additional layers to further the analyses. This combined approach of levels and themes together with highlighting the role of strategy rather than tactics grants this research a unique and valuable position in the current debate.

Third, the focus on strategy itself is of special importance. As emphasised repeatedly, the research uses a strategic perspective to scrutinise Germany's foreign policy making, assessing Germany's search for a strategy. *Strategy* refers to "a cohesive core of guiding decisions" (Strategic Direction 2020, p. 35). Factors in the context of major developments between Berlin and Beijing throughout the intended time frame therefore are examined for the purpose of identifying the existence of strategy directly and characteristics of Germany's China decision-making procedure in a strategic sense. This ultimately separates this research from the majority of the existing literature. While the term strategy is frequently referred to in foreign policy opinion pieces, the core aim of these discussions is to provide predictions and push for certain recommendations. On the contrary, as a scientific project, the use of strategy for this research refers to the search for the existence of strategy. Instead of strategising the future, the research aims to identify its foundation and to unpack it.

By combining these three scopes, the thesis provides a comprehensive explanation and reviews the development of the bilateral relations over almost two decades. It helps to understand reasons for the intensification of the relations despite of public scepticism and reservations on the German side. It finds that although Chancellery agency have had major impact, the grown bureaucratic disparities within the German executive branch largely prevailed which further complicated the search for a consistent strategy towards China. Overall, this thesis adds a substantial contribution to the academic debate and fills a void in exploring the nature of the Germany-China relations with an agency-oriented approach and from a strategic standpoint.

The value in many ways reaches beyond the simple study of the bilateral relationship, though. In the broader sense, findings of this project can also be used to support research in the wider context of international politics such as examining the power dynamic shifts between West and East, the wider discussion of global order and its implication on the EU-China debate. Additionally, it offers a further perspective and practical insights on German domestic considerations related to China. By scrutinising the evolution of Germany's agency in foreign policy making, it also offers great empirical value to help Germany reflect on its performance to better navigate its future steps in the bilateral relationship.

1.5 Limitation of this Research

Naturally, it is impossible to cover the whole breadth of the Germany-China bilateral relations from 1997 to 2018 in a research project of this size. This thesis covers the events that were deemed to be essential to paint a nuanced picture of the bilateral relations with a mix of micro and macro views, data and event analysis.

Certain aspects, especially ones beyond the realm of strictly bilateral issues, had to be excluded to guarantee the provision of a reasonable depth of the presented argument. Embedded in the existing literature on EU-China relations, this thesis deliberately focuses on the German national level. It is a piece to deconstruct and scrutinise Germany's decision-making agency itself. To give context, the role of the EU is briefly discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of discussing its actorness and, for comparative reasons, it is also included in Chapter 4 to provide more contextual references of the importance of trade and economics.

Other areas of interaction between Germany and China in other established international architectures, for instance within the United Nations institutions, the World Bank, the G7/8/20 etc. are excluded from this research project to not dilute the key findings and assessment presented. After all, Germany's agency is examined in this piece primarily in the bilateral context. However, Chapter 8 (Conclusion) brings together the arguments throughout the research and highlights their implication on the further potential of the wider Germany-China relations that are also worth exploring. This project therefore provides a foundation for future work

following a similar path, i.e. exploring the construction and the impact of Germany's agency itself. In light of the broader domination of structure-focused analyses, this research with its agency-oriented focus helps to push closer to a much-needed balance, as imperfect as it is.

1.6 Analytical Strategy and Methodology

1.6.1 Core Analytical Strategy: Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)

To deconstruct German actorness and scrutinise the practice of its agency in the context of decision making, this thesis adopts Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), a middle-range theory, as its core analytical framework due to the theory's focus on the actor's agency within the decision-making process. As explained in Chapter 2, where existing approaches to study Germany foreign policy are reviewed, approaches inspired by major international relations theories, namely realism and liberalism, are argued to be ill-equipped for the specific scope of this research in discussing the German decision-making process of foreign policy with a focus on deconstructing agency. A prime example is the infamously ongoing debate between continuity and normalisation. Rather than treating actorness as given, this research lies with constructivism and appreciates the social construction of actorness and agency.

Therefore, to study Germany as a decision-making actor, this research examines Germany's decision-making agency as a result of the evolving construction of sub-state factors which are also actors on their own due to their ability to exercise agency. Certainly, external structural changes beyond the German border also mattered, but the goal of this project is to look from inside out, not outside in. The core of this thesis is to examine the degree to which these internal factors constructed Germany's decision-making agency with China and how this had affected the country's overall actorness as a decision maker. To focus on agency itself, i.e. the decision maker, this justifies the usage of FPA as the main analytical framework.

FPA was designed to study decision-makers' and actors' decision-making processes. The decision maker of interest to this research project is Germany itself

rather than a specific individual or group. The decision maker Germany is thus a concept that is argued to be constructed through the interactions of and among factors within. Through FPA's levels of analysis, the construction of German decision-making agency is deconstructed into factors at the individual, bureaucratic and societal levels. Factors at each level are identified and their influence are examined to evaluate their impact on the overall decision-making actorness of Germany with relation to China.

Based on the discussions above, the analysis of this piece is therefore a breakdown of the German perspective of interest and responses to China from an agency-centric approach. It focuses on the state but is not state-centric. Rather, state actorness is deconstructed and thus using a middle-range approach to assess factors' impact on agency. It highlights (f)actors' at the individual level such as characteristics, psychological traits and world views. It also considers those at the domestic/bureaucratic level, such as their surrounding bureaucratic structures, interdepartmental plays and misalignment of priorities. Furthermore, it reviews factors at the societal level like civil society and public opinion. A more detailed conceptualisation and identification of factors and levels are provided in Chapter 3. In summary, FPA offers a practical structure to break down German decision-maker actorness to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of its agency.

1.6.2 Data Acquisition

To successfully test the above hypothesis and make use of the outlined FPA framework, this thesis uses a bespoke research design. It is based on a triangular research methodology to assess the bilateral relations at hand. The purpose of using such an approach is to investigate and cross-check acquired data from multiple sources to compensate for possible individual limitations. It helps to uncover aspects and information that would otherwise have been overlooked – which is particularly true for the use of elite interviews. This is covered in more detail in the methodology part of Chapter 2. In general, this thesis makes use of three different types of sources:

I. Academic Publications, Reports, and Media Sources

Existing academic literature provides a foundation and framework for the research conducted in this thesis. While some of the cited literature is available in English, many references were published in German only. These academic sources are complemented by reports and studies from think tanks and research wings of foundations. They usually provide a more policy-focused analysis and are therefore also valuable for the assessment found in this thesis.

Furthermore, media sources have been used which primarily consist of newspaper and magazine articles from leading German or international publishers. These also include some opinion pieces which were chosen to provide assessments by authors who are reasonably knowledgeable on the subject matter, and have always been in line with common views (if not stated otherwise). It was taken special care to not include ‘fringe’ views without additional explanations.

II. Official/Government and Political Party Data

The thesis uses a range of archival official/government data for analysis. For most chapters, qualitative material such as published agreements, statements, and speeches by the German federal government provide the foundation for mapping and analysing the Germany-China relations.

The discussion of the economic relationship between the two countries in Chapter 4.3 makes use of various statistical data. Most of it was provided by the *Bundesbank* (German Central Bank), *Destatis* (German Federal Statistical Office), *Eurostat* (EU Statistical Office), and the WTO. It is worth to note that the Germany-China trade and investment statistics published by different institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, may vary in definition or accuracy, and can in certain cases differ vastly.

The data selection for this thesis has been aimed at having the most relevant data used for the specific purpose, e.g. Bundesbank data was chosen for shedding light onto Chinese investments in Germany while Eurostat data was used to inform the reader on trade values of major European countries and China. While the data used

might not be fully accurate, it is still able to give a good indication of economic trends and dependencies.

III. Elite Interviews

Elite interviews were conducted to complement the above core research methods for the purpose of verifying and/or discovering information about Germany-China relations directly or the German foreign-policy decision-making process in more general terms. As such, chosen interviewees have all worked within or related to these subject areas and consist of (former) academics, politicians and their staff, federal/state officials, think tank staff, journalists, business association representatives, and civil society experts.

Due to the potentially sensitive nature of policy-making and the role of different individual and institutional actors within the process, the names of interviewees remain confidential. Where appropriate and meaningful, interviewees were referred to by their (generic) affiliation.

The interviews were conducted either in-person or via phone/video chat between 2015 and 2020. The primary research visit to Germany took place in 2015/16 and a visit to mainland China and Hong Kong took place in 2017. Most interviews followed a semi-structured format while some followed a largely unstructured format, giving respondents the freedom to express their views in more detail.

One might argue that the chosen interviewees do not represent the full range of involved German foreign policy actors and their views. However, this is of no major concern for two reasons. First, it is rather difficult to get a truly representative view on an issue via (not fully-structured) interviews in the first place – no matter whom is interviewed. Second, as pointed out above, the contribution of this thesis lies in advancing the academic debate and this has certainly been accomplished by the triangular nature of the methodology used – the interviews held played an important, but only complementary, role in the data acquisition.

Chapter 2: Studying German Foreign Policy – An Evaluation of Current Approaches

This chapter provides the theoretical and analytical framework as well as an overview about the methodological approach for this thesis. The first part (2.1) introduces the existing dominant conceptual approaches to German foreign policy within (and in part beyond) academia since reunification. It explores the normalisation vs continuity debate which critically influenced German domestic debates on its foreign policy approaches in the 1990s and 2000s, and also received much attention internationally – especially in the first few years following reunification. Sub-chapter 2.1.3 considers the value of this debate for answering the research questions of this thesis: what were the key determinants within Germany that had impacted the country's bilateral policy approach towards China; and whether the approach was underpinned by a comprehensive strategy. Below assessment suggests that a conceptual divide between the debate's focus on Germany's role in the international arena and actual Germany-China policy-making existed.

To be able to address the research questions, i.e. to uncover the drivers of German decision-making towards China, this chapter then presents foreign policy analysis as the core analytical strategy for this research project due to its focus on deconstructing and scrutinising actor's agency in decision-making. In contrast to the more rigid perspectives that approaches inspired by realist and liberal theories in the normalisation vs continuity debate offer, FPA provides a set of tools for assessing *factors* at multiple levels and their roles in constructing Germany's overall practice of agency in decision-making. Although constructivism provides certain flexibility to appreciate the role of sub-state actors, FPA allows to focus more on agency rather than structural/systemic influences. This relates directly to one of the key contributions of this research: to complement the dominating structure-focused analysis from an external perspective with an agency-focused examination of the internal developments. Adopting a *levels of analysis* structure, FPA provides an ideal analytical tool to unravel the complexity of German foreign policy decision-making and engagement with China within the sub-state level, analysing the

individual, bureaucratic, and societal levels. The thesis follows such approach with its structure.

The final part of this chapter provides the methodological plan for this thesis, presenting the chosen methods for data acquisition for the application of FPA. It further highlights the benefits of the methods – and data – used in the research process, and the solutions for overcoming their limitations.

2.1 Dominant Conceptual Approaches to German Foreign Policy

The fall of the Soviet Union and subsequent German reunification led to a surge of interest within the international relations and history communities in Germany and beyond to assess past events and to draw the trajectory German foreign policy would likely take within Europe and the international system in the years to come. Not only did Germany receive “unprecedented attention from the most prominent journals in International Relations” (Hellmann 2009, p. 257), it also became the new battleground for competing international relations theories, which Hellmann (2009, p. 290) outlined comprehensively.

The unfolding debate in the early 1990s presented a division between two major arguments – and camps: *normalisation* and *continuity*. Supporters of foreign policy normalisation, largely in line with (neo-)realist thought, believed that Germany’s return to a great (regional) power with its regained economic size, socio-economic strength, and political sovereignty was only a matter of time. Therefore, a more self-interest-driven foreign policy approach was required to match the country’s hard power (Hellmann 2009, p. 290; Waltz 1993).

Opponents of this view, largely found within the liberal and constructivist schools of thought, believed in the continuity of Germany’s foreign policy strategy instead. Similar to the pre-reunification period, continuity supporters believed that the main goal of Germany’s foreign policy remained to strengthen multilateral ties within Europe and NATO as well as to champion liberal and *civilised* values (Maull 2006b; Risse 2000).

The debate shaped the academic discourse of Germany's role in the world and its foreign policy for twenty-plus years and is analysed below. Although neither side claimed defeat, continuity proponents had effectively won the debate by the time Schröder had entered the Chancellery in 1998 (Roos 2010).

2.1.1 The Normalisation vs Continuity Debate

With Germany's reunification in 1990 and its newly found foreign policy sovereignty⁴, a broad discussion emerged on how the German *Bonn Republic* was to transform its foreign policy in the years ahead. The key debates right after reunification centred on the ideas of foreign policy *normalisation*, backed by (neo-)realist thinking, focusing on Germany's relative strategic strengths, and foreign policy continuity, often liberal/institutionalist and in part constructivist in nature. The debates between the ideological camps were primarily held within academic circles but were also closely followed by German policy makers and the wider political sector (Roos 2010). While this key debate flared up repeatedly during the early 21st century and up to the end of this thesis' time frame in 2017, it had effectively already been settled by the mid- to late-1990s – with the *continuitists* having come out on top (Katzenstein 1997; Roos 2010).

The former idea, *normalisation*, suggests that Germany was to adjust its foreign policy towards the existing realities within Europe and the wider international system in-line with realist ideology. Germany, like any other country, should think of foreign policy as an instrument of power and aspire to maximise international influence, and with the potential of becoming a great power in a strategic sense (Schöllgen 2000). Normalisation proponents hence argue that Germany ought to pursue a more assertive foreign policy which would resemble more of its economic and socio-political power (potential) due to the lack of “a plausible strategic competitor on the continent” (Maull 2006b, p. 3) to challenge its ambition and rise. Early proponents of such a view included theoretical international heavyweights such as Mearsheimer (1990), Krasner (2019), and Waltz (1993). Their view was strongly supported by a small number of German scholars such as Schwarz who

⁴ Apart from EU-based restrictions discussed in Chapter 3; for more information about pre-unification German foreign policy, see Chapter 3.2.

believed that Germany had already become Europe's *central power* (*Zentralmacht*) with completion of the reunification process (Bertram 1994).

Voicing such considerations made many German policy makers and large parts of the country's civil society feel uneasy. Not only had West Germany had limited scope in soft power terms and no significant hard power potential or ambition prior to reunification (Hilz 2009; Kronenberg 2009), Germany did not pursue a relative power enhancement programme in the 1990s either (Watzal 2000). For decades, German diplomats had instead been re-assuring European neighbours that they had no intentions of imposing their will on the continent ever again. Neither labelling Germany as a "world power by destiny" (Hacke 2006, p. 7), nor discussing how Germany could start with accumulating power within international organisations before rising above them (Mauil 2006b) had been particularly helpful to ease reunification concerns abroad.

It is worth noting, however, that many of the German key normalisation proponents at the time – such as Hacke, Schöllgen, and Schwarz – were Cold War historians and not contemporary international relations specialists. Having worked in this field for decades makes it plausible to believe that the impact of the end of the Cold War and German unification had changed Germany's power position within the international system and had opened up opportunities for the country to become Europe's primary regional power, a regional hegemon. For Neorealist normalisation supporters, increasing its relative strategic power over Europe had to be the obvious aspiration and outcome of German foreign policy. Waltz infamously encapsulated this view in the early 1990s: "a country to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly" (Waltz 1993, p. 66, 2000, p. 34) and "[c]ountries with great power economies have become great powers" (Waltz 1993, p. 34). With its reunified economic market and population, both the largest within Europe, as well as its strategic location, it was hard to imagine for Germany to not fit into this neorealist construct.

Within German academia, however, such an assertive realist foreign policy stance was met with strong opposition. A wide range of German political science scholars refused to agree with such views and asserted that normalisation proponents

were not representing the mainstream perspective (Schlotter 1992). Instead, they believed that German foreign policy had been showing policy continuity and would likely continue to do so with its approach to strengthen multilateral cooperation and structural ties rather than questioning previously established liberal post-war principles. Such continuity view did indeed remain fundamental to Germany's general foreign policy trajectory as is discussed in Chapter 3.

Hellmann (2009), for instance, argued that Germany's national interests since reunification had little in common with the traditional national interest highlighted in a realist framework which aims at building material advantages, in particular military capacities. With German reunification, the end of the Warsaw Pact and the Eastern EU enlargement process, Germany had accomplished all its long-term security- and stability-related foreign policy goals: to be reunified, to live in a stable and peaceful Europe, and to drive integration and mutual cooperation forward. In other words, Germany had nothing to fear from traditional security threats throughout the relevant time period of this thesis and immediately prior to it⁵.

Masala (2008) added to this view by pointing out that Germany pursuing regional hegemony would have to include a significant rise of military spending and activity. Not only would such actions have been close to impossible to sell to the German public with its strong aversion against military operations and armament, it would also have been difficult to push these through Germany's federal political system⁶. Key indicators also do not support any significant rise in military capabilities. Germany halved its standing army from 1990 to 2018 to about 183,000 soldiers (Bundeswehr), spent about 1.2% of its GDP on its armed forces (SIPRI 2018), significantly less than the 2% expectation by NATO allies (Kamp 2019), and disbanded its mandatory national service in 2010 – while most young German men had already decided for decades to serve in a pacifist civil service role instead of serving in the German Armed Forces. Therefore, from reunification to the end of the

⁵ This is also one of the reasons why Germany did not see China as a security threat for most of the assessed time frame. See Chapters 5, 6, and 7 for further discussion.

⁶ German state governments possess strong veto power through the *Bundesrat*, Germany's Upper House. This system was put in place after World War II to avoid any sudden or extreme political movements to gain power too quickly. See Kohler-Koch (1991) who offers a worthwhile assessment on the subject.

time frame of this thesis, i.e. from 1990 to 2017, Germany clearly did not re-emerge as a great power in a realist sense (Jäger et al. 2011; Hellmann et al. 2014) and, from an opposing perspective, normalisation as a concept had clearly been detached from reality.

Instead of having hegemonic aspirations, continuity supporters believed that Germany stuck to – and should stick to – its cooperative, integrative and multilateral foreign policy principles which had worked well prior to reunification. Gareis (2009) notes that West Germany's self-limitation of not following a power politics approach in the first years after World War II did surprisingly not decrease its influence abroad but instead continuously increased it. This experience throughout the Cold War, and its role in forming Germany's dedicated foreign policy tradition let a wide range of scholars to believe in the merits of foreign policy continuity, or what Maull coined the *paradox of continuity* (2006b, p. 2)⁷. Their proponents included Hellmann (2009; 2014), Kohler-Koch (1991), Maull (2006b, 2013), Risse (2000), Rittberger (1993) and Schlotter (1992) who largely championed a liberal institutionalist or constructivist approach for making sense of Germany's foreign policy at the time.

A central theme for the continuity supporters was Maull's *civil power* (*Zivilmacht*) role concept which he had introduced in 1990⁸ (Maull 1990). Inspired by Duchene's *Civilian Power Europe* role concept (Duchene 1973), Maull adapted and expanded the term in the following twenty years (Tewes 2002; Maull 2007; Maull 2013). Regarding foreign policy as a product of social construction, his civil power concept is constructivist in nature. Yet, he kept it "open for realist, liberal, or institutionalist explanatory approaches, as long as these are incorporated into the respective foreign policy role concept" (Maull 2007, p. 75).

⁷ Maull (2006b) argues that Germany's foreign policy continuity had been a paradox: despite of the international system changing dramatically due to the events that led to German reunification, Germany adhered to its existing foreign policy approach.

⁸ Maull's (2013) retirement lecture transcript at the University of Trier in 2013, where he explained how he learnt about the term, how it changed over time, and how it influenced senior German politicians, is a worthwhile read.

The objective of a civil power is “the civilianization of the international environment, [i.e.] the use of military force is tamed in order to guarantee the rule of law, prosperity and legitimate governance” (Tewes 2002, p. 11). Or, in Maull’s own words, ‘civil powers are thus states that feel committed to the goal of civilizing politics and act accordingly. The term “power” describes in this context [states with] the willingness to implement their own goals, if necessary against resistance, and [...] certain forms of implementation, i.e. specific strategies and instruments of foreign policy’ (Maull 2007, p. 74). The concept was first introduced as a prescriptive analytical tool to describe German and Japanese foreign policy behaviour, and later extended by a normative component to expand its scope. The practical role this concept played for German foreign policy decision makers is presented in Chapter 3 as part of the discussion of Germany’s foreign policy traditions. In short, much of Germany’s foreign policy behaviour, including policies towards China, can be attributed in part to underlying civil power considerations.

While the continuity camp had prevailed in most scholars’ eyes by the late 1990s, normalisation supporters refused to give in and renewed their claims throughout the 2000s. In 2001, Mearsheimer still expected Germany to increase military funding and to extend its armed forces to establish “hegemony over Central Europe” (Mearsheimer 2001, p. 395 in: Hellmann 2009, p. 4) in the mid-term. This assessment followed the Kosovo crisis which constituted a new chapter in the debates on Germany’s foreign policy. Schröder, who had only taken office in late 1998, decided to support a NATO operation against Serbia without a UN mandate. This decision led to heated debates within the German political sector and civil society, and was harshly criticised by the political left⁹. In academic assessments, however, it was largely seen as evidence for Germany’s multilateral civil power approach and not as a realist-style power grab (Maull 2006b). Germany’s overall military strength and spending data already mentioned above (Bundeswehr 2019; SIPRI 2018) did not support Mearsheimer’s expectations either.

Following 9/11, the established domestic consensus on German foreign policy to pursue a path of civil power continuity was tested again and, for many, came to an

⁹ See Chapter 3.2 for further information.

end with Schröder's decision to not join the US-led military intervention in Iraq in 2002/03. German transatlantic multilateralism had received a blow and a new range of debates and positions emerged among the German academic community. Scholars within the realist realm once again saw an opportunity to discuss German power aspirations while reminding everyone that the end of the Cold War had already heralded the end of the transatlantic era (Schöllgen 2004). At the same time, foreign policy budgets had been cut significantly (Hellmann 2003) and Germany's poor economic performance in the 1990s had "begun to affect the conduct and also the direction of the country's foreign policy" (Maull 2006b, p. 4). This structural economic weakness had a major impact on Schröder's decision to prioritise stronger trade ties with various promising economies at the time, including Russia and China. Although you can argue that strengthening economic ties beyond Europe would increase Germany's relative (economic) power within Europe, Schröder's primary consideration was to support the German economy based on a liberal globalisation mindset¹⁰.

Similarly, Maull kept adjusting his civil power concept to address changes in Germany's foreign policy approach under Schröder (1998-2005) and believed that Schröder's decision not to invade Iraq had simply been the inevitable result of the rising influence of Germany in the international community paired with its traditional foreign policy concepts (Maull 2006a). Schöllgen, trying to rejuvenate the relevance of Realist analytical thought, argued that Schröder had deliberately opened up different policy trajectory options for Germany with the "possibility to choose other partners [than the United States] in critical situations" (Schöllgen 2005, p. 7). Such explanation can be used from different ideological angles, though, and the above examples illustrate the ongoing debate and a certain fluidity of views over time.

Hence, the distinction between the two camps – or within their camps – had not been as clear-cut as it may have seemed in the early 1990s. For instance, Hacke, who proposed in the early 1990s that Germany was destined to become a world power (Maull 2006b), argued in 2006 that close cooperation with the US was crucial

¹⁰ See Chapter 4.4 on economic considerations and Chapter 5 on Schröder's policy agenda.

(Hacke 2006) for Germany's success within the international sphere – a view that would be tested further in the years ahead.

The majority perspective among German foreign policy scholars in the 2000s remained focused on foreign policy continuity – including strong ties with the US. Upholding institutional commitments, favouring multilateral approaches, strengthening the EU and, ultimately, focusing on its established partners within and beyond Europe, appeared to be most appealing to them. Reasons for such views varied among continuity supporters and ranged from Germany's role as a civil power (Maull 2015; Tewes 2002), and existing multilateral commitments and frameworks (Kirste and Maull 1996; Rittberger 2001), to Germany's Europeanised (and institutionalised) identity (Hellmann et al. 2014; Katzenstein 1997; Roos 2017). To differing degrees these views can also be found when assessing Germany's relations with China – which is discussed further throughout the thesis.

While realist analyses of key German foreign policy developments did thus not have a great track record and institutionalists with their cooperative approach appeared to be better suited to explain such developments, several key German foreign policy actions are hard to explain with a purely institutional mindset either. For instance, Maull (2004) argues that the German unilateral rejection of the US' Iraq campaign in 2002/03 was not fully explainable by a liberal reading of the civilian power concept. He argues that Germany seriously undermined the United States as a close political ally as well as the United Nations and its Security Council by proclaiming that it would reject a UN resolution on an intervention in Iraq. Similarly, Germany's breach of the Eurozone's Stability and Growth Pact at roughly the same time showed possible limitations on how far Germany might go with its "presumed Europeanized identity" (Hellmann 2009, p. 12) when their own economy was at stake. An additional example were Kohl's and Schröder's repeated advances for establishing a German UNSC seat instead of putting its whole political weight behind a permanent EU seat instead. Not only realists may consider such activities as a more traditional power politics move than a liberal/multilateral one. To deal with such kind of inconsistencies, e.g. Hellmann made an effort in bringing both camps closer together under a pragmatist approach. By introducing the *civil great power* concept, he suggested that normalisation of German foreign policy was

taking place in the sense that Germany had started to defend and protect its interests beyond its borders more assertively, but that civil power traits were still at the core of German interest in the first place (Hellmann 2002a).

As with most scholarly debates, the approaches presented above were used to make sense of Germany's policy decisions and, in part, to draw its future foreign policy trajectory. Despite of the more systemic nature of the debate and focus on NATO allies, the following pages are addressing the value of the normalisation vs continuity debate for making sense of Germany's bilateral approach to China.

2.1.2 The Limitation of the Debate to Study Germany's China Approach

Before considering the debate's value for this research project in more detail, it is helpful to take a step back to consider what constitutes foreign policy. Waltz (1959) introduced a comprehensive framework constituted by three areas, or *images*, to influence a state's foreign policy: systemic considerations, namely how the anarchical structure of the international system enables and limits individual states' actions (third image); the role of domestic attributes, processes, and stakeholders (second image); and the experiences, traits, and views of the states' key decision-makers (first image). Although acknowledging these layered images, Waltz's own work primarily focused on factors in the third image, the international system. This also holds true for the majority of grand theory debates, which drove the normalisation vs continuity debate, which have been instrumental in examining the structural parameters of the international system, and in setting different scopes of action for state-level and sub-state-level actors. The ubiquity of such structural considerations at the time has been of both conceptual and contextual relevance for addressing the decision-making process of key Germany-China actors.

Conceptually, policy decision-makers do not act in a void. As discussed further below in this chapter and the next, and is also analytically encapsulated in Chapter 5, the experiences and perceptions of individual actors matter. Theoretical views found in the – still ongoing – normalisation vs continuity debate have therefore not merely been theoretical constructs of interest to a handful of academics, but ideological perspectives that have shaped views, arguments, and decisions in Bonn,

Berlin, and beyond. As such, the debate, and in particular liberal and realist views on the international system, can be considered as reference points for interpreting actors' intentions when formulating Germany-China foreign policy.

Contextually, the views and decisions of German policy makers assessed throughout the thesis were influenced by the normalisation and continuity debate. The debate provided them with an indication of their policy options' applicability in the international context – and therefore played significant roles in influencing the decision-making process. This clearly does not only hold true for Germany's foreign policy in general terms but also for Germany's relations with China specifically. Therefore, it is sensible to relate the findings of this research to the normalisation vs continuity debate which is taking place throughout the thesis, and in Chapter 8 providing a verdict on its overall impact on the research questions at hand.

Schröder's, as well as Merkel's, focus on strengthening trade ties with China, for instance, could be seen as an underlying strategy to strengthen Germany's influence within Europe, establishing Germany as the leading regional power by normalisation supporters. Similarly, one may argue that regional power concerns were not high on the government's priority list at the time and that Germany was first and foremost eager to embed China through its increasing trade and political ties within the established Western-centric international system from a continuity perspective. Examples such as this one fundamentally reveal the inadequacy of the normalisation vs continuity debate to understand Germany's foreign policy decisions fully – both camps have repeatedly come up with responses that fit their own world views, not reaching consensus. However, such assessment can still offer valuable empirical insights into decision-making due to the prevalence of such concepts within policy circles. Still, the example also reveals the fundamental limitation of an exclusive emphasis on the third image lens when assessing the bilateral Germany-China trajectory. In other words, the objective of these grand-theory-based explanations is to offer explanations of foreign policy decisions and to advise on policy based on systemic considerations from their collective – and individual – points of view. However, less attention has been given to scrutinise the construction of the decision-making process, where systemic factors only play one part in policy formulation. By using Waltz' three images concept, it is clear that incorporating images two and one,

i.e. domestic and individual considerations, is essential for understanding the formulation process beyond an abstract structural assessment.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there have been significant advances within the grand theories to incorporate these two images, or *levels of analysis*, in their respective paradigms. Especially after the Cold War, neoclassical realism has still placed “primacy on the international system and relative material capabilities, but see these as filtered through the state” (Kaarbo 2015, p. 203) and thus considers policy being “made by human beings, political leaders and elites” (Wivel 2005, p. 361). “[D]omestic processes [...] (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces. [Hence,] states often react differently to similar systemic pressures and opportunities, and their response may be less motivated by systemic-level factors than domestic ones” (Schweller 2004, p. 164). However, the neoclassical realist approach still remains within the realist school. It thus prioritises materialist considerations (Wivel 2005) and a distinctive outside-in approach (Brummer and Oppermann 2019), both being the very essence of the realist paradigm – one which normalisation supporters cannot shed. To fully understand Germany’s approach and related internal developments towards China, a mix between material and idealist considerations is crucial to make sense of foreign policy traditions, individuals’ perceptions and experiences, and societal norms.

The fundamental German foreign policy cornerstones, covered in detail in the following chapter, are based on core liberal beliefs as evidenced by the continuity camp’s contributions and discussions of Maull’s civil power concept. As such, contextually, (neo-)liberalism serves as a popular framework to assess German policy decisions with. Additionally, “liberals pay more attention to domestic structures and individual differences than do realists” (Doyle 2012a, p. 59). Conceptually, it uses a bottom-up approach in a two-step process, putting major societal interests in the spotlight: first, by analysing the development of foreign policy as an aggregation of societal interests, and second, by assessing its position within a liberal international system (Brummer and Oppermann 2019).

While the first step of this process may offer some convincing insights in assessing the research question at hand, it is limited in scope and fails to provide the

needed flexibility for this research with its bottom-up approach. Governments are seen as mere “transmission belts for domestic interests” (Kaarbo 2015, p. 196; Brummer and Oppermann 2019) by assuming that societal interests of certain influence are becoming policy. However, governments are merely one part in constructing the decision-making process. It is thus necessary to look more closely at the interplay between the government and various domestic stakeholders, and not just to assume that the government and each of its individual members are simply executing society’s majority views and/by being rational actors. Liberal assumptions on other important aspects for this research are also challenged. For instance, the media’s influence on foreign policy formulation is not as straightforward as often assumed (Baum and Potter 2008), and sub-state structural factors with their domestic/institutional dynamics and leadership styles received little attention within the liberal paradigm (Kaarbo 2015).

To compensate the limitations of these structure-dominated approaches to study foreign policy, this research switches the focus to what has happened within the *black box* of a country’s policy process. Rather than taking Germany as a given decision-making actor, it deconstructs Germany’s actorness and scrutinises its construction of agency, which is in line with postpositivist views of constructivism.

As highlighted by constructivist’s appreciation of agency, concepts surrounding societal and ideational forces, e.g. incorporated in ideas, language, roles, norms, or identity, are also vital to an actor’s practice of agency – including decision-making processes. For instance, image research, such as used by Herrmann and Fischerkeller (1995), can help with assessing how key German actors maintained their positive self-images by their distinctive perceptions of – and distancing to – the non-democratic China. However, as is shown by this example, constructivists’ examinations of agency remain to focus on external/non-domestic factors, i.e. how agency is constructed due to structural changes. already shows how external, i.e. non-domestic, factors still matter a great deal within the constructivist paradigm. Actors, seen through these lenses, are therefore more reactive where aspects such as the constructions of their own internal characteristics like personality and worldviews are formed due to structural changes – by a response to externalities, and not by proactive action. Although constructivism puts emphasis on the

“sociological social psychological” (Wendt 1992, p. 394) and “attempt[s] to show that ideational factors could alter perceptions of power and system structure[,] much of this challenge came from scholars who still clung to the primacy of states as actors. [...] The theoretical mix simply changed to: states, power, system structure, and ideas” (Snyder et al. 2002, p. 3).

In other words, constructivists generally privilege structure over agency in their works¹¹, although for instance Katzenstein (1997) does discuss unit-level forms instead of macro structures. Still, Checkel pointed out that “constructivism lacks a theory of agency. As a result, it overemphasizes the role of social structures and norms at the expense of the agents who help create and change them in the first place” (Checkel 1998, p. 325). While advances in providing further space for agency have been made since the late 1990s, Flockhart summarised in 2012 that “constructivism has nothing substantial to say about who or what are the main actors, problems, or issues in international relations” (Flockhart 2012, p. 80). Furthermore, Kaarbo provided a substantive argument that constructivists largely assume “a single national identity or role that is shared between elites and masses” (Kaarbo 2015, p. 202) without addressing more agency-based sub-state level influences on such identities/views and the actual influence on foreign policy and their decision-makers. This is of particular relevance to Germany’s China relations, because general knowledge of – and interest in – China had been poor within German society and policy circles alike, as argued in Chapters 6 and 7. Without delving deeper into individual aspects of ideas and streams of influence within Germany, a structure-focused single-issue cause-and-effect approach provides limited value to explain Germany-China foreign policy realities as required by the posed research questions.

As a result, even with an emphasis of agency in mind, constructivism fails to fully deliver in this case and ends up with a remaining focus on systemic factors and an ambiguous conceptualisation of agency. Perhaps Wendt put it best when explaining (his) constructivism’s focus: “like Waltz, I am interested in international politics, not foreign policy” (Wendt 1999, p. 11).

¹¹ See Checkel (1998); Houghton (2007).

Overall, it has become clear that the normalisation vs continuity debate prioritises the discussion of Germany as an international actor within the international system. Although efforts were made in addressing sub-state level considerations and the foreign policy decision-making process to an extent within both camps and recent developments of their underlying schools of thought, the debate's key approaches have been falling short in providing comprehensive and convincing answers to the research questions on how and why key German policy actors chose to push their relations with China forward. They may very well help to explain long-term trends and, as pointed out above, its influence on actors within the wider German foreign policy sector is undeniable. However, some key considerations for this thesis, for instance the role of China knowledge, or the level of interest in China, is difficult to assess with an approach aimed at explaining systemic patterns, considering states being a *black box* (Hudson 2012).

Instead, a foreign policy approach which is “ontologically oriented towards explaining discrete behaviours” (Kaarbo 2015, p. 194) which turns the focus onto agency itself to deconstruct and make sense of the decision-making process rather than merely its end result, is required. This thesis makes therefore use of foreign policy analysis, the *middle-range* theory that “mediates between grand principles and the complexity of reality” (Hudson 2012, p. 16). With its toolbox-style approach, the thesis adopts FPA as the core analytical framework to assess specific elements of the foreign policy decision-making process and involved key actors and decision-makers within the Germany-China realm. The following pages provide a discussion about FPA as an approach before presenting the operationalisation of FPA as well as further methodological considerations.

2.2 Foreign Policy Analysis

Recalling the core research puzzle, the goal of this work is to identify, examine, and evaluate the existence and the key determinants of Germany's strategies towards China throughout the given time period. This requires the deconstruction of Germany's national agency, i.e. rather than assessing Germany as a unitary actor, this research assesses Germany's actions towards China through the sub-state level lens of the foreign policy decision-making process. Therefore, instead of adopting a

deductive perspective to search for explanations to rationalise decision end-results, key actors and factors that have led to the formation of decisions were identified inductively and represent core elements of interest for this research. In other words, this thesis does not present a comprehensive mapping process tracking Germany's China foreign policy decisions; it instead identifies the role of decision makers in having opted for certain policies and policy trajectory trends – and how and why they were chosen over others. It deconstructs Germany's actorness and examines the construction of its decision-making agency.

With its focus on decision-making, “[t]he single most important contribution of FPA to IR theory is to identify the point of theoretical intersection between the most important determinants of state behaviour: material and ideational factors” (Hudson and Day 2020, p. 7). Foreign policy analysis therefore offers a logical and feasible analytical framework to match the core objective of this thesis to examine the evolution of Germany's foreign policy decision-making agency towards China. The emergence of FPA can be dated back to as early as the 1950s. Although heavily influenced by the then dominant grand theory, realism (Clarke and White 1989), early FPA pioneers shifted their attention away from the mainstream structure-focused narratives to exploring a more agent-, or actor-focused, approach¹². From the view of FPA scholars, grand theories' over-accentuation of external factors, structure, is not sufficient to understanding a state's foreign policy, and internal factors that occur within a state should also be taken into consideration (Hill 2003).

As such, “to recognize that foreign policy is shaped by internal as well as external factors is not to comprehend how the two intermix or to indicate the conditions under which one predominates over the other” (Rosenau 1966, p. 98). Instead, the formation and evolution of foreign policy depends on decision makers who “are viewed as operating in a dual-aspect setting so that apparently unrelated internal and external factors become related in the actions of the decision-makers” (Snyder et al. 1954, p. 53).

¹² Houghton noted that the early works of Robert Jervis and Graham Allison were “amendments to realism [that] have evidently mounted to the point where the original edifice is imploding; FPA arguably runs against the whole thrust of realism, both in its classical and structural versions” Houghton (2007, p. 25). For further information, also see Ripley (1993).

The core aspects of FPA are therefore “decision-making, the individual decision makers, processes and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions” (Alden and Aran 2016, p. 3), which, by definition, are not only *multi-factorial* but also *multi-level* (Hudson and Day 2020). Adopting the levels of analysis framework inspired by Waltz’s work, in contrast to the grand theories’ focus on Waltz’s third image (international system), FPA instead turns to variables in the first (individual level) and second (domestic level) images (Morin and Paquin 2018).

This focus on the decision-making procedure and consideration of non-material factors are direct rejections to the rigid emphasis of the notion of state-level actors and material factors by the classic grand theories of realism and liberalism who have “ignore[d] the question of agency altogether, as if in embarrassment, concentrating their attention on structures – power balances for neo-realists, [and] international regimes for liberals” (Hill 2003, p. 3). In practice, the interaction of agency and structures “is a dynamic process, leading to the constant evolution of both” (ibid).

Hence, this research aligns itself with constructivists in sharing the view that an *actor* is a social construction and should be judged by its ability to exert agency. Beyond external structural factors it also acknowledges the role of ideational factors as vital components affecting agency. For instance, as indicated in the title and the core argument of this thesis, trust and ignorance have played a key role in shaping Germany’s strategy towards China.

However, unlike constructivists that still emphasize the power of (societal) systemic structure, this research is more in line with FPA’s agent-oriented and actor-specific approach (George 1994). It is important to note that many constructivists’ works such as Wendt’s also claim to have an actor-focused angle, highlighting the determinant power of an agent’s ideational characteristics. In contrast to constructivists’ overly-broad acknowledgement of agents’ roles in international politics, however, FPA’s agent approach is actor-specific, advocating the fundamental role of the actor’s agency in determining the results of any cooperative practices of collectives (Wight 2006, p. 128). As Hill nicely concluded, the “genuine

dilemma over what foreign policy includes has led some to assume that its content is now minimal, and that agency lies elsewhere, with transnational enterprises of various kinds. It has led others to ignore the question of agency altogether, as if in embarrassment, concentrating their attention on structures – power balances for neo-realists, international regimes for liberals, and markets for the gurus of globalisation.” (Hill 2003, p. 3). Therefore, unlike constructivists that believe actors are defined by their ability to exert agency, to FPA scholars, actors and agency should be treated separately. While actors are socially constructed, agency of an actor, regardless of the actor’s size and type, is fundamentally human-centric/decision-maker-centric.

This is particularly the case for foreign policy making (Hudson and Day 2020). In the context of this research, the goal is to understand how Germany as a unified actor acted towards China. As mentioned above, this requires the deconstruction of unified state actorness to unveil factors, which are also actors on their own due to their agency ability, at the sub-state level and to assess how they have affected Germany’s overall approaches throughout the chosen period.

In the case of Germany’s decisions on China, it quickly became clear that both Schröder and Merkel, including the *structure* of the Chancellery, were not simply executing the ‘unitary interest of the state’, but crucially influenced the relations based on their own convictions. That said, political leaders usually cannot act in a free space but “are surrounded by advisers and a bureaucracy, influenced by domestic constituencies, and dependent on the power their state can project in the international arena” (Breuning 2007, p. 6). This also holds true for the case of Germany and China, which once more validates that an agency-focused sub-state analysis revolving around decision makers is mandatory to address the research questions at hand. After all, “a compelling explanation [of foreign policy] cannot treat the decider exogenously (Hermann and Kegley 1995, p. 4).

It is further important to note that, especially since the Cold War and as mentioned before, traditional grand theories showed increasing attention to sub-national level factors and agents, for instance with structural realism scholar Mearsheimer’s rational actor model (Mearsheimer 2009) and neo-liberalist scholar

Putnam's two-level game theory (Putnam 1988). However, these grand-theory variants are still limited in nature. Despite their broadened consideration of actors' agency, these later developments are restricted by their predetermined respective worldviews: agents and actors in the eyes of neo-realists remain believing in the "zero-sum" game that actors ultimately fight over for maximizing their power. Even though Putnam's two-level game has been seen as a push for the advancement of FPA (Hudson 2012), it still strongly adheres to the neo-liberalist tradition. Therefore, they have never escaped from their narrow positivist paradigm and continue to adopt a set vision to explain results and motivation of actions just as how it is shown in the normalisation and continuity debate. These predetermined views might be able to offer insightful explanations to decisions but need to be treated for what they are, i.e. views deeply embedded within their paradigms. This makes them unsuitable to capture linkages beyond their realm of worldviews.

Therefore, whether it is a constructivist angle or contemporary developments of the classic IR theories, these versions of actor-focused or agent-considered analyses are limited to various degrees to address the questions at hand (Hill 2003). This research's aim is to understand not only *how* but also *why* Germany's China strategy evolved. Neither grand theory manages to compete with FPA to offer the required focus on decision makers and also provide the ideological freedom to observe and analyse Germany's foreign policy approaches without an existing surrounding paradigm.

It is unfortunate to see how FPA has been alienated by major international relations theories throughout its development. Even during the post-Cold War era when the study of IR theories had been generally heading towards a similar sub-state path (Kaarbo et al. 2012), FPA, as an early pioneer at this front, had not been given appropriate recognition and is often completely ignored by international relations scholars (see e.g. Brummer and Hudson 2015; Hudson and Day 2020).

Although FPA has carved out a niche in German academic debates, this still largely holds true for it as well. The contemporary discussion of theoretical developments of FPA within German academic circles has been very "rudimentary" according to Brummer (2019, p. 4) while the grand theories kept dominating the

field from 1998 to 2017. However, a slow generational shift (Harnisch 2003) had been taking place in the international relations community since the end of the Cold War, which had also opened up the door for usage and theoretical development of FPA beyond US borders. In Germany, FPA had already been used by historians in the late 1960s. Contemporary approaches found some recognition in the 2014 work of Hellmann, Wagner, and Baumann (2014) which provides a comprehensive introduction to German foreign policy covering different theoretical approaches. Brummer and Oppermann (2019), who published their dedicated work on FPA in 2019 after having identified a major gap in the German literature, highlighted a couple additional publications which, at least in part, covered FPA tools, for instance Wilhelm's systematic introduction to foreign policy foundations and processes which includes a range of FPA tools such as the bureaucratic politics model (Wilhelm 2006), and Colschen's book introducing German foreign policy from 2010 (Colschen 2010, in: Brummer and Oppermann 2019).

One major reason for the relative lack of FPA in the field of contemporary international relations has been the continued criticism of FPA's theoretical and methodological capabilities and the related debate in/since the 1980s. Among other aspects, questions had been raised about how to challenge the feasibility of FPA's ability to achieve acquiring and measuring qualitative-natured factors such as actors' emotions and personalities – in particular on senior decision makers in non-transparent and exclusive settings (Hudson and Day 2020). This is a sensible concern not only in theory but also in a conceptual sense for this research. Its core analysis revolves around the discussion of the key factors at various levels that had significantly affected core German decision makers' approaches towards China; hence, this problem is discussed in more detail in the methodology section below. Certainly, no person can fully understand one another, and the idea of acquiring the full spectrum of any decision-makers thoughts on a given issue is fatuous. Furthermore, it is inevitable to avoid subjective biases in the interpretation of data.

However, although these concerns exist and are sensible in terms of research designs as well as practical considerations, it is crucial to note that these concerns are not limited to a discussion of FPA and should be treated as wider methodological considerations. Similar problems arise within the grand IR theories.

For instance, realists might conclude Germany's increased trade volume with China aimed at enhancing its regional relative power and influence within Europe, while liberalists could have interpreted the numbers as a validation for the existence of a global liberal order.

Moreover, none of the grand theorists can be certain to have access to a 'complete data set'. There is no standard in realism to determine how much data is needed to prove if an actor is driven by rationality and self-interests. Plus, is it feasible to criticise FPA on its agent-oriented qualitative data foundation by realists when their own measurement of rationality and self-interest remains ambiguous? Similar questions can be raised towards liberals (relevance of institutions) and constructivists (how to measure ideational factors?). This path leads down to a (comparative) debate on methodologies which goes far beyond the scope of this thesis. However, while mileage varies in addressing these issues, FPA appears to have received the most criticism in comparison. Yet, not fully dissimilar to constructivism, FPA has by definition been open to interdisciplinary collaboration and solutions, and has made frequent usage of established methodological approaches and models of other disciplines, e.g. psychology. In short, FPA does generally rely on actor-specific and agency-focused qualitative data more so than the major international relations theories, but rejecting FPA for it to provide valuable insights into a governments' foreign policy decision-making process, is simply nonsensical.

Given the reasons above, FPA provides value by offering a more flexible approach to examine foreign policy with a focus on actors' agency. Although challenges in data acquisition and interpretation exist, offering a *subjective* view should not be regarded as a disadvantage. Rather, qualitative analyses drawn on the available data do offer by definition subjective views. This enriches academic debates by offering different perspectives on similar data, (ideally) leading to a better understanding of the subject matter. With this in mind, the goal of this project is to contribute a new perspective for scrutinising Germany's China strategy – which, by definition, is subjective. Yet, compared to other grand theories, FPA can also offer the relatively best objective framework to evaluate and conceptualize German foreign policy by not having to rely on overly limiting pre-existing

worldviews and actor definitions. FPA simply focuses on assessing decision-making factors' agency on multiple levels, and the influences affecting them. As such, FPA offers the ideal analytical framework to evaluate this thesis' research questions.

2.3 Analytical Framework

To recap, the primary contribution of this thesis is to add an FPA-fuelled agency-driven assessment of Germany's foreign policy development trajectory towards China to German foreign policy debates. Such contribution then extends into related fields, from German policy analysis debates to EU-China ones. Germany is in this thesis regarded as the core decision maker of interest, embedded in the discussion of its state actorness, and through the lens of FPA. In other words, the thesis examines how Germany's state actorness was constructed through its practice of sub-state level decision-making agency from 1998 to 2017. To assess the underlying research questions of this thesis, i.e. how Germany piloted its relationship with China, Germany's state actorness is deconstructed, scrutinising factors affecting the construction of its state actorness.

Before going into more details on how FPA is used to structure analysis in this piece, it is also important to have a quick note on the different strands of theory so to better understand where this research situates in the FPA school of thoughts. Within the broader theoretical framework of constructivism that this research aligns itself with, FPA is largely divided into two major strands: North American and European. Given FPA's American origin, the North American strand is frequently referred to as 'conventional', or 'standard'. This strand is dominated by a positivist approach that primarily focuses on top-down deductive analysis and identifying causal relationships among "actors, norms, interest, and identities" (Smith et al. 2017, p. 72). The European strand is instead more interested in the construction of these concepts such as norms and interest, adopting a more inductive measure. In the context to study decision making process, the American strand therefore focuses more on how factors at various level affect actor of interest's courses of action. The European strand on the other hand investigates how changes in these factors occurred at the first place.

The scope of this discussion on strands is to serve the purpose to better situate this research, acknowledging the differences instead of providing a lengthy analysis thereof. Hence, to better understand the construction of Germany's agency in decision-making regarding China, this research goes beyond searching for a causal relationship between factors at various level and Germany's actorness as the American strand proposes. Additionally, it is also interested in how these factors are constructed. For example, in the more in-depth analysis at the individual level in Chapter 5, Chancellors Schröder and Merkel were identified as key factors at this level who had played vital roles in influencing Germany's foreign policy making and decisions with China. However, acknowledging Schröder and Merkel's views on China is only one aspect. Rather than treating their views as given, the analysis digs deeper to examine how these views were constructed. Further explained below, this is a part of the major reason that research combines the FPA framework with thematic lenses. The lenses are used to further deconstruct and make sense of the qualities possessed by factors at these levels.

However, this research project does not only assess how factors at these levels affected Germany's construction of agency in decision-making. Rather than treating these factors as given concepts, the development of the identified factors that affected their ability to influence Germany's actorness and agency in the context of the country's bilateral relationship with China also matters. This is therefore a post-positivist assessment in line with the European approach. With regard to specific tools that might be of interest to analyse factors at each level, this is covered in more detail in the later part of Chapter 3 where the analytical levels are further explained.

To combine the discussions above, making use of FPA's structural framework, the core analytical part of the thesis structure was developed with a focus on three major levels: the individual, the bureaucratic, and the societal. The content of Chapters five to seven largely adheres to Hudson and Day's (2020) proposed framework. However, in addition, the chapters further include economic interest, ignorance, and trust as the three key themes to evaluate how factors at these levels had affected Germany's overall decision-making agency.

With FPA focusing on examining the agency of decision-makers, the crucial first step to undertake is to identify factors that construct and influence Germany's

decision-making actorness in context of Germany's China relations. In order to achieve this, it is essential to first sort out the relevant stakeholders based on policy processes and traditions, and to understand Germany's foreign policy decision-making process. The next chapter therefore begins with clarifying this process in the context of Germany's relationship with China. Furthermore, Chapter 3 introduces the three themes of economic interest, ignorance, and trust which are used to analyse the decision-making process and to link the development of factors at the respective levels to Germany's practice of agency.

Considering the *sui generis* nature of the EU and Germany's role in it, the following chapter also provides an assessment of the implications of the EU's supranational status for Germany's actorness and agency, and further asserts the decision of this research to focus on an agency-oriented approach within Germany. Based on this, Chapter 4 further provides a historical and contextual literature foundation as well as an overview about the economic side of the relations for the discussion of key developments between Germany and China from 1998 to 2017.

Based on the findings of these foundational chapters, Chapters 5 to 7 are structured by the chosen *levels of analysis* structure, focusing on the individual level (Chapter 4), the bureaucratic level (Chapter 5), and the societal level (Chapter 6). They assess major specific factors at the three levels and how they had impacted Germany's decision-making process regarding China. It is important to note, though, that "decisions entail action, inaction, and even indecision" (Hudson and Day 2020, p. 8) and that the chapters focus on the impact of the identified factors, who/which are also actors within their respective boundaries, on the key decision-making actorness of Germany. Figure 2.1 below presents the overall analytical roadmap for this research

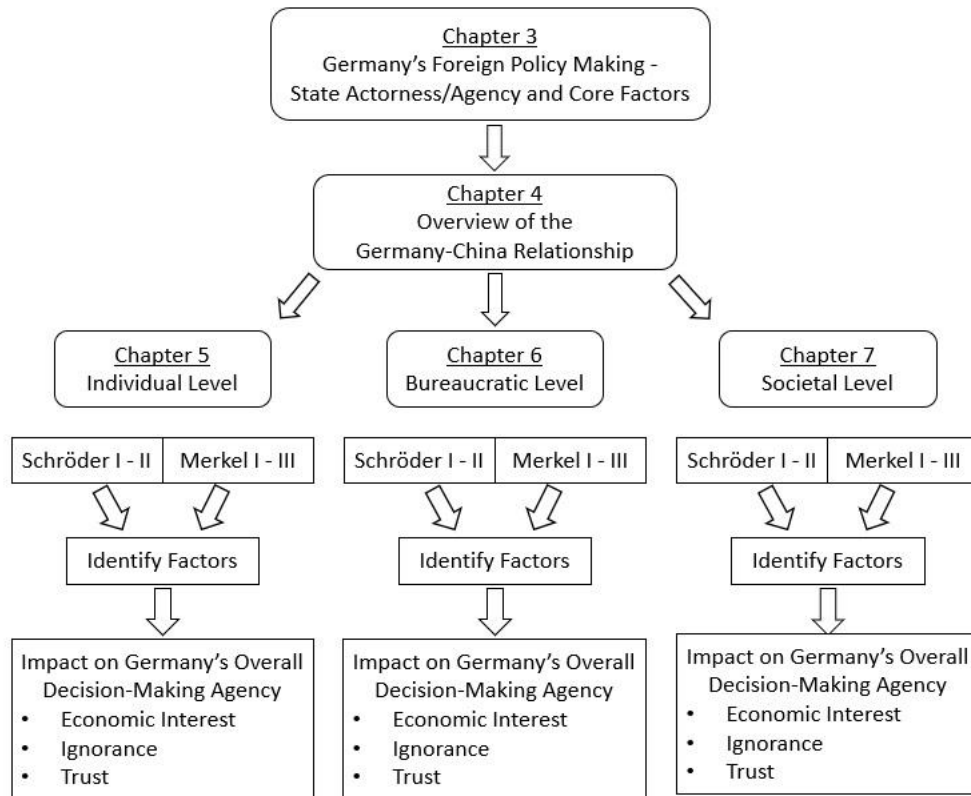


Figure 2: Structure of Chapters 3 to 7

Source: own illustration

With FPA being a *toolbox*, there is much flexibility on employing its *tools* and to choose research subjects and objects. This makes it easy to lose focus on the chosen core considerations. As such, the selection of factors has been based on their relevance for the decision-making process based on the existing research. For example, wider political stakeholders such as civil society organisations will only be discussed where imminently relevant for the foreign policy decision-making process – even if they otherwise may have had an impact on the Germany-China trajectory. Chapter 5 therefore prioritises the two Chancellors, Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel for its assessment. Some additional individuals, primarily business representatives and politicians were included, but their effective influence on the process remains far more difficult to quantify. Chapter 6 on the bureaucratic level, includes major factors of the executive and legislative branches, and, for this thesis, also includes the role of major business associations directly linked with policy makers (APA and BDI). Although they could also have been discussed in Chapter 7, their close proximity to the Chancellery and relevant ministries made it feasible to

include them in the (bureaucratic) structural assessment found in the chapter. Chapter 7 then provides an overview of the role of public opinion and selected policy advocates/actors in the wider political sector, and assesses their role and impact on German actorness. Each chapter provides its own thematic assessment on economic interest, ignorance, and trust – the discovered overarching themes for explaining policy developments which are introduced in the following chapter.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Research Approach

The FPA-adaptation used in this research project requires a range of sources and types of data to develop meaningful insights within the three analytical levels/chapters. Before going into more detail about sources in the next section, it is important to clarify underlying methodological considerations. In general, the data collected has been assessed and interpreted by empirical qualitative (and, where appropriate, quantitative) standards which, in part, depend on the *tools* used at each respective level within the FPA framework. Each core analysis chapters (individual, bureaucratic, societal) is largely structured chronologically, with the three identified key themes (economic interest, ignorance, and trust) embedded in the discussion.

The long time frame, from 1998 to 2017, covers both Schröder administrations and the first three Merkel administrations. This offers the chance to trace developments within, and changes between, Schröder's and Merkel's reigns. However, the sheer scope of the time frame – and thesis – makes it mandatory to selectively choose key events and developments to address, instead of providing a complete mapping process. To illustrate this, the assessment includes analyses of all coalition agreements for the five terms and selected (parts of) speeches by German MPs, but it does not provide a complete discourse analysis of all China-related official parliamentary documents and speeches. While it had been a consideration to conduct such qualitative analysis with NVivo, the large number of documents (59,901), of which many included the terms 'China' or 'Chinese' (*chinesisch*,

chinesische) as part of wider international activities/reports¹³, and not in direct relation to bilateral considerations, made such analysis with its relatively minor effect on finding answers to the research questions impractical.

The nature of empirical qualitative research demands some form of source/fact checking. Wherever possible, this was done with a triangulation approach in mind to increase internal validity for this difficult setting (Bryman 2016). After all, measuring influence and cause-and-effect linkages of decision-making processes and the roles of individual actors is difficult. FPA offers a feasible qualitative framework to assess this by using a number of tools within its levels of analysis to estimate the relationship's key determinants and aspects on affecting decision-making procedures related to the research questions. Using multiple types of sources, e.g. by combining primary and secondary data, further strengthens the data pool and subsequent assessment. The elite interviews which were conducted as part of this research have been important to provide confirmation (or dissenting views) as well as context to the otherwise document- and literature-heavy analysis. While it is still difficult and problematic to *measure* influence and impact within (somewhat blurry and largely access-restricted) decision-making processes, the goal of this project was to discover and verify major concepts and trends of Germany-China relations by assessing the key decision-makers and concepts of relevance. This helped to better understand the policy actions and debates within German governments and their surrounding political influence spheres, i.e. how policies were formulated and which actors influenced the decision-making process as factors.

As explained in more detail in the next chapter, existing literature on Germany-China relations was limited. On the one hand, existing literature has usually been context-specific and not comprehensively related to the political development of the relations, but focuses on historic, cultural, economic, or political event-based issues. There is a shortage of literature providing a more comprehensive analysis as this

¹³ Often, these key words would be found in progress reports on international activities. For instance, if a UNSC activity is reported on or discussed, 'China' would usually be mentioned at some point – similar to the other UNSC member countries. Such mentions, however, would seldom have direct relevance for the German bilateral relations with China.

thesis is designed to achieve. On the other hand, although some of the debates included the discussion of factors within Germany and their impact on the bilateral relationship, the focus remained on the bilateral perspective and not on a German angle to examine Germany's practice of agency. Certainly, these two perspectives do overlap to varying degrees, but there exists a (sometimes not so) subtle difference: while the bilateral perspective highlights on the development of the relationship, the latter one focuses on Germany and its actorness itself. Therefore, although a limited range of publications on contemporary Germany-China relations exist, there has been a clear lack of literature scrutinising Germany's decision-making process from the perspective of a strategic actor. This research helps filling the existing gap.

To do so, the main analytical sections use the three identified themes of economic interest, ignorance, and trust as guides and to *classify* the findings¹⁴. As already discussed in the introductory chapter, the use of these themes provides an essential part of the contribution to the German foreign policy as well as Germany-China debates by shifting the focus away from structural concerns as found in most of the prevalent literature, and towards domestic policy makers and their actions and perceptions, albeit within structural constraints. In short, while FPA with its ontological appreciation of agency is used to deconstruct Germany's decision-making actorness and agency, the three themes are introduced to make sense of the developments at each level of analysis and their implication for Germany's overall decision-making practice.

2.4.2 Data Acquisition

Chapters 2, 3 and 4, i.e. the discussions of the chosen analytical framework, German foreign policy debates including its historic and economic relations with China, and German foreign policy traditions and stakeholders, largely rely on academic literature (and statistical data) and are quite straightforward from a methodological perspective. The main analytical chapters (5, 6, and 7) rely less on existing academic literature given the identified limitation in existing works as mentioned above. In addition to academic sources, these key analytical chapters rely

¹⁴ Further discussed in Chapter 3.5.

on a wide range of official documents, pieces by think tanks and policy advocates, media sources, and interviews for tracking processes and stakeholder activities. Chapter 6 includes a range of survey data to complement the qualitative data collected from the literature and interviews for drawing conclusions on aspects such as societal perceptions.

Whenever the sources are in German, and no English version exists, direct quotes were translated into English, having made an effort to convey the original German meaning as closely as possible. This also holds true for paraphrased content. Factual information was either taken from official government publications or leading German or international publishers. Opinion pieces by *experts in their field*, e.g. long-term correspondents, were also used where appropriate, to add depth to the existing analysis. Overall, every effort was made to provide an authentic and balanced view and to limit subjective biases when selecting one source over the other.

Naturally, documents used throughout the thesis may suffer from a range of biases and/or errors (Burnham 2008) and therefore have been triangulated wherever possible as explained in the previous section. The standard approach has been to verify important secondary literature data by, ideally multiple, interviewees. Still, the research aims at taking, in particular institutional, biases into account to better understand the role of relevant stakeholders. For instance, Chapter 7 examines the societal level and offers insights on the role of German media in shaping China perceptions within society (and, directly and indirectly, among policy makers). Some of the important policy circle stakeholders were also scrutinised, e.g. the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS). Further examples include the three survey studies funded by Chinese technology giant Huawei Technologies, addressing China perceptions during Merkel's second and third terms in Germany. Their findings add an important triangulation component to the understanding of China policy in Germany – yet, funding implications for the validity of the data need to be addressed (which is found together with the main assessment in Chapter 7). Apart from institutional biases, personal bias further complicated the research, both in terms of interviewee biases and biases of authors, and ultimately also of the researcher. Triangulation once again helped to limit and partially mitigate the issue.

Still, this thesis remains being a subjective contribution to the debate, and based on its empirical qualitative analytical framework, it is not possible to be objective in an absolute sense.

Most of the provided economic data was taken from the Bundesbank, Destatis, Eurostat, and the WTO. The economic data selection aimed at having the most relevant data used for the specific purpose, e.g. Bundesbank data was used for shedding light onto Chinese investments in Germany, while Eurostat data was used to inform the reader on trade values between major European countries and China. However, it is worth to note that the Germany-China trade and investment statistics published by different institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, vary in size and can in certain cases differ vastly. Furthermore, trade data is always difficult to calculate due to various factors including what has become known as the Rotterdam Effect: “Official statistics follow agreed conventions. [...] For international trade, the convention is that the first country of unloading, for exports, or the last country of loading, for imports, is considered the trading partner” (Williams 2011, p. 1). While the data used therefore may not be fully accurate, it is still able to give a good indication and representation of the general trends and comparative relevance.

Elite interviews largely serve a complementary purpose. Their role was to verify existing information or to identify/discover new considerations or influences on the overall construction of Germany’s decision-making agency. Chosen interviewees all worked on or within Germany-China relations, Germany-China business endeavours, or German foreign policy decision-making processes. They held positions within academia, government/parliament (federal and/or regional), think tanks, journalism, businesses and business associations, or otherwise related civil society organisations. In-person interviews were largely conducted during research visits to Germany in 2015/16 and Greater China in 2017 and accompanied by phone and videoconferencing interviews from 2015 to 2020. Most interviews followed a semi-structured format, although some followed a largely unstructured format and were largely held in the spirit of what Dexter (2006) described as *elite*, or *specialized, interviewing*, giving well-informed interviewees more freedom to express their views. Due to the interviews’ complementary and triangular nature, the

effect of a range of biases associated with elite interviews¹⁵ has been limited. When it was suspected that interviewees would withhold information or paint a particularly rosy picture of a certain action, alternative views were also presented (not only including personally held interviews but also in terms of publicly available interview transcripts).

Access to Germany-China insiders proved to be difficult overall – in part due to the decision to undertake this research project in the UK. Interviewees were found through personal relationships/referrals, supervisory/departmental guidance, and cold calling/emailing. The latter had mixed success: while stakeholders within the wider policy arena such as think tanks and business associations were generally more responsive to interview requests, in particular politicians and their staff remained elusive without – and often despite of – referrals. As such, interview success with politicians remained lopsided on the political spectrum. This is unfortunate, as more, and more balanced, interviews with German politicians would have improved reliability and added further richness to the argument, possibly offering undiscovered strands of policy reasoning. However, this does not discredit this project’s validity, academic contribution, or impact on the policy discourse, and is no major concern for two reasons. First, it is impossible to achieve a truly representative view on the topic by relying solely on interviews. Second, as pointed out above, the interviews’ complementary nature provided additional and/or further insights in the policy-making process despite a politically uneven group of (elite) interviewees¹⁶. As such, even limited representation of all the existing views still adds value as part of a triangulated research design (Burnham 2008) and is able to complement the existing structure-dominated academic debates on Germany-China relations. As imperfect as it is, this thesis therefore serves as a foundation for future work in the field – by the author as much as other researchers.

¹⁵ Cf. Bryman (2016); Mielke (2010).

¹⁶ Due to the potentially sensitive nature of political policy-making and the interviewees’ roles in the increasingly politicised Germany-China relations, their names were replaced by a random number and clearly identifiable characteristics were not included. Instead, whenever meaningful, interviewees were referred to by their generic affiliation or expertise (by virtue of their position).

That said, one of the lessons learned from this research experience is to develop closer ties to the local/specialist academic community during future research projects to make use of their experience, networks, and resources¹⁷.

2.4.3 Further Considerations

As the goal of this research is to deconstruct Germany's state actorness and to understand its practice of agency with an agency-driven approach, it treats factors at the international sphere, incorporated in Waltz' third image, as external factors – which are excluded from the analysis. It is undeniable that the international system, the EU, the WTO, close German allies such as the United States, US-China tensions, and many other international considerations have played a role in shaping Germany-China relations. Indeed, international events certainly have an impact on decision-makers, how they evaluate their options, and how policy formulation processes in a wider sense are executed. Such relevance is also generally acknowledged within FPA frameworks. However, given the existing limitations of this research and to narrow down its the scope and focus, these external 'beyond the border' variables are taken out of consideration. Moreover, this thesis prioritises an inside-out approach which examines internal factors within Germany, hence an outside-in approach does not fit the chosen conceptual framework. Such an outside-in assessment of Germany's relations with China very well deserves its own research project, though.

There are, however, two notable exceptions to the above. The first is perhaps the most obvious: the thesis would not be complete without acknowledging the EU's role in German foreign policy and with regard to Germany's China policies in particular. As such, the next chapter touches on the topic as part of the German foreign policy literature review in context of a review of its global actorness. However, the purpose of including the discussion of the EU is to highlight and remind the reader of the importance of Germany's autonomy in its foreign policy

¹⁷ This also, and in particular, includes limited access to German academic literature and informal discourses. Closer interaction with German academics would have helped alleviating this, perhaps in form of a temporary research visit or continued research group cooperation.

decision-making – while still acknowledging its key policy decision-makers dedication to the European project.

The second notable exception was the German government’s perception and policy shift on China following Chinese investment in Germany’s robotics company KUKA in 2016, appropriately summarised as “German angst over Chinese M&A” (Chazan 2016, p. 1). Germany’s closest non-European ally, the United States, played a key role in the following policy shift as is discussed in Chapters 4 and 7. Although technically an external factor, given the complex nature of Germany-United States relations and the number of senior transatlanticist decision-makers in German policy circles it is appropriate to address German actors’ sentiments towards US criticism of China for this particular development.

In conclusion, the mentioning of structural factors in this chapter relates to examining Germany’s agency. The goal is to study Germany’s responses on how agency was constructed with regard to China. The object of this research is therefore not to measure the degree to which Germany’s agency had shaped its relationship with China in general, but to specifically examine how Germany’s use of its agency constructed Germany’s actorness as a global decision maker. The analytical focus therefore remains on Germany and its actorness in context of the bilateral relations.

Chapter 3: An Overview of Germany's Foreign Policy Making

To make sense of how Germany's foreign decision-making agency had been constructed in the context of China apart from conceptual approaches, it should be reviewed within the country's broader foreign policy objectives. This chapter therefore provides an overview of Germany's foreign policy trajectory to understand more about its actorness as a foreign policy decision maker. Using one of the broader and practical definitions, *foreign policy* is for this research defined as "general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019).

This chapter begins with presenting an overview on Germany's foreign policy trajectory pre- and post-reunification, linking back to the normalisation vs continuity debate addressed in the previous chapter. The focus resides on how these broader foreign policy considerations played a role in affecting Germany's actorness at the global stage. To once again clarify, with FPA's focus on decision makers, the decision maker of interest for this research is Germany, i.e. Germany as a decision-maker actor. The adoption of FPA's levels of analysis structure is to identify and examine how factors at various levels had played a role in constructing Germany's practice of agency. Sharing a similar view of the social construction of actorness through agency with constructivism, factors at these levels can also be regarded as 'actors' themselves due to their ability to exert agency. However, this thesis solely acknowledges them as factors shaping the construction of Germany's actorness and direct its agency. Before identifying the key factors for developing German foreign policy in general, and with regard to China in particular, it highlights the implication of being a member state of the *sui generis* European Union onto Germany's foreign policy making agency, which Germany possesses for developing and executing its own foreign policies within the supranational EU structure.

Making use of this contextual overview, the chapter then pinpoints the key factors influencing German China policies on Germany's three chosen FPA levels of analysis: the individual level, the domestic/bureaucratic level, and the societal level. The chapter concludes with the identification and conceptualisation of the three themes, economic interest, ignorance, and trust, and highlights their importance for understanding Germany-China policy developments under Schröder and Merkel. These three identified themes are then incorporated in the core analytical chapters (5, 6, and 7) to scrutinise the impact of factors at their respective levels for shaping Germany's policy towards China.

3.1 German Actorness in the Post-War Era

Studying Germany as a decision maker through the lens of FPA, the core of this thesis examines the agency of its state actorness, i.e. how Germany, as an actor, practices its agency of decision-making regarding China. Before such assessment, however, an exploration of Germany's actorness in the post-war era and in particular during the reconciliation phase is required to understand Germany's historic foreign policy trajectory and principles.

With the end of World War II and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany ('Germany'), the country's foreign policy was very much determined by the United States for the decades to come (Haftendorn 1978; Hilz 2009). The small foreign policy scope German diplomats were granted in the early days was used to emphasise and strengthen the country's Western bonds, particularly with the US, and the beginning of the reconciliation phase with France. This increasing integration into the Western alliance led to a deterioration in the relations with Soviet states which SPD's Willy Brandt and his chief of staff Egon Bahr ought to reverse when Brandt became Chancellor in 1969. With Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, or *change through rapprochement*, approach, the Chancellor established a more cooperative stance towards Central and Eastern European countries. Instead of fuelling distance and separation, the federal government in Bonn at the time intended to improve communication and relations with East Germany, harmonising the relations. This included the recognition of East Germany's legitimacy as well as the legitimacy of other Soviet countries (Kronenberg 2009). It is worth to note for

this project that Brandt's approach was strongly criticised by the CSU, CDU's minority partner in the *Union*, and their then Chairman Franz Joseph Strauss who "felt that the Soviet Union had to be dealt with from a position of strength, one element of which should be close relations between the FRG and [China]" (Garver 2016, p. 341) to increase Chinese pressure on Moscow. Brandt prevailed in rejecting such confrontational foreign policy approach and his successors kept following Brandt's *détente* directive which aimed at intensifying what Werner Link called "Western bond + Eastern ties" ("*Westbindung + Ostverbindungen*", see Kronenberg 2009, p. 28). The underlying idea was for Germany to remain fully embedded in the Western alliance while also fostering good communication and, wherever possible, cooperation with members of the Warsaw Pact. The overarching goal of this doctrine was the reunification between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Democratic Republic of Germany – which took place 1990.

With re-unification, Germany became a leading continental European power with global political and economic weight practically overnight. Yet, most German politicians did not consider diverting from its foreign policy principles established prior to and during the Cold War (Bredow 2008; Watzal 2000). Germany was ought to remain a middle power deeply integrated into the European project and able to generate wealth in a secure environment without being dragged into major global conflicts. To ease surrounding countries' fears of Germany re-emerging as a major regional power and to strongly re-affirm Germany's position of a 'non-aggressor' in the international community as discussed in the previous chapter, European integration processes were quickly intensified under Chancellor Kohl (Schöllgen 2000; Wilhelm 2006). However, the changing dynamics in global politics due to the fall of the Soviet Union increased pressure on Germany to participate in military operations to secure or manage peace beyond its borders (Bredow 2008). German politicians hesitated, were indecisive, and German involvement in international conflicts during the 1990s were soon to be labelled *chequebook diplomacy* (ibid). Germany thus participated by funding military operations but not actively taking part (prior to the Kosovo crisis).

One of the major issues for the German government was to figure out how to deal with their increased sovereignty on foreign policy decisions. For decades,

Germany has had to closely align their foreign policies with the Atlantic alliance. Suddenly, senior foreign policy decision-makers in Bonn, and later on in Berlin, had to engage in complex decision-making processes themselves – with little in-house guidance, experience, or expertise¹⁸ (Bertram 2015; Schöllgen 2000). Instead of taking up the challenge, German policy makers largely reacted to foreign policy developments outside Europe instead of anticipating them and developing own proactive strategies. The largely reactive nature was, for instance, exemplified by the above-mentioned chequebook diplomacy approach. Although a lack of strategic vision within the German foreign policy sector in the 1990s had been clearly present (Bertram 2015; Hellmann et al. 2007), the overarching political situation for, and within, Germany did not favour grand foreign policy strategy development beyond Europe.

Understandably, at the time, politicians and bureaucrats in Bonn and Berlin were busy uniting the country in the years following re-unification and were additionally dealing with strenuous efforts to intensify cooperation within the EEC/EU at the same time. While Germany remained committed to providing development aid and running cultural and educational programmes all over the world either directly or indirectly (in particular through Germany's Organisation for International Cooperation [GIZ] and its preceding organisations, as well as the work of Germany's political and societal foundations), foreign policy development largely focused on Europe.

As a result, throughout most of West Germany's history, as well as the time after reunification, Germany's policy focus largely remained on domestic issues and, regarding foreign policy, pushing for further integration of and developments within the EU. Beyond Europe, its policy remained reactive in nature, aligning itself largely within the transatlantic framework, and focusing on speeding up post-reunification recovery. It is therefore no surprise that Germany's relations with China, as with many other non-European countries, received little strategic attention (Koch and Riecke 2019). An exception to this was presented by exogenous shocks during the

¹⁸ See Chapters 6 and 7 for analyses of China knowledge within German foreign policy circles.

chosen time frame, e.g. the aftermath of 9/11 which left Germany's political circles discuss foreign activities beyond Europe much more actively. During the mid-2010s, the same held true for China's economic rise (which is discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6).

3.2 Foreign Policy Principles: Germany, a Civilian Power?

Given Germany's historical complexity and immediate priority to tackle the economic and political effects of reunification, peace and multilateralism had remained the primary drivers of the country's foreign policy principles after reunification as well. The preamble of the German Basic Law states that the key principle of German foreign policy is for Germany to be an equal member of a unified Europe and to serve world peace as such. Furthermore, any actions disrupting peace, in particular the domestic preparation of a war of aggression, is unconstitutional and punishable. The Basic Law allows Germany to become a member of a supranational organisation as long as it serves peacekeeping (Deutscher Bundestag 2017a, p. 13).

This principle is visible when examining Germany's formal key foreign affairs areas as indicated by the FFO: European integration and the transatlantic partnership; crisis prevention and conflict management; global economic cooperation; technical assistance; tackling environmental and climate challenges; promotion of democratic human rights (Auswärtiges Amt 2019)¹⁹.

By considering Germany's foreign policy trajectory from its foundation after WWII until the early 21st century, a common conception of Germany was to label it as a *civilian power* (Hockenos 2007). Although Czempiel's assessment of calling Germany the "anti-thesis" (Czempiel 2000, p. 2) to Realpolitik had been perhaps too ambitious considering Germany's export-led economic interests²⁰ and NATO

¹⁹ These are the priority areas listed on the website of the FFO in 2019. Details have changed over time and secondary/sub-areas have been added throughout the period discussed in the thesis (e.g. Cybersecurity), but the mentioned areas directly relate to the corner stones of the foreign policy framework in place prior to 1997 (Auswärtiges Amt 2019).

²⁰ See Chapter 4.4.

membership (Hockenos 2007; Overhaus 2006), in terms of multilateral cooperation to foster peace, i.e. as a civilian power, his claim remained valid.

The discussion of the normalisation vs continuity debate in Chapter 2.1 directly relates to this. As discussed, Realist inspired narratives played no major factor in shaping Germany's foreign policy related political processes. On the contrary, the concept of civilian power gained support from both the continuity and normalisation sides, although the narratives varied. The supporters of continuity argued that Germany had been deeply embedded in liberal Western multilateral institutions and that (armed) conflict had been, and would be, incompatible with Germany's many-decade long grown conviction (Kirste and Maull 1996). The highly controversial debate on an engagement in Kosovo in 1998 reflects this (Hellmann 2002b).

Largely in line with the continuity argument, Link (2000) explained that German (foreign) policy development had been a process of bureaucracy, not power. This was not just because of Germany's integrative and cooperative standing in the international community, but also because policy makers in Germany simply did not have to develop their own strategic foreign policy approaches because they had gotten used to aligning their processes with their allies' strategies.

Moreover, living in a highly industrialised and inter-dependent region meant that cooperative strategies provided a better chance of mitigating systemic anarchy and to democratise authoritative political structures than militaristic actions (Czempiel 2000). Originally based on work by Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker in 1963 (Werkner and Ebeling 2017), two German Presidents during the 1998 to 2017 time frame actively advocated the concept of '*Weltinnenpolitik*', or *world domestic politics* (Czempiel 2000, p. 2). The concept became rather popular amongst German politicians and intellectuals in the early 21st century and was frequently used not only by both foreign ministers during the Merkel I and II (and first half of III) administrations (by Steinmeier, SPD, and Westerwelle, FDP), but also by public intellectuals such as Ulrich Beck and Jürgen Habermas. This can be seen as a further indicator for the desire of the German population and/or intellectual elite to continue their peaceful path of cooperation and integration at the time.

However, while continuity-inspired narratives saw the civilian power concept as a protection of the status quo to ensure peace, normalisation supporters saw it as a means for Germany to gain further global influence. A Civilian power narrative therefore was first and foremost not a normative value to uphold, but a tactical instrument. For instance, Czempiel believed that “eradicating dictatorships” (Czempiel 2000) and promoting democratic political systems had become the second big German foreign policy cornerstone. He referred to the increased influence of Democratic Peace Theory²¹ for the Clinton administration in the United States and the theoretical discourse around Brown et al.’s book “Debating the Democratic Peace” (Brown et al. 1996). Undoubtedly, this theory influenced the Eastern enlargement process of the European Union and related German security observations. Still, Faust and Messner (2008) raised the question on how Germany was going to deal with countries if they followed a different political system or even possessed a democracy-inhibiting influence on their neighbouring countries²². Moreover, they criticised Germany’s foreign policy at the time for not having been inclusive enough of regions beyond the EU, US and Middle East. As such, Germany missed to include many emerging economies such as many of the later G20 member countries in a superordinate strategic system. Faust and Messner (ibid) further argued that Berlin was only interested in these countries from a foreign trade and/or development assistance perspective, despite of some of the countries’ abilities to increase their strategic potential and value (for Germany) quickly and significantly. This primarily included first and second tier emerging economies such as Indonesia. Apparently, only in the mid-2000s, parts of the ministerial bureaucracy and politicians realised that such countries were gaining international influence quickly (Auswärtiges Amt 2002; Bertram 2015). They argued, that if attention was not given to these emerging countries, Germany would have an increasingly hard time in protecting and pursuing its global interests and guiding principles in the future (Faust and Messner 2008).

²¹ See, for instance, Doyle’s view on Democratic Peace Theory, suggesting that democracies are less likely/more hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other democratic countries Doyle (2012b).

²² Although worries about China’s reluctance to move towards their Western counterparts through multilateral cooperation already existed at the time of the publication, this view gained political momentum in the early 2010s. See Chapter 5 and 6 for more details.

This view is in line with the earlier findings that Germany lacked a detailed strategic vision taking a range of individual countries into consideration. It further stresses the practical relevance of major emerging economies for Germany's trade-based economy. Despite of Germany's export-led economy and status of a top three exporting nation between 2000 and 2017 (together with China and the United States, see World Bank 2018), a clear strategy or vision underpinning these successes and building upon them is not visible. On an operational level, though, economic and trade cooperation was a fundamental concern for German policy makers throughout the discussed time frame and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Regarding Germany's position within the Western alliance, Masala (2008) pointed out that the West had lost its unitary position in international relations – not even in the sense of 'exporting democratic values'. Although European powers and the US remained closely inter-linked in history, culture and their respective political and value systems, unitary strategic actions, such as undertaken during the Cold War, were already a thing of the past. Hence, Germany required to develop its own strategic and also normative approach to secure its global position, long-term prosperity, and security. Schröder was apparently right when he proposed in 2002 to discuss the "existential question of the German nation" (Fröhlich 2008, p. 15) to make a decision on Germany's role in the second Iraq War. Granted, his opposition to the US-led operation was also aiming to secure his re-election in the 2002 general election, but the 'muddling-through' nature of foreign policy and its lack of strategic vision at the time had been apparent to him (Schröder and Meck 2014). Nine years after the end of his second term, Schröder re-asserted his position by stating that a reunified Germany was in a very different position than West Germany prior to it, and that Germany had the responsibility to step up its game and become a "full-fledged member" (Schröder and Meck 2014, p. 64) of the international community.

Similarly, Masala considered that Germany's foreign policy after re-unification had been "piecemeal engineering" (Masala 2008, p. 24): instead of carefully re-evaluating Germany's position in a global context and developing a holistic foreign policy strategy, German foreign policy makers merely tackled short-term challenges without any sort of overarching strategic framework in mind. Such view is a little harsh considering that the fundamental principles of German foreign policy were

established long ago: it's cooperative and inclusive approach to secure peace in Europe and beyond as a civilian power – and that these principles did not fundamentally change (Overhaus 2006). Still, considering Germany's inexperience in developing strategic foreign policy, its somewhat contradicting inclusion of various federal ministries with their 'bottom-up' approach (not the least by also adding state ministries and governments into the mix), and its core focus on Europe, Masala, Faust and Messner, and also Schröder, were onto something.

Bender (2008) offers an explanation for the situation. He argued that Germany had been in a convenient position to pursue its foreign policy goals because its existing policies were “fairly risk-free” (Bender 2008, p. 5). Europe's integration, global trade, and environmental challenges were important topics, but they involved little risk: in case of failure of negotiations in a bilateral or multilateral setting it would usually not be seen as Germany's fault due to its cooperative international approach. Should this be all you could have expected from Europe's biggest country, Bender wondered. Indeed, the Eurozone crisis gave Germany under Merkel the opportunity to step up its game and show responsibility in crafting a response. Merkel stayed true to her policy making style – she followed a slow, goal-oriented course of action, one “not in a sense of what was feasible but in the sense of gradualistic policy with the conscious abstinence of any strategic vision” (Masala 2008, p. 25). Why such gradual developments only? German governments were generally careful not to appear overly ambitious to gain power internationally for not raising potential historic red flags with their partners. Instead, Germany, in particular under Merkel I and II, was much more interested in influencing multilateral decision-making processes instead of taking a bold stance²³. This sometimes overlooked but clear distinction between power and influence is the result of Germany's history and a principle which the vast majority of senior policy makers were well aware of (Bender 2008).

²³ Merkel took a more proactive approach during the height of the European refugee crisis in 2015/16, possibly due to her prolonged personal views on immigration and having described herself as “a person with migration background” Mushaben (2017b, p. 6). The discussion of the crisis is of no major relevance for the Germany-China relations and thus beyond the scope of this thesis. For a more in-depth discussion of the crisis, see e.g. Alexander (2017). For more about Merkel's views on the crisis, see e.g. Mushaben (2017a).

To recap, German foreign policy prior to and post reunification closely followed liberal thought on cooperation in the field of diplomacy and also commerce. While significant changes in the security realm occurred under Schröder and Merkel, including the eventual participation in (widely accepted and UN/NATO supported) combat missions, ‘non-aggressor’ principles still applied well post-reunification. Germany increasingly emancipated itself from the United States on the global stage, but had been unwilling to challenge its close transatlantic partnership up to the period this thesis covers (although the dawn and early days of the Trump administration in the US led to a considerable deterioration of the partnership).

German governments firmly believed in the European Union as a success model of integration and for abolishing (armed) conflict, for many more so than most other European Union member countries (see the next sub-chapter). *Power* and *leadership* in the realm of international diplomacy had negative connotations for German policy makers while *influence* is what they sought. However, Germany was in a somewhat comfortable foreign policy situation since re-unification which did not require particularly difficult decisions to be made (Schröder and Meck 2014). Both aspects put together led to a reactive nature of foreign policy (beyond European integration). Furthermore, German foreign policy makers within the executive and legislative branches as well as the political parties failed to implement, or develop, a holistic global foreign policy strategy up to 2017. Similarly, as is shown in the following chapters, the same holds true for Germany’s relationship with China.

3.3 Foreign Policy Agency in the Context of the EU

As a member state of the supranational European Union, Germany’s practice of agency at the international level needs to first be assessed within the EU framework. Did the EU, and to what an extent, play a role in affecting Germany’s approach to China? After all, the EU also became an increasingly active actor engaging with China.

3.3.1 An Overview of the EU's Engagement with China

The first contacts between Europeans²⁴ and the Chinese Empire can be dated back to as early as the 16th century resulting in a range of trade route agreements. After a period of colonial and imperial chaos in the following centuries, Track I contact between the NATO-aligned European countries remained largely non-existent from 1949 to the early 1970s. This had not necessarily been a matter of a lack of interest, but primarily related to the nature of the Cold War. With the normalisation of the formal relations between the US and China taking place in the early 1970s, Europe-China relations intensified as well and diplomatic relations were eventually established in 1975, with a first trade agreement signed in 1978. Although primarily being seen as a 'sideshow' reacting to the US' activities in light of the Cold War (Edmonds 2002) and/or a response to the "massive protracted, and unexpected economic upsurge" of China's open-door policy in 1978 (Brandt and Rawski 2008, p. 1), the relationship between the two at the trade and economic front were quickly intensified. In 1980, China was allowed access to the EU Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme which provided China with preferential access to the European market. This agreement was extended further in 1985 to facilitate cooperation in the energy, technology, and mining sectors (Li 2007).

However, in 1989, the Tiananmen incident disrupted the upward trends of the relations. It posed a constraint on trade flows and diplomatic relations, although the negative implications were manageable for both sides. The European Commission (EC) considered the economic relations to be of higher priority than the political implications of the event (Li 2007). Slightly less than three years later, the relations had been "largely back to normal" (DG RELEX 2017, p. 1), although the initially initiated arms embargo remained in place and the 1990s witnessed a decade of deepening engagement between the EU and China. While the political cooperation until 1993 had mainly been based on bilateral talks, the enforcement of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 provided the EC/EU with more leverage. It published the key policy paper 'A Long-Term Policy for China-Europe Relations' in 1995 and extended its scope in 1998 by promoting a *comprehensive partnership* and establishment of the annual EU-China summit (Chen and Armstrong 2010;

²⁴ The term Europe, or Europeans in this case, refers to the EU and its predecessors.

Narramore 2008). At the same time, China benefited from Deng Xiaoping's proposal of keeping a low profile and avoiding significant confrontation to build a more positive image (Cabestan 2010). This partially facilitated the intensity of relations with Europe as well.

In 1995, the EU introduced its long-term strategy to “maintain stability in foreign and security relations, to integrate China into the world trading system, to support sustainable development, to help alleviate poverty, and to promote the rule of law” (Smith 2008, p. 203) which also included the EU's support for China to join the WTO, with US objections, as well as the establishment of a regular EU-China Summit. In general, in the first years of the 21st century, further EU-China summits and meetings were held, and further agreements were signed including the comprehensive strategic partnership agreement in 2003 (Casarini 2009; Narramore 2008), during which repeated efforts were spent on lifting the EU arms embargo on China. Schröder (and France's Chirac) spearheaded these efforts (see Chapter 5 on Schröder's role) which remained unsuccessful (Balme and Bridges 2008; Rettman 2011). Overall, the EU-China history until 2005 was a decent success. Despite issues, trade flourished and cooperative activities showed an increasing potential of a long-lasting partnership. This potential might have been most obvious by Beijing's 2003 publication of its 'EU Policy Paper' which, according to Chen and Armstrong, was “the first ever foreign policy paper detailing China's strategy towards a country or group of states” (Chen and Armstrong 2010, p. 158).

In the late 2000s, concerns regarding China rose within the EU as well as within member states. Various issues were presented as being problematic, ranging from human rights concerns to the role of Taiwan and Tibet, to economic issues such as trading malpractice, intellectual property rights violations, the undervaluation of the Chinese Renminbi, and concerns for European low-tech manufacturing jobs (House of Lords 2010), despite the EU itself becoming China's biggest trading partner in 2004 already (Chen and Armstrong 2010; DG Trade 2019a). The diplomatic relations deteriorated between 2005 and the Global Financial Crisis, and beyond. In particular the lengthy arms embargo debates and eventual unsuccessful lifting disappointed and frustrated Beijing, while the European Parliament (EP) kept highlighting human rights concerns. China's standing also deteriorated significantly

within Europe. A more systematic problem was the EU's published 'Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia' which incorporated a much harsher stance in comparison to what had been voiced before (Council of the European Union 2012). Together with the Treaty of Nizza and the more and more vocal criticism voiced by the EP and other actors unveiled the underlying dilemma: the EU considered itself as a normative power, standing for values incompatible with (some) Chinese values.

3.3.2 The EU's Struggle with its China Policy

The core constraint of EU-China relations, at the EU-level, was the lack of a unified EU-wide China policy. In Fox and Godement's well-received Power Audit (Fox and Godement 2009), they argued that "[a]ny attempt to strengthen the European position must start with an acknowledgement that no Member State is big enough to sway China on its own" (Fox and Godement 2009, p. 7). Unfortunately for the EU, most major member states pursued their relations with China on their own terms. While this problem had been addressed widely²⁵, the situation did not significantly improve throughout the 1998 to 2017 time frame – regardless of the foundation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and new calls for unifying member states' strategies towards China from around 2015, in part due to the post-KUKA China shift in Germany (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The lack of a unified strategy became even more of an issue with China's pursuit of the 16+1 initiative. In 2012, China had started to engage with 16 Central and Eastern European countries including eleven EU member states in a regional cooperation strategy, dividing EU member states' priorities towards China further. It largely followed a regional cooperation approach which China adopted in other regions as well as "a type of non-Western 'South-South' multilateralism" (Grieger 2018, p. 2). Regardless of China's original intentions, in practice this posed a divisive issue, and also a potential security issue for the EU. Concerns rose when the 16+1 initiative had been "effectively merged with the local implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative" (Godement and Vasselier 2017, p. 64). Godement's updated Power Audit from 2017 (2017) featured a chapter on the effects of the 16+1

²⁵ Cf. Berkofsky (2005), Gottwald (2010), and Youngs (2010).

initiative for the EU but found no clear answers. Until 2017, it appeared that the initiative had “not created or received the momentum that might be expected for very high-profile initiatives” (Godement and Vasselier 2017, p. 74)²⁶.

Alongside these initiatives, several-year-long negotiations were also established for an EU-China investment agreement in 2013 which aimed at guaranteeing non-discrimination for mutual investments, improving protection for investments and improving transparency amongst other investment aspects (DG Trade 2019b). As Shambaugh (2007) suggested, the EU lacked a modern academic, political and cultural discourse with, and on, China. This is a similar assessment to the one found in this thesis for the case of Germany. As such, the British view from 2010, that the EU-China relationship “based on trust and mutual respect [did] not currently exist beyond trade matters” (House of Lords 2010, p. 15) held true until at least the mid-2010s, although calls for action on changing this did rise eventually, as discussed in Chapter 5 in detail. Still, to summarise the 1998 to 2017 time frame, Barysch’s assessment comes to mind: the “EU’s China policies often resemble a shopping list of priorities rather than a coherent strategy” (Barysch 2005, p. 76). Simply put, it was too lucrative for individual major member states, first and foremost Germany (see below and Chapter 4.4 on the economic Germany-China relations), to give up or jeopardise their ‘personalised’ trade ties with China²⁷. This lack of unified strategy led to an undesirable outcome for the EU: “China [could] choose which offers of cooperation to accept and which to reject” (SWP & GMF 2013, p. 34), effectively being able to play member states against each other. It bears a certain irony that one close academic observer of China’s foreign relations noted that Beijing had originally not been interested in diminishing EU unity at all. Instead, over time, Chinese senior foreign policy makers lost hope in the EU becoming a unified major global actor (to oppose, or balance, the US) and only then developed its divide and rule strategy²⁸.

²⁶ See Grieger (2018) for an overview of the 16+1 developments from an EU perspective. For an overview about the Belt and Road initiative at the time, see for instance Baltensperger and Dadush (2019).

²⁷ See Chapter 4.4 on the economic ties between Germany and China. In addition, see for instance Godement and Vasselier (2017), Koch and Riecke (2019), Lehne (2017), and Rungius (2017).

²⁸ As expressed by interviewee #17.

3.3.3 EU-China and the Role of Germany

It is not the purpose of this research to examine the coherence and cohesion of the EU debate on China. Instead, its focus is to assess Germany's practices of foreign policy making agency. Therefore, the debate of the EU's engagement with China and its lack of unified vision within its framework further advances the need to explore Germany's approach within its own borders. Indeed, compared to other member states, Germany's role within the EU is a special case. Since its beginnings soon after the end of World War II, the early-stage integration processes featured a strong Germany signature. Prior to its reunification, and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, rather than "deliberate [and] forceful articulation of interests, combined with resources for articulating leverages" (Jeffery and Paterson 2003, p. 61), Germany's power exerted in the region was more "soft [and] institutional [which relied on] multilateral or European interests shared with others and pursued in partnership" (ibid). This was especially the case with regard to security concerns, for which Germany had primarily relied on its Western partners within Europe and the United States. Germany's role within this phase has frequently been referred to as *leadership avoidance reflex* (Miskimmon and Paterson 2003; Gaskarth and Oppermann 2021).

Since the mid-1990s, and in particular during the 1998 to 2017 period this research focuses on, the dynamics between Germany and the EU started to shift. Induced by the new challenges brought by the reunification, Germany's engagement with the EU had begun to be more assertive, especially on economic and monetary issues (Baumann 2007). For instance, with Germany's firm stance on ensuring price stability, the German model of the Bundesbank was chosen over the Anglo-French model prioritising monetary and economic goals to be the foundation for the European Central Bank during negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty. Germany further trumped France in pushing for the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) in 1997 – only to breach it a few years later (Schwarzer 2015). Although a number of measures were put in place with the hope to stimulate unity among member states in foreign policy engagement such as the Lisbon Treaty, they were seen as normatively desirable but "paradoxical" (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2020, p. 14) in nature. Foreign policy decision-making processes still largely occurred at the (inter-)member state level, which ultimately constrained the power of the EEAS and

formal leadership structure established at the EU level. Instead, Germany, or Merkel, the perceived informal leader of the EU for years, emerged through the practice of *cross-loading* among member states and its ability of “learning to lead in three main areas: diplomatic negotiations, politico-military crisis management, and the EU sanctions policy” (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2020, p. 19). Especially since the following Eurozone crisis, Germany’s assertive role had become even more evident in a policy area “where its relatively inflexible preferences were well established” (Bulmer and Paterson 2018, p. 219).

Moreover, the weakening of the Franco-German partnership rendered this development inevitable. Because of Germany’s increasingly important, and in part assertive, involvement in the EU, it is therefore perhaps no surprise that the EU-China relations trajectory roughly resembled the Germany-China one, especially during the time period this research covers. Rungius (2017) summarised how the German government had been pushing for a free trade and investment agreement between China and the EU in 2015. This included a quote from Merkel on how China had already established free trade agreements with Switzerland and Iceland (Rungius 2017), hinting at her support for the endeavour. Either way, Germany’s preference for an investment deal with China had been lodged at the EU level, and was turned into a new EU strategy on China in the year afterwards. However, while this strategy aimed to “strengthen its relations with China” (European Commission 2016, p. 1) in a general sense, it primarily aimed at supporting the above sought-after investment agreement instead of the finalisation of a trade deal per se. That said, Germany also had a history of *outsourcing* difficult topics such as human rights concerns to the EU level. Instead of letting them sour the bilateral relations between the two countries, the EU was acting as the saviour of Germany-China trade growth (see Chapter 5).

Based on these developments, opinions were divided on assessing Germany’s commitment to the EU as part of the bigger picture. On the one hand, those driven by intergovernmentalism, emphasised the leadership role of Germany over the EU and German domestic politics deliberate and pragmatic articulation of avoiding being perceived as a hegemon (Bulmer and Paterson 2018; Schwarzer 2015). Based on this narrative, Germany’s increasing leadership role was argued to be more

reactive rather than proactive in nature, and was primarily pushed via expectations from partners and interactions among member states (Aggestam and Johansson 2017). However, this does not imply that Germany's growing "inflexible preferences" (Bulmer and Paterson 2018, p. 241) and its leaning to become a "much less inclusive actor" should be overlooked (Bulmer and Paterson 2010, p. 1051).

On the other hand, especially driven by Europeanist narratives and supported by the German continuity side of the debate as discussed in Chapter 2, Germany's devotion to the EU integration process and its embrace to European values was firm. This view was further advanced by those who remained assured by the "tamed power" narrative, arguing that Germany's exertion of power relied on the EU's multilateralism (Katzenstein 1991). Others argued that Germany gradually transformed into a "normalised power [adopting a] more balanced approach in exercising power" (Bulmer and Paterson 2010), sharing some views with the normalisation supporters who had persevered.

However, in general, regardless of whether Germany was a *tamed power* (Katzenstein 1991), a *normalised power* (Bulmer and Paterson 2010), an *embedded hegemon* (Crawford 2007), a *growing leader* (Schwarzer 2015), a *reflexive multilateralist* (Bulmer and Paterson 2010), or a *reluctant cross-loading learning leader* (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2020), it is undeniable that Germany's influence on the EU should not be underestimated. It had a long track record of prioritising its national interests in the regional milieu, not so much on security related issues and more so on economic and trade related matters.

Once again, it is not this research's core purpose to evaluate these narratives or to further the debate of Germany's role in the EU. Despite of their varying degrees in estimating Germany's assertiveness within EU policy making spheres, these discussions all acknowledged Germany's own policy making authority within the EU – in particular on trade. This therefore validates this research's decision to examine Germany's China approach through its own national agency. Given the heavy weight of China on Germany's economic development and trade relationship (as discussed more in detail in Chapter 4), the issue of Germany-China engagement lies in the area where Germany has been particularly inflexible in compromising its

national interests at the EU level. This further proves the value of scrutinising solely Germany's own agency in shaping its engagement with China as part of this thesis. Existing linkages on China between Berlin and Brussels, in either direction, are by no means unimportant or irrelevant, they simply go beyond the scope of this particular research project – and offer intriguing further research opportunities.

3.4 Germany's Foreign Policy Factors on China

As mentioned previously, this thesis examines Germany as a decision maker. The benefit of using FPA as its analytical framework is that it focuses on, and deconstructs, the actor's actorness and agency through levels of analysis, which offer the ideal comprehensive approach to scrutinise Germany's decision-making process. On a most basic level, foreign policy is developed and executed by national governments. For Germany, this includes in particular the Chancellery, the Federal Foreign Office, and the Defence Ministry (Korte 2007).

However, the world of diplomacy is more complex than that. As reviewed in the section above, Germany transferred part of its policy sovereignty to the supranational EU, although its domestic decision-making autonomy remained strong for the relevant time frame. Germany's federal system also assigned German states (*Länder*) certain autonomy, although they played a limited role for the particular decision-making agency part of the Germany-China relations evaluated in this thesis. In contrast, a range of governmental and parastatal organisations were involved in different economic tracks (Bredow 2008) which did play a role and are discussed in Chapter 6²⁹.

²⁹ Diplomatic relations can be divided into different tracks. Originally coined in 1981, Track I diplomacy relates to governmental diplomacy which uses official channels to communicate. In contrast, Track II diplomacy covers *backchannels* which include informal communication and activities by non-state actors Davidson and Montville (1981). This original Track II definition was extended over time, including new tracks such as *Track 1.5, with governmental and non-governmental actors collaborating on certain issues* Jones (2015). The widening of the diplomatic activities did not stop here – for instance, Diamond and McDonald (1996) divided them into nine different tracks. This thesis, however, uses Track I, 1.5, and II signage only to simplify the analysis.

The analytical chapters 5 to 7 assess factors at the individual, bureaucratic, and societal levels, which set or influenced German actorness related to China. For reasons explained in the methodology section in the previous chapter, it is impossible to have certainty on the absolute impact of developments on policy. This is where factors come into play. The chapters' purpose is to estimate the influence of these factors onto Germany's overall decision-making agency based on the available data at hand.

To recap, this research examines Germany as a decision maker in the context of the country's approach to China. It studies Germany's practices of agency of decision-making. Through the lens of FPA, Germany's agency at the time is deconstructed, helping to understand that its decision-making process is thus the result of the decision-making agency of factors at various levels. Certainly, agency, and therefore actors, occur at all levels in the eyes of FPA scholars. However, given that the core unit of interest for this project is Germany's actorness as a whole, agency and actors at various levels are treated as factors that construct the wholeness of Germany's decision-making agency. The core analysis part of this piece therefore examines the roles these factors had played in shaping Germany's foreign policy making.

Indeed, Germany's practice of agency was affected by external factors such as those at the structural level like the EU, and the overall changes in the geopolitical climate. Although debates on this existed as discussed earlier, little attention was given to the internal factors within the domestic circle to examine constraints and opportunities from within, and this is to what this research intends to contribute. The domestic levels at which factors are examined in this research were divided into three sub-state levels: individual, bureaucratic, and societal.

3.4.1 Individual Level

Chapter 5, making use of FPA's individual level, seeks to understand the human factor. Early FPA scholars such as Harold and Margaret Sprout (1956, 1965) and Snyder (1963) pointed out that foreign policy is the product of human agency.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) has played an important role in the history of FPA. First, by setting the scene for a micro assessment of foreign policy and then by having been thoroughly criticised for its rationalist core argument (Allison 1971). RCT's fundamental idea of utility maximisation in the FPA realm suggests that national interest is defined as providing/enhancing security and wealth maximisation by using cost-benefit analyses. In other words, a state identifies and prioritises foreign policy goals, and then it identifies and selects means available to it to fulfil its aims with the least costs involved³⁰ (Alden and Aran 2016, p. 15).

However, as individuals in policy leadership positions identify issues, make judgements, and act upon the available – limited – information, behaviouralists have pointed out that they do so based on their own cognition, perceptions, and personalities (Kaarbo et al. 2012; Orbovich and Molnar 1992). Individuals are therefore not always acting based on absolute rational calculation. There are also external complexities such as linguistic-cultural barriers, stereotypes and the level of incomplete information at play. Therefore, decision makers end up with a “definition of the situation [which is] always a distortion of reality since the purpose of perception is to simplify and order the external environment. Policy makers can therefore never be completely rational in applying the rationalists’ imperative of maximisation of utility towards any decisions” (Alden and Aran 2016, p. 19) but instead bring their individual assessment and conviction to the decision-making table.

There are a number of concepts, or *tools*, that can help make sense of the individual level’s analysis. To limit the scope of the chapter, three concepts are considered. First, cognitive consistency, the sub-conscious urge to reinforce existing beliefs, appears to have played a significant role during the first ten plus years this thesis analyses. At least up to the Financial Crisis in 2008/09, a major(ity) view among German policy makers and legislators remained to associating China with the

³⁰ Further Rationalist tools exist in FPA, for instance, Game Theory approaches for deriving decision-making interpretations such as Putnam’s two-level game, dealing with the interplay between domestic and international constraints Putnam (1988).

world's workbench instead of a quickly growing competitor of some of Germany's strategic sectors³¹.

Second, Simon's *satisficing* concept (Simon 1956), making a 'good enough' decision instead of finding the one maximising utility, is also of relevance. Axelrod (1976) expanded on Simon's original concept (Simon 1956), arguing that policy makers would often address immediate pressures instead of weighing the overall merits of a policy. If 'policy' is substituted with 'strategy', then such satisficing concept appears to be surprisingly accurate in depicting Germany's foreign policy approach towards China, as explained in Chapter 5. As such, it resonates well with the reactivity of German foreign policy discussed in the previous chapter: Germany responded to external developments, i.e. pressure, without much thought of its actions for strategic purposes.

Third, cognitive dissonance states that individuals seek to maintain consistency and avoid dissonance which arises when differing beliefs conflict with one another (Festinger 1957; Barber 1979). This directly relates to the role of groups. Group-based decision-making is used to overcome some of the perceptual misconceptions and cognitive shortcomings of individual decision-making – or simply to bring decision-makers from different units/home institutions together. However, it leads to a range of detrimental group dynamics and groupthink (Janis 1982) which only worsen under the presence of strong-minded leaders, such as Schröder and Merkel, and time pressure (George 1972). Combining this with Germany's foreign policy consistency across terms and parties is a recipe for a response-driven piecemeal engineering strategy towards China.

A major part of Chapter 5 relates to the role of cognition and personality of Chancellors Schröder and Merkel and their chosen Germany-China policy trajectory. As Chancellors, they "shall determine and be responsible for the general guidelines of policy" (Article 65, Deutscher Bundestag 2017a, p. 54). Although the Basic Law continues stating that "[w]ithin these limits each Federal Minister shall

³¹ See Chapter 4.2 on Germany's economic ties with China, and Chapter 7 on China perceptions within Germany.

conduct the affairs of his department independently and on his own responsibility” (ibid), major bilateral relationships, in particular the one with China, were for the most part driven by the Chancellery well before Schröder took office³². Therefore, the Chancellors’ background, overall political views, and leadership style does matter when assessing German actorness towards China.

In short, individuality matters because “different leaders are likely to choose divergent policies even when faced with similar problems and scenarios”³³ (Rapport 2016, p. 4). However, it is essential to understand that cognitive and psychological factors are difficult to measure. Without being an insider or having extensive access to groups, it is difficult to evaluate group dynamics. Without having had close and extensive interaction with specific individuals, making assumptions about their thought process is difficult and inherently limited. Yet, the combination of existing literature with own findings contributes new views of German foreign policy actorness to the debate.

The role of certain other individuals apart from the Chancellors, such as foreign ministers (Fischer, Steinmeier) and key representatives of German industry (von Pierer, Wuttke) are also briefly addressed. While they may have had impact on the decisions by Schröder and/or Merkel, from an external third-person perspective this is almost impossible to assess robustly. Moreover, the strategic vs tactical concept provides a helpful approach to assess individuals’ impact. Strategically, the Chancellors were the primary individual factors constructing German actorness. Tactically, i.e. with regard to individual decisions, others may have very well had significant impact³⁴.

However, with overall strategic actorness being the subject of the analysis, and tactical actorness being of secondary relevance, the role of non-Chancellor factors remained small to minimal. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 5. That said,

³² See the following sub-chapter as well as Chapter 6 for more information about the type of *Chancellor democracy* and the FFO’s limited role in making policy (in contrast to preparing and executing it). Also see Korte Korte (2007), Mertes (2000, p. 62) and Wolfrum (2007).

³³ Cf. Byman and Pollack (2001) and Jervis (2013).

³⁴ See Chapter 5.1.1 for Schröder, and respectively Chapter 5.2.3 for Merkel, provide further information.

their role will often have been significant for the Germany-China relations itself, just limited in the strategic sense. The focus on individual factors should not deflect from others impacting China policies. In fact, some FPA scholars such as Holsti (1970) downplay their significance by focusing on the operational environment instead. He urges to take note of additional levels, in particular bureaucratic constraints and civil society influences on the domestic level.

3.4.2 Bureaucratic Level

Chapter 6 assesses developments at the bureaucratic level such as Germany's executive and legislative structures, and political party foundations. As a flexible framework for the assessment of bureaucratic structure considerations the thesis makes use of the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM). Initially developed/advanced by Allison (1972), the model considers the foreign policy sphere as a conglomerate of large, bureaucratic organisations. These organisations generate structured output on specific situations which policy makers use to make decisions. Such output can take the form of information aggregation, policy suggestions, and standard operating procedures. Furthermore, the bureaucratic entities, be it ministries or other relevant organisational units within the foreign policy realm, tend to develop common attitudes and shared images based on their inherent tasks and responsibilities. Halperin noticed that they often also derive influence from their position in the power-sharing structure of a government (Halperin 1971) and thus aim to maximise it.

As a result, (bureaucratic) factors do not all have consistent sets of strategic objectives but are driven by their individual conception. In case of the Germany-China relations, this has been a prominent and recurring concern. One example for this were the activities of the BMWi pushing for trade growth and security while the BMU favoured Chinese commitments to environmental improvements, and the Chancellery had to deal with bringing its own ministries together while at the same time following its own agenda. This particular situation occurred during Merkel's third term when China had been considered introducing a quota for electrical cars sold in China. The German car industry did strongly oppose this idea due to them trailing its Chinese competition on electric vehicle production.

This example also touches on the role of Chancellors as highlighted in the previous sub-section. Beyond individual consideration, their Chancelleries, since well before reunification (Krause and Wilker 1978), took increasing charge of the foreign policy agenda, marginalising the foreign and defence ministries (and, in part, the BMZ) in their executive decision-making power. In what has come to be known as ‘Chancellor Democracy’ (*Kanzlerdemokratie*), the Chancellery has three core foreign policy tasks to handle: to lead, to coordinate, and to ‘pull strings’ (Mertes 2000, p. 62; Korte 2007). Although it has no formal authority to give directives to other ministries and is more of a “secretariat of the government” (Korte 2007, p. 205) than a ministry, it develops the general policy trajectory for other ministries (Mai 2010), is in charge of the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) and closely interacts with international partners on the highest level. Its foreign policy department staffs a number of seconded personnel that further help with coordination and data gathering and analysis. Hence, on certain matters the Chancellery will have an information edge over other parts of government, including the foreign ministry.

By further considering the nature of coalition governments and that in Germany the foreign minister is usually a senior figure at the minority coalition partner, it is no surprise that this can lead to institutional turf-wars (Korte 2001, 2007; Krause and Wilker 1978). This is exemplified by the foreign policy/international desks in all federal ministries, also vying for attention and pushing for policy objectives on central issues of world politics. Ismayr (2007) counted these departments and found that in 2001, federal ministries had 336 units dealing with international tasks, 279 of these beyond matters involving the European Union. Weller (2007, p. 211) also counted these and found 250+ and 200+ respectively in 2006³⁵. He further argues that it makes no sense whatsoever to try to distinguish between the work of specific ministries and the ‘traditional’ foreign policy arranged by the Foreign Ministry and Chancellery. In reality, he points out, most activities involving foreign states or actors are very closely interlinked with the work of functional units, and much of

³⁵ It is unclear what the reason for this discrepancy is, but the key point to take away from these numbers is that federal ministries were a fundamental part of foreign policy operations.

what the Foreign Ministry can do is to merely keep track of developments, advise and (less and less often) organise activities (Weller 2007) while the Chancellery coordinates and steers them (Knoll 2010).

To recap, developing and executing foreign policy is no simple matter. On the notion of the Chancellorship, this research puts an emphasis on the individual level of factors, and, therefore on the Chancellors themselves. They head the Chancellery and its extensive staff, wrangling policy issues as much as power issues within the government (Korte 2010). The interplay between ministries is essential for the workflow and to provide the Chancellery with most relevant information. Yet, tensions exist, and inter-ministerial power struggles are only part of the institutional challenges to uninhibited foreign policy making. Therefore, the key bureaucratic structures are discussed in Chapter 6, shedding light on some of the issues particular to the Germany-China process.

3.4.3 Societal Level

The third level of analysis in this thesis involves the wider German society. It includes a discussion of public opinion, the media, and think tanks and NGOs, including major industry lobbying organisations (BDI and APA), as they all to various degrees can have an impact on constructing Germany's decision-making agency towards China. Moreover, they also serve as media that can shape and make use of the domestic discourse of the relations, affecting individual policy makers, the policy-making process, and policy decisions, as discussed previously.

A vivid example is Schröder's re-election campaign in 2002 and his polling boost he received by rejecting the United States' military campaign in Iraq. Another example is Merkel's refugee dilemma and the related drop in her and her party's support ratings in the mid-2010s. However, the impact of public opinion on the Germany-China relations is difficult to estimate. Chapter 7 presents a detailed analysis of German sentiments on China, and on China's perceived role for Germany. The impressive economic development of the relations presented in Chapter 4 indicates that German public's substantially negative sentiments towards China had little effect on putting the blooming political relations at risk. One

interviewee³⁶ suggested that there was no need for the Chinese leadership to “quarrel about the small things” such as German public opinion. This research finds that the same can be said about the German leadership: public opinion towards China did not appear to have much of an impact on Germany’s China actorness, and indeed its most senior policy makers, between 1998 and 2017.

German media did not have a substantially better view on China than the German public. Such correlation is perhaps no surprise, and therefore Chapter 7.2 provides an overview of academic and policy circle views on the topic as well as primary research findings. They suggest that an often one-sided coverage within the media existed.

However, despite of a negative opinion and coverage of China, the question remains to what an extent these factors impacted German actorness. By assessing them via the three themes of economic interest, ignorance, and trust, Chapter 7.4 shows a divergence between the themes. It finds that societal level factors had limited (negative) impact due to their indirect nature.

3.5 Key Themes

The three themes – economic interest, ignorance, and trust – should not be seen as methodological underpinnings of the analytical framework, but instead as guides to make sense of, and identify the evolution of, the German foreign policy decision-making process towards China. They materialised and became tangible throughout the research process, emerging in academic literature, policy-related pieces, and undertaken research interviews alike. They made their way into the title of this thesis due to their sheer relevance for understanding German policy development decisions towards China.

It is easy to misunderstand the underlying notion of these themes without conceptualisation. All three terms may be interpreted very differently, and indeed misinterpreted, depending on the context. Without getting ahead of the explanation

³⁶ Shared by interviewee #14.

below, it is important to note that ignorance and trust are closely intertwined in their conceptualisation for this thesis, and that they are used in a specific context. There is no intention for either of these terms to have a pejorative connotation.

The analytical chapters 5 to 7 each refer to these three themes and specifically show how they fit into the discussion of factors' influence at FPA's different levels of analysis, and how they relate to the research findings on the construction of Germany's strategy to China. As discussed more in the conclusion, the potential of these three themes is immense for future research. The following provides conceptualisations of the three themes for the purpose of this study.

3.5.1 Economic Interest

The economic interest theme as part of this research is used as an umbrella term, referring to economic and commercial interest in a wider sense. This includes the German federal government's foreign trade and economic policies, commercial interest by sectors, and even individual companies, and financial flows such as investments.

In short, China's influence for the German economy is hard to understate. German imports from China increased seven-fold from 1998 to 2017 while its exports increased 15-fold (Eurostat 2018). To put this into perspective, Germany-China trade accounted for about 28% of EU28-China trade in 2017, more than tripling the UK or France in value. Similarly, investment flows in both directions increased significantly over the same time frame, e.g. German investments in China 40-fold and their revenues 38-fold (Bundesbank 2018). Despite of these impressive numbers, economic interest lobbying towards German protectionism, limiting China's ability to invest in German companies, and calls for a level playing field in China, have been voiced for prolonged periods. Since Germany's KUKA was bought by the Chinese Midea group, such efforts yielded some success from the mid-2010s onwards.

Considering the enormous importance of economic and commercial interests for Germany's relations with China, both as a partner and as a competitor, the following

chapter (4.4) provides a detailed overview about trade flows, investment, and overall relevance of the Chinese market and Chinese businesses for the German economy. Although some of the analysis presented there could have been incorporated into the analytical chapters 5 to 7, the matter of economic interests and concerns deserved its own space to better show its relevance in a comprehensive manner.

3.5.2 Ignorance

Ignorance is a divisive term. It is commonly used in line with laziness, naivety, or simple-mindedness. Linguistically, the Cambridge Dictionary defines ignorance as a “lack of knowledge, understanding, or information about something” (Cambridge Dictionary 2021). Smithson correctly pointed out that “anyone referring to ignorance cannot avoid making claims to know something about who is ignorant of what” (Smithson 2008, p. 211). This shows that the term needs to be used particularly carefully in an academic setting, with its conceptualisation being essential.

There have been multiple attempts to conceptualise ignorance in the social sciences as well as in a broad range of disciplines. Within the realm of ignorance studies, scholars proposed a range of taxonomies on ignorance. For instance, two of the most popular definitions of the term consider whether ignorance is seen as a *lack of knowledge*, or as the *absence of knowledge*, also called *non-knowledge* within the field³⁷.

For the purpose of this research, ignorance equals the *lack of knowledge* definition, i.e. a privation. When discussing ignorance in the following chapters, the notion of ignorance relates to “a state where something is missing that *should* be there” (Haas and Vogt 2015, p. 18). More specifically, the term ignorance refers to the lack of, or limited, China knowledge, or the lack of, or limited, acknowledgement and understanding of China’s significance for German interests in the assessment of factors. Particularly the analytical chapters six (bureaucratic level) and seven (societal level), the role of a lack of knowledge of China, and of the

³⁷ Cf. the edited books by Proctor and Schiebinger (2008) as well as Gross and McGoey (2015). See Smithson (2008) for a discussion on the taxonomies of ignorance. For *non-knowledge*, also see Böschen and Wehling (2004) as a starting point.

effects and consequences for the bilateral decisions, are highlighted. Foreign policy decision-making requires a certain level of understanding of your counterpart, especially from a strategic perspective. This includes both macro and micro terms, and beyond the aggregation of mere political, economic, cultural, or historic facts. A lack, or limitation, of ‘China knowledge’ in relation to the role and nature of the assessed factor, is thus referred to as ignorance.

3.5.3 Trust

Trust is a multi-faceted concept and sits at the junction between a wide range of subject areas with a multitude of underlying theories and frameworks in many contexts³⁸. As such, there are many approaches for incorporating trust into the analysis of Germany’s relations with China. For instance, organisational psychologists Shapiro, Sheppard and Cheraskin (1992) based their trust concept on deterrence-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust, covering rational, experiential, and value-based considerations. Their model alone could provide an analytical framework for researching the bilateral relations – or, indeed, any relationship.

Instead of using such a comprehensive framework to assess the specific relations or other aspects of German foreign policy³⁹, in this thesis the term *trust* refers to the liberal notion of *Ostpolitik/change through rapprochement*, combined with the *Wandel durch Handel/change through trade* notion. Its specific definition is somewhat fuzzy and relates to the optimistic, perhaps also naive, notion of faith that things will work out. *Trust* therefore aims at encapsulating Germany’s belief that close economic and political cooperation with China in combination with good-spirited communication would lead to positive (liberal) change in terms of value systems. Eventually, this would be expected to foster peace and collaboration across borders, and eventually to bring China closer to the Western global order/Germany – or at least not causing additional conflict. Although it can be a response to structural

³⁸ Cf. Gambetta (1988), Uslaner (2018), and Zmerli and van der Meer (2017). Within international relations, Rathbun (2018) and Brewer, Gross, and Vercellotti (2018) provide recent insights.

³⁹ See, for instance, Yoder (2016) work on trust-building.

changes, trust is inherently an agency-based characteristic, fitting the wider conceptual framework of the thesis nicely.

In general, trust is closely linked to the ignorance theme in this thesis and therefore discussed together. Although knowledge about ‘the other’ may not be a necessary prerequisite for trust in this case, an adequate understanding of Chinese political and economic realities, whatever they may be, would enhance chances of successful cooperation and progression in the sense of the trust theme introduced in this section. As such, the thesis considers the themes of ignorance and trust in direct relation to each other when assessing factors’ abilities in constructing German foreign policy. This is also discussed in the broader sense of the first theme of economic interest.

Chapter 4: An Overview of the Germany-China Relationship and a Review of the Current Debate

Following the discussion of conceptual approaches to study German Foreign Policy and a review of the Germany decision making trajectory and its actorness, this chapter furthers the debate to set the foundation for the following analytical chapters with an overview of the historic relations between Germany and China, the significance of their economic ties and the existing academic debate surrounding the relationship.

It begins with a chronological list of major milestones of the Germany-China relationship to provide a contextual timeline for the later discussion. To complement the following analysis chapters' examination of the 1998-2017 time frame, this chapter includes a background analysis of the relationship prior to 1998. Given the dominating impact of trade and economic interest, the contextual review continues with a closer examination of the economic implication of the relationship from 1998 to 2017. At the end of this chapter, a review of current literature on Germany-China relationship is provided to highlight the contextual and methodological limitations within the current debates, which further reinforces the value of and the need for a comprehensive and agency-oriented analysis as this piece is designed to achieve.

4.1 Milestones of the Germany-China Relations

Year	Event
1949	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The German Democratic Republic (GDR) recognises the People's Republic of China
1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China's Mao Zedong declares the end of the state of war between the GDR and China Principle agreement between the GDR and China on friendship and cooperation
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDR leadership sides with Soviet Union in the Soviet-Chinese conflict
1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese government provides unrestricted approval for building the Berlin Wall
1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade agreement talks between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and China in Bern fail
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRG-China relations are established
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of a first trade deal between FRG and China
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRG banks provide an 18 billion Deutsche mark loan commitment for Deng's Modernisation plans
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRG-China bilateral investment protection treaty signed Volkswagen starts car production in Shanghai
1985/86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDR-China agreement on long-term economic and technical cooperation
1989, June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDR leadership supports Chinese government's approach to protests FRG parliament strongly condemns it. Sanctions put into place
1989, November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese party media criticises Kohl's plan for German confederation
1990, October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese government declares its pleasure with German re-unification
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germany ends 1989-initiated sanctions (except arms, with the EU arms embargo still being in place)

1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany develops its ‘Concept for Asia’ (Asien-Konzept) which includes China • German business’ Asia-Pacific Committee (Asien-Pazifik-Ausschuss) is established
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Parliament passes resolution criticising the Chinese government’s stance on Tibet. Chinese diplomatic protests
2000, June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the bilateral Rule of Law Dialogue
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China becomes Germany’s most important Asian trade partner • Germany develops its second ‘Concept for Asia’ (Asien-Konzept) including a volume on East Asia
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schröder and Wen declare their partnership in global responsibility
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the five-time annual Germany-China ‘Dialogforum’ (made continuous in 2010) •
2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated tensions related to Tibet and the 14th Dalai Lama
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany-China strategic dialogue announced
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly bilateral government consultations headed by the head of governments are established
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany-China comprehensive strategic partnership announced
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German robotics company KUKA acquired by Chinese Midea Group

Table 1: Milestones of the Germany-China Relations

Main sources: Schmidt and Heilmann (2012, p. 163) & Sieren (2007)

4.2 Germany-China Development Prior to 1998

Although China⁴⁰ had not been completely unknown in Germany from the Middle Ages, and in particular from the Enlightenment period, the first trade endeavours followed the first Opium War in the 1840s and 1850s after France and Great Britain had forced China to open up several treaty ports. In 1859, the Prussian cabinet sent an expedition to China to establish formal trade relations. Only after further pressure from France and Great Britain, China agreed to start formal relations with Prussia (Cho and Crowe 2014a). During the 1860s, a German envoy travelled to China, a visit which was reciprocated by Chinese diplomats visiting Berlin. Soon thereafter, both sides, with several German states including Prussia representing Germany, engaged in intensified relations and eventually signed two commercial treaties during the 1880s (ibid). In the following decades, (arms) trade rose between both sides despite of strong political tensions, including the German seizure of Kiachow in Shandong province and further military action related to the Boxer movement up to the early twentieth century. Decades later, after the 1921 peace treaty following the First World War, and up to 1937, trade ties improved again before the German Reich eventually decided to stop trading with, and supporting China, and instead allied with Japan (ibid).

With the end of World War II and under the increasing grip of the Cold War, the German Democratic Republic established diplomatic relations with China just weeks thereafter. Tompkins suggests that China “became an inspiring symbol to East German communists throughout the 1950s” (Tompkins 2014, p. 221) during which a range of diplomatic, cultural and educational visits between the two countries took place. However, with the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relations in the early 1960s, GDR officials suddenly started to “carefully [...] manage the sweeping transition from friend to foe” (Tompkins 2014, p. 222). As a result, the GDR-China relations deteriorated due to the close GDR-UDSSR ties up to German reunification (Meissner and Feege 1995; Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 674)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ In this section, *China* refers not only to the People’s Republic of China (established in 1949), but also to the Republic of China (1912 to 1949), and to the prior Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1911).

⁴¹ For further information on the relationship of the German Democratic Republic with China, see Meissner (1995), Schüller (2003), and Tompkins (2014).

The Federal Republic of Germany had had little contact to the mainland Chinese government until China's opening-up efforts bore fruit in the 1970s. While some efforts were made to understand the role that China played in the Cold War, information were difficult to obtain (Gehrig 2014)⁴². However, China had not been completely ignored within the political sector. The perhaps most prominent example of this is the 1969 statement from Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger (1966 to 1969, CDU) "I only have to say China, China, China" ("Ich sage nur China, China, China", *Der SPIEGEL* 1969) as some form of vague warning of a "Red China" (Gehrig 2014, p. 234) and its future influence or threat towards West Germany. As such, developments in Beijing and its relations with Moscow were followed by the Western alliance. However, soon after China's entry into the United Nations, the Bonn-Beijing relations normalised in 1972 under Brandt, although Beijing had been critical of Brandt's Ostpolitik approach, improving West Germany's relations with the UDSSR (Garver 2016). While Germany's trade interests played a role back then already, the United States supported this move, believing it to increase additional pressure on the Soviet Union by closer cooperation with China (Garver 2016).

China fuelled domestic German criticism of Brandt's détente approach towards the Soviet Union by giving a platform to CDU and CSU leaders, at the time in the parliamentary opposition, with government representatives only playing a secondary role to them. Therefore, the first West German senior politician able to meet Chairman Mao in 1975 was Franz Joseph Strauß (Garver 2016), the CSU Chairman at the time, and not Helmut Schmidt (SPD), who had succeeded Brandt as Chancellor in 1974. As such, German politicians "struggled to decide whether Maoist China ultimately was a viable partner or political opponent" (Gehrig 2014, p. 235).

Since China's 1978-introduced open door policies, however, the initial relations were largely harmonious and facilitated by the "massive, protracted, and unexpected economic upsurge" (Brandt and Rawski 2008, p. 11) that followed, Brandt later argued. Then Chancellor Schmidt also supported this shift as he became fascinated

⁴² For more information on the 1949-1972 period, see Gehrig (2014).

with China over time and visited the country many times, including several trips after he left office. He developed close relationships with multiple generations of Chinese leaders, culminating in Xi Jinping thanking Schmidt “for opening the ‘big door of cooperation’ between China and Germany” (Sieren 2015, p. 3) in 2014, and China’s CCTV calling Schmidt “an old friend of the Chinese people” (Sieren 2015, p. 2) after Schmidt’s death in 2015. Sieren, a leading German China expert and journalist, believes that “[a]longside Henry Kissinger, Helmut Schmidt is the foreign politician who dealt most intensely with China” (Sieren 2015, p. 2). Although Schmidt’s influence on the Germany-China relations is difficult to quantify, he certainly helped to ease tensions and brought leaders from both countries together well after his Chancellorship had ended – including post-1998 relations.

One roadblock in the bilateral relations prior to 1998 were the events that led to, and included, the Tiananmen incident in June 1989. These caused a strong temporary backlash by Germany and the EEC, including economic sanctions and an arms embargo. While the condemnation by the German government went on for a while and included multiple debates within the German federal parliament⁴³, European-wide economic sanctions were lifted in 1991/92 (Heilmann 2007). Within the German political sector, this had initially caused some re-thinking of the role of China and Germany’s engagement with it, but appeared to lose momentum with the shift in focus on German reunification and the aftermath of the Soviet Union collapse in the years ahead. Economic interests prevailed (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012), and Kohl’s *Concept for Asia* (Bundesregierung 1993) from 1993 illustrates this. It addressed an increasing shift in economic and political power towards Asia and highlighted the opportunities of the opening of Asian markets for German businesses. China appeared to be the main target of German foreign trade policy efforts, although other countries such as India, Japan and the Asian tiger states had been mentioned frequently (ibid). One surprisingly pragmatic paragraph aimed at intensifying public relations efforts in Asian countries while it also suggested to Germany’s domestic media to increase the coverage of Asia – with the primary goal of improving trade and business links (Bundesregierung 1993, p. 9). Going hand in hand with this concept, German business associations also founded the Asia-Pacific

⁴³ See e.g. Deutscher Bundestag (1990).

Committee of German Business (APA) which provides a high-level dialogue forum for business association representatives and a close link to the German government (see Chapters 3 and 6).

Regarding the trade relations between the two countries, Germany-China trade had been limited and accounted for less than 1% of the annual total German trade volume until 1979 (Destatis 2018). However, from the early 1980s onwards, in particular export values increased and the 1989 Tiananmen incident did not significantly curb trade. Instead, trade between the two countries took off in the early 1990s with the total trade volume accounting for about six billion Euro in 1990. This number almost tripled to close to 18 billion Euro in 1998 (Destatis 2018) – yet, this was only foreshadowing the tremendous rise in trade volume discussed below.

4.3 China's Economic Significance for Germany

As mentioned in the thematic conceptualisation in Chapter 3 and in the following analytical chapters, economic interest represents one of the three major aspects that have shown high relevance to define Germany's relationship with China and have also intensified throughout the aimed 1998-2017 period. Given its significance for the relationship, this section provides a more detailed analysis of the implication of trade and investment to the development of the relationship, which serves as a necessary contextual foundation to construct analysis in later chapters. The following pages could have been part of the main analytical chapters, but dividing this information between bureaucratic and domestic levels, and even the individual level, would have caused a lack of clarity and added unneeded complexity. Instead, Chapters 5 to 7 feature an analysis of the developments within the theme of economic interest, based on the data presented here, aiming to assess economic interest not on itself, but to gauge its relevance for Germany's actorness and its practice of agency in the policy making process.

To support such endeavour, the following pages provide an overview of the quantitative realities of the German-Chinese trade and investment relationship. It finds that trade as well as investment volumes grew spectacularly within the

assessed 19-year period. Germany became China's primary trading partner in Europe during this time and, overall, played a far superior economic role to China than other European economies. As an example, in both 1998 and 2017, Germany's total trade with China roughly equalled the total China-trade of the UK, France and Italy combined (Eurostat 2018). This strength in trading volume put German companies in a prime position for investments in China and increased opportunities to attract Chinese greenfield and M&A investments. While German companies in China complained about difficulties with market access, competition, intellectual property protection and more for decades, what changed German sentiments towards investment cooperation with China were Chinese investments into iconic or promising (technology) companies in Germany in 2016/17. Its response was a shift in tone, highlighting protectionism and initial actions to raise foreign investment barriers for certain sectors. Despite of Beijing's protest, this did not have a significant effect on the strong upward trajectory of the economic relations until the end of Merkel's third term in October 2017, though.

To put the below information on German-Chinese trade and investment into perspective, it is important to consider the key characteristics of both economies- and in particular the German one. The advanced industrialised German economy was coined a *coordinated market economy (CME)* by Hall and Soskice (2001) and is referred to in Germany as a *social market economy (soziale Marktwirtschaft)*. In short, German economic policies aim at combining economic liberalism with protective measures for its citizens, such as providing more extensive welfare policies, stronger bargaining powers for unions, and to foster a more collaborative relationship between economic actors compared to traditional market economies. German industry generally focuses on specialisation based on extensive training leading to the production of high-quality manufacturing goods and largely consists of SMEs (*Mittelstand*) as the fundamental core of the economy and key economic driver – even if it is usually the big German corporations that make foreign policy headlines during delegation visits (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012, p. 157). Over time, and in particular in the past two decades, Germany, with a population of about 83 million in 2017, became a major exporting nation, partially as a result of policy changes under Schröder and eventually Merkel. The term of *world export champion (Exportweltmeister)* has rarely been absent from German trade-related debates in the

mid to late 2000s and was often used and seen as a badge of honour for the German economy⁴⁴. In particular vehicles, industrial machinery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals were popular export goods (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018a).

This sub-chapter first provides an overview about the economic realities in Germany during the relevant time frame. The next part then provides the actual trade values of Germany-China trade, demonstrating how Chinese exports to Germany increased seven-fold from 1998 to 2017 and how Germany has become China's primary European importer of goods (Eurostat 2018). Far more importantly, it also addresses Germany's outstanding export record to China with its exports having increased almost 15-fold during the same period. Between 2000 and 2017, Germany's share of EU28⁴⁵ exports to China rose from 38% to 44%. In 2017, the runner-up 'European Export Champion' was the UK with close to 10% (Eurostat 2018). German exports to China accounted for close to half of the total EU-wide export trade with China involving all of its 28 member states at the time. Due to Germany's undeniable export-strength it was also the by far biggest overall Chinese trading partner in the EU with more than twice the UK-Chinese trade volume and provided close to 28% of the EU28-China trade in 2017 (Eurostat 2018). These numbers alone demonstrate the dominant position Germany had taken in European Union trade with China and makes it less surprising that Beijing would often call Berlin prior to Brussels on trade-related matters (Kundnani and Parello-Plesner 2012)⁴⁶.

Such discussion of trade volume is then followed by addressing bilateral investment data, opportunities, and issues. China became an important destination for German investment abroad, but German companies also faced various difficulties, for instance regarding market entry and discrimination, over time. Similarly, China started to more actively invest abroad during the 2000s and 2010s

⁴⁴ Cf. Horn (2010) for an overview of existing paradigms on trade surplus in the debates inside Germany.

⁴⁵ The denomination of EU28 and EU19 indicators relates to the total size of the economy considering the amount of member states at different stages of the EU enlargement process. In other words, the EU19 value for 2017 refers to the aggregated values of the original EU19 member states in 2017. This makes it easier to compare statistics in relative terms.

⁴⁶ This was also suggested by interviewee #15.

and an increasing amount of Chinese money found its way to Germany. While there was much talk about the potential issues of such investments, primarily relating to technology transfer, intellectual property rights/theft and eroding employment standards, positive experiences far outweighed these concerns and Chinese investments did save or strengthen traditional German SMEs (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013). At the end of the covered time period, following the takeover of German robotics firm KUKA by the Chinese Media Group, Sigmar Gabriel, the German Economics Minister at the time, started to push for legislation for safeguarding core German industries from Chinese investment – a move that had long been discussed, but never executed. Needless to say, it met severe criticism by the Chinese as well as parts of the German business community, worrying about their China business.

This sub-chapter concludes with relating the trade and investment relationship to the political relations between the two countries in a more general sense. Germany's reactive political stance was also evident with regard to its economic relations. Yet, the German and Chinese economies complemented each other rather well for the first two-thirds of the relevant time period: Germany was in need of export markets for its manufacturing goods while China required both imports and exports as well as German technology/high-quality industrial goods to facilitate further economic development and move up in the value chain (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018a). In the latter third of the period it became clearer to German policy makers that China was going to become a major competitor for some of Germany's key sectors. With its initial *Going Global* trade strategy and its *Made in China 2025* industrial strategy thereafter, China was set on a path where it would eventually further collide with German economic interests – or so German businesses and policy makers believed (BDI 2019).

4.3.1 Economic Realities in Context

This section puts German 1998 to 2017 economic data, with special reference to trade with China, into perspective, comparing it with Germany's main European economic competitors, i.e. France, Italy and the UK. The purpose of this comparison is not to opening up this thesis' assessment to the European level, but instead to

present an overview of the importance of China to the German economy by also comparing it to other major European countries.

The German Economy

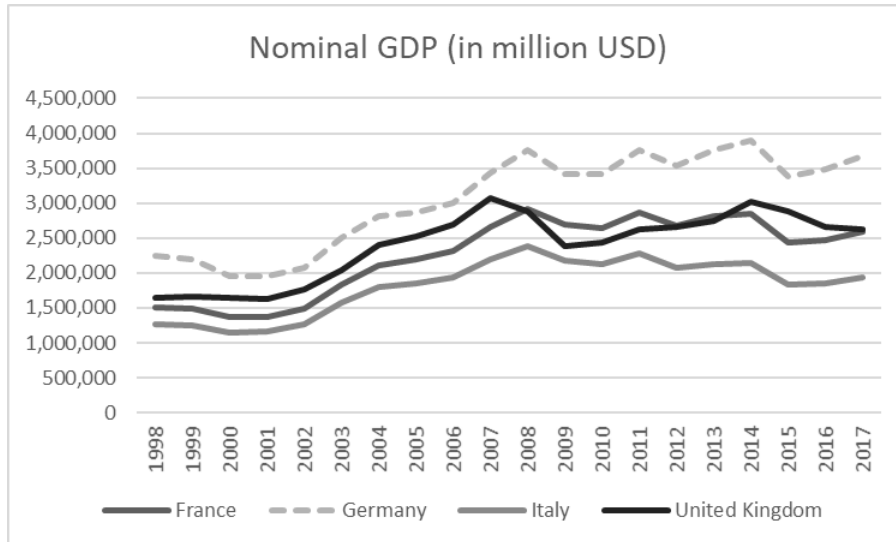


Figure 3: Nominal GDP of Selected Countries (in million USD)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

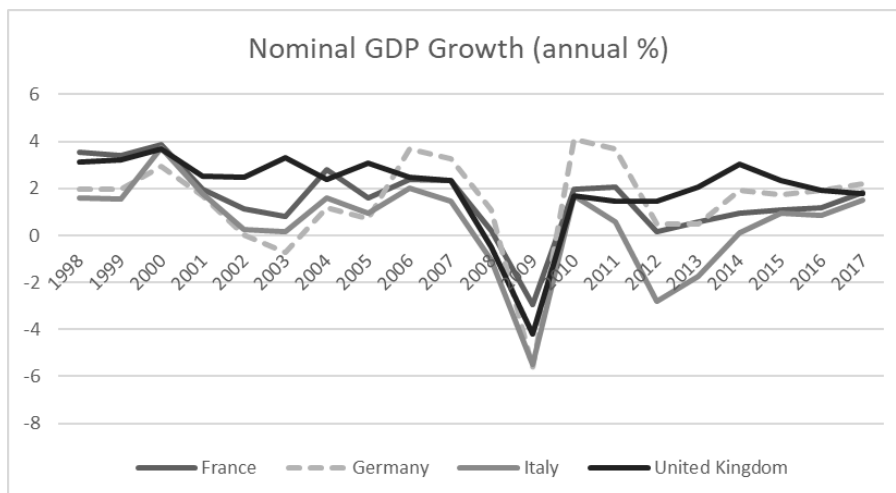


Figure 4: Nominal GDP Growth of Selected Countries (annual %)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

The German economy was the third/fourth largest economy in the world during the 1998 to 2017 time frame and only trailed the US and Japanese economies until 2007 before it was overtaken by the Chinese economy afterwards. It was therefore the largest economy in the EU and its growth path did not divert drastically from other major European economies throughout the time frame – apart from having

fared better through the Eurozone Crisis (Figures 3 and 4). The growth uptick in 2010 and 2011 as well as the reduced growth in 2012 and 2013 can in part be attributed to the increased trade volume with China which is examined later. Figure 5 further exemplifies that trade played a role in stabilising the German economy around 2010: while Germany was the number two trading nation – and leading export nation (*'Exportweltmeister'*) – for the first half of the discussed period, its total goods and services trade volume steadily increased up to 2008 and then by and large remained at similar levels from 2010 to 2017 (World Bank 2018).



Figure 5: Total Goods & Services Trade of Selected Countries (in million USD)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

However, the data in Figure 6 suggests that Germany's exports relied on goods to more than 80%. Despite of this number having decreased from 86% in 1998 to 82% in 2017 (ibid), it still remained the highest goods to services export ratio of any major advanced economy in 2017, only to be closely followed by Italy and Japan (ibid). Considering the special characteristics of the German economy, i.e. the abundance of highly specialised manufacturing SMEs and a focus on quality as part of the CME framework explored above, a high export to services ratio is hardly a surprise. Still, it shows an important distinction from the French and British economies and provides an insight into why China imported more from Germany than, say, the UK.

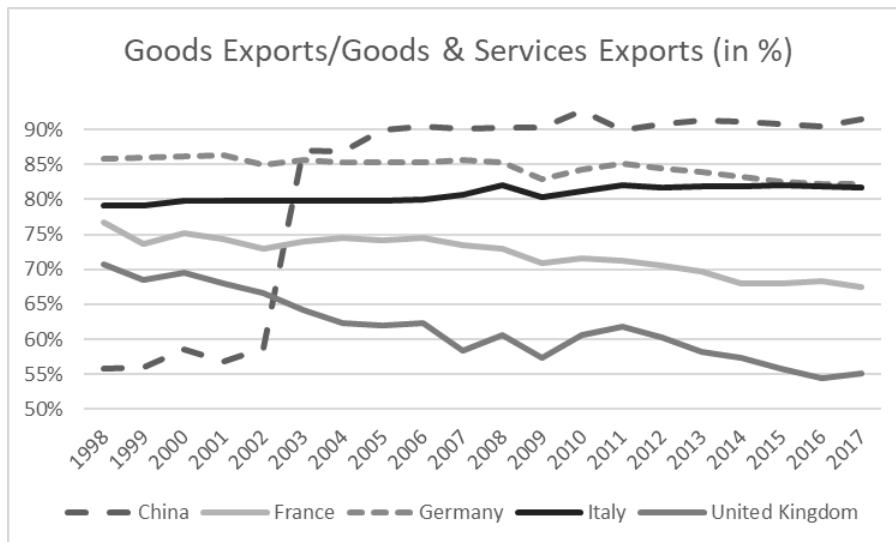


Figure 6: Goods Exports to Goods & Services Exports Ratio of Selected Countries (annual %)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

It is perhaps unsurprising that Germany’s trade balance sheets displayed an imbalance between imports and exports. Germany’s economy featured the largest or second largest annual global trade surplus from 1998 throughout 2017 and was often criticised for it by foreign governments, in particular the United States with its large trade deficit, in the second half of that time period (Horn et al. 2010). Many economic indicators can be put forward to point at reasons for this, e.g. the added value of manufacturing to GDP ratio (about 20%) or the relation between medium and high-tech exports to total exports (about 72%) in 2010 – both indicators were highest for either the German and Japanese economies which led before other advanced economies in these indicators by a large margin World Bank (2018). Or, to put the above in another way, the German economy heavily relied on its manufacturing exports for economic prosperity and its goods have been highly sought after abroad.

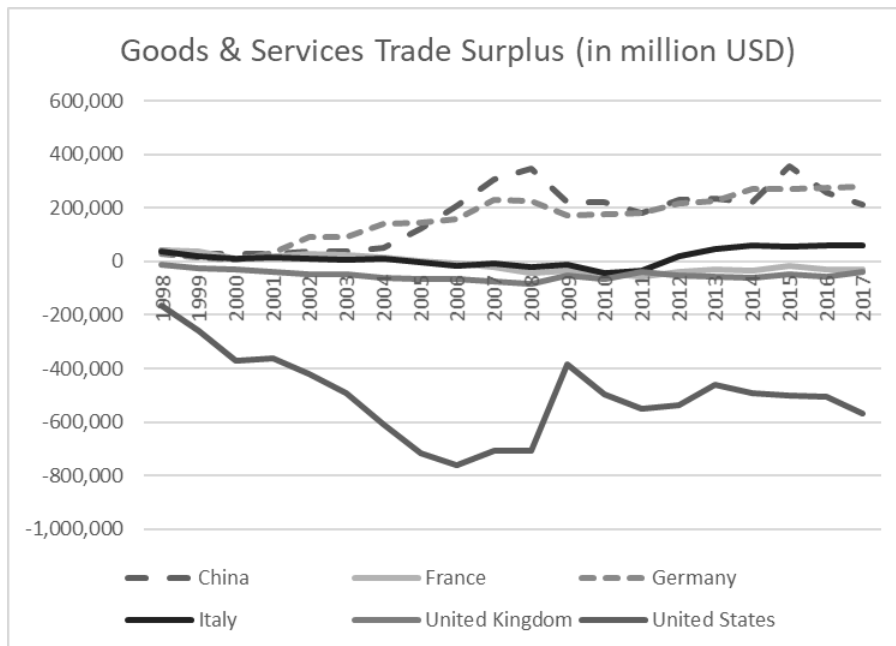


Figure 7: Goods & Services Trade Surplus of Selected Countries (in million USD)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

Flourishing foreign trade was of vital importance for the German economy during this period. While this was already the case under Kohl’s Chancellorship, the reliance – or dependence (Hauschild et al. 2015) – on trade and in particular on exports increased dramatically under Schröder and Merkel. Schröder’s initial decision to improve the condition of the German economy by boosting exports, and later on reforming Germany’s social welfare sector including the decrease of labour costs, did work at least in this regard. Germany’s total trade of goods and services almost tripled from about 1.16 trillion USD in 1998 to more than 3.2 trillion USD in 2017 (Figure 5). This is further exemplified when considering the total exports to GDP ratio (Figure 8) and total trade to GDP ratio (Figure 9). In 2017, both ratios were far above the ones of other major advanced economies (at least 21 points and 12 points respectively). This proves that the German economy relied heavily on exports (of goods) which in turn strongly influenced foreign policy making as shown in the following chapters.

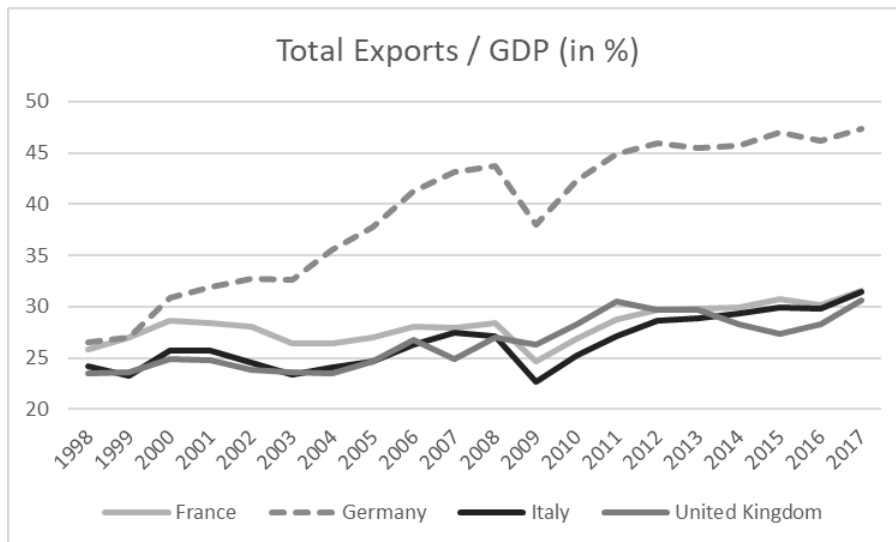


Figure 8: Total Exports to GDP of Selected Countries (annual %)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

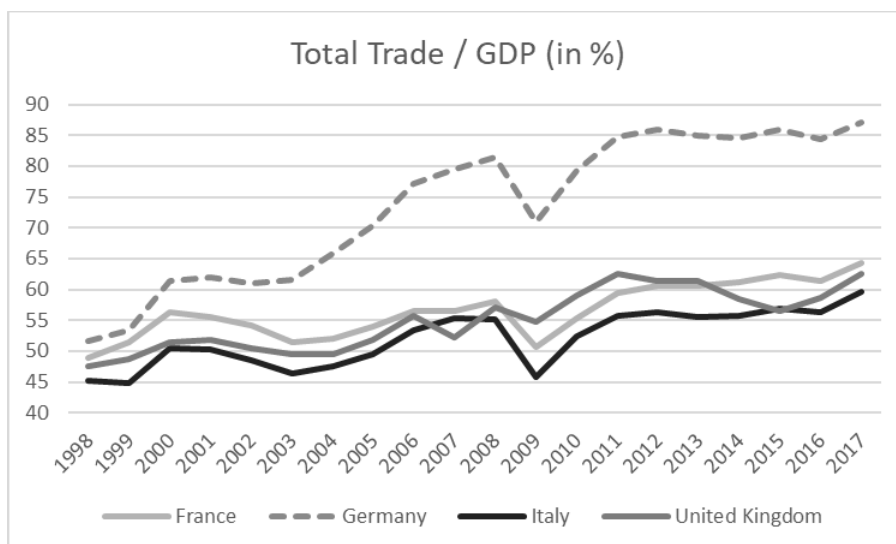


Figure 9: Total Trade / GDP of Selected Countries (annual %)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

The Chinese Economy

Although this thesis focuses on the German side of the bilateral relations with China, the following couple of paragraphs briefly outline Chinese economic development in the relevant time frame for additional context.

China's economy and trade activities were in flux since the 1970s and its gradual opening-up policies that followed, including the crucial accession to the WTO in 2001. China's share of global trade rose from about 4% to 12% between 2001 and

2013 (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018a). China had been in a transitive state as an emerging economy throughout the whole time period of this thesis. While regions on its Eastern coast and in China's Southeast were highly developed for mainland Asian standards, other provinces, in particular in the Western part of the country, could still be considered as least developed areas based on economic indicators in 2007 (Naughton 2007) and well thereafter. Still, China's continued high economic growth, albeit it growth deceleration from about 2008 onwards (Figure 10), and international trade values, with an ever-increasing trendline (Figure 11) in the past two decades, were impressive and provide a good indication of the economic power the country with a population of about 1.4 billion possessed during the time.

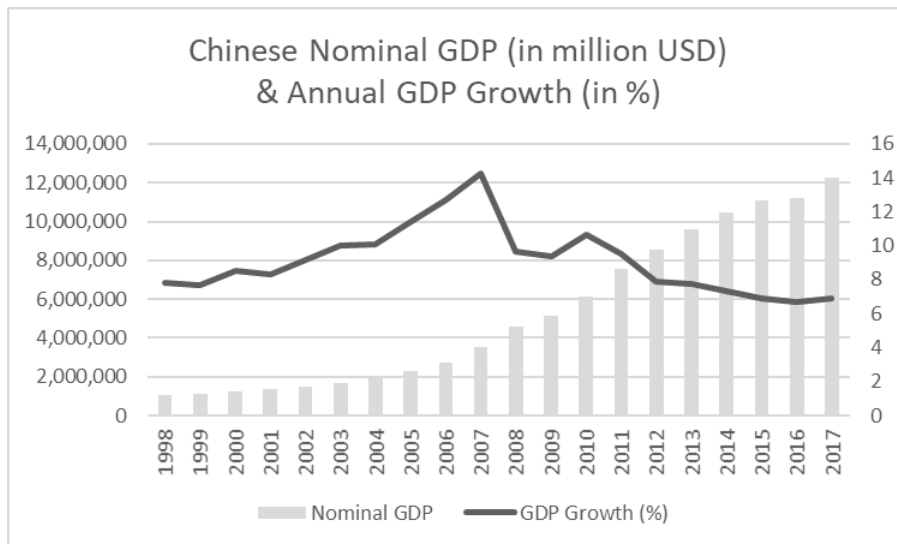


Figure 10: Chinese Nominal GDP (in million USD) & Annual GDP Growth (annual %)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

Figures 5, 6 and 7 above show that China became the biggest global trading nation in the late 2000s, generating a major trade surplus by exporting more than it imported. Furthermore, the Chinese economy almost exclusively exported goods with a goods export to total export ratio of well above 90%, an export trade volume of about 2.4 trillion USD, and import trade volume of about 2.2 trillion USD in 2017 (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Chinese and German Exports and Imports in 2017 (in million USD)

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

In short, Germany and China both featured one of the biggest global economies and were very reliant on trade throughout the 1998 to 2017 years. The composition of trade goods amongst other things did differ widely, though, as is discussed in the following sub-chapter.

4.3.2 Germany-China Trade Ties

As discussed earlier on (Chapter 4.2), West Germany had little formal contact to the Chinese government until China's 1970s opening up efforts took place. Once China had begun opening its economy up, Germany was not particularly quick to move and to facilitate trade as German-Chinese trade accounted for less than 1% of the annual total German trade volume until 1979 (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018b). However, from the early 1980s onwards, especially export values increased quickly, and even the 1989 Tiananmen incident did not significantly curb trade. Instead, trade between the two countries took off in the early 1990s under Kohl with the total trade volume accounting for about six billion Euro in 1990 (Destatis 2018). This number almost tripled to close to 18 billion Euro in 1998 (ibid).

China's relevance for the German economy increased continuously from 1998 to 2017. The bilateral relations and trade flows already improved quickly under Kohl (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018b), but took off until Schröder when China started to play an increasing role for Germany's foreign trade statistics. In 1998, Germany

exported goods worth about six billion Euro to China. This number rose to almost seven billion Euro in 1999 and nine-and-a-half billion Euro in 2000. In this year the anticipation of China’s upcoming accession to the WTO in 2001 was high and the German export value rose each year in the next two decades (apart of a slight drop in 2015). In particular two aspects stand out when considering the 19-year period of this thesis. First, the overall increase in German exports to China. Since 1998, their value rose three-fold until 2003, almost six-fold until 2008, more than eleven-fold until 2013 and about 14.5-fold until 2017 (Destatis 2018). These are rather impressive numbers – in particular when compared to other major European economies as done in the section above.

Perhaps most intriguing is the change in exports from 2009 to 2010. While many countries were feeling the tight grip of the Global Financial Crisis at the time, German exports to China rose from about 37.3 billion Euro in 2009 to about 53.7 billion Euro in 2010, an about 44% increase within a single year, and part of China’s economic stimulus plan (Hauschild et al. 2015).



Figure 12: German Exports to China (in million Euro)

Source: GENESIS Statistical Database, Destatis (2018)

The above trade figures may appear somewhat abstract without putting them into context. Hence, these are compared further: to assess German exports in a more general sense; and to see how German exports fared compared to exports of other

countries. First, here is an overview of German exports in comparison to other European and non-European key trading partners' exports.

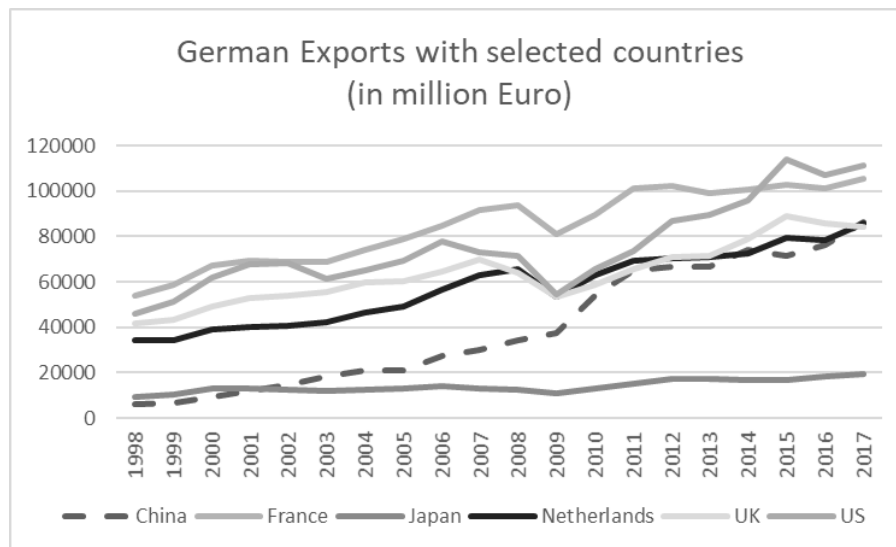


Figure 13: German Exports with Selected Countries (in million Euro)

Source: GENESIS Statistical Database, Destatis (2018)

It quickly becomes clear that although China was trailing the United States as much as major European economies when it comes to German exports, it kept catching up in total value as well as percentage values. Considering the nature of the European single market as well as the traditionally close trade ties with the US, China's demand of German goods had been influential.

Additionally, Figure 13 suggests that Germany exported significant value to the Netherlands. This can likely be attributed to the so-called Rotterdam effect: "Official statistics follow agreed conventions. [...] For international trade, the convention is that the first country of unloading, for exports, or the last country of loading, for imports, is considered the trading partner" (Williams 2011, p. 1). In other words, a certain part of exports arriving in the Netherlands (and other countries with major trading ports) are shipped elsewhere. As such, specific trade values should be taken with a grain of salt, including the ones presented in this chapter and thesis⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ This is also displayed by the, in part, vast differences in values available through statistical databases. Different organisations have different research methods and e.g. the official German export numbers from Germany's statistical office Destatis and from

How do German exports to China then fare compared to the exports of other European countries? In 1998, German exports to China had already the size of the Chinese exports of France, Italy and the UK combined. During the next 19 years, German exports increased by a pace that the other countries could not follow. Figure 14 below illustrates this well. By 2017, German exports had a value of about 1.75 times of the exports of the three above countries combined (Eurostat 2018).

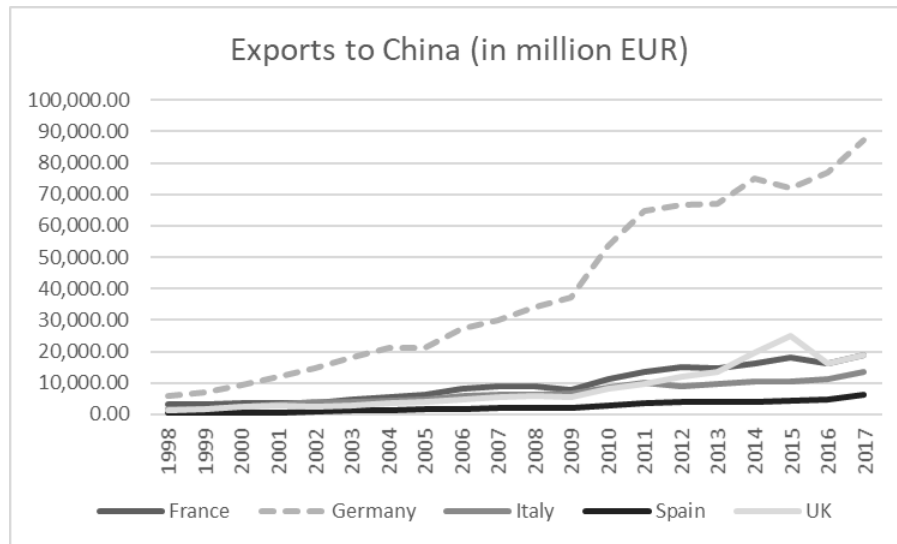


Figure 14: German Exports to China (in million Euro)

Source: Statistics Database, Eurostat (2018)

How does the data for imports from China compare? While it does not show the growth of exports, it overall still rose decisively. From about eleven billion Euro in 1998, Chinese exports to Germany rose about two-fold by 2003, about 4.7-fold by 2008, 5.3-fold by 2013 and 6.7-fold by 2017 (Eurostat 2018). Again, these numbers were compared to other major European economies above, but it is once more helpful to note that Germany was not only the number one source of European exports to China, but was also the European country importing most goods from China under Schröder as well as Merkel.

Eurostat of the European Union differ by several per cent at times. For this chapter, and thesis, the most ‘logical’ source for the consideration at hand was used, e.g. using German Destatis data on detailed German export data, while using Eurostat data on comparing European countries’ exports.

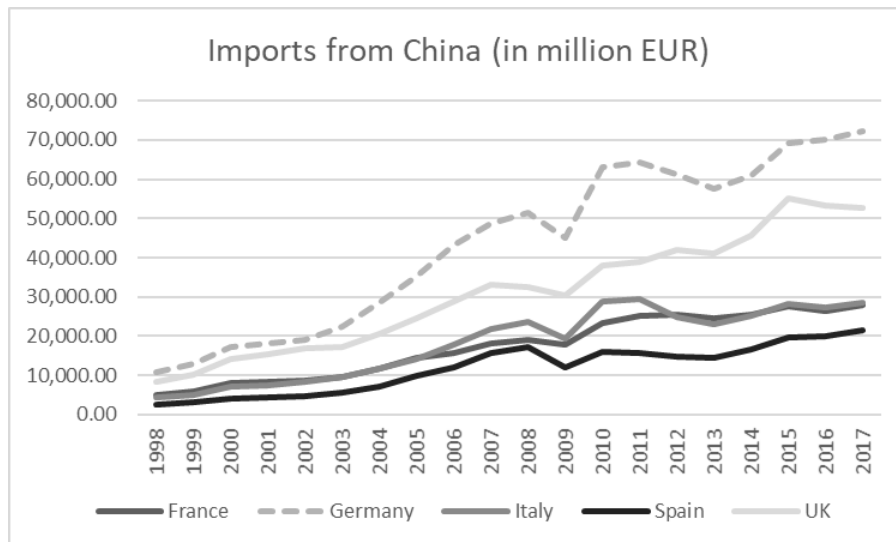


Figure 15: German Imports from China (in million Euro)

Source: Statistics Database, Eurostat (2018)

As such, Germany remained being china’s biggest European trading partner throughout the relevant period. The base of about 17 billion Euro in 1998 increased 2.4-fold by 2003, about 5-fold by 2008, about 7.4-fold by 2013, and about 9.4-fold by 2017. The European runner-up, the UK, did not even trade half as much with China as Germany did from 2006 to 2017.

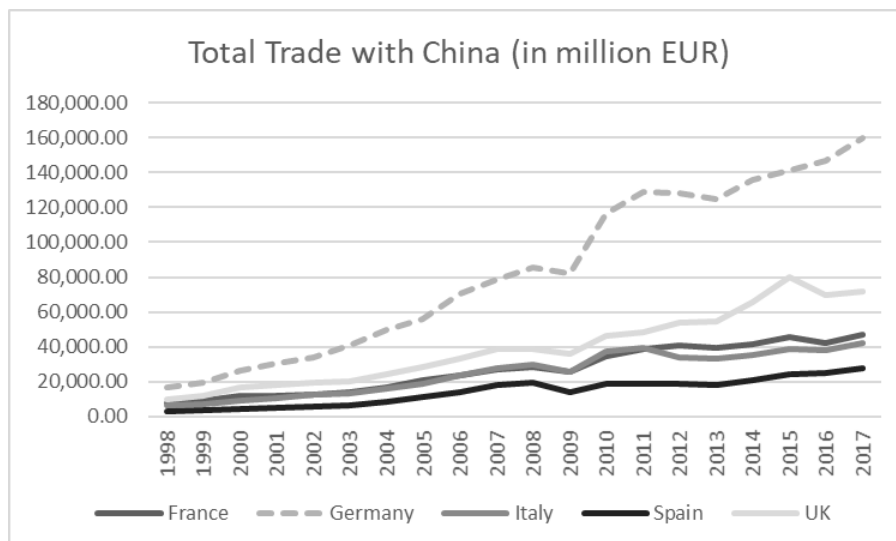


Figure 16: German Total Trade with China (in million Euro)

Source: Statistics Database, Eurostat (2018)

The above data already gives a good overview about the relevance of Germany for China, and China’s relevant for Germany when it comes to trade. However, two

more figures are worth considering to understand the full impact of German-Chinese trade for the German economy. First, Figure 17 offers a graphic representation of EU-China exports and how much of it belonged to Germany with the rest of the EU being split between the EU19 and the EU28 groups of member states. The German share of the EU28 rose from 36.6% in 2000 to 44% in 2017 (Eurostat 2018).

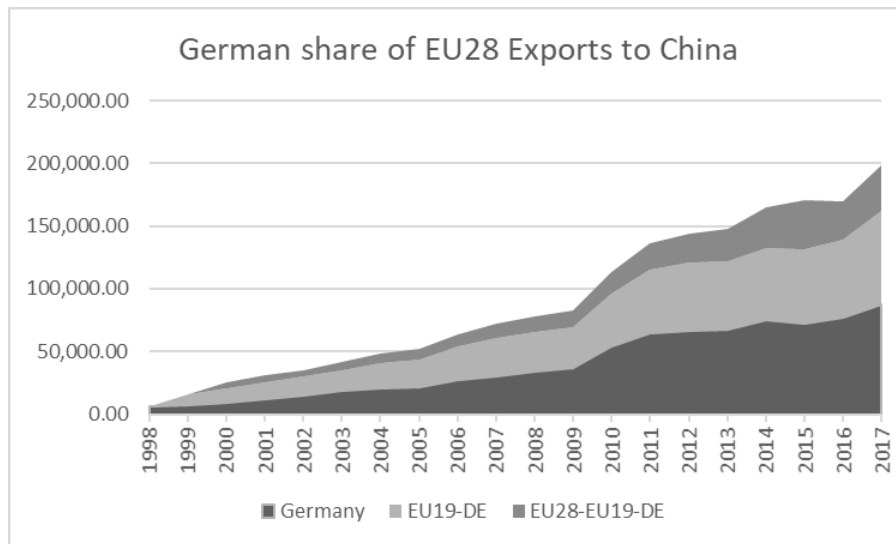


Figure 17: German Share of EU28 Exports to China (in million Euro)

Source: Statistics Database, Eurostat (2018)

Figure 18 compares Germany-China and Germany-US total trade in relation to the German total trade outside the European Union. It shows that both trade volumes converged up to 2009 and that China overtook the US as Germany's biggest non-EU trading partner for most years from 2009 onwards.

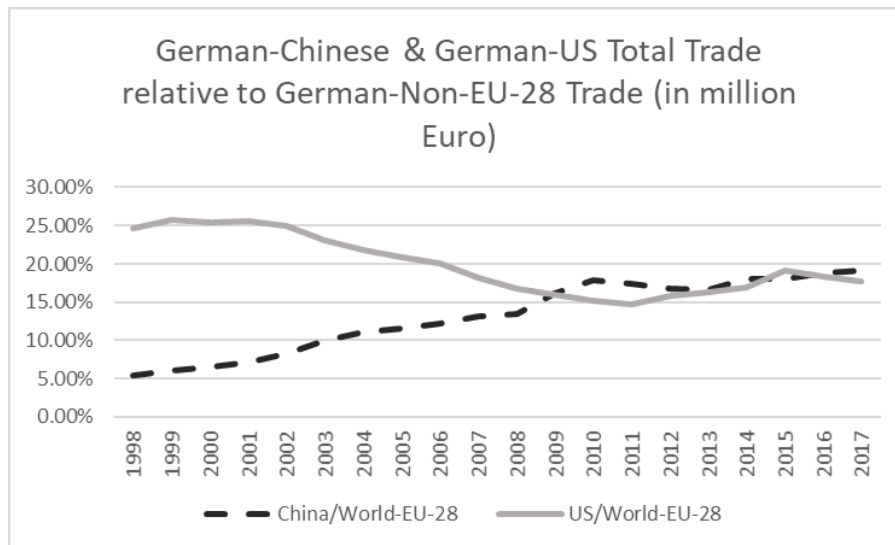


Figure 18: German-Chinese & German-US Total Trade Relative to German-Non-EU28 Trade (in million Euro)

Source: GENESIS Statistical Database, Destatis (2018)

When studying this economic data on German-Chinese trade it should prove useful to consider the *why*: why did the bilateral trade relationship flourish that much? Why did German-Chinese trade trump the China trade of European counterparts?

As discussed in the following chapters, Berlin expanded on its export-focused policies both under Schröder and Merkel. It became clear that Schröder did not particularly care whom to trade with as long as it led to results (see Chapter 5). In the case of Merkel, it is more difficult to say, but based on her background and likely normative values laid out in the next chapter, she would likely have preferred more intense trade with other countries. Still, trade and in particular exports mattered to both Chancellors enormously. China, on the other hand, was developing rather fast and also sought stable and scalable trade relationships. Germany, the 3rd/4th largest global economy, presented not just a large export market for China, but also a valuable source of high-quality manufacturing products to import. German products helped China to increase its capital stock and to improve its manufacturing potential both in quantitative as well as qualitative terms (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018a). As such, trade co-operation between the two countries fit well within their trade policy frameworks. As Hausschild et al (2015) argue and is quite obvious when looking at the above data, this led to an increasing dependence of German manufacturing exports to China as these cannot be substituted easily

(Schröder 2010). In other words, the German manufacturing industry – both major corporations and SMEs – relied to a high degree on continued demand from China.

4.3.3 Germany-China Investment

Another dimension of the economic relationship between the countries consists of commercial investments. This section offers a concise overview about both German companies' investments in China and Chinese companies' investments in Germany. Covering primarily mergers and acquisitions, greenfield investments⁴⁸, and in the case of the Chinese market joint ventures, commercial investments can be of high relevance to policy makers. To just highlight a couple of examples: on a domestic level, foreign acquisitions may challenge a country's technological leadership or generate security concerns, with KUKA's acquisition being a prime example; on a local level, greenfield investments create jobs and may level up the whole region, while mergers or acquisitions may save jobs (or threaten them). Furthermore, major companies investing abroad will often rely not only on their chamber of commerce but also their respective home government through lobbying at home and their embassies in the target countries. As such, investments are a crucial factor to consider for the policy trajectory of the bilateral Germany-China relations, although trade often receives the majority of attention.

German Investment in China

After German companies warmed up to China's opening-up strategy in the late 1970s/early 1980s, German industry quickly embraced a "China-Hype" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, p. 13). Over time, they learnt from difficulties surrounding commercial activity in China for foreign companies, and that business success in China required strategies different to other East Asian countries. In particular the issues of market access, free/fair competition and intellectual property considerations made it difficult for companies to compete in the earlier days and still posed issues throughout the assessed period as briefly outlined further below.

⁴⁸ A foreign company builds up a new operation in a target country from the ground up, possibly turning a *green field* into a commercial area.

Figure 19 provides an overview about the growth trajectory of German FDI to China and its share of German total outward FDI. The trajectory the figure shows is obvious: German investment into China continuously rose throughout the 1998 to 2017 period. When Schröder entered the Chancellery in 1998, German FDI to China accounted for about 3.1 billion Euro, and about 1% of Germany's total outward FDI. By 2005, these numbers had increased to 10.4 billion Euro and 1.6% world share respectively, including an increase from 301 to 673 billion Euro in total outward FDI. In other words, under Schröder, FDI to China more than tripled in absolute terms while overall FDI more than doubled. China was attracting more attention by German companies and investors fast at the time. Figure 19 also shows that the GFC and Eurozone Crisis did not have a major effect on the growth trajectory. Until 2016, i.e. until the last full year under Merkel's third term, German FDI to China had reached 77.4 billion Euro with a total German outward FDI of 1,490.1 billion Euro. China's share of overall German FDI rose from 1.6% in 2005 to 5.2% in 2016. As such, overall German FDI had more than doubled (220% increase) under Merkel while German FDI to China had risen 7.4-fold in the same time period (Bundesbank 2018). The relatively limited growth until the late 2000s were related to the constraints of operating in China mentioned above (Schüller 2008)⁴⁹. Over time, however, companies decided that Chinese market growth was too much of an opportunity to ignore, and revenue success stories became more widespread among the German business community (see below).

⁴⁹ See Schüller's 2008 extensive study on German companies' concerns regarding their activities in China.

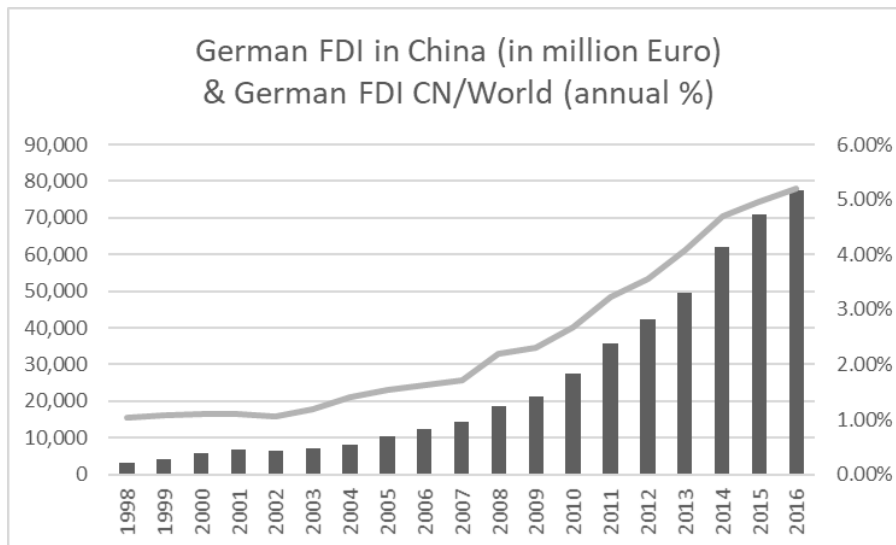


Figure 19: German FDI in China

Source: Statistics Database, Bundesbank (2018)

While these FDI growth numbers trailed German export growth, they do show that both economies became increasingly intertwined during the selected period. Considering the difficulties foreign companies had in accessing Chinese markets, part of the investments was made to accommodate trade and/or to manufacture goods in China by using joint ventures to circumvent these restrictions.

The following Figure 20 identifies the amount of German companies that operated in China⁵⁰. Their share rose from 486 in 1998 to 793 in 2005 to 2161 in 2016 and the share of German companies operating in China compared to the global numbers more than tripled from 1.7% in 1998 to 5.8% in 2016. This exemplifies the German economy's unique composition of a large SME sector. While the major German corporations, first and foremost active in the automotive sector, had a significant role in facilitating German reputation and trade with China, and made large profits in the process, the diverse SME sector drove the expansion to China during the Schröder and Merkel years (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013). After all, most of these registered companies were no one-person trading company, but, on average, a small- or mid-sized manufacturing company specialising in a few high-quality products (Lucks 2012).

⁵⁰ These are the formal numbers of registered German companies operating abroad by the German Central Bank. It is likely that the actual amount of companies operating in China, and globally, exceeds these numbers.

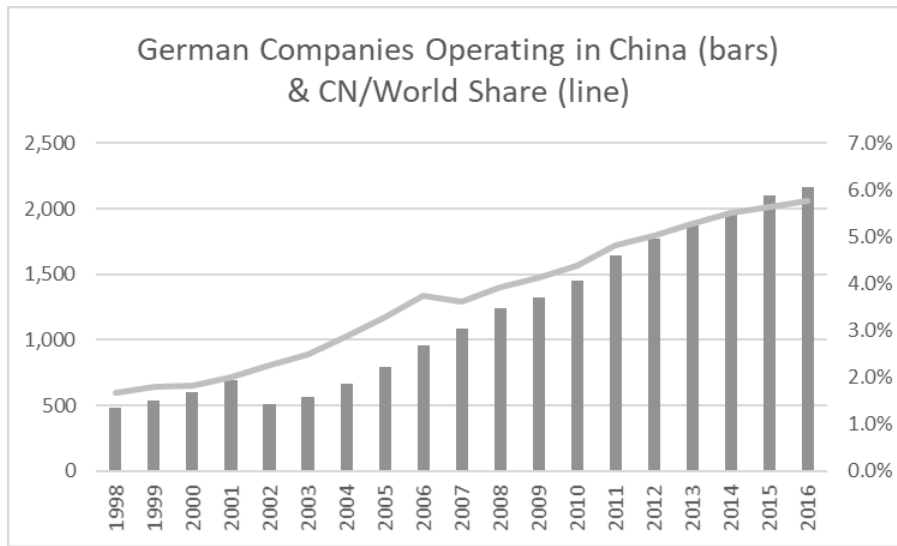


Figure 20: German Companies Operating in China (bars)

Source: Statistics Database, Bundesbank (2018)

Figure 21 and 22 offer additional information on how German companies fared during this time frame. German companies' total revenues were initially increasing from year to year, first on a more modest level, and later on dramatically well. Overall, they rose from 7.3 billion Euro in 2008 to 278.8 billion Euro in 2016 (Bundesbank 2018) which constitutes an almost 40-fold increase. At the same time, world share of China revenues for Germany rose from mere 0.8% in 1998 to 9.9% in 2016. In whatever way these numbers can be interpreted, two results cannot be denied. First, that the Chinese market proved to be very profitable for German companies, and second, that German dependence rose with German revenues. If up to 10% of all foreign revenue is generated in a single country, this country and its political situation matters to the host economy. The stark increase in revenue from around 2010 went hand in hand with the establishment of the bilateral government consultations in 2011 and affiliated dialogues which most likely led to resolving bureaucratic or political constraints foreign companies faced in China. Figure 22 gives some indication that the increase in German companies and revenue generated in China followed an overall sustainable pattern. As such, the numbers of employees rose steadily over time and very roughly resemble the trend of companies active in China with twice the growth rates. Hence, it appears that the companies active in China also expanded their activities in China over time, whether it was a manufacturing plant or a sales office.

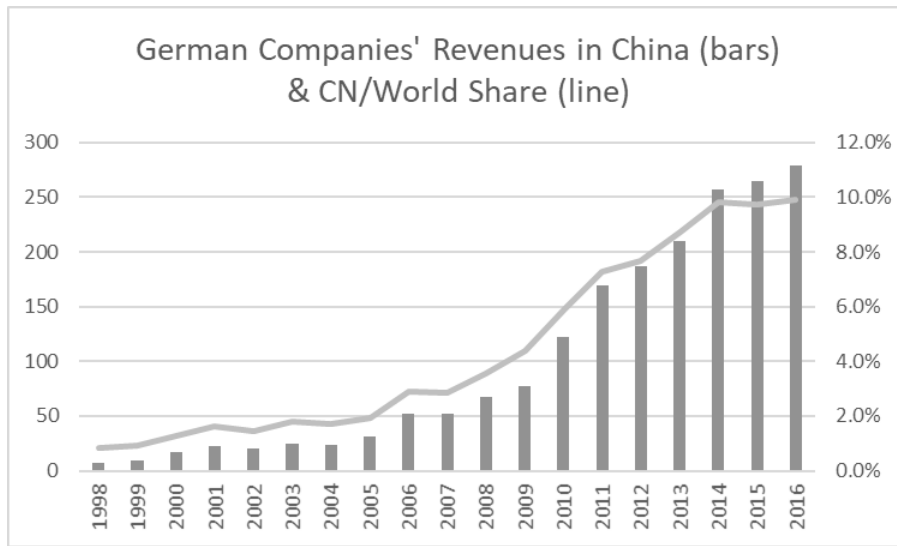


Figure 21: German Companies' Revenues in China (bars) & CN/World Share (line)

Source: Statistics Database, Bundesbank (2018)

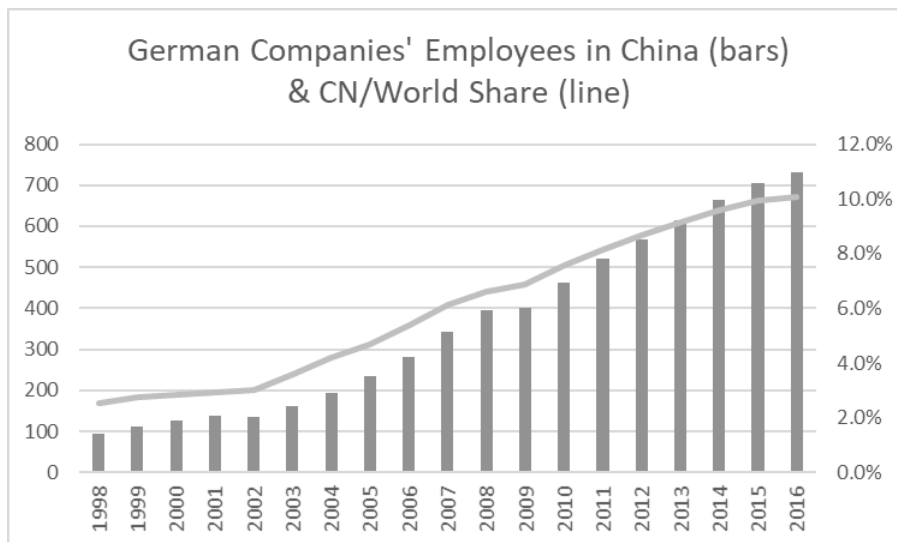


Figure 22: German Companies' Employees in China (bars) & CN/World Share (line)

Source: Statistics Database, Bundesbank (2018)

Overall, China rose from its spot on the periphery of German foreign economic interest in 1998 to being at the forefront in 2016/17. The amount of German companies in China rose 4.5-fold, their employee base rose 7.8-fold to 731,000 employees in 2016, and revenues 38.2-fold. Despite of ongoing problems and issues, the *goldrush* to participate in the Chinese market worked out well for many companies involved. It may have generated plenty of hiccups along the way, but the revenue growth speaks for itself during this time frame. Functional help was

available through the AHKs/DIHT as well as the embassy and lower-level Track I dialogues (see Chapter 5).

One of the reasons that the investments overall went well and were met with the Chinese government's will to facilitate was that "[d]irect investment play[ed] a particularly important role [...] in China's catching-up strategy" (Deutsche Bundesbank 2005, p. 40)⁵¹. With China moving up the value chain, it remains to be seen how German companies will fare within China and beyond. Until 2017, however, they did very well, not the least because of the sustained high to medium growth of the Chinese economy (Kundnani 2016).

Chinese Investment in Germany

While Germany-China overall trade volume shows one significant side of the economic ties between the two countries, and German investments in China show another, it is worthwhile to add a third perspective to the analysis: Chinese investments in Germany from 1998 to 2017 and their implications for German policy making⁵². As is explained below, Chinese investments were of minor macro-level relevance before 2012 but have generally helped individual companies to survive and/or thrive. Strong reservations from German society and the German political sector, and, to a lesser extent, businesses, existed and became more prominent over time, but Chinese money did not lead to the disastrous results that were predicted by critics within the selected time period (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013).

In general, Chinese outward investment strategies were initially largely state-centric and closely aligned with the Chinese economic five-year plans. Zhang

⁵¹ Cf. Naughton (2007).

⁵² Most of the quantitative data used in this sub-chapter is provided by the World Bank, OECD and German Central Bank. As was argued by Hanemann and Huotari (2015, p. 12), international financial flows have been increasingly difficult to track – which is particularly true for Chinese financial flows (Naughton 2007). Therefore, numbers from different sources often do not match and can differ greatly. For the purpose of this argument, the chosen official numbers appear to be sufficiently robust to show the relevant trends without diverting from the core consideration of this section. However, it can be expected that the actual Chinese outward investment towards Germany (and elsewhere) is higher than the provided numbers suggest.

(2009) notes that China's outward FDI strategies can be divided into three phases since China's opening up policies from 1979. The first phase took place up to 1991 and was limited to a small number of companies, mostly state-owned, investing abroad. Their investments were largely marginal in overall volume, below 1 billion USD each year. The second phase lasted for about eleven years up to 2002 and saw outward direct investments tripling in size and largely focus on securing crucial resources for China's export-led manufacturing sector. Somewhat lagging behind China's WTO accession, the third phase then begun in about 2003 and lasted at least up to the global financial crisis in 2009 (Zhang 2009), and effectively throughout the 2010s. This third phase was shaped by China's *Going Global* strategy from 1999 which led to much stronger participation on global markets and the immense trade volume gains highlighted above.

Additionally, and perhaps following up from Zhang's three-phase model, Hanemann and Huotari (2015) announced "a new era of Chinese capital" (Hanemann and Huotari 2015, p. 5) with much increased capital outflows. This new era was first noticeable from about 2014 and is illustrated by Figure 23 below. China's stark increase in outward FDI is directly related to a push for financial linkages beyond trade, and the related financial liberalisation initiative set by Xi Jinping in the Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the CCP in 2013 (Rosen 2014). Together with the previous, but less pronounced, liberalisation steps for outward FDI, "[i]n barely a decade, annual flows have grown from virtually zero to more than \$100 billion per year, catapulting China in the top 5 ranks of FDI exporters globally" (Hanemann and Huotari 2015, p. 10). On top of this high growth, China adopted the 'Made in China 2025' industrial policy strategy in 2015 which aimed at putting China at the forefront of the fourth industrial revolution – by using mergers and acquisitions as one key policy instrument (Jungbluth 2018).

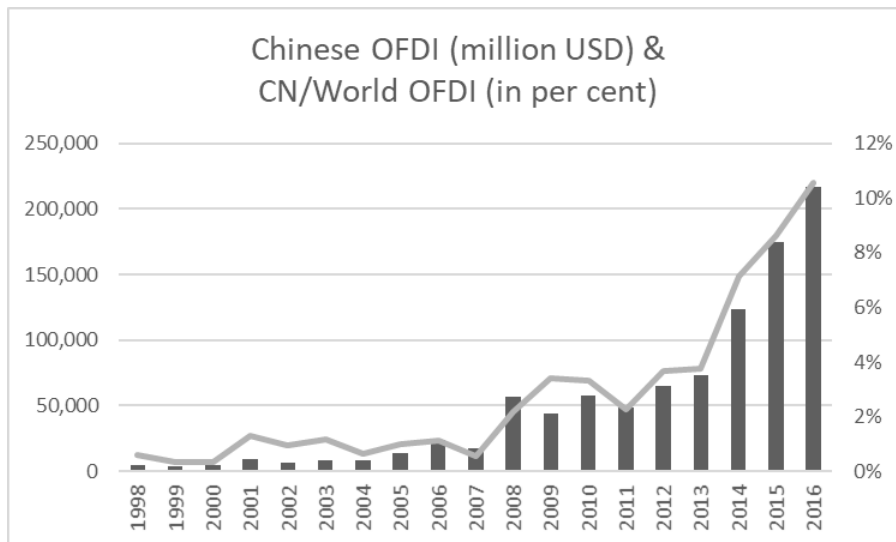


Figure 23: Chinese Outward FDI (in million USD) & Chinese Percentage of World Outward FDI

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank (2018)

This begin of the *new era* led to a rather stark increase in outward FDI, as shown in Figure 23, with major implications for the global FDI landscape. With China having held an about 1% share of global outward FDI in the early 2000s, it rose to about 3% after the global financial crisis. In 2016, China already accounted for more than 10% of global outward FDI (World Bank 2018). Considering the implications of China’s Made in China 2025 strategy, these numbers suggest a further upward trend.

What were the key reasons for China to invest abroad at all? Some reasons certainly include Beijing’s urge to stabilise its economic growth (up to 10% per year in the 2000s and six or seven percent in the mid-2010s) by securing natural resources, to facilitate the shift away from an export-led trade/growth strategy, to increase China’s global footprint as an economic – and, indirectly, political – power, and to facilitate further technical and practical knowledge transfer in one way or another to move overall production upwards in the value chain. Related to this more strategic view, it should also be noted that Chinese state-owned enterprises were largely the sole driver for investments abroad in the late twentieth century, but that privately owned companies with looser ties to the government became increasingly active beyond Chinese borders in the new millennium (Nicolas 2009). Following the GFC, private financial investors also gained significance (Hanemann and Huotari 2015). Still, whether it be state-owned enterprises or private Chinese companies,

serious concerns were raised in Germany and other countries that Chinese companies regardless of ownership distribution may be guided by the government and are part of China's Made in China 2025 strategy (see below).

Germany, as a target destination for FDI, fits very well into the Chinese government's strategy as well as typical growth strategies that private companies might adopt to satisfy their global ambitions: Germany was the third/fourth largest global and Europe's largest economy, its economy relied on globally competitive SMEs – of which some fulfilled the 'hidden champion' status as technology leaders in their respective fields such as industrial machinery. Germany had one of the freest economies to invest in which offered opportunities for Chinese companies to move up the value chain amongst other common FDI goals (Bian and Emons 2017).

Throughout the 2000s, Chinese investment in Germany largely consisted of smaller greenfield investments to set up headquarters and trade operations (Hanemann and Huotari 2015). A sharp rise of financial inflows from China to Germany then took place from 2011 onwards. From 2000 to 2014, Hanemann and Huotari (2015) suggest based on their own dataset developed in co-operation with Rhodium Group that the two key sectors of Chinese interest were automotive (about 28% of total Chinese FDI in Germany) and industrial equipment (39%) respectively, with about 82% of Chinese FDI having entered Germany in form of acquisition budgets. This is surely no surprise considering the direct benefits acquisitions might provide, such as acquiring technical know-how and specialised personnel, or to gain access to a reputable brand. Within the EU, Germany was been the biggest recipient of investments in the sectors of industrial machinery, automotive, and IT (Hanemann and Huotari 2015) during that time frame.

More than 60% of Chinese investments to Germany between 2000 and 2014 originated from state-owned enterprises or companies with at least 20% government ownership (Hanemann and Huotari 2015). It is easy to assume that this is part of a grand Chinese strategy to gain economic and/or political power in Germany. However, the individual circumstances of each investment matter: for instance, the industrial machinery sector in China was traditionally dominated by state-owned enterprises. These companies buying up or investing in German competitors can

therefore hardly be seen as evidence of Beijing strategically tightening its grip around an important German sector. Yet, in the later stages of Merkel’s Chancellorship, it became more common for German MPs and political commentators in Germany to question whether investment restrictions for foreign powers, geared towards addressing China, should be expanded (and were eventually expanded in 2017, discussed in Chapters 5 and 6).

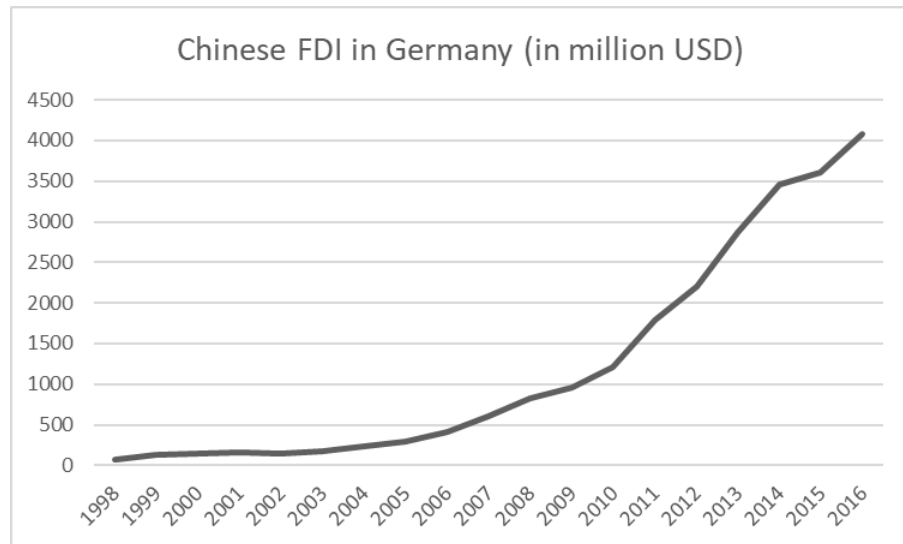


Figure 24: Chinese FDI in Germany (in current million USD)

Source: Statistical Database, OECD (2018) & Statistical Database, Bundesbank (2018)

For German companies, the reasons for accepting Chinese investment were diverse, yet can be allocated to two main drivers. First, the companies in question might have simply required outside money to stay afloat or to pursue strategic goals. Second, the company sought (full) market access to China and instead of starting a joint-venture within China it was more feasible to bring a Chinese investor in directly. Both reasons are backed up by an extensive study by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2013) that assessed how German companies fared with having accepted Chinese investments until 2012.

4.3.4 Economic Tensions

The existence of tensions in complex bilateral trade and investment relationships is certainly to be expected: different needs, different expectations, and a lack of mutual understanding and/or existing miscommunication can lead to a myriad of problems in government relations.

To simplify the discussion of German-Chinese bilateral financial and trade tensions, the following analysis includes the key issues that the relationship faced from a German perspective: German protectionist concerns including intellectual property rights issues, and Chinese protectionism including accusations of dumping. These two key areas shaped the German debate throughout the five terms, although political criticism became significantly more pronounced during Merkel's third term. There are two reasons for this: first, China simply became a much more important trading partner and investment source for Germany over time and German dependence increased significantly (Krueger 2013). Second, various other OECD countries, especially the US, became more hostile towards Chinese trade and investment practices and criticised China for unfair competition, intellectual property theft, lack of market access and more (e.g. Jungbluth and Hauschild 2012; Krueger 2013).

As Figure 23 in the section above displays, overall Chinese outward FDI was marginal (0.9% of global outward FDI per year on average) between 1998 and 2008 and then steadily rose to 10.5% in 2016 (World Bank 2018). At the same time, Germany warmly welcomed inward FDI due to its membership in the EU and a liberal investment policy mindset. The OECD's FDI Restrictiveness Index (2018) ranked Germany as 'very open' throughout the assessed time frame. With regard to some of the above-mentioned issues the OECD countries accused China of, it makes sense that German criticism on some Chinese investment decisions was audible over time but limited to individual cases and brief periods of political commenting. For most years in the chosen time frame, China also did not directly compete with many of the more advanced (manufacturing) products German companies exported and therefore did not pose as direct economic competition. However, over time, and with increased Chinese investment into German key industries as well as increased manufacturing output challenging Germany's high-tech goods in the global markets directly, a number of arguments were put forward more regularly and more strongly. These included that Chinese investments were made for the purpose of transferring foreign advanced technology home, aimed at weakening Western technology leadership in sectors of importance to both China and these Western countries, that Chinese companies, state-owned or not, received unfair government subsidies to

invest in companies abroad, and that business continuation was not their actual interest. Instead, everything useful would be packed and shipped back to China with local assets being discarded and local jobs lost⁵³. From a German perspective, especially technology and intellectual property theft as well as the lack of sustainable business management practices based on Germany's social market economy mindset were the key criticisms commonly voiced. With the acquisition of the German robotics firm KUKA in 2016, one additional component was added to the mix: the threat to German strategic interest in key sectors⁵⁴.

Schüller (2008) provided an extensive report for the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation suggesting that illegal technology transfer and intellectual property rights violations were a regular occurrence German companies engaged in Chinese business relations had to deal with. She argued that the whole value chain was at risk when manufacturing high-tech goods or parts in China, or in cooperation with Chinese companies, and that this posed a major threat to German companies, in particular SMEs. However, based on other available research on the topic, it appears that the issue had been more related to counterfeiting German products instead of technology transfer per se. Two studies, one by the Bertelsmann Foundation in cooperation with Deloitte (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009) from 2009, and a major study by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2013) from 2013, assessed the effects of Chinese investments on German companies. Both found that Chinese investments generally aided the German economy (they saved jobs, secured German technology leadership despite of some technology transfer due to sustained or improved research environments), Chinese investors largely let the German management do their job (with an often high level of independence from Chinese investors and only few restructuring or in-depth Chinese integration efforts at the host companies taking place), and provided benefits to Chinese and Asian market entries/positions as well

⁵³ Cf. Bartsch (2016), BDI (2019), Jungbluth (2012), and Schüller (2008).

⁵⁴ References to the public discourse can be found widely. More comprehensive assessments can be found in the 2009 Bertelsmann report on German companies that dealt with Chinese investors directly 2009 and, for a later assessment, Jungbluth (2018). The key concerns were also frequently mentioned in many conducted interviews with interviewees following the German discourse closely, especially #2, #10, #15 and #19. It was also brought up by interviewees following Chinese foreign policy in detail, especially #14 and #17.

as valuable synergies for manufacturing processes (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013). While issues and failed investments did occur, they often resulted due to a lack of due diligence and unrealistic expectations on both sides, and was not the result of political and/or strategic agendas. The macro-level view of such investments indicates that Chinese investor activity was a major success story for German companies (up to the 2013 publication date, at least). This view is also backed up by a 2016 survey which found 48% of German respondents to believe that Chinese investments in Germany had a positive impact on German employment (Huawei 2016, p. 117).

While Hanemann and Huotari (2015) acknowledge that concerns about sharing technology and German and European companies losing their technological edge were prevalent in the public debate in the years following the GFC, i.e. in Merkel's late second and third term, they agree with the studies above that the overall track record in Germany had been positive, with "no signs that Chinese investment has led to a politically mandated shift of value-added activities to China [and that] most Chinese companies are [...] expanding their EU R&D presence and local staff count after they enter the market through greenfield projects or acquisitions" (Hanemann and Huotari 2015, p. 40).

A further aspect how German companies might be able to benefit from Chinese investments is to navigate the difficult intellectual property rights situation in China better (Hanemann and Huotari 2015). Although China joined the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 1980, and a set of laws, regulations and procedures regarding intellectual property were established in 1992 and later on refined or extended in 1993, 1995, 2004 and 2007, the situation in mainland China was leaving a lot to be desired for foreign companies (Llewelyn and Williamson 2014). In late 20th century and early 2000s Western companies feared mostly for Chinese companies copying their products. This was often done poorly, resulting not only in counterfeits, but also in a blow to the reputation of the targeted company when counterfeits entered (established) markets. In the late 2000s, the focus for companies shifted away from counterfeits, though. Instead, Western counterparts feared that Chinese companies would move up the value chain by using unlicensed foreign technology via theft or forced unfavourable business deals in China.

However, in the German case, it appears that these worries were largely unfounded and that the foundation for successful cooperation with Chinese partners in the future had been laid, according to the above study results.

The second key issue faced in the German-Chinese trade and investment relationship is related to German businesses' activity in China. Covington & Burling LLP (2014) provided an in-depth 71-page overview for the European Commission on the constraints that foreign companies face in China. They found restraints that impeded market access, restraints that generally treated foreign-invested entities less favourably, and “[b]road policy statements that potentially result[ed] in less favourable treatments for foreign investors and investments” (Covington & Burling LLP 2014, p. 6). Additionally, they further categorised restraints by how favourable different types of companies were being seen by Chinese policy makers: with Chinese state-owned enterprises at the top and (partially) foreign-owned entities at the bottom. They argued that systematic discrimination existed based on their policy analysis and that this had been further aggravated by even less favourable administrative practices on regional and local levels in China.

Therefore, protective measures did not only complicating business endeavours for German companies in China, but also provided a certain asymmetry with Germany allowing capital inflows largely restriction-free (Hanemann and Huotari 2015). The following figure exemplifies this. It features the OECD FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index, i.e. it assesses how restrictive an (aggregated) economy is towards foreign investment. It ranges from 0 to 1 with 0 being a fully open economy and 1 being a fully restricted economy. As is shown, Beijing reduced restrictions quite significantly 1998 to 2017. However, protectionist regulations remained a major obstacle when compared to Germany, or indeed the OECD country average. However, the aggregated numbers do not paint the whole picture. China's engineering and manufacturing sectors, both important destinations for German companies' FDI, had their restrictions lifted by great margins (from 0.55 in 1997 to 0.05 in 2017 for engineering, and from 0.383 to 0.1 for manufacturing). Still, in Germany, both sectors scored a zero on the index and were thus considered to be fully open to incoming FDI according to the OECD criteria (OECD Statistics Database 2018).

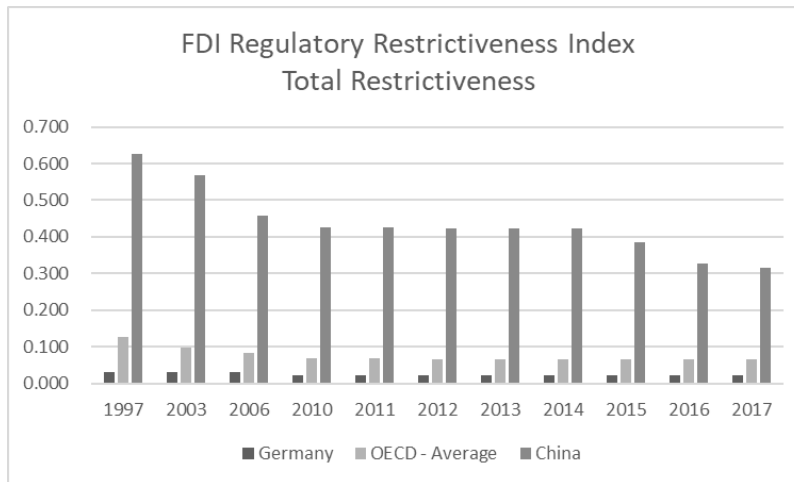


Figure 25: FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index – Total Restrictiveness

Source: Statistics Database, OECD (2018)

Such asymmetries, regardless of the level of improvement, easily create “a strong sense of unfairness” (Hanemann and Huotari 2015, p. 35) which is difficult to deal with in terms of policies and public opinion alike. Germany, and the EU, repeatedly called for further liberalisation efforts while China in return argued in 2016 and 2017 that the EU should stop discriminating against Chinese investments and acknowledge China’s progress (Bartsch 2016). This sense of unfairness, experienced throughout the period discussed here, eventually got recognised and acted upon, not only as a trade promotion issue to be solved within the Chinese market, but also as an economic security threat for German core economic interests. Consequently, Gabriel, then BMWi head and Vice Chancellor, expressed on a visit to China in 2016 that “German companies [...] face various limitations in China. The further development of [our] bilateral cooperation depends on the opening-up of the [Chinese] market and fair competition” (BMWi 2016).

This and many similar statements led to rising frustration on the Chinese side which had been eager to improve the relations with Germany and Europe under the impression of a less robust and less predictable relationship with the US under an incoming Trump administration at the time⁵⁵. These concerns, however, were hardly a peculiar German view, but were shared widely. In 2016, the European Chamber of

⁵⁵ According to interviewees #3 and #14 who follow Chinese foreign affairs closely.

Commerce in China surveyed European companies doing business in China. 57% suggested that they were disadvantaged compared to domestic competition (Riecke 2017, p. 2). In contrast, the Chinese ambassador to Germany, Shi Mingde, suggested in 2017 that foreign companies complained about market access limitations simply because they had lost additional prior privileges and were afterwards treated equally (Riecke 2017, p. 2). He did later on move away from a more confrontational approach and suggested that “the German market [was] more open than the Chinese market, and we [would] continue to open [ours]” (Reuters 2018) in the future.

4.4 A Review of the Existing Literature on Germany-China

Germany’s perceived foreign policy priorities after reunification were to stimulate its own domestic economy, to further integration within the EU, and to further its established partnerships within the Western alliance. Trade with China was already growing under Kohl, but in terms of the political relations, China had played a limited role apart from the Tiananmen incident aftermath. As is shown in the earlier sections, with the drastic growth of China and its economic relevance to Germany and the world, more attention within Germany had started to be given to the country. Compared to the discussion of Germany’s bilateral relationship with other international actors such as the EU, the US and Russia, literature on examining Germany-China fell considerably short in the assess time frame. Although slightly more scholarly works exist in German, this shortage was particularly evident for English-language sources.

Among the existing discussion of the Germany-China relationship, most contributions were carried out in the form of opinion pieces, think tank reports and privately funded analyses such as industrial insights, e.g. by Bartsch (2016) and Jungbluth (2018) for the Bertelsmann Foundation, and Kundnani (2016) for the German Marshall Fund. Frequently, contributions by think tanks painted a largely one-sided picture despite claims for ‘non-partisanship’ or similar⁵⁶. It is common to notice the use of cherry-picked information to push for certain narratives based on what appears to be pre-existing agendas. Their usual goal was not merely to inform

⁵⁶ That said, with think tanks being classified as pressure groups/lobbying organisations for good reason (Burnham 2008), this is not surprising but still worth to point out.

the reader (as policy pieces may do), but to advise the reader directly or indirectly, often by presenting ‘strategy papers’ (see, for instance, Poggetti 2019; Karnitschnig 2020). Therefore, regardless how convincing some of these arguments might seem, based on their at-times highly subjective selection of information, such documents are often less valuable from a scientific perspective, although they can offer some useful empirical insights. Without being an insider in one or more of these think tanks, it is difficult to state with certainty to what extent agendas exist and are being followed⁵⁷. To minimise the effect of one-sided coverage, this review focuses on academic contributions only.

To provide an overview, for the time frame from 1998 to 2017, only a handful of journal articles and book chapters in either English or German exist. These are often reasonably short (about ten pages, a few are about 20 pages long). Among the accessible sources, existing academic discussions on the Germany-China relationship were found to be limited to achieve the purpose of this research to solely focus on Germany’s agency in the bilateral context. Their limitations can be summarised, and separated, into contextual and analytical/methodological contributions. Regarding contextualisation, this refers to the content or areas of aspects these existing discussions cover, analytical/methodological papers investigate the approaches used by the current academic literature.

First, contextually, there is a general absence of literature that covers the whole time frame this research does. Somewhat dated works covering longer time frames exist, which focus on historical considerations, often prior to the post-war period. Some examples include Walsh’s (1974) examination of German military encounters in China from 1928 to 38; Wilke and Achatzi’s (2011a) discussion of how the German press framed China from 1986 to 2006, and some focusing on the Nazi regime period (Möller; Leitz 2004; Preker 2021) and Tomkins (2014).

Additionally, there are those covering only a fraction of the period this research includes. For example, there was Taube’s examination of the economic relations

⁵⁷ Attempts have been made, though. For instance, the most prominent European think tank on China, MERICS, was criticised for their one-sided coverage by Rogelja and Tsimonis (2020).

from 1979 to 2000 (Taube, 2001), Heberer and Senz' (2011) overview of key events from 1998 to 2010, and Heiduk's (2014, 2015) brief assessments of the global financial crisis and Eurozone crisis. Others include Gottwald (2003, 2012) and Heilmann (2012). As shown throughout this research, during the chosen time span, not only Germany and China on their own, but also their relationship had changed and evolved drastically, not to mention the implication of their relationship to the broader international environment. As highlighted throughout this project, rather than examining short-term or event-based tactics, this research provides a strategic evaluation of the developments. Disregarding those examinations that look at the older past and have limited value to provide a contemporary analysis, an evaluation across the five Chancellorship terms from Schröder to Merkel allows the need to identify and make sense of a broader evolution of changes to draw conclusion on strategic assessments.

On the same note of strategy, this brings this review to the second point: most of the existing works covering aspects of the bilateral relationship limit the scope for identifying Germany's strategy with China in the sense of the research questions at hand. Although in recent years there have been more works published by German researchers on studying China, the majority of the discussion is dedicated to examining China and Chinese foreign policy which does not relate to the bilateral relations directly, and does not relate to the scope of this thesis. Most of the pieces focusing on the relations are also historical in nature. This lack of direct relevance to the contemporary political Germany-China relationship, which is studied in this thesis, is also evident in further existing literature which focused on other subjects such as cultural exchanges (for instance, Barabasch et al. 2009; Harnischfeger 2007; Luo 2015; Qiu and Dauth 2021; Oetzel et al. 2001), or education and scientific cooperation (Wang et al., 2007; Wang and Jiang 2007; Meng 2018, Corrocher 2018, Frietsche and Tagscherer 2014).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that a wide range of work appeared on EU-China relations in the 2000s and 2010s. However, such work usually only includes very narrow aspects of the Germany-China relationship, at best a few pages in books, or paragraphs in journal articles/reports, with a couple providing a somewhat more extensive overview (Berkofsky 2005, Casarini 2009, Erber 2014, Narramore

2008, Sandschneider 2002, Wacker 2010, Weske 2007, Wu 2017). However, neither of these publications provides a somewhat comprehensive analysis of Germany's relations with China, and certainly none from a strategic perspective of German actorness.

Analytically or methodologically speaking, among the very limited literature directly focusing on this bilateral relationship, structure-focused approaches dominate the existing assessments. This also holds true for FPA-inspired approaches. On the one hand, there are those solely focusing on the impact of externalities on the development of the relationship. For instance, Schichor (2013) examined the role of Uyghur activism and concludes that it has limited impact on the Beijing-Berlin relations. Similarly, Zhao (2009) looked into the influence of the role of Tibet on the relations. Although adopting a similar view of FPA, Schnellbach and Man (2015) identified the transition from “change through trade” during the Schröder years to a “normative turn” under Merkel, the analysis remains residing on the implications of international crises, such as the Ukraine Crisis, on Germany's engagement with China.

Among those also attempting to examine Germany's decision-making process, most of their focus stays on the bilateral relationship and not on Germany itself. For example, with a similar FPA-inspired approach in examining Germany's domestic factors, Heiduk's study of Merkel's Chancellorship remained focused on the development of the relationship (Heiduk, 2014) instead of identifying actorness. Similarly, Cunba (2017) evaluated changes within the German policy development from Schröder to Merkel, but his focus stayed on evaluating the performance of the relationship in the light of the new Silk Road. Although there is an overlap between focusing on Germany's influence on the relationship and the role of Germany in the relationship, the biggest difference here is that this research's sole focus is on Germany itself in the context of the bilateral relationship rather than the other way around.

Therefore, the goal of this project is to look at how Germany's actorness as a decision maker is constructed by factors from within – what factors within Germany impacted its decision-making process and decisions with regard to China. In other

words, it is about how Germany affected itself. Although externalities do matter to this discussion and therefore there are chapters covering changes in the external sphere such as major crisis, mentioning them primarily provides contextual context. Rather than studying how these events shaped Germany's decisions, this research examines how they are interpreted and might have changed Germany's choice of direction with China. Compared to the structural focus of the existing literature, this is a subtle difference, yet it is of great importance. Rather than to focus on a structure-based approach, this highlights the oversight of the study of agency itself. This is ultimately what makes FPA a more suitable analytical framework for this research with its appreciation to the role of agency itself.

With the support of the levels of analysis framework, Germany's actorness as a decision maker is deconstructed and factors vital to its decision-making agency are identified. This complements the existing discussion with an agency-oriented analysis. Through deconstructing Germany's decision-making process, this research is designed to evaluate the performance of its agency – once again through the perspective of strategy. Thus, the goal of this research, as shown by the main research questions, is to assess how factors within Germany had affected Germany's decision-making regarding China.

In general, compared to the existing academic discussions, this research covers a wider time-period of five Chancellorship terms with a contemporary focus. It further complements the existing overly dominating structural approach by primarily focusing on agency to assess Germany's China policy-making process and decisions. This combination of a wider and more contemporary time-period and agency-oriented approach together with a holistic and strategic perspective contributes to gaps in the existing literature, which concludes the core added value of this piece.

Chapter 5: Individual Level

This chapter is the first of the three key analytical chapters providing insights into the black box of German actorness regarding its relations with China. It seeks to understand the human factors in elite decision-making, representing the individual by making use of the FPA framework and toolbox.

To recap, a core understanding within FPA is the role of human agency in decision-making. Individuals identify, assess, and act on issues, and they do so based on their own cognition, perceptions, and personalities (Kaarbo et al. 2012; Orbovich and Molnar 1992). The goal of this research is to deconstruct German actorness, and therefore it is essential to have identify what factors at the individual level affected Germany's overall agency in decision-making within the bilateral relations.

Given the importance of the role of the Chancellors, this chapter devotes most space to the two Chancellors Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel during the chosen period from 1998 to 2017. Although many senior decision makers were involved in the Germany-China policy making processes, the reason to primarily focus on the Chancellors are two-fold. First, what has become known as a *Chancellor Democracy (Kanzlerdemokratie)*⁵⁸ has been particularly true for Germany's relations with China. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chancellery, and with its head, the Chancellor, was in charge of these important bilateral relations. Other individuals, foreign ministers, for instance, had relatively minor influence on the relations directly. Second, based on the research framework and limited access to information and actors as outlined in Chapter 2, it has not been feasible to detail the influence of a range of foreign policy individuals within Germany. Although some level of influence may be attributed to certain individuals, quantifying or qualifying their influence would have been a lost cause within the research parameters of this thesis.

⁵⁸ See Niclaß (2015).

The goal of this research is to uncover the key drivers of the relations, and to assess whether a comprehensive China strategy existed during the chosen time frame. Hence, the research requires to unpack German actorness *to an extent*, but not so far as to get lost in the subtleties of the third, fourth, or fifth layer down the decision-making process. In other words, paying special attention to the de facto most influential individuals in charge, the Chancellors, is of fundamental importance for this research. On the contrary, discussing, for instance, the influence of individual China desk officers in the BMWi has limited explanatory value in comparison. Evaluating influence on the Chancellors' decision-making process then depends on their specific governance style. While the influence of individuals is generally difficult to assess, the existing major bureaucratic (Chapter 6) and societal constraints (Chapter 7) at play can instead more reliably be scrutinised.

Primarily investigating at the individual level, the following sections focus on the two Chancellors and a small number of relevant other figures before assessing the findings through the three identified themes of economic interest, ignorance, and trust. This is done by assessing the development and the influence of the main individual factors in the context of the relations under Schröder (1998 to 2005) and subsequently under Merkel (2005-2017) and their respective government coalitions. Due to the reasons mentioned above, and also the multi-level nature of the relations with various forms of dialogues and cooperation Track I, 1.5, and II activities, the evaluation below narrows down the scope to prioritise the relation's chosen key milestones and events which directly involved the German Chancellors (or his/her cabinet ministers in a limited fashion). Considering the political weight of the Chancellors, the assessment at this level is therefore an essential part of the contribution of this thesis. It adopts an agency-oriented approach to unpack the impact of factors at this level on Germany's actorness regarding China by scrutinising the role and the possessed qualities of the main individuals and their influence on Germany's decision-making agency through the three found themes to better evaluate actions Germany had taken.

5.1 Schröder's Chancellorship

Gerhard Schröder came into power in 1998, heading a coalition between the SPD and The Greens, ending Kohl's 18-year Union-FDP reign. He was seen as a *doer*, someone who was ready to lead Germany into the 21st century, and who had a vision for Germany beyond reunifying the country (SPD 1998).

In the early days, Schröder placed his attention on domestic reforms and EU debates (including Germany's role within the EU) as much as Kohl had done before him. Germany was then known as the *sick man of Europe* and required strong policy responses as well as a more positive economic outlook. Schröder responded with what had been dubbed the Agenda 2010 which encompassed downsizing of Germany's welfare state as well as more extensive labour market reforms. These policies brought his traditionally left-wing Social Democrats much closer to the political centre in Germany and, as a result, Schröder faced not only societal scrutiny during his incumbency, but he also left his own party in a divided and identity-seeking state (Hilz 2009). In the realm of foreign policy, he also faced difficult situations. Shortly after he had moved into the Chancellery, Schröder had to deal with a worsening Kosovo crisis in 1998/99 which eventually led to a number of international crises such as 9/11 and its aftermath including German military engagement.

Additionally, and despite of his continued focus on domestic reforms, Schröder and his foreign minister, Joschka Fischer (The Greens), also heralded a new era in German foreign policy. Hilz describes their efforts as "explicitly articulated assertiveness" (Hilz 2009, p. 49). Schröder became the first post-war Chancellor who "talked unashamedly about the German national interest" (Grant 2005, p. 1) which led to further lobbying for a permanent UNSC seat, a major contribution to the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and general lobbying for the UN and its sub-organisations. While the newly elected German government largely followed their predecessor's steps in promoting pan-European and multilateral policies, Schröder championed more extensive trade ties as one response to improve Germany's weak economic performance. This led to a revival of the historic *Change through Trade (Wandel durch Handel)* activities that aimed at facilitating trade with

non-Western countries (Schnellbach and Man 2015) while at the same time stimulating Germany's economy.

Schröder took the (trade) relations with China seriously from the beginning of his first term. He visited China every year of his Chancellorship, i.e. six times while in office, and left an important first impression during his first visit. He went on his first trip to China in May 1999, a little more than six months after he had taken over the German Chancellery. This trip was supposed to be a formal four-day state visit after China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan had visited Germany in March already. However, the visit's significance suddenly rose due to the prior NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on 07 May 1999. Schröder, who was also holding the rotating European Union presidency at the time, decided to indeed fly to China but to cut his trip short and to not go through all the standard procedures such an official (first) state visit usually demands. Instead, he went to Beijing on a brief one-day trip to apologise for the bombing on behalf of NATO (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012).

As part of the visit, Schröder met with China's then President Jiang Zemin as well as Prime Minister Zhu Rongji with whom Schröder eventually shared a "personal friendship" (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 677) with. This echoes Schmidt's suggestion that top Chinese government representatives had "almost friendly relations" (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012, p. 155) with Schröder – not dissimilar to Kohl⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Although, contrary to Kohl, Schröder eventually received the honour to be called 'an old friend of the Chinese people' Schröder and Meck (2014) – the same recognition Helmut Schmidt had received.

Date	Primary Focus
#1: May 1999 (as EU President) ⁶⁰	Belgrade NATO bombing apology
#2: Oct 1999 ⁶¹	Formal introduction to the new Chinese leadership duo Jiang Zemin & Zhu Rongji, agreement on holding the Rule of Law Dialogue
#3: November 2001 ⁶²	Commerce
#4: December 2002 ⁶³	Commerce, honorary PhD, Shanghai Maglev opening ceremony
#5: December 2003 ⁶⁴	Formal introduction to the new Chinese leadership duo Hu Jintao & Wen Jiabao
#6: December 2004 ⁶⁵	Commerce

Table 2: Gerhard Schröder's official visits to China as Chancellor

A second visit took place in October 1999 when Schröder introduced himself to the Chinese leadership formally. Additionally, the groundworks for the Sino-German Dialogue on the Rule of Law as well as two Human Rights Dialogues, one official government-to-government dialogue and one including the SPD-linked Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation on the German side and the Chinese Foundation for the Development of Human Rights and the Chinese Association for International Understanding on the Chinese side, was put in place. Explanations for the dialogues' establishment on the German side differ widely, but boil down to three key views: a) to show the German audience that Schröder and his administration took the promotion of Western values seriously, b) to simply execute the coalition agreement and take action to promote the rule of law, human rights and civil society internationally (SPD 1998, p. 41), and c) to remove any sort of disagreeable content regarding democracy, human rights and the like from key visits and top-level communication and put it into their own separate and, ultimately, toothless dialogue forms (Schulte-Kulmann 2005b). In reality, all three views were likely to be of

⁶⁰ See Spiegel Online (1999).

⁶¹ See Heberer and Senz (2011) and Schulte-Kulmann (2002).

⁶² See Bundesregierung (2001) and Spiegel Online (2001).

⁶³ See Bundesregierung (2002) and Generalkonsulat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Shanghai (2012).

⁶⁴ See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2003).

⁶⁵ See Spiegel Online (2004).

relevance, but it is not far-fetched to say that Schröder was prioritising trade prospects over scolding foreign governments on their lack of Western-style governing values⁶⁶. He had a slightly different view, arguing in 2014 that formal and public criticism was simply a ritual being performed for the public on both sides and not helping to improve conditions at all. Instead, he wanted to improve the situation by putting these dialogues in place and limiting his public criticism of the Chinese government (Schröder and Meck 2014).

Such a pragmatic pro-trade approach did attract criticism. Especially the junior coalition partner, with Joschka Fischer at its forefront, presented a more normative view and held up Western values in public. As previously mentioned, Fischer, Germany's Foreign Minister under Schröder, had little influence on the Germany-China relations per se. Gottwald suggested that Fischer was indeed "too glad to leave the [based on German normative values] problematic exchange" (Gottwald 2005, p. 8) with China to Schröder. Regardless of whether this holds true, Fischer did criticise human rights abuses in China regularly in the media and also on the global stage, for instance at the UN Human Rights Conferences in 1999 and 2002 (Auswärtiges Amt 2002; Heberer and Senz 2011). He further met with Chinese dissidents such as Wei Jingsheng (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 677). As such activities did not lead to serious repercussions on the Chinese side, it is fair to say that Fischer's activities were considered by the Chinese to target Germany's domestic audience instead of the Chinese government or global audience. For them, Schröder was the person in charge without a doubt – neither Fischer nor anyone else. This is also substantiated by a leading Germany expert in China who suggested that such public criticism was not of sufficient relevance to damage the important relations China had with Germany and was seen as a domestic issue⁶⁷. By taking this one step further, there is reason to believe that Fischer deliberately shielded Schröder from some of the public criticism in Germany to enable Schröder to pursue his trade-oriented (China) strategy further to bring the German economy back on track. This led to the added benefit of Fischer being able to appease his own faction and party.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 6, evaluating the bureaucratic level, for an assessment of the role of the Rule of Law and Human Rights Dialogues.

⁶⁷ As stated in the interview with interviewee #13.

During the following years, Schröder intensified his efforts on expanding existing trade ties with China. Not only became exports an essential piece of his economic vision of curing the *sick man of Europe*, but the country's economic recovery was also an essential piece in his re-election strategy after he had executed his unpopular economic and social welfare reforms (Agenda 2010). Along party and governmental lines, there was even more to it. Defining his *change through trade* approach as an ideological pillar of export- and trade-related efforts between Germany and non-Western countries in the spirit of *change through rapprochement* is one way to look at it – and is also the perspective he highlighted retrospectively (Schröder and Meck 2014).

Further evidence of his focus on trade is the Concept for East Asia paper, published by the FFO in 2004, and succeeding the 1993 Asia Concept paper. Although coming from Fischer's ministry and having generally included more pronounced human rights promotion passages, it “bore the hallmarks of Schröder” (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 676) regarding China. Apart from highlighting the formal importance of the Human Rights and Rule of Law Dialogues, economic interest was mentioned front and centre (Auswärtiges Amt 2002)⁶⁸. Similarly, the economic relations between both countries were considered being a cornerstone – or, perhaps, *the* cornerstone – of the bilateral relations in the partnership declaration which was signed in 2004 (Chinesische Botschaft 2004). This is far from being a surprise considering that the German economy was performing poorly during Schröder's first term and that he had started adopting a more *realpolitik* foreign policy approach with a focus on trade policies.

In 2003, a matter close to the Chinese government's heart was pushed to the forefront of Schröder's political efforts in Brussels. He was directly involved in one of the most difficult issues in the EU-China relations to date – the role of the EU arms embargo on China. While the EU's role for the bilateral relations is discussed in Chapter 3 above, Schröder's role deserves attention within this chapter.

⁶⁸ Chapter 6 offers a further analysis of the concept as part of the discussion of the role of the FFO.

After the Tiananmen incident in 1989, the European Council imposed an arms embargo on China (European Council 1989). The initial embargo text remained reasonably vague and more narrow specifications were only added in the late 1990s and 2000 (Casarini 2006, pp. 375–377). Casarini points out that France, Italy, and the UK amongst others considered this regulation “indulgently” (Casarini 2006, p. 376) while other countries including Germany had adopted a stricter approach. Overall, however, for instance Grimmett and Papademetriou (2005) estimated based on official EU data that arms trade with China in 2002 and 2003 totalled at least 625 million Euro. In other words, despite of tightened specifications, the embargo did de facto not work well in preventing arms being exported from the EU into China. However, for the Chinese side, the primary concern with the embargo was the accompanying ‘loss of face’ by having been mentioned alongside other embargoed *rogue states* such as Myanmar, Sudan and Zimbabwe (Wacker 2005).

Schröder and French President Chirac, both having their bilateral relations with China in mind, started lobbying for the end of the embargo from 2003 onwards, suggesting that it was outdated, and that China was a very different country at that time compared to twenty years before (Casarini 2007). This push from Schröder for lifting the embargo was in line with his trade-first approach, the rapidly improving bilateral relations between Germany and China, and his friendly relations with the Chinese leadership. However, it also caused a harsh backlash from the German Parliament and public. As a result, the Bundestag passed a resolution opposing the end of the embargo in October 2003 (Casarini 2007). This meant that Schröder did not have majority support from his own government coalition for this issue, yet he did not back off – a rare occurrence within German politics.

According to Dombey (2005), the attempt to lift the embargo eventually failed after more than one year of negotiations and talks for three reasons. First, Schröder’s Social Democrats had just lost the state elections in Germany’s biggest state Northrhine Westphalia in 2005 for the first time since 1966. Schröder subsequently asked for a vote of confidence in the federal parliament with the expected result of a snap election a few months later. This not only forced him to focus on domestic politics, but also led him face a difficult upcoming election where he would not have

benefited from pushing through lifting an arms embargo that many of his own party's MPs as well as large parts of the public rejected. The other two reasons included the United States' pressure on EU member states to keep the embargo in place, and the missing *good will* from China to show they had learned from the 1989 protest response (Dombey 2005).

What is the quintessence of this de facto policy defeat for Schröder? It is fair to say that the bilateral relations with China had been a priority on Schröder's agenda. This becomes even clearer when paying attention to an interview from March 2005, some weeks before the SPD lost the state election in Northrhine Westphalia. Schröder was asked about the strong opposition for lifting the embargo in the European Parliament as well as the fact that "probably the entire German parliament would speak out against the lifting of the embargo against China" (Spiegel Online 2005, p. 1). He responded by saying: "I have to acknowledge it, [but the] constitution states that foreign policy shall be made by the federal government. I take every vote in parliament seriously, but the constitution is clear" (Spiegel Online 2005, pp. 1–2). As a response to the interview, Gernot Erler, the SPD parliamentary faction's deputy leader responsible for foreign policy at the time simply stated that "we [cannot] lift the embargo now" (Spiegel Online 2005, p. 2). This gives an indication of Schröder's leadership style and the tensions within his own party, and also clearly shows that he did not back off easily when it came to facilitating relations with China.

These events followed the levelling up of the relations. In May 2004, Schröder and China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao promoted the Germany-China relations to a "partnership in global responsibility" (Chinesische Botschaft 2004, p. 1). Alongside the strategic partnership between China and the EU announced in 2003, this partnership aimed at closer cooperation, increased multilateralism and working towards a cooperative world order. While this agreement appears to have mostly aimed at the international sector and thus addresses global (im-)balances, it also addresses "increased economic relations, development cooperation and environmental cooperation" (Chinesische Botschaft 2004, p. 2). Furthermore, the agreement emphasises the "central relevance of the rule of law as well as human rights dialogues for the bilateral relations" (Chinesische Botschaft 2004, p. 2)

amongst extending cooperation in sectors such as health care⁶⁹ and culture. As such, the partnership agreement falls very well in line with the previously adopted 2002 concept on East Asia. The timeline certainly suggests that this expansion of the relations had been planned either in the Chancellery or in Beijing for some time, although a strong trade focus prevailed and the value of closer political cooperation remained to be seen.

2004 ended with a brief China visit of Schröder, his sixth within six years. It focused on trade deals, and symbolically highlighted the close cooperation between the two countries by the intent to establish a direct encrypted phone line between the Chancellery and the Chinese Premier's office (Volkery 2004). This visit might very well have been one of the last happier moments in Schröder's second term. As outlined above, the SPD's lost state elections in May led to Schröder calling for a snap election – which he eventually lost, paving the way for Angela Merkel becoming Chancellor after the election took place in September 2005.

5.1.1 The Power of Individuals on Germany's Decision-Making Process

Although Germany's China relations had already been administered by the Chancellery ever since the beginning of the official relations in 1972 (Schnellbach and Man 2015, p. 3), this arrangement came in handy for Schröder. As previously mentioned, Fischer, as foreign minister and head of the junior coalition partner, appeared to have little to say regarding the German policy-making process towards China, although he likely supported Schröder's course, focusing more on serving critical contributions to the domestic audience than his Chinese counterparts (Gottwald 2006).

Harlen (2002) examined the role of German leadership styles and found that the two most effective ways for Chancellors to gain power are by centralising policy areas of interest by putting them under the Chancellery roof, and for Chancellors to emphasise their own foreign policy role. Both ways, amongst further strategies outlined in Harlen's work, fit Schröder's *doer* personality. Schröder grew up under

⁶⁹ During the SARS outbreak in 2003, Germany supported the Chinese government with medical supplies (Wilke and Achatzi 2011b).

poor socio-economic conditions and had to work from a young age to support his family. In contrast to most German senior politicians, he did not follow the standard educational career in Germany, but instead completed a retail apprenticeship before working various jobs while spending his nights on pursuing his Abitur, the German general qualification for entering university. He had already joined the SPD prior to enrolling in his law studies. While studying, and working as a lawyer afterwards, he pursued his political career, eventually joining the Bundestag from 1980 to 1986, before becoming the Minister-President of Lower Saxony from 1990 to 1998 (Schöllgen). His time in political leadership positions in Lower Saxony may have shaped his views on the importance of foreign trade policy, and in particular German commercial views on China, as this post provided him with a position on the board of directors at Volkswagen. Compared to other German politicians, closeness with industry leaders came natural to Schröder, the *Autokanzler*, and the *bosses' comrade* (*Genosse der Bosse*). His pursuit of power was not only praised by Merkel a decade after she took the Chancellery from him (Doering 2015) but widely acknowledged. Schröder, the “spectacular salesman” (Hogrefe et al. 1999), was a politician “motivated less by visions than by interests” (Bulmer 1997, p. 45), although Schröder would disagree and consider both relevant. Yet, he stated after his retirement from politics that he had never planned his career (Schröder and Meck 2014). Being driven by hunger for power, with pragmatism, and the ability to sense changes in majorities and public support early, Schröder framed his policy approach around national interests, i.e. economic growth (Bulmer and Paterson 2018, 131:45). This was not a sudden shift; he had done so already in Lower Saxony⁷⁰.

In short, Schröder resembled a very different kind of Chancellor in terms of story, vision, and style to Kohl⁷¹. He had ousted him after his 18-year reign, half of it covering the pre-reunification period. Schröder then pushed forward with major social welfare reforms, agreed on military operations in the Kosovo and Afghanistan despite of stark domestic criticism, and focused on saving the German economy. Axelrod's satisficing concept (Axelrod 1976) comes to mind considering Schröder's focus on relieving immediate pressures and dealing with urgent issues. This enabled

⁷⁰ See Bulmer et al. (2010); Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (2010).

⁷¹ See Klormann and Udelhoven (2008) for the image both Chancellors portrayed and how public perception shifted over time.

him to live up to his doer reputation, and to push past internal and external opposition. Examples for this can also be found in his China approach, e.g. his quick move to visit China after the NATO bombing and apologise for the mess. An added benefit was for him to meet the Chinese leadership and to leave a good first impression – one which helped to forge closer ties in the years afterwards.

Yet, initially, Schröder likely saw the relations with China as a means to strengthen his economic plans for Germany which was also largely planned and executed at the Chancellery. However, it appears that the relations evolved beyond a mere partnership of convenience for boosting German trade throughout his incumbency. Although trade value did indeed increase more than three-fold from close to 18 billion Euro in 1998 to more than 62 billion Euro in 2005⁷², this alone does not necessarily explain formal successive progression steps in the political relations. It also does not explain Schröder risking a loss of support from the German public as well as turmoil in his own party with his continued outspoken support of the arms embargo lift in the early 2000s. While there is no claim to be made to link his anti-embargo activities to his re-election loss in 2005 directly, Schröder did certainly affront parts of his own party's parliamentary faction (who were already deeply torn about many of his implemented domestic policies) and party members from a grassroots to federal level, as well as his supporters within the Green Party. His push for the embargo lift cannot be seen in the same light as Germany's military engagements in Afghanistan or the Kosovo, though. However, it is fair to say that the whole issue, climaxing in what an opinion piece called "a sudden fit of Thatcher-like confidence" (Spiegel Online 2005, p. 1) when disregarding the parliament's opinion on the matter, still played a visible role in the wider debate during Schröder's late second term.

Why did he then take such risk? His aforementioned "almost friendly relations" (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012, p. 155) with senior Chinese government representatives, falls short as a sole explanation. Some argued that Schröder "has never [...] put the issue of human rights at the centre of his political ethics"

⁷² In comparison, the UK's trade numbers rose from 10 billion Euro to 29 billion Euro and the French numbers from 8 billion Euro to 21 billion Euro in the same time period (Eurostat 2018).

(Malzahn 2005, p. 1) and that his “ignorant behaviour towards anti-communist civil rights and freedom movements [...] has remained consistent [throughout his career]” (Malzahn 2005, p. 1). Based on Schröder’s later views, as for instance stated in Schröder and Meck (2014), however, he simply disagreed with the key arguments the proponents of keeping the embargo in place put forward. A range of factors come to mind to explain his decision: Schröder, with his doer persona and conviction for his own views, likely believed to be able to force the end of the embargo through on a domestic and European level, indicating strong cognitive consistency and cognitive dissonance at the same time.

Although presented from a different angle, Niclauß tended to agree, arguing that Schröder had developed “an increasingly presidential style as Chancellor” (Niclauß 2015, p. 291) in his second term. Perhaps Schröder simply did what most major European leaders ended up at the time and tried to maximise trade with China. Under his Chancellorship, Germany came out on top because its economy had an advantage of size and sector relevance for the Chinese economy, and also because his predecessors had already developed trustworthy and friendly relations with China including his fellow party member and former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

Do Schröder’s actions account for a diversion from the continuity trajectory in German foreign relations then? This depends on the perspective. For the normalisation supporters, not just Schröder’s military Kosovo intervention, but also his strong support for ending the arms embargo should have counted as a move towards geostrategic power politics. Yet, continuityists may point out that the embargo constrained multilateralism and that there was a certain dissonance between the EU-China strategic partnership on the one side and treating China as a rogue state on the other. The latter approach appears to be more convincing but has a major caveat: a self-proclaimed *civilian power* arguing for arms deals makes for a difficult normative debate – although China would not have been at the centre of such broad debate.

It is important to note that despite of Schröder’s own convictions on China, he did not act in an empty space, of course. Apart from bureaucratic and societal considerations discussed in later chapters, a number of other individuals also

certainly had an impact to a degree through their involvement in the bilateral engagement. There was his long-term Chief of Staff, Franz-Walter Steinmeier, who then went on to become Foreign Minister and eventually German President (see below). Moreover, key German industry representatives helped to facilitate relations. Heinrich von Pierer, CEO of Siemens from 1992 to 2005, had been asked by Kohl to chair the APA in 1993, a position he held until 2006. He famously said that “the risk of *not* being [in China] is higher than the risk of being there” (Stewart and O'Brien 2005) which sums up his advocacy of China business in Germany and representing German interests in China (Gottwald 2006; Schüller 2000). He advised not only Schröder on foreign trade policies but also Merkel after she took office in 2005 (Manager Magazin 2005) and he helped both of them to network and lobby within China (Maas 2006; Stewart and O'Brien 2005). His actual influence on German China policies is impossible to quantify, but his close relations to Schröder, whom he had been playing tennis with on a regular basis (Der SPIEGEL 2005), suggest that he had helped shaping Schröder's understanding of German industry's perspectives. This directly relates to von Pierer's role as APA Chairman – an organisation discussed in the next chapter.

A further prominent figure representing business at the time was Jörg Wuttke. He represented BASF in China since 1997, was a founding member of the German Chamber of Commerce Abroad in China and headed the European Chamber of Commerce multiple times (2007-2010 and 2014-2017). Robust direct linkages to Schröder or Merkel have been difficult to find, likely because Wuttke was situated in China and not Berlin, but he had been a frequent dialogue partner for policy makers and policy advocates in Germany⁷³. His influence on top-level decision-making in Berlin is difficult to measure and may have been limited. However, he represents one of the key figures of Track 1.5 and II diplomacy between the two countries, and one of the major lobbyists of German – and European – business in China. His active involvement is therefore still of interest. However, as mentioned earlier, the purpose of this chapter is to measure the influence of key individual factors in direct relation to the decision-making and determining processes of

⁷³ As highlighted by interviewees #21 and #22 who have detailed knowledge of the German China policy making procedures.

Germany. The difficulty in quantifying the degree of individual factors' direct influence on the procedure make them less of a priority for analysis here, including Wuttke. Certainly, this research acknowledges their active participation and influence of these individuals will be examined more based on the positions they pose and organisations they represent. Therefore, to discuss them, the focus lies more on their civic engagement and thus will be evaluated at the following societal level chapter.

In short, however Schröder had developed his views and policy agenda on China, the trajectory of the relations did bear his hallmarks. He resembles the main factor at the individual level from 1998 to 2005 due to exerting his direct influence on policy-making for two reasons. First, by virtue of his office and the Chancellery-based administration and planning of the bilateral relations. Second, by his conviction of pushing the relations forward, which mattered the most, and therefore was directly reflected in the results of his engagement. His desire to reform and strengthen the German economy, understanding of the relevance of foreign trade policies, and dedication to cooperation with partners with different value systems, ultimately had led Germany to ensure that the relations thrived beyond expectations.

5.2 Merkel's Chancellorship

Term I (2005-2009)

With Merkel having come into power after a close win of Merkel's Christian Democrats over Schröder's Social Democrats in the general election in 2005, Germany's relations with China started to shift significantly. Merkel put more emphasis on the notion of human rights. While Schmidt and Heilmann argue that there was "low-friction" (Schmidt and Heilmann 2012, p. 155) between both countries within Merkel's initial couple of years in office, Merkel's decision to meet with the Dalai Lama in the Chancellery *privately* in 2007 drew a different picture (Dempsey 2007). This meeting and, as Gottwald (2010) argues, the fact that no conveyed advance warning of the meeting was given, pushed Beijing to calling off the human rights dialogue the same year. Even former Chancellor Schröder saw the need to publicly express "regret" (Reuters 2007, p. 1) about Merkel's decision at the time – similarly to comments by then foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier,

Schröder's former chief of staff (FAZ 2007). Merkel, and part of the CDU faction rejected this critique harshly, with Merkel noting that she "decide[d] whom to meet and where to meet herself" (FAZ 2007). In 2014, Schröder suggested that Merkel likely met the Dalai Lama in the Chancellery for domestic political reasons, but that she had not realised the foreign policy repercussions her decision would have (Schröder and Meck 2014, p. 126). A Chinese interviewee with a sound understanding of how foreign Chinese diplomatic relations work, explained that Merkel's meeting had disgruntled the Chinese leadership, but that the affront had not been severe enough to jeopardise the important bilateral relationship both countries enjoyed⁷⁴. This view is largely in line with Chinese views on Fischer's criticisms mentioned above. However, two close observers⁷⁵ on the German side of the relations noted that the then German ambassador to China, Michael Schaefer, had afterwards spent more than a year on mending the relations and to regain influence among Beijing's political elite.

Merkel's reception of the Dalai Lama was not the first act which had been met with a frosty Chinese response. Even before Merkel's first visit to China in 2006, the German government had delivered 26 human rights cases they were concerned with to Beijing (Kinzelbach 2015). This was a practice introduced by Schröder as an alternative to public criticism which "sometimes worked, sometimes did not work" (Schröder and Meck 2014, p. 115) to improve the situation of the people in question. Merkel's government delivering 26 cases without having met the new Chinese leadership herself should not have left a good impression either. During Merkel's first visit to China, she then met with Bishop Aloysius Jin, a controversial figure in China, and, a year later in 2008, she decided to not attend the Olympic Games in Beijing⁷⁶. The decision to stay home sparked several parliamentary debates on the human rights situation in China⁷⁷ and was not perceived well in China. Furthermore, just a couple of months after taking office, Merkel decided to forgo her

⁷⁴ As explained by interviewee #13.

⁷⁵ Interviewees #6 and #15.

⁷⁶ The Olympic Games were preceded by extensive coverage on all sorts of problems relating China's economic development and issues with the preparation of the Olympic Games – from criticism on human rights violations to environmental problems to the fact that the Games were giving too much attention to a "Communist-despotic regime" Heberer and Senz (2011, p. 682).

⁷⁷ Cf. Schnellbach (2015).

predecessor's plan to organise a majority for lifting the arms embargo on China within the EU (Deutsche Welle 2005), although this had hardly been a surprise considering the prior opposition of her party to Schröder's campaign. Similarly, when Merkel was presiding over the European Union Human Rights Dialogue with China in 2007, she affronted China by letting two NGOs participate in a seminar that the Chinese delegation had specifically protested against (Kinzelbach 2015).

With such actions, Merkel distanced herself from her predecessor within the German debate as well as the relations with China. However, her actions need to be seen in context of Merkel's own party- and faction-constraints in parliament. After criticism of Schröder's trade-driven approach to China, a strategy paper published by Merkel's Union faction in the Bundestag in 2007 gives an indication of the predominant views on China. In short, this paper argued in favour of the promotion of liberal Western values and preventing China from destabilising Asia and accusing China of lessening the appeal of Western values (CDU/CSU 2007)⁷⁸. Based on Merkel's track record and political style, it is unlikely that such a paper would have influenced Merkel to the point of jeopardising Germany's economic relations with China. Still, it presented her with the necessity to accommodate her party faction to an extent. After all, her coalition government with the SPD provided the Union with only a narrow lead.

⁷⁸ For further information on the paper, see Chapter 6.

Date	Primary Focus
#1: May 2006 ⁷⁹	Formal introduction to Wen Jiabao, Expo 2010 visit
#2 August 2007 ⁸⁰	Formal introduction to Hu Jintao
(October 2008)	ASEM Summit
#3: July 2010 ⁸¹	Joint Communiqué on Strategic Partnership, establishment of the strategic dialogue, commerce
#4: February 2012 ⁸²	Commerce
#5: August 2012 ⁸³	2. Germany-China Government Consultations, paying respect to outgoing Wen Jiabao, Commerce
#6: July 2014 ⁸⁴	First visit after announcement of the comprehensive strategic partnership (Mar 2014), commerce
#7: October 2015 ⁸⁵	Commerce
#8: June 2016 ⁸⁶	4. Germany-China Governmental Consultations
(September 2016) ⁸⁷	G20 Summit

Table 3: Angela Merkel's official visits to China as Chancellor

Whether she was therefore deliberately changing the tone of the relations or was driven by her own faction, her actions clearly provided a stark contrast to Schröder's time in office. He was seen as a pragmatist and commercially oriented, and it is no surprise that he attended the Olympic Games in Beijing, although in a *'private'* role only (Tagesspiegel 2008). When meeting the Chinese Vice Premier, and later Premier, Li Keqiang just before the Olympic Games' opening ceremony, Li "spoke highly of Schröder's endeavours to promote China-Germany relations when he was in office and then out of office. [Li] also expressed his hope that Schröder could continue to play his positive role in advancing bilateral ties" (Xinhua 2008).

⁷⁹ Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

⁸⁰ Cf. China Daily (2007).

⁸¹ Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

⁸² Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

⁸³ Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

⁸⁴ Cf. Deutsche Welle (2014).

⁸⁵ Cf. Deutsche Welle (2015).

⁸⁶ Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

⁸⁷ Cf. Liu and Guo (2018).

Li's words can be interpreted as a pointed remark, in particular in the context of Merkel's no-show at the Beijing Olympics. Although Schröder had stepped down as the SPD's chairman and stopped playing an active role within his party after the 2005 general election, the SPD with its new Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Schröder's former Chief of Staff at the Chancellery (and prior to that in Lower Saxony) and long-term confidant, appeared to further pursue Schröder's China strategy. The coalition paper stated that Germany aimed at strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights via the existing Rule of Law Dialogue with China (CDU, CSU & SPD 2005, p. 135). This is not much of a diversion from the previous stance, as the dialogue had already been running for a while under Schröder and the language did also not significantly differ from previous agreements. Based on the above paper from the CDU/CSU faction, it appears that the Union had been pushing for what could be seen as the absolute minimum of value-driven statements to be included in a coalition agreement (CDU/CSU 2007) instead.

Why did Merkel divert from the prior government's stance on China then? Some of it can be attributed to the wider political situation in Germany. On the one hand, Merkel wanted to distinguish herself from Schröder and his turbulent years as Chancellor. With Schröder having had disappointed many Social Democrats and voters, Merkel – and her party – was eager to establish a more positive and value-driven political atmosphere. Even the Union's junior partner in the grand coalition, the SPD, had gotten tired of Schröder and his *pragmatic* decision-making (Hilz 2009), although Steinmeier appeared to keep a lid on criticism of Schröder's foreign (trade) policies.

Moreover, as Wells put it: Merkel's "willingness to upbraid the Chinese Communist regime comes straight from her own youth in Communist East Germany. It has cost her ministers many cancelled meetings with the Beijing regime, but folks love it at home" (Wells 2007, p. 36). The former claim of Wells on Merkel's own history has already been discussed above – it likely has had an initial

impact on her attitude towards China. The latter correlates strongly with the generally negative public China sentiments found in Germany⁸⁸.

Furthermore, the Christian Democrats had harshly criticised Schröder's foreign policy repeatedly for having changed Germany's image in the world due to its lack of cohesive policies and a turn away from its Western partners and NATO towards Russia and China (Schnellbach and Man 2015, p. 3). When Merkel took office, her stronger and much more positive views of the United States (Yoder 2011) compared to Schröder likely played a role. While Schröder had moved Germany slightly away from the transatlantic partnership towards the East, Merkel appeared wanting to rectify this and to strengthen Germany-US ties in her first years to the extent German foreign policy continuation principles allowed her to do so (Hacke 2008).

Another view is provided by Heberer and Senz (2011) who point at the macro-perspective: China's rise led to a lot of uncertainty in global politics and a challenge to the established institutions. As such, Merkel had to manage this friction perhaps more so as a Conservative party leader than Schröder, who stood for a more gain-oriented than value-oriented foreign policy. This view has some merit, yet it simplifies Schröder's role a little. To slightly revise it: Schröder could afford being more pragmatic about a changing global world order due to his role within his party, while Merkel had to pay more attention to its party's conservative roots and close transatlantic and NATO ties.

Coming back to the relations, they stayed frosty for a while after the above discussed setbacks in 2007. China eventually cancelled their attendance to the annual Rule of Law Dialogue and German Ambassador Schaefer was attending "secret meetings lasting for months" (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 681) to normalise the relations, although other sources suggested that it took well over a year⁸⁹. As part of this process, Bierling (2014) pointed out that Germany had made a significant concession – one that Merkel had to approve: to explicitly state that Taiwan and Tibet were part of the Chinese territory, instead of relying on the 'one

⁸⁸ See Chapter 7 for a thorough discussion.

⁸⁹ As mentioned above, shared by interviewees #6 and #15.

China policy' term like it had been consensus within the German political sector. With a 2008 visit of the then Minister for Environment, Sigmar Gabriel (SPD), to China, the relations were on the mend (Wirtschaftswoche 2008).

Term II (2009-2013)

In the run-up of the general election in 2009, the Union parties quickly decided to put Merkel at the very centre of their election campaign. She had gained the reputation of a level-headed Chancellor and was dealing with the domestic fallout of the Global Financial Crisis, and the looming Eurozone crisis. As such, priorities shifted and Merkel started focusing more on domestic economic issues, avoiding unnecessary international conflict. Merkel started to follow in Schröder's footsteps.

With the general election results in September 2009 there came further change. The *Grand Coalition* between the Union and SPD ended and was superseded by a coalition between the Union and Liberals, laying the ground-work for an even more commerce-friendly foreign-policy style⁹⁰. Hence, facilitating trade was not just on the agenda to mitigate the economic woes during these years, but also resonated more with the key players within the new administration than with the ones during Merkel's first term.

Soon after the new government was established, and in the midst of the Global Financial Crisis, Merkel's position towards China shifted significantly. Perhaps it was the influence of the German Financial Crisis or the new junior coalition partner, but China's role for German economic growth and stability was suddenly paid more attention to. Less than one year after the elections, in July 2010, Merkel proposed a "new phase" in Germany-China relations (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 686). A close observer of the relations between the two countries considered that Merkel's *learning curve* to understand China had not been very steep at first and that she had

⁹⁰ However, their BMZ Minister at the time, Dirk Niebel, decided to cut China off the list of 50 countries being granted German development aid. He argued that China had become too developed and wealthy to still require aid. A number of technical assistance projects remained in China, though, and continued to be executed in cooperation with the Chinese government on different levels for the whole time period of this thesis (Wissenschaftliche Dienste 2018).

required time to wrap her head around China's role for Germany in her first term⁹¹. This may have been a slightly simplistic view of the situation, as internal party constraints and personal experiences with Communist regimes will likely have also had an impact. Yet, once again, what matters is that Merkel did have a direct impact on the relations, and therefore on Germany's final decision-making.

As such, a policy shift occurred. With a German export ratio of close to 45% during Merkel's second term (with a slight dent in 2009 and 2010), the influence of commercial interest in the policy making process was rising and securing trade ties became a crucial policy endeavour more than ever before. According to Schnellbach (2015), especially the automotive sector lobby gained greater even influence. Schröder had been known as the *Autokanzler* due to his close ties to the automotive industry (in part due to his prior board of directors role at Volkswagen), yet Merkel would eventually match his open ear for sector interests (Bernhagen 2017).

While Merkel and her government were pushed more and more into an unwanted leadership position within the EU during the Eurozone crisis, in particular regarding Greek bailout negotiations, she still had to make sure that Germany sailed through the rough economic sea at the time reasonably well. As later analyses show, China played a major part in Germany's largely unscathed economy during the crisis years as has already been discussed (Chapter 4.4). China delivered on German trade expectations and China eventually became/remained an "important driver for economic growth" (Erber 2012, p. 27), both for Germany as well as the global economy.

Being well aware of this, Merkel not only proposed a *new phase* in the relations with China, but also acted accordingly. In October 2009, the Frankfurt Book Fair, the "world's largest trade fair for publishing" (Frankfurter Buchmesse 2019), prominently featured China. This led to strong criticism among parts of German civil society, not the least because Chinese dissidents and critics had been uninvited on request of Chinese officials (Geyer 2009). The already negative media coverage on China worsened further (Siemons 2009). Yet, just a few weeks after the 2009

⁹¹ As suggested by interviewee #3.

general election, Merkel did not weigh in on the controversy – which she may have done a few years earlier – and the critical debate therefore did not taint the diplomatic relations between the two countries, putting them back on a political growth trajectory.

In fact, China had become so important for the German economy that Merkel turned against one of Germany's most promising and popular business sectors at the time: solar/photovoltaic. In September 2012, EU ProSun, a business association of European solar panel manufacturers, pressed for an investigation into Chinese dumping of photovoltaic panels (Rapoza 2013). Although accusations of Chinese price dumping had been around well before China's accession to the WTO in 2001 already, this allegation regarding solar panels made headlines in Germany due to the involvement of SolarWorld, a then very prominent and promising German company which also headed the EU ProSun association. After half a year of investigation, European governments were divided. While twelve countries including France and Italy supported protective measures for European solar panel makers, 15 countries insisted on letting market forces sort this dispute out – including Germany (Rapoza 2013).

For Merkel and her cabinet, this was a tricky subject. The German renewable energy sector not only produced world leading technology but was also heralded as a key sector for future economic success by some. Overall, the German solar industry consisted at that time of around 200 companies with about 100,000 employees (Bundesverband Solarwirtschaft 2013, in Schnellbach and Man 2015). At first glance, it would border political suicide to not support a homegrown industry which was popular, much-heralded in the media, and seen as a key industry for future economic growth. Yet, Merkel decided to oppose EU ProSun's request to avoid diplomatic trouble with China and promised Li Keqiang personally to work on resolving the disagreement within Europe (Rapoza 2013). Germany's Economic Minister, Rösler (Liberals), also rejected calls for tariffs and called a possible implementation "a grave mistake" (Dominguez 2013, p. 2) as such tariffs would have harmed bilateral trade between the EU and China – and, of course, Germany and China.

This further indicates that Merkel's view on China had profoundly shifted. First, she considered Germany's relationship with China to be important enough to risk a media backlash within Germany and some level of diplomatic backlash within the EU. Second, it shows that China had gained significant economic policy influence and that they were considered a force to be reckoned with, both on a national as well as supra-regional level. Third, Merkel was now facing a more assertive China in a highly visible and well-covered economic policy disagreement, a new experience for someone who had largely succeeded in the political arena by waiting for her opponents to make mistakes instead of taking the first step. Therefore, the question of whether the German photovoltaic industry was worth fighting over is beside the point for this assessment. Admittedly, if the German automotive industry would have been hit, the German government would most likely have intervened, but photovoltaic – and what it stood for in the public's eyes, i.e. for a bright green future – was apparently not of sufficient importance to quarrel over with the Chinese leadership. However, a further view is worth consideration. This was an EU-wide issue in which the German government quickly and indeed assertively positioned itself pro-China compared to other major European economies such as France. One further possible explanation was to steal a march on European competitors and to consolidate Berlin's role as China's primary and priority partner in Europe despite of the struggles during Merkel's first term.

The latter consideration goes hand in hand with Merkel's fourth trip to China in July 2010. During the trip both countries published a communique to “forward their strategic partnership in a comprehensive way” (China Daily 2010, p. 1), paving the way for a *comprehensive strategic partnership* between the two countries to be introduced in the mid-term. This step included the establishment of a strategic dialogue, one which China only had agreed to conduct with one other country up to this point, the United States. While such a move might be seen as an exchange of formal niceties following a quickly evolving trade relationship, it also indicated Germany's increasing importance for China both commercially as well as politically – and, similarly, China's growing importance for Germany. This quick development of the political relations also substantiates earlier views that German civil society/public criticism on China in previous years was seen by Beijing as a purely

domestic affair with little relevance to them, and that their relationship with Merkel had improved considerably.

Overall, the relations started on a much better footing during this term than the last. While there are different explanations within academia and the political sector on why Merkel brushed China off within her first couple of years as Chancellor – and whether she did so at all – the relations improved rapidly in the eye of the Global Financial Crisis and the following Eurozone Crisis. Trade volume increased each year except for 2013 (Destatis 2018), regular dialogue forums were renewed and/or elevated, and additional ones established. It therefore appears that Merkel had aligned her China policy with Schröder's: to prioritise trade, to support German companies during visits to China, and to take it easy on promoting Western values publicly, but to move them into dialogue forums of questionable influence.

Term III (2013-2017)

In the general election in September 2013, “[t]he personality and stability of Angela Merkel had trumped every other campaign issue” (Janes 2015, p. 192), with “[her] approval ratings [having been] at record highs” (ibid). However, part of her success stemmed from the failure of the FDP to pass the 5% barrier to be represented in the Bundestag.

As such, her former junior coalition partner was unavailable for a coalition and after three months of negotiations a revival of the Merkel-led Grand Coalition between the Union and SPD was formed. Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) returned to the post of Foreign Minister and the former BMU head and then SPD Chairman Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) took over the BMWi⁹². As such, the SPD held increased influence on important foreign relations by holding both the FFO and BMWi, even if the particular relations were handled by the Chancellery. That said, FDP's China policy from 2009 to 2013 did not fundamentally differ from SPD's prior course and was similarly aimed at improving trade ties between the two countries.

⁹² Gabriel led the BMWi until January 2017 and subsequently took over the Foreign Ministry for about half a year until the 2017 general election. The post had become vacant when Steinmeier was set to become German President in March 2017. Gabriel was running for Chancellor and the Foreign Minister role provided him with a platform to improve his standing – Foreign Ministers have traditionally been polling well with Germans.

Regardless of this change in Merkel's coalition composition, the Germany-China relations continued running smoothly. While EU-Chinese trade tensions rose and the EU announced tariffs on a couple of sectors, both Germany and China had an interest to minimise these effects. Three months after the coalition granted Merkel her third term, both countries agreed on promoting their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership (Bundesregierung 2014). It explicitly sought to facilitate closer EU-China cooperation by supporting the EU-China 2020 strategy as well as the EU-China investment cooperation, eventually leading to an EU-China free trade agreement. It also aimed at intensifying bilateral ties and to ease market access while promoting free trade globally (ibid). Only weeks after Xi Jinping had visited Germany to sign this agreement, China's then new Prime Minister Li Keqiang also visited Germany, discussing trade cooperation before visiting Helmut Schmidt in Hamburg and eventually continuing his trip to other European countries (von Hein 2015). Considering the two consecutive visits by the then new Chinese leadership duo within about a month's time, it becomes quite obvious that Germany was an important partner for China – and that the Chinese leadership found it valuable to consult Merkel on European affairs first.

In the early 2010s, foreign policy sentiments in Berlin's political sector started to shift, though. Janes (2015) argued that German scholars, analysts, advisers and eventually also politicians became increasingly “aware of [Germany's] leadership prowess in economic terms, but constrain[s] when it comes to other forms of global responsibilities” (Janes 2015, p. 194). This most certainly was a development in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and Merkel's navigation of the Eurozone crisis – perhaps even including a delayed learning effect of the relations with China. Indeed, the foreign policy realm in Berlin was pushing for the German government to develop a more pronounced foreign policy strategy at the time (SWP & GMF 2013). Such view was also eventually shared by Steinmeier who got the FFO involved in discussing the “prior period of strategic indifference for the value of foreign policy in Germany” (Bertram 2015, p. 89) as part of the FFO's ‘Review 2014’ initiative.

This debate facilitated a move towards a more ambivalent outlook on China in Germany. In part, this change was also fuelled by the Chinese stock market crash from June 2015 to February 2016, which had negative effects not only on the stock values of Chinese companies including spillover effects onto other stock exchanges, but also deteriorated the outlook on the Chinese economy as a whole (Hsu 2016). The developments “failed to inspire confidence” (Hsu 2016, p. 2) in Chinese stocks and its economic stability at large, worrying German businesses exporting to China and/or doing business in China. Furthermore, it raised awareness for German politicians, and especially ones with a commercial or trade policy focus, that increasing economic dependence on China could have downsides beyond dumping, market access constraints, or IPR issues.

Based on several interviews⁹³, it became clear that German companies’ and business associations’ criticisms towards the economic realities in China gained much additional weight with politicians during this time. While the existence of short-term issues or operational problems had been highlighted by German companies throughout the time period of this thesis (Mehta 2006), major German corporations had these dealt with via the German embassy or high-level governmental channels such as the APA, and smaller companies via the German Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK)⁹⁴. This short-term problem-solving approach was partially replaced by more strategic concerns and a sudden lack of trust in mid- to long-term profits as long as both countries maintained good diplomatic relations.

The somewhat cataclysmic moment, or period, in the bilateral relations was caused by Chinese investments into German companies and sectors of *strategic importance*. Chapter 4.4 highlights how Chinese companies, often state-owned, bought German tech companies such as the robotics manufacturer KUKA, how they made strategic investments into iconic companies such as Deutsche Bank and Daimler, and tried to acquire German chip company Aixtron – which the BMWi under Gabriel vetoed, giving into US pressure (Scharrenbroch 2016). With the general attitude towards China having changed, these economic activities suddenly

⁹³ Interviews with interviewees #6, #13, #15, and #16.

⁹⁴ See Chapter 6 for an overview of the relationship between German businesses, their representatives, and the government.

appeared threatening to (some) German politicians including senior government figures.

Not Merkel but Gabriel, the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Social Democratic Chairman, and Vice-Chancellor, led the charge. About a year before the KUKA acquisition, Gabriel was about to undertake a China trip in April 2014. He had publicly declared to meet Chinese dissidents and to put emphasis on addressing China's human rights situation with them (Lee and Kreutzfeldt 2014), breaking with Schröder's, and in part Merkel's, policy trajectory. However, the next day, his spokesperson stated that the meeting had not taken place due to Chinese pressure and without giving further comments (Drews 2017). Why had he cancelled his meetings? A likely explanation is that he had received *advice* by industry leaders to forgo such meetings and to focus on promoting commerce during his trip instead of managing a possible crisis of his own making. Perhaps it had not been industry leaders but Merkel who had intervened. Both explanations are plausible, and the event may have left a lasting impression with Gabriel for the time ahead.

After the KUKA acquisition, he became much more outspoken in his efforts to bar China from investing in German key industries and to be much more pronounced in criticising China for its commercial practices. For instance, in October 2016, he blatantly stated that "further development of [Germany-China] bilateral cooperation depends on the opening-up of the [Chinese] market" (BMW 2016). To fully assess such statement, it is essential to ponder the domestic situation at the time. Gabriel was getting ready to become his party's Chancellor candidate, and by having led the minority group within the grand coalition, it had been difficult for him and his party to set themselves apart from Merkel and her party. With Merkel having been quiet on criticising China in the prior years, Gabriel likely saw an opening for 'protecting German business interests' in combination with protecting and promoting German/Western values. This stance may have created an issue with Steinmeier, the Foreign Minister, and parts of old Schröder supporters (and trade advocates), but offered Gabriel a way to distinguish himself from Merkel and to be in the centre of a public debate, with largely favourable views on his side.

By the time Merkel's third term was coming to a close, the relations between the two countries had deteriorated in terms of communication (but not trade or investment volumes), and Gabriel had succeeded in somewhat enhancing regulations for foreign investments in Germany's key sectors, administered by the BMWi (Berschens et al. 2017)⁹⁵. Although further talks on legislation challenges followed from 2018, a first step had been done. In August, a few weeks before the general election, Gabriel urged other European countries to develop a unified EU strategy on China (Handelsblatt 2017) – a final acknowledgement that had been brought up before, but finally had a sense of urgency attached to it; not the least because it came from a country that had paid special attention to developing their own sovereign China policy to maximise gains for themselves instead of following a mutual EU strategy (Godement and Vasselier 2017; Koch and Riecke 2019), just in time to remind the German public who had German businesses' best interest in mind, of course.

For Merkel, her third term had been the most difficult one. The migration crisis including major struggles within her own party over her chosen policy approach, the linked rise of nationalist and populist sentiments within Germany, and international expectations of her leadership within the EU and beyond, took most of her attention. This is likely to have attributed to the worsening of the Germany-China relations during the term, considering that critics of her approach existed in her party, in the opposition⁹⁶, in the public⁹⁷, and, with Gabriel, in her own government.

5.2.1 The Power of Individuals on Germany's Decision-Making Process

Based on the FPA framework and this chapter's specific search for individual factors who had sufficient impact to construct German actorness, Merkel is of similar importance to Schröder for the similar reasons explained under Schröder's analysis. It is therefore essential to give attention to her as an individual (f)actor constructing and shaping Germany's direction to China during her chancellorship.

⁹⁵ By the time, in Spring 2017, Gabriel had taken up the short-term position of Germany's Foreign Minister, as mentioned above. Yet, her successor at the BMWi, Brigitte Zypries (SPD), a former Federal Minister for Justice, formally took the lead.

⁹⁶ See the next chapter.

⁹⁷ See Chapter 7.

Some, such as Schnellbach (2015, p. 10), argued, that the influence of Merkel's personality traits should not be overstated for the policy making processes under her leadership. Although it is impossible to assess and quantify the extent of an individual factor's impact on German actorness and it will always remain a question of interpretation, dismissing/belittling individual experiences, ingrained habits and personal style completely severely limits the benefits of uncovering individual impact on policy-making. (Individual) factors are certainly not fully rational actors which disqualifies rational actor theory and is in line with the behavioural approach outlined in Chapter 2. Cognitive considerations matter as the previous section on Schröder's role has already shown.

Instead of discussing personality traits per se, Merkel's academic training was often cited to explain her actions and style. By holding a PhD in natural sciences with a focus on quantitative methods, she has been perceived as possessing an analytical mind that is deliberate, cautious, thoughtful (Klormann and Udelhoven 2008; Langenbacher 2015) and at times "dispassionate" (Crawford and Czuczka 2013, p. 183). While this view creates more puzzles about Merkel's first term's actions on China than it solves, it does appear to hold true for much of her leadership style and political strategies in a general sense. What helped negotiations within Germany and beyond has also been her "ability to reduce the tension in a meeting room" (Wells 2007, p. 35) as a calm and rational conversationalist⁹⁸.

Yoder (2011) pointed out that Angela Merkel is a woman, that she lived in the German Democratic Republic before reunification, grew up with her father being a pastor, and, indeed, has a background in the natural sciences. Yoder then went on to assess whether Merkel has a "unique perspective on international relations and foreign policy [and] on the management of foreign policy" (Yoder 2011, p. 360) in comparison to most political leaders and with an inter-sectional approach on the above aspects. For this particular research project, although important on its own, the aspect of sex/gender is excluded from the discussion since it would divert further from the question at hand, i.e. whether and how much factor's impacted Germany's actorness. Plus, empirical data on female leaders is limited. As argued by

⁹⁸ Interviewee #1 pointed this out repeatedly during the interview.

Hoogensen and Solheim, “the range of women executives is wide and, moreover, that there are no patterns when it comes to ideology or style of leadership” (Yoder 2011, p. 362)⁹⁹. In addition, Merkel considered having a post-feminist view on gender and politics based on the socialist culture she grew up in, and that she was “unlikely to explicitly articulate foreign policies concerning women’s rights or further initiatives that would target women specifically” (Yoder 2011, p. 363), and Merkel has indeed not prioritised such stances.

Far more relevant for this thesis’ topic is Merkel’s extensive experience with (Soviet-style) Communist thought in the GDR. As the following quote argues, it is quite clear that her socialisation in the GDR is likely to have partially shaped her view on China as well.

“Merkel is a liberal, she deeply believes in western values of freedom, human rights, and democracy. From personal experience in the former East Germany, she knows the difference between freedom and dictatorship and she is distrustful of a state which tried to control every aspect of the society and economy. Like many people from central and Eastern Europe, she has a positive image of the United States as a bastion of freedom and democracy. And like them, she is suspicious of Moscow’s intentions, especially when it comes to the Kremlin’s efforts to regain influence outside its borders, be it with military or economics means.”

(Hacke 2008, p. 3)

Following on from the above discussion of Merkel’s three terms, it is evident that the quote relates very much to the time it had been published: Merkel’s (early) first term. The mentioned hesitation, or lack of sympathy, when engaging with Communist governments had been visible during her first few years in the Chancellery as has been argued. This is not at all surprising in light of her background, and further exemplifies the importance of taking cognitive considerations into account when assessing individual factors’ decision-making.

⁹⁹ Cf. D’Amico (2010).

That said, “observers agree[d] that Merkel’s decision-making method [was] characterised by pragmatism and her ability to recognise the circumstances available to her. She listen[ed] to various policy recommendations and then [sought] a reasoned, logical solution to a problem” (Yoder 2011, p. 363). This is an assessment which many, perhaps including Schnellbach, can agree on.

How does this then relate to the foreign policy changes under Merkel generally and with regard to China specifically? As already mentioned in the empirical section above, Merkel improved ties with the US quickly after she had taken office. Also, whether it was based on her experience of life in the GDR or her Protestant roots, she believed that humanitarian issues were of high importance, that they should not be opposed by economic interests and that “Germany [could] press other regimes to respect human rights without jeopardising the bilateral relations between Germany and those countries” (Yoder 2011, p. 365). This is seconded by a close follower of China’s relations with Germany who believed that Merkel had a set of normative liberal values she upheld throughout her contacts with Chinese representatives. However, after her first few years as Chancellor she eventually developed an understanding of how far she could go without causing a stir¹⁰⁰.

This assessment on experiences and traits is certainly of interest, as it provides a different view on Merkel’s actions in the first couple of years of her first term than was usually depicted within academia and policy circles. Instead of considering Merkel as having been overly ideological, or very uninformed about China and its leadership or the importance of Germany-China trade, it simply highlights that Merkel believed that economic facilitation between the two countries could co-exist with her standing up for her deeply rooted beliefs on human rights, personal freedom, and democratic values. Or, perhaps she simply wanted to test how far she could push such matters with her Chinese counterparts. In such light, her, albeit unofficial, reception of the Dalai Lama in the Chancellery in 2007 suddenly makes sense. Still, with the German economy having slowly benefited from Schröder’s domestic policy reforms and the country’s economy getting back on track, it appeared imprudent for Merkel to *poke the dragon* without a clear agenda or plan.

¹⁰⁰ Expressed by interviewee #13.

Additionally, this view lacks substance for the later Merkel years, i.e. in her second and partially third term. While German governmental criticism on China rose during her third term, this had not been primarily caused by human rights concerns within China, but by the role of China as an economic partner and competitor instead. Still, Yoder's in-depth assessment of Merkel's characteristics is valuable for the interpretation of her actions and fits well into the chosen framework.

However, the question of why Merkel chose to change the early trajectory of her role in the Germany-China relations may still have other, simpler, explanations. When entering the Chancellery, Merkel had limited experience in trade policy planning and business advocacy¹⁰¹. A perhaps still frustrated Schröder also suggested a few months after his election defeat that “Merkel ha[d] been widely known to have little understanding of economic considerations” (Der SPIEGEL 2005, p. 1) which coincided with Schröder's friend Heinrich von Pierer starting to advise Merkel on commercial matters. The assumed initial lack of comprehensive understanding of China's economic relevance for Germany/German companies with the cognitive reluctance of seeing China as a close partner which required special treatment, is a sound interpretation of her early Chancellor years. Over time, however, and as Schnellbach and Yoder would certainly agree on, Merkel's analytical mindset and external advocacy by business representatives helped her to rebalance her views towards China for the (immediate) greater good of the country – or its major businesses. Such view is also backed by the works of Klormann and Udelhoven (2008) who assessed changes in images and approaches of Chancellors. They noted that, in contrast to Schröder (and Kohl), Merkel had been the one desiring to *serve* her country, instead of putting herself in the centre of her aspirations¹⁰².

In summary, Merkel had significant impact shaping Germany's relations with China during her first two terms. While the relations cooled down in the first half of her first term, they eventually recovered, and from there moved forward, increasingly aligning with Schröder's trajectory. The exact extent to which the

¹⁰¹ This view is supported by interviewees #4, #17, and #19.

¹⁰² Cf. Crawford and Czuczka (2013); Langenbacher (2015); Mushaben (2017a); Yoder (2011)

above analysis and suggested influences actually impacted her ability to construct German actorness towards China is impossible to say. Given the decision and actions delivered, it's sensible to draw a correlation between her qualities and the decision-making process. Her third term was impacted by other developments that required her attention, namely the migrant crisis, and led to a loss of her authority within her government, party, and the public, which was then used by Gabriel in particular to carve out a normative and practical policy platform in the run-up of his Chancellor candidacy.

However, reducing Gabriel's activities to mere career strategising falls short in at least one sense. Gabriel was the head of the BMWi at the time and German businesses, big and small, had been raising a range of issues of doing business in China and Chinese companies doing business at home for many years (see Chapter 4.5 and 6). Although worries about the latter had largely been debunked by the time Gabriel had taken action on these concerns¹⁰³, he was representing business interest when raising his concerns and eventually pushing for legislative restrictions of foreign investment in Germany. As such, he had more than tactical impact on Germany's China policies, which made him a temporary strategic factor for Germany-China actorness in Merkel's third term. Still, Merkel remained the primary individual factor found in this research to have a more obvious and prolonged impact on Germany's decision maker actorness regarding China among the studied policy individuals.

Others with some level of influence on the wider decision-making process existed as much as under Schröder. In fact, Steinmeier, Fischer's successor as foreign minister from 2005 to 2009 and 2013-2017 (before becoming German President), proposed a *community of responsibility* (*Verantwortungsgemeinschaft*) including China (Kundnani and Parello-Plesner 2012, p. 3), *trusting* the process of rapprochement. This is not a big surprise, though, as Steinmeier was expected to follow Schröder's footsteps here. In particular his role as the head of the Chancellery (*Kanzleramtschef*) – which is perhaps the second most influential

¹⁰³ See the extensive studies on Chinese activity and investment in Germany, such as Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2013).

position in the German political sector due to the Chancellery's strategic and guiding role in German politics (Knoll 2010; Korte 2010) – under Schröder should have made him well aware of the underlying bilateral concepts involving China. As such, it is fair to say that Steinmeier can also be assumed to have constituted a relevant direct factor in constructing German agency in decision-making, both in his prior role with Schröder and as a Foreign Minister under Merkel. However, his impact on the process itself under Merkel is once again very difficult to gauge, although it can be expected that he had played his role in changing Merkel's views on China to a certain degree during his late first term as head of the FFO and former Chancellery Head.

Other individual (f)actors, particularly those in private sector such as von Pierer and Wuttke, remained involved in the Germany-China relationship, but their 'active participation' within the relations cannot be equated with their direct impact on Germany's agency. While Wuttke most likely had influence on a tactical level in the role as a long-term Track 1.5 and II German leader in China, his role was more representative in nature. Thus, his strategic influence on Merkel should have been limited. Business considerations, primary related to the BDI and APA, did not only target the Chancellors. They also targeted the policy making process, from the data gathering (or *thought design*) stage in ministries or within the parliament, to senior decision-making negotiations. These, however are discussed from an institutional perspective in the following chapter, evaluating factors at the bureaucratic level.

5.3 Evaluation of the Influence of Individual Factors through Thematic Analysis

The above evaluation of the Chancellor's role in constructing German actorness as a decision maker and its agency towards China provides insights about the influence of the involved key individual factors on Germany's engagement in the bilateral relations. Throughout the analysis, it is evident that the identified three themes, economic interest, ignorance, and trust, were embedded in the individual factors' considerations to construct Germany's position. This section summarises and emphasises these findings.

5.3.1 Economic Interest

Chapter 4.5 illustrated the economic realities of Germany-China trade and investment cooperation. The total trade volume rose from about 17 million Euro in 1998 to about 56 million Euro in 2005, and to close to 160 million Euro in 2017, far outpacing Germany's European counterparts (Eurostat 2018). For Schröder, this had been part of the plan. Although Germany-China trade had been rising at impressive levels well before Schröder came into office (Deutsche Bundesbank 2018b), his main domestic, and also foreign trade policy, related goals had been to reform the Germany economy and to mend *Europe's sick man*. Before Schröder set a foot in the Chancellery, or, indeed, in the State Chancellery in Hanover, he had "considered it being important and the right thing to do for the Chancellor to facilitate German business abroad" (Schröder and Meck 2014, p. 124). This is of particular importance due to Schröder's economic policy priority to further stimulate growth of the German economy in the post-reunification period.

Was the increase in trade values all Schröder's doing then? Obviously not, the existing trade ties between the two countries and trade facilitation associations (e.g. the German AHK in China and the APA) made sure that the relations were on a growth trajectory. China's accession to the WTO also played a major role. Still, Schröder propelled the political and economic relations forward to an extent few would have anticipated. His pragmatism, charming salesman personality, close ties to business leaders, and doer approach, tackling urgent issues head on, improved the relations with the Chinese leadership swiftly and lastingly. Or, in terms of a metaphor, Kohl had opened the door for close economic ties with China, and Schröder had stepped through.

For Merkel, foreign trade policies may not have been her utmost priority at the beginning of her first term (see the section above), but she eventually came around, facilitating trade on her trips in a similar fashion as Schröder had done. Whether it was the existence of the Global Financial Crisis which made her come to this conclusion herself, or the influence by German business lobbyists or political partners, is not clear. Yet, from the individual level, she, the analytical and reserved Merkel, realised as much as Schröder, that German economic prosperity (also)

depended on exports and that China had the market size to facilitate German prosperity.

The notion of economic interest had indeed been omnipresent in the 1998 to 2017 time period. Both Chancellors travelled to China with many-dozen business delegates¹⁰⁴ at a time, they facilitated major investments of German companies in China¹⁰⁵, and nurtured close relations with senior business representatives involved in China-related businesses (Schröder, in particular). It is therefore no surprise that the economic relations correlated with the political relations. As such, the bilateral relations were promoted to a ‘partnership in global responsibility’ in 2004, to a ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’ in 2014.

With Midea’s announced interest in KUKA, which had been far from being a world-leading technological leader as the German media and claimed¹⁰⁶, perceptions shifted. The pro-China pendulum in the German government started to swing into the other direction. BMWi’s Gabriel took charge in giving industry complaints a voice, made use of the political momentum for changes in regulations, and also saw the opportunity to benefit from it politically. As such, Gabriel needs to be named as the third core individual factor with power to construct German China actorness during the time frame, although not at the same magnitude as the Chancellors did. Once again, many other individuals played an active role in shaping the Germany-China relations in one way or another as well, ranging from individuals in the political sector, to private sector lobbyists, and perhaps even to public intellectuals and journalists. However, the purpose of this thesis is to understand the key factors that have had a direct impact on constructing Germany’s actorness within the bilateral relations only. Furthermore, there has not been sufficient evidence to measure to what an extent other individuals had the power or influence to directly influence Germany’s strategic positioning directly. That said, some may have, and in certain cases (Steinmeier and von Pierer¹⁰⁷ come to mind) will have had non-

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, Volkery (2004).

¹⁰⁵ See, for instance, Deggerich (2001), and also the next chapter.

¹⁰⁶ According to interviewees #15 and #20 who both possess the expertise to make such claim.

¹⁰⁷ Similar to all individual factors, it is difficult to separate them from the position they held. Von Pierer had influence and leverage through his positions as Siemens’ CEO and the

negligible strategic influence on Schröder's and/or Merkel's decision-making. However, not only were these cases more tactics driven, a dedicated assessment of second- or third-degree influence is also beyond the scope of this research project.

In short, economic interest had been one of the key drivers for the three identified individuals – Schröder, Merkel, and Gabriel – and it directly influenced Germany's decision-making agency towards China.

5.3.2 Ignorance and Trust

The role of ignorance and trust, as conceptualised in Chapter 3.5, had been ubiquitous in the German policy processes and its policy results concerning China during the 1998 to 2017 time frame. It also mattered with regard to the individual factors' navigation of Germany's approaches.

Schröder may have prioritised economic interest above all else when directing Germany's engagement with China, but he also well realised that he could not fully ignore the normative criticism that was voiced against China, and Germany's China approach. As mentioned previously, Fischer helped him to keep some of the criticism at bay. Furthermore, he squeezed (or let others squeeze) some of Germany's normative foreign policy principles inside strategy papers and brought the Chinese government to the table on discussing some of these aspects – even if this had mostly been done within separate dialogues and roundtables. In return, “Schröder [...] refused to criticise the Chinese government's human rights record in public” (Grant 2005). It may have simply been a pragmatic task sharing practice, with Schröder addressing the Chinese leadership and Fischer addressing the German population and other more normative-minded stakeholders, but it also gave Schröder's overall approach to China a one-dimensional appearance with its trade focus. Even much later, Schröder insisted that public criticism simply would not have done much good (Schröder and Meck 2014) and he had therefore not ‘outsourced’, but ‘legitimised’ criticism via non-public channels.

head of the APA [which is discussed in the following chapter]. Yet, he also was close to Schröder and an adviser to Merkel. Hence, the influence through his personal contact has been referred to here, and this is difficult to assess.

How does this relate to ignorance and trust? The championing of economic interest and cooperation with a non-democratic partner by a Social Democratic Chancellor invites the linkage to Brandt's change through rapprochement approach. Schröder himself firmly believed that change in China was possible and that trade could facilitate China closer moving to Germany's/European standards and values. This approach constituted a cornerstone of German foreign policy (Schröder and Meck 2014). He has not been alone among the German political elite, with Steinmeier, and Peter Altmeier (CDU), Merkel III's Head of the Chancellery and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs during Merkel IV, in 2020 publicly stating that he "still believe[d] that change can be achieved through trade," (Karnitschnig and Hanke Vela 2020). This adamant defence of German policy principles and effectively its civil power notion shows a deep trust in the process, ingrained in the people's understanding of foreign policy and geopolitics, which led these individual key factors to counter and downplay an increasing number of critics.

A second dimension of trust, closely aligned with ignorance, as explained in the conceptualisation section in Chapter 3, had been the acknowledgement of China as a major export market for German goods and as a distant emerging economy only. There had been some inherent trust that China was *just there* for German companies to generate profits from, despite of some minor issues here and there. In the eyes of these individuals, Germany had no direct security interests in Asia, especially not strategic long-term interests beyond trade promotion, so the rise of China in political terms remained vague and largely related to global institutions instead of bilateral relations. This oversight, lack of recognition and limitation in understanding of China's implication to Germany beyond trade and economics had led to a lack of a comprehensive long-term strategy. Therefore, with the increasing dependence on China's economy, concerns about Chinese foreign (economic) policies, and increasing global geopolitical concerns, a void had been created by trust and ignorance, which had quickly filled with fear and threat perceptions – or, in short, with "German angst over Chinese M&A" (Chazan 2016, p. 1).

Chapter 6: Bureaucratic Level

Following the examination at the individual level in the previous chapter, this chapter is the second of the three key analytical sections of the thesis. It assesses the bureaucratic level, i.e. the bureaucratic institutions and the interplays among them which have the potential to impact German actorness and its decision-making agency with regard to China.

The following pages provide an overview about a range of core institutions of the German political system, also offering additional information on the effects that KUKAs acquisition by the Midea Group had. In general, this chapter starts with identifying key German bureaucratic factors in the context of China. Throughout the discussions of these specific institutions, there is also thorough analysis of their impact on the country's decision-making process with regard to China. Specifically, chapter 6.2 features the attempt to bring together an overview about the discoverable pieces of information on China knowledge within the German parliament, and also assesses the role of China within German coalition agreements.

At the end of this chapter, it concludes with a comprehensive analysis using the identified three themes: economic interest, ignorance, and trust. Built on the specific analyses of the major bureaucratic factors in the previous sections, this thematic investigation at the end brings the arguments together to advance the examination from the intended strategic perspective. The findings further validate the observation made at the individual level: while economic interest stayed at the centre of consideration within the institutional debate, the role of ignorance and trust also prevailed at this level which impeded the country's search for a more comprehensive strategy towards China.

It is important to clarify at this point that the mentioning of individual factors at this level should not be mixed with the analysis at the individual level. The institutions these individuals represented or the duties which individuals' function titles encompass are at the centre of this chapter. Certainly, as argued in Chapter 5, specific traits of the people mentioned in the following sections had direct impact on the course of action taken, but this chapter complements the above analysis of

individuals at the bureaucratic level. Therefore, while the examination at the individual level focuses on the impact of factor's personal experiences and traits, this chapter discusses these persons' activities based on the scope of influence the titles or institutions represent and possess.

6.1 The Executive Branch

6.1.1 Chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt)

The previous chapter already discussed the role of the Chancellors Schröder and Merkel for the construction of German actorness towards China at the individual level at length. Paying special attention to the bureaucratic level by assessing the role of the executive branch in impacting Germany's relations with China, however, is essential to understanding the environment Schröder and Merkel operated in – and were constrained by. In short, both Chancellors benefited from prior power struggles, leading to a more and more distinct *Chancellor Democracy*, bundling executive governmental power within the Chancellery.

In terms of foreign policy, the Chancellery generally handles the three tasks of leading policy endeavours, coordinating them, and 'pulling strings' to secure their success (Mertes 2000, p. 62; Korte 2007). It has no authority in giving directives to ministries and has traditionally been seen as a "secretariat of the government" (Korte 2007, p. 205). However, it is the Chancellor's secretariat, and thus situates at the very core of political power in Germany, and therefore not only develops the general policy trajectory of the government, but also sits at the main intersection between the federal ministries and is also in charge of the Federal Intelligence Service (BND).

On an operational level, the Chancellery uses a large amount of seconded foreign ministry personnel to staff its foreign policy department. This is especially useful as the Chancellery does not have the resources for doing extensive research on its own. Instead, it relies on the expertise and structures in the foreign ministry and diplomatic service to assess foreign matters of interest. This, however, is perhaps the primary reason for the increasingly systemic tensions between the Chancellery and the FFO. While the Chancellery relies on the FFO's information

and expertise, the Chancellor – and, the institutional counterpart, the Chancellery – takes charge in developing policy and may cast suggestions, advice and concerns by the foreign policy practitioners in the FFO aside. Based on the internal coalition government struggles and the tradition that the FFO is often held by a senior junior partner figure, dissent between the two institutions also result from internal coalition struggles often (Korte 2007). This is exemplified by the fact that until 1982, the head of the foreign affairs department in the Chancellery had been a career diplomat, i.e. a long-standing member of the foreign service. From 1982, Kohl, Schröder and Merkel primarily chose trusted colleagues for this position instead of lesser-known FFO personnel.

With the Chancellery being the governmental *junction* institution where information is passed to, and where the coordination takes place, the Chancellery was the instrumental institution for Germany's China policy making from 1998 to 2017. As such, by virtue of being the centre-top piece of the organisational chart, the Chancellery directly affected Germany's actorness in general terms, and with regard to China specifically, thanks to both Schröder's and Merkel's decision to retain the coordination of Germany's relations at the Chancellery. This further ensured that the Chancellors' focus on economic interest remained at their own *secretariat*, not to be diluted by their minority coalition party holding the FFO.

6.1.2. Federal Ministries

With increasing internationalisation and Europeanisation of the German political sector over time, few purely domestic areas of policy making within the federal institutions could be found in the 1998 to 2017 period. Domestic policy changes in most fields influenced foreign actors, while policy discussions at home were also increasingly influenced by debates or expectations abroad. This led to two types of concerns. First, this caused complications when influencing international actors to adopt German policies, often via international organisations, and either for normative reasons, to strengthen the government's own position domestically, or to simply make life easier for the ministry in question. Second, the task of screening the international environment in all sorts of policy fields was an impossible task for

the Foreign Ministry to execute on its own. Coping with such demands while influencing policy debates at the same time was simply too much to ask a single institution within the German executive branch.

Therefore, the classic distinction between domestic and foreign policy did not seem to be an adequate separation of tasks around the millennium – a view which was widely supported within German political science debates (Messner 2000; Weller 2007). Accordingly, foreign policy relations, also with regard to China, were influenced by various federal political stakeholders with partially vastly different interests.

This led to a range of problems, including that ministries generally relied on a reactive action pattern in the international sphere (Weller 2007). Without taking charge and showing initiative, influencing debates, and securing international support is difficult. Eberlei (2001, pp. 38–41) raised four reasons for such behaviour: the discussed adaptive challenges in foreign policy setting after the end of the Cold War, particularly inside the foreign ministry; the relatively low priority of international affairs in relation to the effort it requires to stay on topic international developments at most ministries; the tensions it may create with other German political organs, both internally as well as from a public relations perspective; and simply the lack of resources to turn reactive work patterns into proactive work patterns. Hence, if a ministry pushed forward with an international project, particularly a bilateral one, it was likely to have the explicit support of the Chancellery or otherwise important and influential stakeholders (e.g. influential commercial lobbies collaborating with the BMWi while having strong support by the minister in charge). Without it, the necessary operational and functional support of a project may be overwhelming – and so could be the criticism at home in case the project contradicting other running or planned policy initiatives. Yet, ministries working closely with the Chancellery benefited from a *federal bottom-up approach* in which the relevant ministries would often come up with their own policy initiatives which would then get streamlined and supported by the Chancellery (Faust and Messner 2008).

Additionally, historic tensions between ministries existed. One chronically strained inter-ministry relationship was the one between the FFO and the BMZ. In most coalitions in German political history, these ministries were headed by ministers from different coalition parties. The BMZ was often used to accentuate foreign policy differently than the foreign minister and his party did. Its focus on developing countries combined with deep foreign aid and technical assistance pockets led to often close relationships with many governments and influential personnel in international organisations. This was a stark contrast to the FFO which mostly relied on its embassies to exert influence on foreign stakeholders and had little budget beyond that. On top of that, the FFO had to represent the official government line and take the brunt for any pushback. The BMZ, on the other hand, had the aim to improve living conditions in some of the world's poorest countries. Although it also served as a tool to extend German interest beyond the country's borders, the nature of the foreign policy activities by the FFO and BMZ differed widely and inevitably led to strategic and sometimes operational conflicts. With the BMZ's Minister usually having been a member of the same party as the Chancellor (or, in the case of the CDU/CSU, in the same 'Union'), this posed additional pressure on the, traditionally, more influential FFO.

An assessment of ministries as factors, under the consideration of the role of the Chancellery discussed above, finds that a wide range of ministries were also active in China, ranging from the FFO, BMWi, and BMZ (since 2009 in minor fashion) to, for instance, the BMU, which was engaged in environmental projects.

As part of these ministries' core expertise and policy fields, tactical influence was certainly exerted. This is in line with the Bureaucratic Politics Model which suggests that bureaucratic institutions deal with operational matters and matters of moderate importance while leading figures such as the Chancellor (as part of the Chancellery), take part of important policy matters (Allison and Halperin 1972). This approach hits the nail on the head in terms of Germany's China actorness. On tactical matters, individual ministries and departments may have taken charge on policy matters, but the Chancellery coordinated them and executed the important policy projects – to the detriment of the traditionally influential FFO.

The ministry which perhaps benefited most from the development was the BMWi, though. With economic interest having dominated the 1998 to 2017 time frame, its economic competence became crucial to establish itself as a secondary knowledge hub besides the Chancellery. Following the KUKA debate (see the next section for a more extensive discussion of the case), the China unit in the BMWi was extended to become a “coordination centre”¹⁰⁸ which started to plan and execute delegation trips etc. instead of having merely been a point of contact and data gatherer like before. It also started to communicate with business lobbyists and further policy advocates on China on a frequent basis (“multiple times a week”¹⁰⁹), once more highlighting the role economic interest played for the bilateral relations despite of the worsening rhetoric.

In short, a range of ministries may have had dedicated tactical impact on certain initiatives/policies due to their active presences, but most lacked strategic impact on Germany’s China actorness. Apart from the Chancellery, the notable exception was the BMWi.

6.1.3 BMWi and the KUKA Aftermath

During Merkel’s third term, the BMWi gained particular importance under Sigmar Gabriel around 2016 when he pushed for controls of Chinese investment. The debate on the KUKA acquisition by the Chinese Midea Group highlighted the power that the BMWi could exert over international investments and trade. It was able to block international acquisitions/investments of 25% or more if they saw a credible threat for traditional German national security. After the public debate on Chinese investments posing a threat to German mid- to long-term economic prosperity¹¹⁰, the regulations were expanded in summer 2017 by Brigitte Zypries (SPD), who had taken over the BMWi from Gabriel who had become Foreign Minister in the run-up of the general election in September 2017. The 2017 regulations included more thorough assessments of takeovers, for instance also

¹⁰⁸ According to interviewee #22.

¹⁰⁹ Based on interviews with #15, #21, and #22.

¹¹⁰ Calls for labelling China a threat was nothing new. In its essence, the 2015 debate was quite similar to earlier societal debates in the mid-2000s as exemplified by a 2006 SPIEGEL cover story warning that Asia and China were about to endanger German future economic success (Steingart 2006).

including harbours and hospitals, instead core infrastructure businesses only (Dams 2017).

The bone of contention for this tightening of investment regulations by one of the most open and liberal economies at the time was the acquisition of the German industrial robotics company KUKA by the Chinese Midea Group as discussed briefly in Chapter 5 already. Despite of KUKA's provision of advanced robotics to various important German manufacturing companies and also collecting and analysing their manufacturing data, the BMWi agreed to the acquisition in August 2016 and saw no threat to national security (Handelsblatt 2016). Still, economic minister Sigmar Gabriel tried repeatedly to find a German or European investor to come forward to acquire KUKA instead of letting a Chinese buyer acquire the company (Allen 2016). This search was unsuccessful, in part because the Chinese had made an offer that was far above the expected value of the company, and in part because questions remained on whether KUKA would be able to live up to the expectations that were put on it during the concurrent public debate on the acquisition process, according to an M&A specialist familiar with the case¹¹¹. This public debate soon zoned in on China's "unfair competition" (Allen 2016, p. 1) practices and how the German government should deal with such practices by non-Western non-democratic countries. The debate quickly turned sour and moved towards discussing the threat that China's rise posed to German future wealth generation (Kundnani 2016).

While the KUKA debate was still ongoing, the BMWi agreed to the acquisition of German chip company Aixtron by Fujian Grand Chip Investment from China in September 2016, but the decision was reversed in the following month. US authorities had informed the German government that the Chinese were able to make use of Aixtron technology for military purposes (Scharrenbroch 2016). This fuelled the existing debate further, despite of added complexity in the Aixtron case: the German company owned a subsidiary in California under US jurisdiction. A US veto of the takeover had already been expected by various financial analysts

¹¹¹ Who was interviewed in relation to the Germany-China economic relations (#15).

(Scharrenbroch 2016) and had therefore not been a surprise. Still, eventually, after much criticism, Gabriel rescinded his support for the decision.

Soon after the decision, Gabriel proposed further veto rights on stopping/impeding foreign investors taking over German companies. Some CDU/CSU politicians warned that such a measure might pose negative consequences for Germany competing for foreign investment – which was met with support by business associations. They feared this step could lead to repercussions for German companies in China (Dams 2017). In private, business lobbyists also complained about the Chinese government gaining influence on the German economy through such investments, but such statements were avoided in public to avoid facing repercussions in their China businesses directly (ibid). Yet, this somewhat anecdotal evidence illustrates a key issue that was increasingly understood: as long as German and Chinese economic actors did not have to follow sufficiently similar rules in both economies/globally, real competition could not take place. If German companies feared being disadvantaged in China because the German government was protecting German interests elsewhere (whatever this might mean in reality), there was an issue that needed to be addressed. Without liberalising these transactions – or at least Germany developing a more comprehensive strategy to deal with (perceived) Chinese strategic interest – German companies in China could face increasing difficulties while German companies requiring external money at home may be unable to find investors. Suddenly, a “win-win” (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013, p. 6) situation were on the verge of ending up becoming a ‘lose-lose’.

About half a year later, in Spring 2017, Gabriel, then Germany’s Foreign Minister, succeeded with his push for somewhat tougher guidelines on regulating foreign acquisitions of key companies in sectors of special interest on an EU level (Berschens et al. 2017). It is well understood that these guidelines were primarily related to Chinese investments based on the suspicion that Chinese companies were receiving government subsidies for foreign acquisitions. Despite this blow to Chinese investment practices, a study by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Germany concluded that the investment climate in Germany remained satisfying to very satisfying for Chinese companies in 2017 (Sigmund 2017).

In August 2017 and a month before the general elections taking place, Gabriel warned his European Union counterparts that the EU required to develop a China strategy “to avoid European division by China” (Handelsblatt 2017, p. 1). He further argued that China would take the EU only seriously once it had developed a unified European strategy. Such strategy should include that the EU not only accepted China’s One-China policy, but also demanded that China accepted the EU’s One-EU policy, i.e. that China would not stake European countries against each other (Handelsblatt 2017). Based on the very core of the EU – economic integration and trade – an EU-China investment deal would circumvent many of the tensions outlined in this chapter. However, until the end of Merkel’s third term in 2017 such agreement did not materialise.

Coming back to the influence of the BMWi, Gabriel and his ministry carved out strategic influence on the Germany-China relations with the policy agenda that had been developed within the BMWi. Once again, it is important to note that the mentioning of individual factors like Gabriel should not be mixed with the analysis at the individual level. The focus of the discussions here is on the institutions these individuals represented. As such, de BMWi became a temporarily defining strategic factor for the bilateral relations. It gained strategic importance for German actorness, joining the Chancellery in shaping China policy for a limited period.

6.1.4 The Rule of Law and Human Rights Dialogues

As part of Schröder’s first visit to China in 1999 when he apologised for the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, three Germany-China dialogues were set up to be held on an annual basis. First, an official high-level Rule of Law Dialogue to support China in developing and strengthening its legal sector and to promote German legal perspectives. Second, two Human Rights dialogues. The first one was also being an official high-level dialogue between German and Chinese stakeholders. The second one was headed by the German SPD-linked Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) and two Chinese entities, the Chinese Foundation for the Development of Human Rights, and the Chinese Association for International Understanding. The following pages aim at exploring the reasons for

why these dialogues were set up and their relevance within the German-China bilateral relations.

These dialogues were originally set up by Schröder to support China in developing its legal system and to support human rights developments in China. He believed that it was more useful to discuss these matters on senior as well as functional levels, instead of publicly addressing concerns or making suggestions (Schröder and Meck 2014). An additional reason was the original coalition agreement from 1998 between the Social Democrats and The Greens, which stated that promoting the above values should be promoted pro-actively (SPD 1998, p. 41). As such, the establishment was also a compromise to address the need for pro-active promotion while, as some argued, not to divert attention from economic matters in high-level meetings (Schnellbach and Man 2015)¹¹².

Either way, following Germany's tradition of cooperative foreign policy, Schröder believed that mutual cooperation would lead to bigger improvements than one-sided criticism possibly could (Schnellbach and Man 2015). Although German ideas on human rights were being fed into all three dialogues in one way or another, including symposia, expert exchanges and other forms of lower level cooperation, these did not lead to lasting change on either the role of democratic values or human rights in China based on, for instance, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2017). On the other hand, Germany's chosen incremental approach would take time and the Chinese leadership likely prioritised domestic stability to Germany's efforts of pleasing its own domestic (and political) audience.

It is quite obvious that Schröder downplayed value-based politics, in particular with regard to human rights, towards China as is discussed extensively in Chapter 5 on Schröder's role as an impactful factor on Germany-China policy. The Rule of Law Dialogue can be seen as a step towards a normative direction, but even supporters of change through rapprochement policies, and officials involved in the everyday communication with their Chinese counterparts, questioned whether the

¹¹² This view was confirmed by interviewees #6 and #14.

dialogue was having any lasting effect¹¹³. Similarly, Schulte-Kulmann (2005b, p. 7) and Schmidt (2012, p. 154) noted that the dialogues did not provide a suitable framework and were introduced for the German audience and not so much for initiating change in China. A common argument brought forward for this view was the absence of Gerd Poppe, Germany's then Special Representative for Human Rights, at the relevant talks that initiated the creation of the dialogues back in 1999 (Kinzelbach 2015). Others argued that Schröder wanted to outsource critical questions on human rights and democracy from the top-level meetings to focus on trade instead of accusing the Chinese of not keeping up with Western standards publicly (Heberer and Senz 2011). Considering Schröder's focus on reforming the German economy and facilitating trade, again as discussed in Chapter 5, this interpretation of fostering economic interest in favour of spreading normative values, was the most feasible of them all.

Contrary to some of these views, however, it does make sense to differentiate between the different dialogues. While the above appears to be an accurate depiction of the role of the Human Rights dialogues, the Rule of Law dialogues featured a broader range of subjects to discuss – from legal questions considering information technology, to states of emergency, to pension schemes (Wissenschaftliche Dienste 2011). Although Schulte-Kulmann (2002, 2005a) argued that these were not helping China to move towards Western values, they should have helped improving the legal foundation for advancing governance – especially as much of the Chinese legal system is based on the German civil law system.

Additionally, Heiduk noted that although “most observers agree that [these] dialogues had very little actual impact, they nonetheless illustrate the attempts by Berlin to further broaden Sino-German relations” (2015, p. 138). This is certainly an important point. With the relation's trajectory in mind and Schröder's, and Merkel's, interest in intensifying the relations over time, a broader foundation for discussing all sorts of issues was useful. It also helped Schröder to convince his own coalition to move forward with elevating Germany's relationship with China, as well as presenting, at the bare minimum, a gesture of good faith to the human-rights-minded

¹¹³ Based on interviews with interviewees #1 and #4.

German civil society. As such, it is no surprise that these dialogues were included in the East Asia Concept from 2002 (Auswärtiges Amt 2002) as well as the Partnership in Global Responsibility from 2004 which emphasised the “central relevance of the rule of law as well as human rights dialogues for the bilateral relations” (Chinesische Botschaft 2004, p. 2)¹¹⁴.

6.1.5 Federal States (Bundesländer)

The German Basic Law states that “[r]elations with foreign states shall be conducted by the Federation” (Article 32(1), (Deutscher Bundestag 2017a)), but that federal states “may conclude treaties with foreign states with the consent of the Federal Government” (Article 32(3), (Deutscher Bundestag 2017a)).

In the traditional sense of foreign affairs, the federal executive and legislative branches take charge and worry little about what federal states might say as long as it does not directly relate to them. However, Fischer (Fischer 2007) argued that the time when (West) Germany had been a unified actor in foreign policy has been long gone. He suggested that in 2007, the 16 federal German states had about 130 offices abroad, plenty of regular working relationships with partners abroad, and that the members of federal parliaments often travelled abroad on official business. Such activities abroad largely focused on European Union matters involving German regions, although travels beyond the EU also took place¹¹⁵. Such activities were usually considered under the term *state foreign policy* (*Landesaußenpolitik*).

Relations between regions or federal states in Germany and abroad are as common as partnerships between cities and span across the globe. One sister city example is the relationship between Cologne in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and Beijing. Their bond dates back to 1987 and has led to numerous mutual visits and events taking place in either city. For instance, in 2012,

¹¹⁴ For a more comprehensive overview of German human rights related activities in, and with regard to, China, see the report by the parliament’s Research Services Wissenschaftliche Dienste 2011.

¹¹⁵ This was confirmed by interviewee #5 who has a good understanding of these travels. Such visits might be of educational, purely diplomatic, or business nature and might include sizeable political and/or business delegations (e.g. to sign investment agreements, market their state as a destination for talent, or simply for reputation reasons).

Cologne celebrated a ‘China Year’ with 152 mostly cultural and educational events in which NRW also took part with a *China Celebration* event (Stadtverwaltung Köln 2019). While such events do not relate to major Track I diplomatic affairs directly, they are important on an operational level, and also for connecting regional governmental bureaucracies to extend the breadth of foreign (cultural and commercial) relations.

Moreover, several aspects of the core business of federal states also require an international mindset. One unexpected, yet functional example of this is, how German states send political delegations abroad to market their own sovereign bonds. These are as secure as German federal government bonds, yet they are offered at slightly more favourable conditions. Hence, these bonds provide a direct incentive for private and institutional domestic and foreign investors to opt for them and aid the states’ budgets instead of the federal budget. This has been a common way for German states to raise money¹¹⁶.

Further activities involve development assistance/international cooperation projects, often related to administrative support or training activities between e.g. German states and Chinese provinces, or cultural exchanges. Such activities are usually embedded in federal (development/foreign relations) concepts, yet they are being administered on a regional level. Yet, multiple interviewees¹¹⁷ indicated that most projects, that originate on a regional or local level, are usually of little strategic foreign relations value, but are pushed by third party commercial or cultural interest, or rely on personal motivation by the politician in charge. As such, they should not be seen as part of a comprehensive approach designed by the Chancellery or Foreign Ministry, but as a separate strain of bi- or multilateral engagement by sub-state actors.

Such paradiplomatic efforts are of great cultural, and sometimes political value for the relations with China, adding to soft power and working relationships, and promoting international understanding. However, in terms of federal policies they

¹¹⁶ As explained by interviewee #5 who is aware of this practice.

¹¹⁷ Interviewees #1, #2, and #5.

play a negligible role, and with regard to China, *Länder* do not exert strategic impact on Germany's actorness.

6.2 The Legislative Branch

In Germany, the only directly elected federal political institution is the parliament (*Bundestag*). Half of its members are elected by a first-past-the-post system, whereas the other half is voted in by proportional representation based on the individual states' political party lists. However, for a political party to enter the parliament it requires to secure at least 5% of the total votes. The parliament elects the Chancellor and can end a governments' administration by electing a new Chancellor with an absolute majority. As a result, German governments require a stable majority in the parliament and take disagreements within the governments' political party factions more seriously than is the case in other political systems (Korte 2001). The role of the opposition is to control and critique the government, and to provide alternative political agendas where they see fit. In practice, not only does a form of dualism exist between the government and its party factions, but also between the government and the opposition to some degree. The reason for this is the broader idea of consensus which is especially prevalent in matters of foreign and security policy. Putting a few political key conflicts between (and in-between) parties, such as the decision whether to participate in the Iraq War after 9/11, aside, opinions divert usually only moderately, especially since both major German political parties, CDU/CSU and SPD, fought about occupying the centre ground in the political spectrum throughout the 1998 to 2017 legislative periods. Within the realm of foreign policy, the notion of consensus is closely linked to the idea of continuity and led to a reasonably stable trajectory of the Germany-China relations as Chapters 5 and 6 have discussed.

Policy ideas are usually first worked on and discussed in faction meetings and parliamentary working groups. While the individual MP has limited influence in parliamentary debates, and in particular in policy decision-making processes, he has more opportunities to influence policy within his own faction. However, practically, MPs often prepare policy drafts and suggestions in close collaboration with the leading figures within their faction and its staff (Eilfort 2017). With Germany only

featuring coalition governments to rule the country, the most influential committee is the coalition committee (*Koalitionsausschuss*), which is the “factual decision-making committee” (Rudzio 1991, p. 136). It consists of leading government representatives as well as leading coalition faction and party representatives. The policies being decided on in the coalition committee are usually merely rubberstamped in parliament. Similarly, what has been decided inside the individual government factions and being passed inside the parliament’s functional committees is likely to gain sufficient support in parliament (Rudzio 1991).

The parliamentary committee for foreign affairs has a slightly different role to other committees based on its self-conception, though. Instead of almost solely discussing policies, Ismayr (2007) explained that about two-thirds of the meetings are being used to discuss foreign affairs with government representatives (often ministers or undersecretaries) or foreign guests on matters of immediate or strategic concerns. Furthermore, its members often and extensively take part in delegation journeys abroad and meet with various foreign politicians or experts on foreign affairs to gain additional information and deepen communication with their counterparts. The influence of individual members is “unclear” (Ismayr 2007, p. 185) and likely to be marginal due to the top-down and faction-based approach of the policy-making procedure.

Foreign policy has long been a distinct matter of the executive branch, with the parliament largely only being able to control the government’s activities. One reason for this has been a restrictive interpretation by the Federal High Court of Justice¹¹⁸. Therefore, the parliament matters in terms of holding the government accountable, such as in the case of the Green’s von Cramon who lobbied for the government in 2013 to work out a (more comprehensive) China strategy as her faction believed no such thing existed (2013).

As discussed above, many ministries have an extensive number of departments dealing with matters of international relevance, often in direct contact with foreign

¹¹⁸ A more detailed take on the legal requirements and developments on foreign policy making, and further reading suggestions, can for instance be found by Wolfrum (2007) and Ismayr (2012).

partners. Not surprisingly, this increased the relevance of foreign policy matters for most parliamentary committees and factions' working groups since the 1990s far beyond the traditional areas related to foreign policy (foreign affairs, defence, development, and trade). As such, it is insufficient to marginalise the parliament's input and decision-making power for influencing Germany's China relations and for setting boundaries for the construction of German actorness.

The Parliament's Research Services (*Wissenschaftliche Dienste*)

The administration of the Bundestag includes the Parliamentary Research Services (*Wissenschaftliche Dienste*). The unit supports members of parliament and their staff's "political work in parliament and the constituencies by supplying specialist information, analyses and expert opinions. The topics covered by the research sections encompass the whole spectrum of legal and policy fields" (Deutscher Bundestag 2019b). The research services unit consists of about 60 specialists in twelve different fields to provide policy advice based on principles of partisan neutrality and objectivity, and is supported by a European-wide network of research services. Schöler and von Winter (2017) wrote in 2016 that about 80% of parliamentary members make use of their services and compile between 2000 to 3000 reports in the 1998-2017 time frame each year. The key function of this service is to support the parliamentary members in controlling the government's actions. It was originally established due to the concern that legislators were unable to compete with the expertise that the executive branch has at their disposal (Schöler and Winter 2017).

6.2.1 Legislative Knowledge on China

This section attempts to provide insights into the China-specific knowledge in parliament. Based on crucial task of controlling the government, specialist knowledge on a wide range of issues should be present. Although domestic policy usually trumps foreign policy in terms of importance for MPs as much as for the government, Germany's foreign policy actorness depends on an inherently executive political process and should be controlled.

Before moving on to the results of the analysis, it is worthwhile to recap two key aspects of the bilateral relations with China: first, China is situated in East Asia and both countries do not engage in the realm of traditional security concerns. Second, China's economic influence and impact on German economic prosperity during the 1998 to 2017 period can hardly be understated. This leads to a strange dichotomy, only aggravated by the cultural gap and lack of (significant) historically grown bonds between the two countries.

The analysis used the 2002-2017 information available on the parliament's web archive (2019a), including a range of information about the MP's in the respective terms. These include Schröder's second term and Merkel's first three terms, and often included MP's degree subjects, prior work engagements, voluntary activities etc.

The available information, which may or may not have been correct and may have included incomplete information by MPs not having provided all relevant information, indicated that zero Members of Parliament had studied Chinese studies, Sinology, or a degree in the wider sense of East Asian area studies which might have included a major China component. It is by no means a necessity to have studied about China to gain a decent understanding of the country or its policy relevance for Germany. Still, with the vast majority of MPs having graduated from university, it is still surprising that not a single MP focused on China in their studies. Furthermore, not a single MP had indicated any prior experience in or with regard to China during these four terms. Only from Merkel's fourth term (2017-2021) onwards, two MPs, Dr Gero Hocker and Dr Alice Weidel, mentioned China in their personal bio section. Both went to China for work, but neither of them focused on China or trade policy in the parliament's committees at the time of submission of this thesis. Again, the information used for this analysis may very well be incomplete and/or inaccurate, and some MPs may have held relevant experiences. Unfortunately, upon request, the parliamentary administration denied having any more comprehensive background information available about MPs or staff members working within the parliament to use for a more detailed analysis of that sort.

However, the parliamentary archive included a further data of interest for this thesis: official travel data. According to the 2012 Huawei study (2012) on China perceptions in Germany, further discussed in Chapter 7 in terms of findings and their robustness and validity, 35% of the polled politicians had at some point visited China. Although the study did not disclose exact numbers of the MPs polled as part of the *politician* cohort, and local or regional leaders were also surveyed, this number appeared to be surprisingly high. According to the MP's travel data based on parliamentary reports, the number of MPs travelling to China indicated far smaller numbers. The outliers, i.e. 25 visits in 2006, 18 in 2007, and 18 in 2016 included travels by larger groups of MPs to China, in part including multiple countries in their trip.

Year	China Visit
Oct-Dec 2002	1
2003	7
2004	4
Oct-Dec 2005	3
2006	25
2007	18
...	...
Oct-Dec 2015	5
2016	18
Jan-Sep 2017	4

Table 4: China Visits by German MPs (partial)

Source: 2002-2004 (Deutscher Bundestag 2005), 2005-2008 (Deutscher Bundestag 2008), 2015-2017 (Deutscher Bundestag 2017b)¹¹⁹

A few points need to be added to this assessment, though. First, based on general survey data bias, the Huawei report was more likely to be completed by people with a China background, considering they were asked about China in the first place. Second, local or regional politicians would often more likely to be involved in the promotion of trade and industry. Considering the large number of SMEs having

¹¹⁹ This is the only data that was available. Despite of it only covering the 1998-2017 period partially, the data still provides an idea about how frequently MPs travelled to China.

(export) ties to China, it is not unlikely that they would invite relevant office holders – who may serve functions in the companies – onto trips. Therefore, the discrepancy between the study and the findings of MP trips is not necessarily surprising. Second, the MP data is not complete as the above table shows. Unfortunately, the data for the missing quarters was not available. Third, even if MPs went on trips, these visits were highly ritualised and there is usually little time for exploration available¹²⁰. As mentioned by another interviewee, the preparation of these trips also varied much among MPs. Some would study their material prepared by the FFO thoroughly, others may not even glance through them and consider the visit being more of a holiday despite of the trip's ritualised nature¹²¹.

Moving away from travels, it surprises that only 16% of German policy makers interviewed for the Huawei study in 2012 believed that they had a very good (1%) or good (15%) understanding of China, with 25% claiming that they had a poor understanding and 5% had no understanding of China at all (Huawei 2012, p. 44). Considering the possible selection issues or response biases of the survey, and that 35% of the respondents had visited China already, only 16% of policy makers having a good or very good understanding about China appears disappointingly low.

Coming back to the Bundestag, how do MPs acquire relevant China knowledge if they and their staff do not possess it? As discussed in the previous sub-chapter, much of this expertise for policy-making comes from the expert ministries, and for foreign policy, often from the FFO and the respective embassy. Still, this expertise usually ends up with the Chancellery or other executive bodies instead of the legislative branch. Furthermore, the question can be raised whether such expertise is sufficiently prepared to understand particular complex or important processes. For instance, Speth (2004) argued that the 'bureaucratised' expertise found in ministries, the parliament (specialist staff at the research services, factions, and of individual MPs) as well as the Chancellery, is becoming increasingly dependent on outside expertise – often including private sector consulting services (Dagger et al. 2004; Falk et al. 2017).

¹²⁰ According to interviewee #1 who is well positioned to talk about the nature of such trips.

¹²¹ According to interviewees #1 and #6, both aware of the typical nature of these trips.

Regarding Chinese expertise within the parliament, some options remain. As mentioned above, parliamentarians have a research services unit available at their disposal, which is able to provide “objective information” (Schöler and Winter 2017, p. 1). However, it does not appear that they were used intensively for China-related research, as only three reports on China were publicly available from 2011 to 2018¹²². While not every report must be made public depending on the sensitive content it might entail, many are (Schöler and Winter 2017)¹²³. The number of three depicts a stark contrast to domestic or European issues which are available in the hundreds. Other options for MPs and their staff to find China expertise is to ask their colleagues, i.e. staff members of individual MPs, and also faction staff are the go-to people for compiling information. According to two interviewees¹²⁴ with a good understanding of the knowledge management mechanisms in play in parliament and knowledge of many staff for the second analysed decade, only one person they personally knew or had heard of had had a background in China-related studies/work.

These analytical bits and pieces presented in this section are certainly not conclusive evidence on the question of China knowledge within the parliament. This would require a much more extensive research effort with help from the parliamentary administration¹²⁵ or extensive faction support. Yet, the presented findings provide a further perspective on the relevance that China played in day-to-day politics in Germany from 1998 to 2017, and the general finding that foreign policy, in particular with regard to China, did not receive appropriate attention by German MPs. This is not a new understanding within policy circles, though, and was for instance shared in an extensive think tank report by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and the German Marshall Fund (2013). It argued that Germany was in dire need of more foreign policy expertise in general.

¹²² See Wissenschaftliche Dienste (2011), (2013), (2018).

¹²³ Also according to interviewee #12 who possesses a good understanding of the parliamentary administrative services.

¹²⁴ Interviewees #2 and #16.

¹²⁵ Which was denied when requested. It was argued that any relevant specific knowledge did not exist within the administration and that any form of formal request via the parliamentary factions was not seen as feasible. Moreover, anything but current legislative period data was unlikely to be accurate or being able to be compiled in the first place.

While this includes various different foreign policy actors, they also found that “[m]ore is also required of Germany’s political supervisory bodies. [A] more forward-leaning German foreign policy does not make political control any easier. [...] A more active German foreign policy also requires appropriate monitoring and control by the legislature. If nothing else, this requires strengthening the human and financial resources of parliament“ (SWP & GMF 2013, p. 7).

In the grand scheme of German actorness, this lack of knowledge on China, this *ignorance*, is not an individual issue but an institutional one. Although China experts, and foreign trade policy experts, exist on the ministerial level, the parliament can effectively not control the work of the government, and therefore Germany’s China actorness. As such, the lack of a comprehensive strategy towards China is not only a shortfall on the executive side, but also on the legislative side of German actorness.

The following section analyses the coalition agreements from 1998 to 2017. The outcome correlates with the findings in this section: German foreign policy (apart from the EU and perhaps the US and Russia) does not play a major role in parliamentary politics, and China is no different.

6.2.2 China’s Relevance in German Coalition Agreements

A slightly different approach to understand the relevance of China in parliamentary, governmental, and inter-coalition communication and discourse is to have a closer look at how – and how often – coalition agreements mentioned China over time. Foreign policy as a whole is of minor concern for coalition talks and for the everyday politics of the German government, so foreign policy chapters within the agreements have generally been short.

Excluding matters directly related to the EU, but including everything from bilateral relations to development aid to cultural exchanges to everything on foreign security concerns/related to the German military, these chapters never took up more than a tenth of the coalition agreements’ total page count during the terms from

1998 to 2013 (in 2017/2018¹²⁶, it consisted of 20 out of 177 pages, i.e. 11.3%). Considering that a few pages were usually spent on detailing the role of the military and military operations, this reduces the relevance and priority of foreign policy, and in particular when also excluding bilateral relations with Western partners, in such agreements immensely.

The 1998 and 2002 coalition agreements between the SPD and the Greens did not mention China – or Asia – at all. Although these agreements were significantly shorter, with only 42 and 90 pages respectively, compared to later agreements with a three-digit page numbers, this is still rather surprising. At least in the 2002 agreement, one could have expected China, or Asia, to be mentioned for at least three reasons: Germany's increasing trade ties with China, Schröder's personal authoritative foreign policy focus on China, and that fact that the relations with China were about to be upgraded soon thereafter – a step that both party chairmen, Schröder and Fischer, and their close staff should have been aware of at the time of the coalition talks. Instead of mentioning any of these aspects, the agreements only referred to promoting human rights in a general sense (SPD & BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN 1998 and SPD & BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN 2002).

The later agreements involving the Union parties all included China specifically and also briefly referred to Asia as part of Germany's foreign policy. While the breadth of such mentions was far from impressive, e.g. the 2009 coalition agreement featured a mere eight lines on the whole of Asia (CDU, CSU & FDP 2009), it became clear that China had become Germany's main country of concern in Asia at the time.

As Table 9 indicates, the amount of words spent on China (and also on Asia) increased steadily with each agreement from 2005 onwards – although in homoeopathic doses only. Due to the varied length of the agreements, the table also features a relative China word count number.

¹²⁶ The general election in September 2017 led to prolonged coalition negotiations and the final coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and SPD was only published in February 2018). This coalition agreement is included in this assessment to evaluate whether a response to the changing nature of the Germany-China relations during Merkel's third term materialised.

	Pages	Words Total (approx.)	Words on China	Words on China /Total Words	“China” Mentioned
1998 (SPD-Greens)	42	16,500	0	0	0
2002 (SPD-Greens)	90	28,000	0	0	0
2005 (Union-SPD)	143	46,000	40	0.0009	2
2009 (Union-FDP)	132	44,000	48	0.0011	2
2013 (Union-SPD)	185	66,000	88	0.0013	4
2017/2018 (Union-SPD)	177	65,000	143	0.0022	5

Table 5: China’s Relevance in Coalition Agreements

Source: SPD & Greens (1998), SPD & Greens (2002), CDU, CSU & SPD (2005), CDU, CSU & FDP (2009), CDU, CSU & SPD (2013) and CDU, CSU & SPD (2018)

While the above numbers suggest the lack of relevance of China for contemporary German governments – or, at least, for parliamentary factions negotiating coalition agreements to form governments – these numbers must be seen in the wider context of a lack of focus on foreign policy, and particularly China. Chapter 7 shows that politicians grasped the general notion of the relevance of China for the German economy and that it became a major political global player, China played an only marginal role in discussions, debates, and negotiations. One reason for this might be related to the German political system. With the rise of grand coalitions as the common coalition type under Merkel, the control function of the parliament, already discussed in the previous section, became less important. As key policies are often decided by the coalition committee, while the government factions hold large majorities in the parliament, debates and interest in largely controlling your own government suffered (Korte 2007). Still, this does not explain why China and foreign policy in general were not placed higher on the priority list of MPs – and coalition agreements. It appears to be an oversight based on the domestic policy priority by the executive and legislative branches.

However, it still makes limited sense considering other activities by the coalition parties. For instance, in 2007 during Merkel’s first term, the CDU/CSU

parliamentary faction published a paper called ‘Asia as a Strategic Challenge and Chance for Germany and Europe’ (CDU/CSU 2007) which drew a worrying picture of China’s rise and basically suggested for Germany to spearhead the liberal crusade on China, to only moderately exaggerate. It declared that an “undemocratic, non-liberal” (CDU/CSU 2007, p. 7) Chinese political model was starting to attract other countries which “reduce[d] the appeal of liberal Western” (CDU/CSU 2007, p. 7) political systems and views. Even worse, “sustainable development and sustainable stability [could] only be accomplished by having [our] participative political system and ensuring human rights” (CDU/CSU 2007, p. 15). Therefore, Germany should “together with the US prevent China’s [and other countries’] rise from destabilising the continent” (CDU/CSU 2007, pp. 15–16). These views were based on their “rationale of a Christian understanding of people and society” (CDU/CSU 2007, p. 3). In other words, the paper argued that Germany should promote Christian values, that fit the liberal Western mindset, much more offensively in and towards China, to prevent Germany and *the West* from losing political influence globally in the long-term and to prevent Asia from destabilisation beyond repair. The US and other close allies were supposed to support Germany in its efforts against China. Putting an assessment of the content of the paper aside, it promoted a reasonably clear message on responding to changing foreign dynamics, being put forward by the majority coalition partner’s faction, garnering sufficient support. It appears odd that it did not have a visible impact on the coalition agreement which followed about two years later and only included the absolute minimum of value-driven statements (CDU/CSU 2007).

6.3 Political Parties

In Germany’s parliamentary diplomacy, political parties with their existing factions represented in the federal parliament, have the potential to influence policy strategies via different channels. As is mentioned in the discussion of the federal parliament on foreign policy making, many of the actual policies are being developed and fought for within the factions and parliamentary committees. This goes beyond operational work, and the factions’ steering committees have often more political influence than the parties’ steering committees. However, such political power is limited. The primary concern for voters has long been either to

support the specific candidate in their constituency, or the political party the candidate is representing¹²⁷. As the political parties are not only the body to select candidates (on local levels) but also the ones setting up the state lists for the proportional part of the electoral system, most prominent faction figures are de facto relying on the party for re-election – regardless of their individual support within their constituency. Yet, holding more prominent positions within factions, or government, likely leads to better results as voters want representatives that appear to be influential and ‘in the know’ about developments (Bernhagen 2017).

However, for political parties, prior and post elections alike, foreign policy is of little relevance and priority, except for rare ‘direction setting’ moments when moving away from established core principles. Foreign policy is hardly a field to win votes with most of the time. One distinctive and rare exception from that rule was Schröders’ re-election in 2002, when he linked his candidacy to the question of whether to join the US’ coalition in Iraq (see Chapters 3.1 and 4.1). Moreover, Germany’s historic context shows that major foreign policy decisions have usually been consensual among the represented parties in the parliament at the given time. In the few diverging cases, however, Oppelland (2007) showed that opposition parties started adopting the chosen new direction after surprisingly fast.

The evaluation of foreign policy goals in the parties’ manifestos finds that they rely mostly on the established inter-party foreign policy consensus. For low-priority bilateral relations, such as the one between Germany and China during its early years assessed in this thesis (in stark contrast to EU matters, or the bilateral relations with the US), little content exists beyond the frequently used comment on the ‘rising influence of China’, the necessity to cooperate due its rise, and brief concerns on the human rights situation in the country¹²⁸.

¹²⁷ While this was largely still true for the time frame of this thesis, it is undeniable that partisan de-alignment has taken place in Germany, similarly to developments in other Western countries Dalton (2014).

¹²⁸ Chapter 6.2.2 provides a detailed analysis of coalition agreements in context of the Germany-China relationship.

Undertaken interviews¹²⁹ support the view that political party headquarters with their small-scale foreign affairs units have little influence on actual foreign policy developments. Within the party factions, there is a general sense what the party might or might not favour, but such views are of no particular relevance to the constant struggle within factions, coalition committees and between legislative and executive foreign policy (f)actors. Therefore, political parties in Germany do not constitute a factor with sufficient influence to construct German actorness strategically. For the work of legislative committees, the expertise found in part in party-affiliated foundations is of more relevance, especially as these have local offices in many foreign countries/regions that can feed local assessments to the decision-makers directly, and the following pages assess whether political foundations do possess such sufficient influence.

6.4 Political Foundations

One distinctive component of the wider political sector in Germany consists of its foundations. These can generally be separated into political party foundations and different varieties of civil society think tanks/foundations (which are discussed as part of the societal level in Chapter 7). The political foundations have a strong affiliation with their respective parties and receive federal funding.

The oldest of the current political foundations, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, is affiliated with the Social Democratic Party and was founded in 1925 to fund workers pursuing further education. After it had been shut down in 1933, it was re-established in 1954 and restructured to advance ‘democratic education’. In 1955, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) with an affiliation to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was founded and trailed by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF, Free Democratic Party, FDP) in 1955, and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF, Christian Social Union, CSU¹³⁰) in 1966. The other two parliamentary parties present during the timeframe of this thesis, the Greens and the Left, founded their

¹²⁹ With interviewees #1, #2, #7, and #8.

¹³⁰ With the ‘Union’ parliament fraction consisting of CDU and CSU, KAS and HSF have largely common ideologies, but work independently of each other. One core sector of the HSF has been development aid and assistance work.

respective foundations in the 1990s (the Heinrich Böll Foundation, HBF, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, RLF, respectively).

Besides offering scholarships to pursue second-chance, further and higher education, and providing extensive training for party members and interested citizens on various political topics, political foundations also engage with foreign states through cultural and value-based activities and often long-established Track 1.5 backchannels. Neuber (2013) even argued that the political foundations were specifically established as an additional tool of German foreign affairs. In 2013, the two big foundations, FES and KAS, had offices in over 100 and 70 countries respectively, with especially FES, KAS and HSF having done extensive work in China since its opening up policies came into effect during the 1980s (2013). Most of this work did not directly relate to progressing the German political agenda, but to facilitate cultural and educational exchanges and training, or to support Chinese development efforts (in particular in the case of the HSF).

The value of these foundations for Germany's foreign policy lies in its very nature: they are not part of official diplomatic channels, yet they have close ties with German political parties, and therefore with policy makers. However, while the foundations constitute independent entities, it is too short-sighted to consider them being part of the civil society either. They receive funding almost exclusively out of Germany's federal budget (funding is based on previous election results of their affiliated political parties) and work together closely with the FFO and BMZ. Pogorelskaja (2002) furthermore pointed out that staff was able to move between these actors with relative ease depending on the coalition parties and their influence over individual ministries. Therefore, the political foundations are neither formal diplomatic actors nor civil society organisations but lie somewhere in-between these two extremes. Yet, they still largely appear to foreign governments to resemble NGOs (or, at least, are not seen as Track I entities), and as such have had freedoms in many host countries which the government might not possess. Their local representatives have often been able to interact with the respective country's government, but also the (tolerated) opposition and/or important civil society groups. Having been able to build their networks in a wide range of countries for

decades provides invaluable information and often shortcuts in communication that formal diplomatic channels might not have access to.

In short, German political foundations provide an alternative to interact with foreign countries on various levels which may be difficult for German diplomatic corps. Such communication takes often place *under the radar* and is difficult to quantify or assess. As such, their role might also be exaggerated, as it is clear that the primary purpose of the foundations is to engage with civil society in their respective target countries – whether it is related to development activities, cultural events, or collecting information about societal developments over time. Still, former German President Roman Herzog commented in 1995 that political foundations are “the most reliable and proven tools of German foreign policy” (Pogorelskaja 2002, p. 33). While this statement might understate the overall independence of the foundations and overstate their relevance a little, it shows the significance of their work in the so-called *pre-political space*. Furthermore, the major German foundations were found to inherit a largely pluralist work ethic and divided countries and political as well as civil society actors amongst each other.

Even in a one-party state with no prominent opposition or broad political debates within society, the work of these foundations can be valuable. The FES was “accepted as a suitable dialogue partner” (Pogorelskaja 2002, p. 32) by the CCP since the early 1980s and has, for instance, been hosting the existing human rights dialogue between both countries (see Chapter 6.2). In contrast, the KAS and HSF engagement focused more on cultural exchanges and grassroots facilitation of education and educational partnerships respectively. However, there are clear limitations for the work that the German political foundations are able to do in China. Fulda (2009) noted that projects generally had two teams to manage them, one at the German political foundation and the other at a Chinese partner organisation which is closely affiliated with the CCP. Furthermore, the foundations’ strategies in China were largely “demand oriented” (Fulda 2009, p. 172): it was usually the Chinese partner organisations that suggested projects instead of the German political parties, disabling them from promoting their own liberal agendas. Fulda therefore believed that the CCP had a tight grip on German (semi-)state actors in China, be it the political foundations, or GIZ as an extension of the BMZ. There is

little scope to diverge from that route, as the foundations' legitimacy was not only based on their ideological beliefs, but also on the value of legality, openness and control in both Germany and the host country (Pogorelskaja 2002). During Merkel's third term, the political environment in China worsened for political foundations. China toughened its stance on foreign NGOs in early 2017 which threatened the survival of many German foundations, including the well-established ones (Giesen and Strittmatter 2017). For the remaining part of the assess period, they were able to continue their work in limited fashion, though.

Despite of the important role political parties played in Germany's relations with China throughout the period, they are also not relevant factors with strategic impact on Germany's actorness. They do constitute important semi-diplomatic institutions for Track 1.5 collaboration in many countries including China, but their direct impact on Germany's construction of its approach with China have been limited.

6.5 Evaluation of the Influence of Bureaucratic Factors through Thematic Analysis

6.5.1 Economic Interest

In line with Chapter 5, the notion of economic interest was of great importance within bureaucratic considerations and interplays as well. This is no surprise, as the Chancellors and the Chancellery usually act in unison¹³¹ and possess decisive power in the decision-making process regarding China.

The Chancellery planned and coordinated the relations for Schröder and Merkel, and for the rest of the executive branch. This organisational layout served the role to pass on policy decisions within the executive branch. As shown above, the rise of the BMWi's influence relative to the FFO and others also indicated that economic interest had been of importance. However, BMWi's position on China during Merkel III under Gabriel helped to change the existing debates in policy circles.

¹³¹ In part due to the fact that Chancellors would bring their close personnel with them, and making changes to the wider leadership positions over time.

Suddenly, economic nationalist interests became popular, despite of Germany's almost flawless record as an investment destination¹³². Surprisingly, much of the criticism found from 2015 to 2017 was voiced by the BDI and major German corporations, and not by the SMEs or M&A support services¹³³. With the BMWi having become a sort of communication hub for exchanging views between the BMWi China staff, the BDI, and other related lobbyists roaming China-related policy circles, the BMWi was in the ideal position to be the focal point at the bureaucratic level besides the Chancellery. Major decision-making activities took place among the two, and influenced Germany's policy decisions on China.

6.5.2 Ignorance and Trust

The assessment of ignorance within the executive branch is challenging and doing so extensively and sensibly has been beyond the scope of this research. Instead, this chapter presented an original contribution with its attempt to better understand the available China knowledge within the federal parliament. Due to the limited role the parliament plays for foreign policy making in a Chancellor Democracy governed by mostly great coalitions, the results were all but surprising. China knowledge, as conceptualised via a small number of indicators, did not appear to be widely available. Although the research design of this assessment has not been very robust, it validated the stance already found in academia and policy circles: there was a lack of China knowledge in the German policy making sector in general. Considering China's great importance for German economic prosperity, this lack of China knowledge represented institutional ignorance towards China.

That said, the Bundestag is neither a corporation, nor a ministry. Although it does employ a small number of research personnel, the vast majority of policy actors within it are MPs and their staff. The former ones are elected, the latter ones employed by the elected members of parliament. As such, it is difficult to rectify the lack of China knowledge by a central directive. Instead, the political sector needs to

¹³² See the FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index OECD (2018).

¹³³ Interviewees #20 and #23 suggested that the debates at the time have had limited impact on the number of deals or their trajectory, both regarding German investments in China and Chinese investments in Germany. What had changed, though, was the explanation that needed to be done, to reassure clients. Both interviewees worked in the wider sector.

acknowledge its existing ignorance and the implication of China's rise beyond trade and economic transaction, and to eventually slowly adapt to it. This also echoes with the findings on ignorance at the individual level. With domestic issues trumping foreign ones, this may take a while. However, with the fast-evolving broader geopolitical environment, without actions, this strategic limitation will certainly lead to more repercussions in the long term.

Trust, the term in the conceptualised sense referring to the reliance on wishful thinking has likely also played a role, albeit a diminishing one – especially from 2016 onwards. A thorough assessment of the executive branch on the notion of trust would run into similar difficulties as when assessing ignorance. Ignorance, in comparison, is more obvious to trace and to identify throughout the analysis. However, this is not to deny the relevance of trust at this level to shape Germany's agency to engage with China. Although less so, especially in the later years during Merkel III, this belief of bringing China to adopt more Western values through trade ran deeply in Germany's bureaucratic institution's construction of China policy during the examined period from 1998 to 2017. This rigid groupthink ultimately restricted Germany's search for a more comprehensive strategy to better adapt to a fast-changing China different from its expectation. Just as FPA scholars have repeatedly pointed out when studying group decision-making in the Groupthink Model (Akhmad et al. 2020), the groupthink phenomenon imposes fundamental harm to efficiency, and therefore to the quality of the decision-making process and the decision itself. This side effect remains quite evident when evaluating Germany's China strategy.

Chapter 7: Societal Level

Adding this third analysis layer, the societal level, to the existing framework, helps to cast a wider net on the search to identify factors impacting strategic German actorness towards China beyond the examination of individuals and bureaucratic institutions. The societal level analysis below therefore identifies key factors and assesses their influence on constructing Germany's decision-making agency regarding China. This includes factors such as German public opinion on China, the media, and of a limited number of lobbying organisations and think tanks.

The first part concludes that German society has held overall poor to very poor sentiments towards China for much of the discussed time frame. This surprising result, considering China's growing relevance for Germany's economy, and the extent of successful economic cooperation between the two, is not rooted in considerations in terms of economic benefits, though. Instead, the presented negative views are largely grounded on normative values Germany held high due to the country's historical past and long-term adherence to these values in public debates. However, when bringing public debates and public opinion into the mix, an assessment of the role of the media is also essential. Not surprisingly, media coverage of China did correlate with public opinion.

The third part of the chapter then covers other possible storytellers, perception multipliers, and lobbyists in a limited fashion. This assessment alone would deserve its own extensive research project. On the search for impactful factors within the societal level, a more selective approach to these factors must do within the scope of this project, though. Similar to prior assessments, the chapter concludes with putting the findings into the context of the three themes, economic interest, ignorance, and trust.

7.1 German Perceptions on China

“In China ist ein Sack Reis umgefallen”

(“A bag of rice fell over in China”)

- Popular German Expression¹³⁴

The quest on finding German actorness’ factors on China would be incomplete without considering the perceptions of China in German society and how these evolved over time. With German foreign policy actors and makers generally being constrained by normative civil power considerations as well as practical (economic) necessities, public perceptions and the societal debate on specific issues may have influenced German actorness directly, or indirectly, through their influence on other assessed factors in this thesis. This sub-chapter therefore provides a reasonably comprehensive understanding of how China was seen within German society. Although citizens’ views are not part of the conceptual core of the thesis, and are therefore not discussed in great detail, they do provide a foundation for discussing German politicians’ views on China in Chapter 7.4 – an assessment which fits nicely in this framework’s Pluralist Model. The following evaluation finds that both normal citizens and politicians had major reservations about China. These reservations were largely based on a lack of understanding and distance, both in geographical and value terms. This argument is then taken further in later sections.

This sub-chapter uses data from primarily two sources, the Pew Research Center’s Global Indicators Database (2018b) and by the German subsidiary of the Chinese Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. (Huawei). Huawei commissioned an extensive study on perceptions in the Germany-China bilateral relationship in 2016 (Huawei 2016a) which built upon earlier studies from 2012 (Huawei 2012) and 2014 (Huawei 2014)¹³⁵.

¹³⁴ This German expression and variations of it have commonly been used for many decades as a response when something “entirely insignificant” Drosdowski (1992, p. 139) took place.

¹³⁵ The studies have a sample size of 1000 citizens (2016: 1001), 100 (2012: 80) political decision makers and 200 (2012: 170) senior management decision makers from the private sector in both Germany and China. On the German side, the political decision maker group consists of federal and state members of parliament as well as political office holders from a federal to local level (Huawei 2016a, p. 21).

Given the controversial reputation of Huawei in the late-2010s, it is important to clarify the rationale of relying on its report for the analysis here in terms of possible biases. The actual surveying and analysis for the three Huawei studies were conducted by the major German polling companies TNS Infratest and TNS Emnid, which both merged to Kantar Emnid in 2016. The German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) was responsible for the scientific quality and data interpretation of the findings of the 2014 and 2016 studies. In the extensive 2016 study used most extensively here, Professor Köllner took the scientific lead, and the study was co-authored by Dr Margot Schüller, Dr Yun Schüler-Zhou, and University of Duisburg-Essen's Professor Nele Noesselt. To Huawei, this appeared to matter, likely because they would want to avoid accusations of bias and unscientific methods/tinkering with the data. By using a leading polling company and a reputable academic institution for the analysis of the data, as well as seasoned academics and China experts in Germany, they could assure that concerns of the studies' robustness and validity should be limited. For this research, this also matters, because the sheer amount of data in these studies is valuable to better understand public perception.

However, it is certainly not ideal from a methodological perspective to rely mostly on these four sources in this sub-chapter, including the Pew Research Center data. Yet, in terms of the Huawei studies, their high-profile support by academics (Professor Eberhard Sandschneider), career diplomats (Michael Clauß), and business lobbyists (Hans-Georg Frey) alike, should help to alleviate concerns. Still, as with all single-source material, the findings should – and were, wherever possible – be triangulated with other sources. Some of the core findings of the Huawei studies were fortunately validated by other surveys painting similar general pictures (on a smaller scale), i.e. existing surveys by the Körber Foundation (2017) and the BBC (2017).

Although the research for the Huawei studies was conducted from 2011 to 2016, their findings also provide a good indication of prior sentiments, especially in combination with the following section on the German media coverage of China.

Such ‘extrapolation’ is also supported by the Pew Research Center’s findings, as they cover a twelve-year period.

7.1.1 Germany’s Overall Reservations

The following pages show that Germans, on average, do not have particularly favourable views of China. One of the most comprehensive international polls on sentiments towards foreign countries was conducted by the aforementioned Pew Research Center and the data is found in their Global Indicators Database (2018b). One of the core questions that had been asked to citizens in a wide range of countries each year since 2005 has been whether the respondents had a favourable or unfavourable view on the country in question.

While the polling data does not provide analyses on why sentiments change, sentiment trends in selected countries or even on an aggregated level can provide valuable information – especially for comparative studies. In the case of this thesis’ search for influence on German actress, such data offers insights on where Germans stood with their views of China. In Figure 26, German views were compared to other major European countries (France, Italy, Spain, and the UK), plus the United States. Germans have consistently had one of the lowest favourable views on China since the inception of the poll in 2005, and up to 2017. They had the least favourable views of any of those countries from 2008 to 2013 as well as in 2015 and 2016, which made Germany leading the list of least favourable views on China for eight out of 13 years (Pew Research Center 2018b).

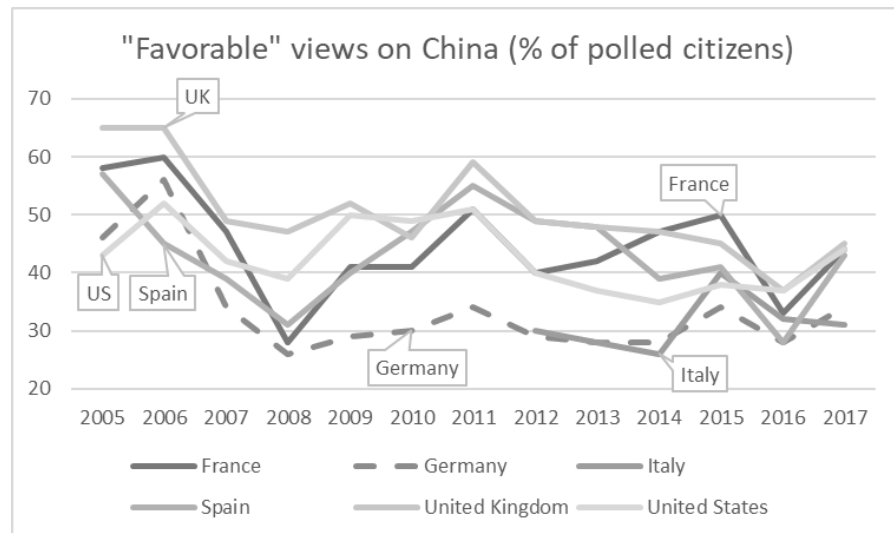


Figure 26: "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?" Polled Citizens Responding "Favorable" in %

Source: Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China, Pew Research Center (2018b)

	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK	US
2005	58	46	-	57	65	43
2006	60	56	-	46	65	52
2007	47	34	27	39	49	42
2008	28	26	-	31	47	39
2009	41	29	-	40	52	50
2010	41	30	-	47	46	49
2011	51	34	-	55	59	51
2012	40	29	30	49	49	40
2013	42	28	28	48	48	37
2014	47	28	26	39	47	35
2015	50	34	40	41	45	38
2016	33	28	32	28	37	37
2017	44	34	31	43	45	44

Table 6: "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?" Polled Citizens Responding "Favorable" in %

Source: Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China, Pew Research Center (2018b)

Considering the above results, it is not particularly surprising that Germany also led in the list of countries having the most unfavourable views on China with six out of 13 top spots as shown in Figure 27.

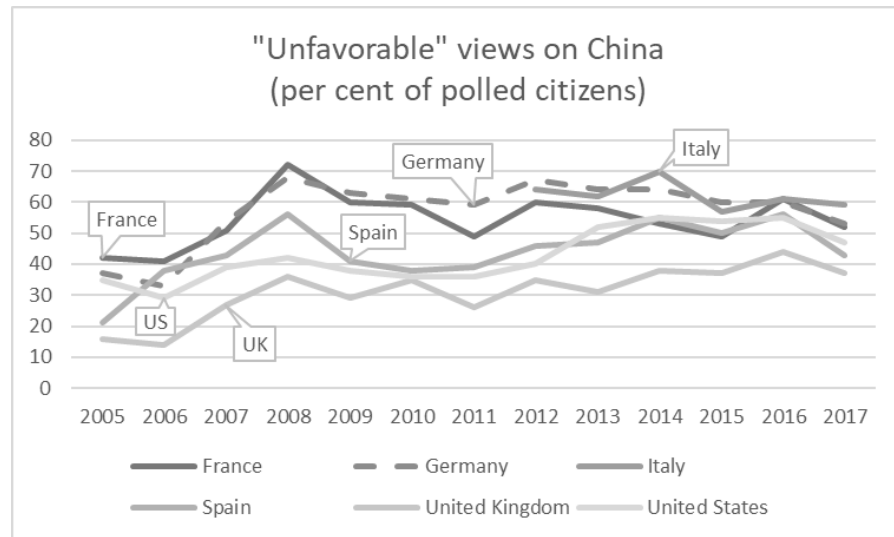


Figure 27: "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?" Polled Citizens Responding "Unfavorable" in %

Source: Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China, Pew Research Center (2018b)

	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK	US
2005	42	37		21	16	35
2006	41	33		38	14	29
2007	51	54	61	43	27	39
2008	72	68		56	36	42
2009	60	63		41	29	38
2010	59	61		38	35	36
2011	49	59		39	26	36
2012	60	67	64	46	35	40
2013	58	64	62	47	31	52
2014	53	64	70	55	38	55
2015	49	60	57	50	37	54
2016	61	60	61	56	44	55
2017	52	53	59	43	37	47

Table 7: "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?" Polled Citizens Responding "Unfavorable" in %

Source: Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China, Pew Research Center (2018b)

Considering both the favourable and unfavourable mentions, it appears that German sentiments towards China were roughly in line with the sentiments in other

major European nations as well as the US. From 2007/2008, Germany's perception on China deteriorated significantly and never fully recovered. Most likely, such deterioration was the result of the issues the Germany-China relations had endured during that very time. First, with Merkel's Dalai Lama visit that disgruntled China and led to a media spotlight of China's rise and societal debate within Germany. Then, shortly after, the unrest in Tibet in 2008, which had been widely covered in the German media, and third, Merkel's decision to not participate at the Olympic Games in Beijing. There was plenty of negative coverage prior to the Olympics, although it improved during the event itself (Lorenz 2008).

While these numbers suggest that Germans held a rather negative view on China, they do not offer an in-depth assessment of such sentiments. Hence, the question remains, how meaningful these results are, and whether they can be considered an influential factor. The previously introduced Huawei studies provide a more in-depth picture of German sentiments towards China and are therefore explored in the next section.

7.1.2 Economic Opportunities and Threats

German views on China's economic role were far more ambivalent and complex compared to the general sentiments presented above. The most common spontaneous association regarding China found in the three Huawei studies was China's strong economy/economic power role. It was mentioned 28% of the time in 2012 (Huawei 2012, p. 53), 37% of the time in 2014 (Huawei 2014, p. 27) and 34% of the time in 2016 (Huawei 2016a, p. 26). Furthermore, 49% of the respondents in 2014 and 44% in 2016 were somewhat or very worried (Huawei 2016a, p. 68) about China's economic strength. Combining these numbers with the views on personal freedoms and human rights in China (discussed in the sections below), it shows that Germans felt worried, if not threatened, by China's economic and political rise. Unrelated to these sentiments but adding a further layer to the argument is a common further spontaneous association which was mentioned: 7%, 8%, and 10% respectively in the surveyed years associated the production of cheap goods of poor quality with China. Such views were likely to be attributed to a somewhat dated 'workbench of the world' China image, which primarily marked the 1990s and the

early post-WTO accession in the 2000s, and the related flooding of German markets with Chinese products that were often of sub-par quality. This perception also becomes visible when considering the responses for the question whether China primarily stood for mass-produced goods or innovative products. In 2016, 85% of the population (2014: 86) opted for the mass-produced goods answer compared to 5% (2014: 4%) who primarily linked China with the manufacturing of innovative products (Huawei 2016a, p. 126)¹³⁶.

Yet, 56% of the German population in 2014 and 58% in 2016 believed that China and the US were equally important as international political and economic partners of Germany (Huawei 2016a, p. 69), with 59% in 2016 responding that China's economy had a very large or large impact on Germany (Huawei 2016a, p. 116), and also 59% stating that the Chinese economic growth was important for German economic growth (Huawei 2016a, p. 116). In particular the results to the first question might have raised eyebrows while the latter results simply show that the *rising China* notion and its economic relevance for German exports had been a common topic in the media over many years.

While the above results can also be seen as neutral assessments, 49% of Germans believed in 2016, that German domestic companies were being pushed out of business by the increase of Chinese goods (Huawei 2016a, p. 117). Contrary to this view, 48% believed in the same year and study, that Chinese investments in Germany had a positive impact on German employment (Huawei 2016a, p. 117). To complicate the matter further, the German population was also torn on the question of whether Germany or China benefited more from technological co-operation with 39% believing that China benefited more than Germany in 2014, and the same percentage in 2016 respectively (Huawei 2016a, p. 118).

These results provide a good indication of the ambivalence in sentiments found within the German economy during the mid-2010s. To put the results into

¹³⁶ The large gap in percentages exists as the first mentioned 7%, 8% and 10% values were related to spontaneous associations, i.e. the responses to a question along the lines of 'Which aspects come to mind when thinking about China?' instead of having given the question whether China stood for mass-produced good or innovative products.

perspective, it is useful to remember that this was the time when Chinese investments in Germany came under additional scrutiny by Gabriel’s push for investment screening and the related shift in political sentiments. Such ambivalence, and change of sentiments, was also found in practical terms by multiple interviewees working on matters involving Chinese commercial activity in Germany¹³⁷.

7.1.3 Normative Values: Personal Freedoms and Human Rights

As Chapter the discussion of Germany’s as a normative power in Chapter 3.2 highlighted, underlying normative values did play a role in Germany and in German foreign policy making. One aspect that matters much to the German public was the notion of people’s personal freedoms. The following polling numbers show a rather strong sentiment suggesting that China was not a free place for its citizens. The Pew Research Center asked up to 49 countries the following question repeatedly over time: “Does China’s government respect the personal freedoms of its people” (2018a)? The German public’s response is clear:

	German “Yes”	German “No”
2008	13%	84%
2013	9%	87%
2014	6%	91%
2015	6%	92%
2016	4%	93%
2017	7%	88%

Table 8: German Sentiments on Personal Freedoms in China – “Does China’s government respect the personal freedoms of its people?”

Source: Global Indicators Database: China Personal Freedoms, Pew Research Center (2018a)

These numbers suggest a clear sentiment. Their explanatory power is further heightened when comparing these to responses in other countries:

¹³⁷ Namely, interviewees #20 and #23.

	Germany's "Yes" Rank	Germany's "No" Rank
2008	17/20 (4th lowest)	3/20 (3rd highest)
2013	47/49 (3rd lowest)	2/49 (2nd highest)
2014	42/43 (2nd lowest)	1/43 (highest)
2015	37/39 (3rd lowest)	3/39 (third highest)
2016	17/18 (2nd lowest)	2/18 (2nd highest)
2017	39/40 (2nd lowest)	2/40 (2nd highest)

Table 9: Germany's Position (Table 6) Relative to Selected Other Countries

Source: Global Indicators Database: China Personal Freedoms, Pew Research Center (2018a)

Such results do speak for themselves, although their explanatory power is limited due to the question's lack of focus and depth. While the Pew Research Center only published polling numbers without any qualitative analysis involved, the reasons for poor German sentiments on Chinese people's freedoms were manifold. Germany's past struggle within a divided country should have made Germans more sensitive to questions of personal freedoms. However, considering this being the only substantial reason is not sufficiently convincing. Germany's direct competitors for the most negative views on personal freedoms in China were, apart from Japan, also members of the European Union: France, Italy (from 2013 to 2015) and Sweden (since polling started in 2016). It is certainly unwise to talk about coherent European values in this case due to the limitation of the data, but it does stand out that a range of underlying concerns were shared by some advanced liberal European economies. Germany's unique past likely added a further layer to this particular question, though.

Regarding human rights in a more general sense, the Huawei study (2016a, p. 21) also includes a related spontaneous association. While most Germans associated primarily economic strength with China (2016: 34%; 2014: 37%; 2012: 28%), more people mentioned human rights violations (14%; 14%; 16%) than 'Chinese Food' (12%; 14%; 17%) or Communism (12%; 15%; 10%) as their first association. Furthermore, the second most well-known Chinese person, a question only asked for in the 2016 survey, after Mao Zedong with 54% had been Ai Weiwei with 8% (Huawei 2016a, p. 165). On the one hand, this is surprising, as other

mentions could have included more recent leading politicians. Yet, it is also a logical consequence of Ai's role in Germany. Ai, who was a "part of global pop culture" (Sieren 2011, p. 260), had been an outspoken critic of the Chinese government in the German media and arts circles for many years, and had opened an office and art gallery in Berlin in 2011 (Zeit Online 2011). In 2015, he had moved to Berlin to teach at the Berlin University of the Arts from 2015 to 2018, before eventually leaving Germany due to its "lack of openness [and] little room for open debates" (Peschel 2019, p. 2), though.

To sum up, the German public's views on China showed ambivalence and a lack of coherence beyond normative values. Similar to notions by politicians (see below), the idea of China's relevance for Germany had gained ground over time. Related to this, a representative foreign policy survey of the Koerber Foundation from 2017 found that Germans considered China the most or second most important partner of Germany on fourth place, trailing France and the US by large margins, and Russia narrowly, but having placed China in front of Great Britain, Italy, and Austria amongst others (Körber Stiftung 2017, p. 23). Yet, negative sentiments within the population prevailed according to the range of surveys mentioned in this thesis, and also the vast majority of German, or in Germany residing, interviewees from various backgrounds and working in a range of sectors.

7.2 German Media Coverage on China

When discussing the poor perception of China within German society, it is inevitable to eventually wonder about the role of the media and its influence on Germany's position vis-à-vis China. This thesis provides neither the focus nor scope to assess the coverage of China in German media with an extensive individual research design in place. Instead, this section provides a small range of individual findings on this very question and refers to existing research on the topic.

Both Huawei studies from 2014 and 2016 include print media analyses (in 2016 commissioned to a specialised firm) of the most prominent daily and weekly newspapers and magazines in Germany. The studies list the key topics presented in the articles in Germany (and China as well) in great detail. For instance, the Huawei

2016 study found that 54% of all media articles in the researched time frame on China related to the field topic of ‘economy and innovation’ (Huawei 2016a, p. 123), and then split the results into further sub-sections. Overall, both studies come to similar results, namely that “[c]ritical and negative descriptions predominate in the German media when it comes to issues like human rights and the rule of law. [...] [R]eports on Chinese foreign policy are predominantly neutral [but] threat scenarios are still widespread in media reporting” (Huawei 2014, p. 2). The correlation between the wider German sentiments and the media analysis was expected as suggested multiple times, and other observers do agree with the core findings of the analysis as well, for instance Wilke and Achatzi (2011b) and Thimm et al (2014).

Sieren, a long-term Beijing correspondent and author of several books on China, holds similar views. In 2011, he shared an anecdote of a meeting of German journalists working on China. In his speech at the event, he argued that some of his colleagues were “sometimes helping along the truth to better distinguish between good and bad” (Sieren 2011, p. 260) and was met with harsh criticism by one journalist in particular. He responded that he had been concerned that “Germans could be duped into believing that China was more open and freer than in reality” (Sieren 2011, p. 260) if the media coverage was not as pronounced in highlighting existing issues. Others have reported similar incidents, talking about editor expectations of negative story framing, and Germany-based journalists’ blatant disbelief when sharing alternative, non-negative views on China (Röhr 2021)¹³⁸.

Furthermore, Heberer found a fault with the German media coverage in 2008. During the civil unrest in Tibet just prior to the Olympic Games in Beijing, he criticised the one-sided, and in his view, far too negative, sentiments in the German media (Heberer 2008). He substantiated his criticism in 2011 by relating it to the lack of realisation of the transformative processes that had taken place in China the

¹³⁸ Also mentioned by interviewee #6 who knew the Germany-China media landscape at the time well. Interviewee #13 added that German correspondents in China would have often problems getting their articles published, and that editors would sometimes simply edit the articles themselves, inflating negative aspects and limiting or removing positive ones.

years before. Or, in his words, summarising the media's sentiments towards China at the time: "China was at fault for everything" (Heberer and Senz 2011, p. 683).

Sandschneider suggested in 2012 that the partially one-sided media coverage of China was to blame for the overall negative German views on China (Huawei 2012, p. 6). He believed that such coverage had strongly influenced German views while having provided little substantial and concrete knowledge on China. The latter is certainly a subjective assessment, albeit from a credible source, but fits well within this thesis' themes.

In contrast to the above statements, however, Lorenz (2008) argued that the coverage of China had been broad and that the German public had never been informed by the media on so many different aspects of China before. The mere fact that criticisms such as the ones above were portrayed in the media already countered the idea of an anti-China conspiracy. Lorenz certainly had a point about the breadth of the available China information, in particular regarding arts, culture, and history. In respect to the lack of neutrality in (some of) the China coverage in Germany, the view of Sandschneider and others prevails in this thesis' evaluation. The often one-sided coverage did play its part to aggravate critical and, compared to other advanced Western states, very critical, views on China. Based on the findings of this research, Lorenz is also wrong in bringing up the idea of an existing anti-China conspiracy in the media. Instead of debating nonsensical arguments to divert attention, the three chosen themes can help. Economically benefiting (economic interest) from a rising power you do not fully understand (ignorance) while hoping for the best that things will work out (trust) while worrying that it will not (existing negative attitudes) may very well lead to an unintended amplification of negative sentiments, fuelling a vicious circle. Whether this brief outline is worth exploring further may be up to others, but at least it aims at contributing an explanation to the bias in the media experienced throughout the assessed time frame.

7.3 The Perception Gap: Politicians vis-à-vis Society

The above sub-chapter 7.1 provides an overview about the sentiments towards China that were held by the German public. While the findings help to better

understand Germany's relationship with China, it does not provide conclusive evidence on the sentiments' impact on Germany's actorness (see thematic analysis below). As such, this chapter draws a comparison between the public's and politicians' views on China to better understand what perspective legislators possess and whether this may provide any clues.

In the 2012 Huawei study (2012, p. 25), the general public and political decision-makers had generally similar views on China. For instance, 15% of the public and 11% of politicians believed that China had a good reputation internationally, while 28% of both groups felt sympathetic towards China. Differences existed in both the question of ability to innovate (53% compared to 74%) as well as China's influence in society (86% compared to 95%). In contrast to the numbers presented previously, this data is surprisingly unsurprising and could be interpreted in the way that common sentiments are shared equally amongst the German public and German politicians at the time, but that the politicians indeed had an information advantage with regard to the latter two results which require more up-to-date information.

However, these responses on their own are not conclusive and require additional data. Considering the rise of economic fears regarding a rising China from 2015 to 2017, the following provides a comparison of views on Germany's dependence on China. The responses suggest that the German politicians appeared to be aware of such a dependence link. Out of the 100 polled politicians in 2016, 30 stated that China was more important for the German economy than the United States while 49 believed both to be of equal importance (Huawei 2016b, p. 373). Similarly, 90 of them stated that the Chinese economy had a large or very large influence on Germany (Huawei 2016b, p. 374) and 77 believed that Chinese economic growth was important for the economic situation in Germany (Huawei 2016b, p. 375). Although these numbers were collected in 2015, the above is also supported by similar numbers in the 2014 study with interviews conducted in 2013. 46% of the polled politicians in 2016, and 40% in 2014, believed that the US and China had been equally important as bilateral political and economic partners of Germany (Huawei 2016a, p. 69).

Considering these numbers, and assuming their robustness and validity, it is undeniable that there was a widespread notion of the relevance of China to Germany as has also been found within the individual and bureaucratic levels. This sentiment was also shared by all (former) German politicians interviewed for this thesis. They all had a rough conception of the importance of China for the country and their own work, yet they could only partially provide examples or put that notion of relevance/dependence into a specific China context. Once again, this is much in line with prior findings and the very conceptualisation of the economic interest and ignorance themes.

These interview findings are also somewhat backed up by the following study results. Related to China's development into a competitor for Germany, one question asked whether Chinese technological goods were internationally competitive. While 64% of citizens and 67% of businesspeople agreed, only 50% of the polled politicians thought this was the case (Huawei 2016a, p. 136). Although German politicians were largely meeting societal averages on the question how good the quality of Chinese goods were (about 50% answered with "high" or "partially good, partially bad"), they were also significantly less convinced that Chinese companies were able to manufacture high-tech products. 83% of the citizen group and 89% of the business manager group agreed with this statement while only 74% of politicians believed so (Huawei 2016a, p. 136). Therefore, politicians provided the worst view on Chinese brands' international recognition in 2016 (Huawei 2016a, p. 148). Only 5% of them believed that Chinese brands were regarded highly (citizens: 14%; business decision-makers: 12%) while 73% of German politicians believed that Chinese brands were regarded poorly (citizens: 57%; business decision-makers: 69%). Moreover, 73% of politicians compared to 62% of the general public believed that Chinese companies predominately copied Western products while only 9% and 10% respectively believed that they predominately developed their own products (Huawei 2016a, p. 128)¹³⁹.

¹³⁹ The above responses give a good indication of the overall findings of the studies. Instead of continuing the listing of questions and responses here, a closer look at the study itself (Huawei 2016a) may be worthwhile.

The latter results did not meet the expectations the 2012 study proposed, and the dependence-related questions suggested. They also did not meet the expectations caused by the increasing scepticism on China's economic rise in Germany in 2015 which rose at the very time the source interviews for the above results were conducted. One would assume that the politicians' results were positioned between citizen ('layman') and business ('experts') results, but these numbers indicate that German federal and state politicians were well aware of the notion of 'China is important for the German economy', but that they were generally less aware of the competitive threat that the Chinese advanced manufacturing industry posed for German goods than was the German general public. With the *comprehensive strategic partnership* established a little more than a year earlier, this poses two key questions: what did legislators know about China at the time, and how were they able to make an informed decision about closer cooperation with China if their level of knowledge appeared to not have surpassed the public's understanding? Admittedly, the surveyed politicians might not have had much of an overlap with politicians engaged in the foreign relations with China, or even worked with regard to German foreign affairs at all. Also, as shared by one interviewee in detail¹⁴⁰, the realities of knowledge acquisition by MPs is all but ideal. Most of the information consumed is either handed to the MPs by their faction, or is aggregated by their members of staff – who often also rely on faction material and do little individual/'critical' research. Depending on the thematic focus of the MP, lobbyists might also play a significant role in *informing* MPs (Bernhagen 2017). With regard to China, the latter aspect plays a major role. As explained by two interviewees with experience in trade policy development¹⁴¹, (senior) MPs concerned with trade/economic policy often spend a significant amount of time talking to lobbyists representing German industry. If no pro-active step in pursuing a balanced acquisition of knowledge is taken, this might very well lead to views as one-sided as the media has portrayed China at times.

A further point the Huawei study data highlighted and that can be found in its detailed annex (Huawei 2016b, p. 383) is that German politicians aged 45 and below

¹⁴⁰ Interviewee #1.

¹⁴¹ Interviewee #10 and #21.

almost always had a less favourable view on China's economic strength and international competitiveness than their older counterparts. Although their age does not automatically relate to their time in office (which was not polled), it can be assumed that many of them were more junior members of their legislative bodies or had less experience in their political decision-making positions they held at the time. As such, their level of knowledge on China – at least regarding China's economic and commercial development – appeared to be inferior to that of older policy makers and also the German public. On its own, this small data set (17 out of 100 polled politicians fall into this category) is of limited explanatory power. Combined with the other findings in this thesis, however, it adds another piece to the puzzle.

Still, despite of the above, advancing the understanding of the policy-making and influencing process, and reiterating the role of ignorance on the German side of the relationship, the above only marginally helps to make a case for public opinion and/or media influence on strategic German actorness on China. Although a linkage most likely exists due to the cognitive role other people's views and the media play in shaping one's own perceptions (Robinson 2001), assessing its influence cannot credibly be done without further research. Yet, the sometimes fleeting notions of the themes and the improving and then deteriorating Germany-China sentiments could be backed up with data in this chapter, although an over-reliance on specific sources still exists.

7.4 Business Associations

Lehning (2004) argued that associations representing societal groups are an essential component to the pluralist discourse in Germany. They represent, but also analyse and support policy-making processes and even control politicians' actions to an extent. They are a core component of the German democratic system and also an important factor to secure and future-proof the lives of its members. This includes the particular and rather influential group of business associations.

The case of the influence of business associations as factors on German foreign policy agency is particularly intriguing. The very nature of these organisations forces them to see themselves as influential players while the respondents,

politicians and civil servants attenuate their influence to appear as being in charge. However, Bühner (2007) found that researchers of German lobbying associations' activities generally reject the notion that associations have much of an impact beyond trade policy.

Regarding the Germany-China relations, trade policy is exactly the type of policy which is of relevance. The key associations in question are the Federation of German Industries (Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie, BDI), the Federation of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag, DIHT), and the German Asia-Pacific Business Organisation (OHV). The BDI is the umbrella organisation of German industry and primarily represents large German export-oriented corporations and was the most influential business association in Germany from 1998 to 2017. In contrast, the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (Außenhandelskammern, AHKn) with their umbrella association DIHT largely represent the German small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Additional individual industry- or subject-related business associations exist, and they are often members of the BDI, but for the Germany-China relations they are generally not of major relevance. In addition to the representation by the BDI, companies of a certain size and/or export-orientation maintain a lobbying office in Berlin to influence policy-makers directly instead of having to take the detour via their business association(s) first. Naturally, doing so also avoids conflicts of interest within the business associations (Zumpfort 2004).

Business associations' foreign policy activities can be separated into direct and indirect activities (Bühner 2007). Direct methods involve communication with foreign governments or international organisations via delegation visits or welcoming them at home. These meetings are especially effective when formal diplomatic relations are limited or strained. This also includes institutionalised regular bi- or multilateral meetings organised by the BDI or DIHT, and also the bi-annually APA conference, organised by the Asia Pacific Committee of German Industry (APA), an umbrella association with BDI, OAV and DIHT being member among others.

Indirect methods involve influencing the foreign policy decision-making process at home by targeting high profile decision makers such as the Chancellor, Foreign Minister, or the department heads of expert ministries in question. With the backing of its member organisations, leverage comes in form of party donations (or their withdrawal) or voicing support/disdain with certain party proposals publicly and in private. Furthermore, advisory board participation for MPs or leading association's figures enlisting in parties offer additional options (Bührer 2007).

Naturally, business associations demand a say on policy in foreign trade related matters, although the scope might very well expand on different fields such as development¹⁴² or environmental policies, particularly in the Germany-China case.

In short, business associations impact trade policy with any country that their members are invested in. China plays a significant role for the BDI, APA, OAV, and DIHT/China AHK. Much of the work they do is to support German companies within China on an everyday basis as well as on delegation visits¹⁴³, although the German missions in China and government consultations do play a vital role as well (Auswärtiges Amt 2002).

It is important to put into perspective that the APA was founded in 1993 after a suggestion by Kohl on a return from China. The APA was initially chaired by Heinrich von Pierer as the CEO of Siemens, and he held onto this position until 2006. APA, and the BDI, a member organisation of APA, representatives did work very closely with their counterparts at the BMWi, and respective German institutions in China¹⁴⁴. The combined lobbying pressure of the APA with its member associations and their own extensive networks and long-established backchannels within the legislative and executive branches may impact German agency in the relations with China. While the nature of lobbying makes it difficult to fully assess influence as mentioned above, their weight matters to policy makers.

¹⁴² Bernhagen (2017) argues that German technical assistance and cooperation has long been supporting German business interests abroad.

¹⁴³ This was confirmed by interviewee #15. Also, for more information, see Chapter 5.3 German Investment in China.

¹⁴⁴ According to interviewees #6, #15, and #21.

Yet, it is difficult to distinguish between the business association institutions and their individual heads, as the von Pierer case highlights.

Is the anticipation of their power sufficient to consider the associations a factor with strategic influence on Germany's China relations? Without further data and clear examples this call is difficult to make, yet their influence should be of sufficient magnitude to deserve an honourable mention.

7.5 Think Tanks

The previous sub-chapter discusses the role of business associations and company representation on their influence for foreign policy decision-making processes. Some argue that think tanks are interest/pressure groups and act similar to business associations (Burnham 2002; Grant 2000). This view has certain merit due to the fact that think tanks do not exist in an empty space but have the general goal to share knowledge and non-partisan 'truthful' views. Albeit think tanks may or may not having their own political agendas, they effectively have only modest impact on policy-making according to Stone (Stone 1996). Although she has not assessed the German case, her key finding fits the German system well. She argued that policy-making is primarily a matter of interests and not of ideas. This clearly resonates with the findings in this thesis, particularly the individual and bureaucratic analytical levels. Yet, think tanks naturally beg to differ and aim at filling the expertise void they make out within the policy-making field – whether it be the Germany-China relations or any other policy matter. Link (2000) also supports this view with explicit regard to the German case. For him, however, bureaucracy and bureaucratic processes play also a major part in the development of policies, agency not so much.

Traditionally, senior foreign policy-makers and their staff are in loose contact with the most established German foreign policy think tanks, namely the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP) and the German Council on Foreign Relations (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, DGAP). There are other more specialised think tanks and research institutions with varying degrees of access to policy-makers as well, for

instance, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien, GIGA)¹⁴⁵.

Moreover, leading academic specialists in their fields, who often work at academic research institutions in Germany, but at times also at think tanks, are of high relevance for the parliamentary research services. They often consult the research services as external specialists either on specific matters or are part of a wider network for regular exchanges of opinions, e.g. at conferences (Schöler and Winter 2017).

One key think tank for understanding China is the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS). The private German Mercator Foundation set it up in 2013 “as a platform for engagement with China in Germany. MERICS provide[s] timely information and analysis on China to political and economic decision-makers [and grew] into one of the largest international think tanks for policy-oriented research into and knowledge of contemporary China” (MERICS 2019). Its establishment undoubtedly filled a big void in the think tank and policy advisory niche within Germany and Europe, as China expertise had been limited and scattered among various think tanks. Although MERICS focused on the analysis of China and not on the German relations with China per se, it quickly gained momentum in the German policy-making arena – not the least because of the Mercator Foundations’ network, money, and influence¹⁴⁶. Although MERICS has come under increasing scrutiny for “narrating the China threat” (Rogelja and Tsimonis 2020), their researchers/lobbyists were increasingly embedded in the German discussions on China by policy makers in the legislative as well as executive branches¹⁴⁷.

Overall, the influence of think tanks on actual policy is very difficult to quantify. Contact and communication clearly exists, but similar to the assessment in other parts of this thesis, the question is not whether think tanks, first and foremost MERICS, has instilled knowledge and/or narratives in mid-level policy makers, but

¹⁴⁵ As was highlighted by interviewees #1 and #7.

¹⁴⁶ Which was suggested by interviewees #16, #24, and #25.

¹⁴⁷ Their participation in a variation of meetings, roundtables, etc. as well as ‘experts on call’ was mentioned by numerous interviewees: #2, #6, #21 and #22.

whether it was able to directly influence German actorness in a strategic sense. The answer to this question must be a resounding ‘no’, although think tanks did play a role in shaping views and perceptions within the political sector. As such, they did indeed differ from (the most influential) business associations.

7.6 Evaluation of the Influence of Societal Factors through Thematic Analysis

In line with the other two analytical chapters, this sub-chapter brings the above analyses together and assesses the role of the three themes of economic interest, ignorance, and trust, and their impact on shaping the core societal factors’ influence on the construction of Germany’s decision-making agency and actorness regarding China.

7.6.1 Economic Interest

With the focus on the societal level in this chapter, economic interest is perhaps more difficult to relate to the assessed factors, putting business associations aside.

For public perceptions, economic interest played a major role in conceptualising China. Assuming that the vast amount of survey respondents of the various surveys used did indeed represent the German society reasonably well, then the general consensus was (over the 2005-2017 time frame of the different surveys) clear: China was an increasingly important economic partner but had its flaws. Therefore, the notion of economic interest was certainly present in the realm of public opinion, although later this was a bit diluted by the public focus on normative values. In the discussion of media bias, however, the theme did not seem to have played a relevant role. While business news covered China very frequently, the debates in non-business media articles surrounded the issue of valued-based/normative storytelling, not profits.

For think tanks, economic interest may very well play a strategic role in their advisory, and/or their assessment. Therefore, economic interest related issues with China were frequently covered in German think tanks pieces. However, it is important to note that in the 1990s and 2000s, think tank pieces on economic

collaboration with China usually contained strong “political” anecdotes and did not focus on economic matters. This started to change in the early to mid-2010s.

Last but not least, business associations are first and foremost interested in maximising their members’ profits. As such, economic interest is positioned back, front, and centre. Whether their impact on German China agency receives the ‘honourable mention’ offered in Chapter 7.4 or a resounding ‘yes’, economic aspects were certainly a major part of these associations’ consideration and therefore have driven them to play a more active role in pushing for more commercially friendly policy decisions with China.

7.6.2 Ignorance and Trust

This leaves the role of ignorance and trust for the societal level. Similar to Chapter 6, ignorance also manifested itself at this level. Although societal perceptions appeared to show that China’s influence on Germany in economic terms had been somewhat understood by the public as well as policy makers, this did not indicate that knowledge about China had been present or sufficient for strategy making/influencing. Having more than a basic understanding of China is simply not necessary for the average German citizen who does not directly engage with China. The average MP, on the other hand, would certainly benefit from such knowledge for the policy making process.

Business associations were likely to possess second least ignorance on the topic, right after specialised think tank personnel, simply because APA members were actively pursuing business in China and Asia, and in many ways knowledge and especially empirical experiences would correlate with profits. Yet, what about trust? The BDI published an accentuated strategy paper in January 2019 (2019), calling China a *systemic rival* and demanding German and European measures that fall in the economic nationalism, if not protectionism, category. Up until mid-2017, such criticism had been muted, but similarly to the deterioration of the political relations

ever since 2015, trust had also been lost. Think tanks started to follow the same trajectory as the BDI¹⁴⁸.

With none of the discussed societal factors having managed to pass the threshold of having strategic influence to directly affect German actorness on China, the role of ignorance and trust, and also economic interest, matter less for the assessment in this thesis. That said, the discussion at this level acknowledges the involvement or even active involvement of some of these factors. However, involvement does not necessarily lead to direct influence. In other words, public opinion is usually gathered by institutions, private or public, so it is always subject to interpretation by these survey organisers.

This assessment has not found conclusive evidence for societal factors being directly instrumental for the decision-making process. However, not having direct impact does not mean that the factors had no relevance at all. Over time, sentiments and lobbying matters, but it is impossible to pinpoint exact (strategic) influence on the relations and Germany's China trajectory. Hence, the relevance of economic interest, ignorance, and trust to these factors is of limited value to assess Germany's overall construction of agency on China.

¹⁴⁸ See Sauerbrey (2019); Kundnani (2016); Wübbecke et al. (2016); Wirtschaftswoche (2018); Sommer (2019); Karnitschnig (2020); Hauschild et al. (2015); Handelsblatt (2017).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In light of the growing importance of Germany and China and the increasingly significance of the bilateral relationship in today's world, some questions emerged from the current discussions on the topic: how did German governments see China, what had caused the attention to shift, and which role did China play for policy-makers in the government and parliament? Mostly importantly, was there ever a strategy? These questions triggered the interests and eventually led to the design of this project.

To recap the research focus of this project, the core research question is: Why did Germany's relationship with China evolve in the way that it did from 1998 to 2017?

Revolving around this core question are the following sub-research questions:

- What are the defining factors within Germany that drove the decision-making process?
- What are the main issue areas that shaped the bilateral relationship (and if they changed over time, why and when)?
- Did a consistent China strategy exist during the time frame?

The goal of this research is to look at how Germany's actorness as a decision maker is constructed by its own agency in the context of its bilateral relationship with China. It thus focuses on the factors within Germany that had impacted on its decision-making process and decisions with regard to China. The bilateral developments only to serve the purpose to provide contextual references. Similarly, the broader mentioning of externalities at the structural level, such as the GFC and Eurozone Crisis, is only used to put discussions into contextual perspective. Rather than studying how these external developments had impacted Germany, this research examines how they are interpreted by Germany that might have changed its course of direction with China. There is a subtle yet important difference between focusing on external structural influences and the actor's ability to agent for the study. The latter, which lies at the core of this research, aims at identifying how factors within Germany had affected its overall construction of decision-making

agency with China. This does not diminish the value of structural-based analyses. Instead, this research is designed to complement the dominating structural focus with an agency-oriented approach and ultimately makes FPA a more suitable analytical framework for this research with its appreciation of the role of agency itself.

8.1 Added Value of this Research

The existing discussions on German foreign policy and Germany-China are limiting as discussed in more detail in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. There has been a clear lack of literature on Germany-China relations in general, not to mention ones specifically focusing on Germany. Generally speaking, among the existing discussion of the German-China relationship, most of them were carried out in the format of opinion pieces, think tank reports, and privately funded analyses which does not carry the same value as this research does. Within the academic debate, contextually, there is a general absence of literature that covers the same time span as this research does. Existing literature is mostly dated, focusing on World War II or pre-WWII time frames to discuss Germany-China relations. Others cover contemporary relations but only assess brief periods which cannot tell the long-lasting picture of the strategic approach this research takes.

Additionally, the aspects in the context of the bilateral relationship these discussions cover are also limiting in scope for the purpose of identifying Germany's strategy with China. Although there have been more works on studying China published recently, most of them were not directly related to the bilateral relations. Instead, they may discuss countries in a comparative sense to measure their performance, or focus on a particular subject area, such as cultural or education policies. A few mention contemporary Germany-China relations, but their primary focus is a different bilateral relationship, not providing a comprehensive, or original, assessment of the relations of interest for this thesis.

From a methodological perspective, among the already very limited literature directly focusing on this bilateral relationship, there is a clear majority using structural approaches to discuss the relationship. However, these either focused on

the impact of externalities on the development of the relationship, or they were examining the implications of the relations for other actors or the broader international sphere. Among those also attempting to examine Germany's decision-making process in a similar fashion as this research, most of their focus stayed on the bilateral relationship rather than on Germany directly. Their focus was to examine how Germany had influenced the development of the relationship i.e. how Germany had impacted the structure. Certainly, there was an overlap between focusing on Germany's influence on the relationship or the role of Germany in the relationship. The biggest difference of this research is its sole focus on Germany itself in the context of the bilateral relationship, rather than the other way around.

8.2 The Analytical/Theoretical Approach and Methodology

FPA's levels of analysis were used to deconstruct Germany's actorness, agency, and decision making into three levels: the individual level, the bureaucratic level, and the societal level.

Factors at the individual level were those who's experiences, trades and/or worldviews might have had a direct impact on the factors ability to influence Germany's decision-making result with China. At the bureaucratic level, factors were those institutions or executive branches that had significant influence on the decision-making process, in particular those within the societal level such as think tanks, business associations, media publications etc. which represented the opinion of the German public in one way or another. It is important to note that certain factors at their respective levels are also actors due to their ability to exercise agency. However, for this discussion, they are treated as factors that are examined by its ability to shape and construct the overall German actorness as a decision maker.

With a focus on strategy rather than tactics, three key themes were defined to be of high relevance for further examination. In general, the analytical framework of this research is a combination of levels of analysis and the thematic analysis including economic interest, ignorance, and trust. This combination leads to a

comprehensive deconstruction of Germany as a decision maker and a thorough analysis to identify the existence of a strategic approach.

To support this, this research adopts a triangular use of data, including academic literature, policy literature, media pieces, survey data, economic data, and elite interviews. The purpose of combining multiple sources is to cross-check the validity of each. This is of particular importance with the research questions in mind because of their qualitative nature. As discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2, there are also considerable limitations in place due to this focus on decision-making agency. The interpretation of factors and their influence on deconstructing Germany's agency can be biased at two fronts. First, due to the data itself. Sources such as think tank reports and interviews can be inherently biased. Arguments based on those may therefore be difficult to include or to let them stand on their own. This therefore further validates the reasoning behind adopting a triangular research approach. By cross-checking data collected through different channels, potential biases are reduced.

Secondly, subjectivity also occurs in the research's interpretation of the data at hand. However, this should not be a major concern, as it is the very nature of qualitative research. As highlighted throughout this piece, the goal of this research is to provide arguments based on available data to offer a certain perspective and understanding of Germany's agency in the context of this bilateral relationship. It hopes to serve as a foundation for future work sharing a similar vision and mission.

8.3 Summaries and Empirical Findings

Chapter 2

To deconstruct Germany's state actorness as a decision maker and scrutinise its decision-making agency with the support of FPA and thematic analysis, arguments in each chapter are structured in a way that tackle the issue layer by layer. The problem is first addressed from the conceptual perspective. Therefore, Chapter 2 is dedicated in providing a conceptual review of current approaches to study German foreign policy. Existing approaches, namely the dominating debate between normalisation and continuity, and the broader approach inspired by grand

international relations theories are found to be limiting in nature to capture the complexity in Germany's foreign policy engagement. Although these narratives can provide some empirical insights, they are less useful to assess Germany's overall evolution of approaches towards China. Since the goal is to focus on how the decisions had been reached, the debate itself is a part of the process. Therefore, taking a side in these explanatory-natured debates and approaches defeats the purpose of this research to provide a comprehensive analysis of the whole decision-making process on strategy. For this reason, these conceptual debates are not proper for this research to base on.

Furthermore, the existing approaches have also primarily a structural dominant focus. Approaches inspired by grand theories prioritise the discussion of Germany as an international actor within the international system. Although some efforts were made in addressing sub-state level considerations and the foreign policy decision-making process, their focus remains on external structural influences. Although sharing with this research the similar appreciation to social construction of actorness and agency, the constructivist line of study is also found short of showing enough acknowledgement of the power of agency itself. For this project's core focus on Germany's agency, it adopts FPA as the main analytical framework to scrutinise factors of the actor on its ability to agent. Details on the operationalisation and methodology included in this chapter has already been concluded in the section above. It is also important to note that this research goes beyond investigating how factors at the identified sub-state levels had impacted on Germany's actorness and agency in decision-making. Additionally, from a strategic perspective, it looks into how the developments of factors occurred. Therefore, it is more about what is about the development of the identified factors that might have affected their ability to influence Germany's search for policies with China. Hence, it is more aligned with the European post-positivist strand of the FPA studies.

Chapter 3

Continuing the conceptual review of approaches to study Germany's foreign policy making, Chapter 3 offers a contextual analysis to Germany foreign policy development in the context of its global actorness. Following the aftermath of the war period and Germany's reunification and due to the historical complication and

changes within the country, there has been a clear trajectory where Berlin adopted and stuck to a more normative-based civilian approach in foreign engagement both within and beyond Europe. The ‘civilian power’ narratives within Germany in light of its growing economic significance also further prevailed to guide the country’s foreign policy directions.

Situated as a member state in the EU framework, despite of their varying degrees in estimating Germany’s assertiveness within EU policy making spheres, these discussions, whether Germany was a tamed power (Katzenstein 1991), a normalised power (Bulmer and Paterson 2010), an embedded hegemon (Crawford 2007), a growing leader (Schwarzer 2015), a reflexive multilateralist (Bulmer and Paterson 2010), or a reluctant cross-loading learning leader (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2020), all acknowledged Germany’s own policy making authority within the EU, in particular on trade. This further validates the value of this research’s decision to examine Germany’s China approach through its own national agency, given its firm autonomy in decision-making.

Applying FPA to study Germany’s agency, Chapter 3 also highlights the importance of the deconstruction of Germany’s decision-making actorness into three levels: individual, bureaucratic, and societal based on which to identify and study factors. Although levels of analysis provide a valuable structural foundation, in order to further evaluate from the strategic angle, three key themes (economic interest, ignorance, and trust) were found of high relevance to defining Germany’s engagement with China. The economic interest theme as part of this research is used as a broader term, referring to economic and commercial interest in a wider sense. This includes the German federal government’s foreign trade and economic policies, commercial interest by sectors, and even individual companies, and financial flows such as investments. Ignorance in this research is conceptualised as a *lack of knowledge*, i.e. a privation. In the analysis, this term relates to missing understanding of China and/or the role of China for Germany. Trust refers to the liberal notion of change through rapprochement, combined with the change through trade notion, relating to the optimistic, perhaps also naive, notion of wishful thinking that things will work out as expected to be.

Chapter 4

To bring the assessment of German foreign policy making into the context of this study, Chapter 4 continues the examination of German foreign policy, tracing the development of the bilateral relationship. It observed an overall shift from the general lack of interest on China during the period prior to the start of the interested time frame 1998 to a growing acknowledgement of it due to the increasing economic relevance on the tie at the time span this research covers. Based on this, Chapter 4 further narrows down the discussions from Chapter 3, examining the general foreign policy level to the specific China focus. Having a thorough discussion of how the relationship had evolved, the chapter provides a much-needed contextual foundation for the following analyses.

In the same chapter, it also reviews the existing debates that touch upon the similar topic of this research. It concludes that compared to the existing academic discussions, on the one hand, this research covers a wider time-period of five terms with a more contemporary focus, which serves the need to identify the trend changes and study evolution of Germany's practice of agency with China for the purpose to examine strategy. On the other hand, it complements the existing overly dominating structural-focused approach with an agency-oriented analysis. Rather than focusing on how Germany had impacted the relationship, how the relationship had shaped interactions in other context, or how externalities had influenced Germany's decision making, the focus of this research is on Germany itself. This combination of a wider and more contemporary time-period and examination of agency itself together with a holistic and strategic perspective is unique in the existing literature. And this is also highlighted as a core contribution of this project to the existing debate.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5, 6 and 7 are the main analytical chapters where factors at their respective level are extensively examined. Each chapter analyses how factors at their respectively assigned levels had an impact on constructing and affecting Germany's decision-making agency and its actorness as a decision maker towards China. Chapter 5 examines the individual level. Given the importance of the role of Chancellors, the two Chancellors Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel during the

intended period from 1998 to 2017 were identified to be the core individual factors. Their experience, traits and worldviews had shaped their preferences and decisions in initiating or directing Germany's China policies. Although there are also other individuals who were involved and active in Germany-China policy making processes, with Fischer being an exception due to his close tie with the Chancellor himself, and Steinmeier as Schröder's former Chief of Staff and Foreign Minister, most of these individuals' ability to exert direct influence on foreign policy making and decisions is hard to measure.

Through the lenses of the key themes, economic interest is found to have been the core consideration of key individual factors. This is particularly evident in the analysis of the key drivers – Schröder, Merkel, and Gabriel – who posed the most measurable direct influence on Germany's decision on agency towards China. From the lens of ignorance and trust, they are evident in Schröder's firm belief that change in China was possible and that trade could facilitate it to eventually bringing China closer to Germany's/European standards. This 'wishful' thinking also prevailed during Merkel's terms. This dominating thinking also reveals ignorance. Their lack of understanding on the further implication of China on Germany beyond trade and lack of acknowledging the normative differences and the likelihood of 'changing China' ultimately led these individual key factors fail to direct Germany to search for a more comprehensive strategy.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 investigates the bureaucratic level factors. Not surprisingly, the Chancellery scored highest in its factor influence on Germany's China actorness. The Chancellery not only houses the Chancellor but is the policy coordinator and policy driver in the executive branch. The BMWi joined the Chancellery as a second (more minor) factor that has the potential to strategically exert influence on Germany's China relations. However, this is only the case for the 2010s in the assessed timeframe, so its role is secondary to the one of the Chancellery – and temporary. Yet, its power lies in the direct link it has to economic interest.

Upon further analysis from the three key thematic lenses, economic interest was found to be of great importance within bureaucratic considerations and

interplays among institutions and executives branches. Acknowledging the weight of China's economic significance, the Chancellery had been active in pushing for further and better economic relationship between the two. However, the turn of BMWi's attitude on China during Merkel III under Gabriel had a direct influence on the existing debates in the policy circle, which increased economic nationalist interests' popularity. Regarding ignorance and trust, institutional ignorance at this level on China was evident that there was a lack of China knowledge in the German policy making sector in general. The belief to change China through trade ran deeply across Germany's bureaucratic institutions, which ultimately resulted in their inability in construct a strategy that can adapt to the fast-changing relationship between the two countries.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 assessed the societal level. By far most influence was concentrated on the business associations within the societal realm, namely the APA (for China, and the BDI overall). It combined its network, its reach, and its sheer economic weight when representing the German export industry and combined it with the key theme of economic interest, to create a power that may have a strategic impact. The problem is, however, that neither one of these associations is in the institutional position to pass laws, regulations, or directives. As such, the APA deserves a honourable mention, and the verdict that may have sufficient impact in certain constellations to be able to operationalise it. The public, perhaps not surprisingly, has not such strategic impact, and neither so think tanks or the media. Yet, all of them can influence individual and bureaucratic factors, and as such still deserve a special mention.

Based on the thematic analysis, the relevance of economic interests varies in degree among factors at this level. For public perceptions, economic interest played a major role in conceptualising China. For think tanks, economic interest may very well play a strategic role in their advisory, and/or their assessment. business associations are first and foremost interested in maximising their members' profits, which had let them to play a more pragmatic and active role in lobbying for a more economic interest beneficial policy decisions with China. Regarding ignorance, it is difficult to assess public's general knowledge on China and the actual implication of

the relationship to Germany. But the results resemble the general lack of knowledge on China at the bureaucratic level. Business associations, due to their empirical practices were likely to possess less ignorance on the topic, while specialised think tank personnel can be expected to have a better understanding. The *wishful thinking* in terms of trust has been less relevant in comparison. In general, the reviewed factors at this level were found to not have the defining power to change the country's foreign policy making and decisions with regards to China. Hence, the relevance of economic interest, ignorance, and trust is of little relevance to this research to examine Germany as a strategic actor on the societal level.

8.4 Empirical Analysis

After the previous section provided an overview about the key factors in each of the three levels of analysis, the question remains whether there are synergies or existing linkages between them. The answer must be a resounding 'yes'. The Chancellor and the Chancellery are inherently connected, and ideally act in unison to lead, plan, and coordinate the German government. Both factors bring different traits to the table, and they can complement each other well to strategically impact German actorness towards China. Both Schröder and Merkel learned how to do this successfully.

Interestingly, it appears that Gabriel had copied this strategy by 'joining forces' with his ministry at the height of his influence, the BMWi. *Together*, they went to use their combined strengths to be able to lastingly influence the China debate at the time. If their timing had been off, this might have never happened. It may sound odd to think about a person and an institution as a 'duo' to accomplish impact. Yet, when thinking about simply combining factors at different levels with each other, it should be easier to wrap your head around.

As discussed previously, the role of the APA/BDI differs in comparison. They may tag along with factors from one of the first two levels to influence German actorness on China, but they cannot accomplish much on their own. This, in fact, appears to be a common trait of the societal sphere. Individuals, even when not in office (i.e. linked to the bureaucratic level), may generate some impact, perhaps

even through the societal level, but a factor from the societal level alone should have trouble accomplishing that. Therefore, for the purpose of this research to look at from the strategic perspective, factors at the societal level are less relevant for the discussion. However, this is not to discredit their frequent active participation within the relations.

To bring all of this together, the question left to be answered is: was there a strategy? Did Germany act as a strategic actor in its relationship with China? This previous chapters have shown that this was not the case. When looking at the three identified thematic lenses, the relevance of economic interest in affecting factors' ability to influence Germany's decision making occurs at all levels. This emphasis on economic interest is also deeply embedded in the ignorance and trust themes. Ignorance-wise, the over concentration on trade/investment by key factors at the individual level had cornered these individuals' visions to only one aspect of the relationship: a lack of knowledge or acknowledgement of the full scope of the relationship beyond trade. Depending on the specific individual, ignorance either occurred deliberately or involuntarily. At the bureaucratic level, there was generally a clear lack of knowledge on China among key institutional factors, not to mention their understanding of the complexity of the bilateral relationship and its implication to Germany.

To have a comprehensive strategy suitable for handling relationships with another actor vital to your own development and economic prosperity, a thorough knowledge of such actor is crucial. However, the ignorance observed among the key factors at the two levels of particular influence on constructing Germany's decision-making is alarming. Combining this with the discussion of trust, the *wishful thinking* by relying on trade to facilitate change in China, further limits these factors' abilities to widen their strategic scope. Unfortunately, this issue of *trust* is also found in all key factors possessing direct influence on the decision-making process. Therefore, limited knowledge in combination with trust-based optimism ultimately limited the factors in constructing strategic agency in the decision-making process. Germany's overall actorness as a decision maker in the context with China was therefore driven by tactics and not by strategy.

8.5 Future Research

This project leaves room for multiple potential research endeavours. First, as mentioned throughout the analysis, there is a clear lack of agency-oriented analysis to examine Germany's foreign policy. As imperfect as this research may be, it provides a foundation to extend the existing limited academic debate with its agency-focused approach to the bilateral relationship between Germany and China. It also lays out a foundation for future work sharing the same appreciation for agency.

Second, projects on evaluating Germany's foreign policy from a strategic perspective, particularly in the context of China, barely exist. In today's fast-changing geopolitical environment, the discussion of strategy is crucial for all involved actors. In order to better navigate the changing global landscape, a strategic analysis of existing foreign policy approaches is an essential first step. Given the scope of this thesis, there are multiple ways to elevate and expand the initial work presented.

Third, based on the limited scope of this thesis, and yet its overall broad assessment of the subject matter, further foreign policy research to develop a deeper understanding of the chosen themes to assess strategies, or the lack thereof, is sensible and offers the opportunity to better understand foreign policy actions in light of (f)actors as decision-makers.

Bibliography

- Aggestam, Lisbeth; Hyde-Price, Adrian (2020): Learning to Lead? Germany and the Leadership Paradox in EU Foreign Policy. In *German Politics* 29 (1), pp. 8–24.
- Aggestam, Lisbeth; Johansson, Markus (2017): The Leadership Paradox in EU Foreign Policy. In *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55 (6), pp. 1203–1220.
- Akhmad, Muqtafi; Chang, Shuang; Deguchi, Hiroshi (2020): Closed-mindedness and insulation in groupthink. Their effects and the devil's advocacy as a preventive measure. In *J Comput Soc Sc* 15 (2), p. 159. DOI: 10.1007/s42001-020-00083-8.
- Alden, Chris; Aran, Amnon (2016): *Foreign Policy Analysis. New Approaches*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Alexander, Robin (2017): *Die Getriebenen. Merkel und die Flüchtlingspolitik: Report aus dem Innern der Macht*. München: Siedler.
- Allen, Kristen (2016): Kuka sale a wake-up call. In *Handelsblatt*, 8/23/2016. Available online at <https://www.handelsblatt.com/english/opinion/industrial-policy-kuka-sale-a-wake-up-call/23540300.html>.
- Allison, Graham T. (1971): *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Allison, Graham T.; Halperin, Morton H. (1972): Bureaucratic Politics. A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications. In *World Politics* 24, Supplement: Theory and Policy in International Relations, pp. 40–79.
- Auswärtiges Amt (2002): *Ostasienkonzept der Bundesregierung*. Berlin.
- Auswärtiges Amt (2019): *Grundprinzipien deutscher Außenpolitik*. Auswärtiges Amt. Berlin. Available online at <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/themen/grundprinzipien/216474>, checked on 5/6/2020.
- Axelrod, Robert (Ed.) (1976): *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Balme, Richard; Bridges, Brian (2008): Introducing Asia, Europe and the Challenges of Globalization. In Richard Balme, Brian Bridges (Eds.): *Europe-Asia relations. Building multilateralisms*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 1–23.
- Baltensperger, Michael; Dadush, Uri (2019): The Belt and Road turns five. Bruegel (Policy Contribution, 1). Available online at http://bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/PC-01_2019_.pdf, checked on 3/22/2019.
- Barabasch, Antje; Huang, Sui; Lawson, Robert (2009): Planned policy transfer. The impact of the German model on Chinese vocational education. In *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 39 (1), pp. 5–20. DOI: 10.1080/03057920802265566.
- Barber, James (1979): Economic sanctions as a policy instrument. In *International Affairs* 55 (3), pp. 367–384.
- Bartsch, Bernhard (2016): *The End of Panda Politics*. Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh (Asia Policy Brief). Available online at https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/user_upload/Asia_Policy_Breif_DA_2016_02_engl.pdf.
- Barysch, Katinka (2005): *Embracing the dragon. The EU's partnership with China*. Centre for European Reform. London.

- Baum, Matthew A.; Potter, Philip B.K. (2008): The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy. Toward a Theoretical Synthesis. In *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (1), pp. 39–65.
- Baumann, Rainer (2007): Deutschland als Europas Zentralmacht. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 62–72.
- BBC (2017): Globescan: Global Poll. British Broadcasting Service. Available online at <https://globescan.com/sharp-drop-in-world-views-of-us-uk-global-poll>.
- BDI (2019): Grundsatzpapier China. Partner und systemischer Wettbewerber – Wie gehen wir mit Chinas staatlich gelenkter Volkswirtschaft um? Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. (BDI). Berlin.
- Bender, P. (2008): Deutsche Außenpolitik: Vernunft und Schwäche. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43.
- Berkofsky, Axel (2005): EU-China Relationship. Strategic Partnership or Partners of Convenience? In Marco Overhaus, Hanns W. Maull, Sebastian Harnisch (Eds.): *German-Chinese Relations: Trade Promotion Plus Something Else ?* Trier (German Foreign Policy in Dialogue, 6 (16)).
- Bernhagen, Patrick (2017): Lobbyismus in der Politikberatung. In Svenja Falk, Manuela Glaab, Andrea Römmele, Henrik Schober, Martin Thunert (Eds.): *Handbuch Politikberatung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Berschens, Ruth; Hoppe, Till; Sigmund, Thomas (2017): E.U. Toughens Line on Chinese Industrial Takeovers. In *Handelsblatt*, 3/27/2017.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009): Chinesische Unternehmen in Deutschland. Chancen und Herausforderungen. Gütersloh.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017): Bertelsmann Transformation Index. China Country Report. Available online at <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/chn/>, checked on 5/18/2017.
- Bertram, Christoph (1994): Alles ist im Fluß. "Die Zentralmacht Europas": Hans-Peter Schwarz über Deutschlands neue außenpolitische Rolle. In *Die ZEIT* 50/1994, 12/9/1994. Available online at <https://www.zeit.de/1994/50/alles-ist-im-fluss>, checked on 4/8/2020.
- Bertram, Christoph (2015): Die Rückgewinnung der Außenpolitik. Die Review 2014 des Außenministers ist ein Anstoß für das Auswärtige Amt wie für die Republik insgesamt. In *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 8 (S1), pp. 89–97.
- Bierling, Stephan (2014): *Vormacht Wider Willen. Deutsche Außenpolitik von der Wiedervereinigung bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich: C.H. Beck.
- BMWi (2016): Gabriel reist nach China und zur Asien-Pazifik-Konferenz (APK) nach Hongkong. Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (Pressemitteilung, 31 Oct 2016).
- Bösch, Stefan; Wehling, Peter (2004): *Wissenschaft zwischen Folgenverantwortung und Nichtwissen. Aktuelle Perspektiven der Wissenschaftsforschung*.
- Brandt, Loren; Rawski, Thomas G. (2008): *China's Great Economic Transformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bredow, Wilfried von (2008): *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eine Einführung*. 2., aktualisierte Auflage. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Breslin, Shaun (2009): Understanding China's regional rise: interpretations, identities and implications. In *International Affairs* 85 (4), pp. 817–835.

- Breuning, Marijke (2007): *Foreign Policy Analysis. A Comparative Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Brewer, Paul R.; Gross, Kimberly; Vercellotti, Timothy (2018): *Trust in International Actors*. In Eric M. Uslaner (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 657–686.
- Brown, Michael E.; Lynn-Jones, Sean M.; Miller, Steven E. (1996): *Debating the Democratic Peace*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Brummer, Klaus; Hudson, Valerie M. (Eds.) (2015): *Foreign Policy Analysis Beyond North America*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Brummer, Klaus; Oppermann, Kai (2019): *Außenpolitikanalyse*. 2nd ed. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- Bryman, Alan (2016): *Social research methods*. 5th ed. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bührer, Werner (2007): *Wirtschaftsverbände*. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 290–296.
- Bulmer, Simon (1997): *Shaping the Rules? The Constitutive Politics of the European Union and German Power*. In Peter J. Katzenstein (Ed.): *Tamed power. Germany in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, pp. 49–79.
- Bulmer, Simon; Maurer, Andreas; Paterson, William (2010): *The European policy-making machinery in the Berlin republic. Hindrance or handmaiden?* In *German Politics* 10 (1), pp. 177–206. DOI: 10.1080/09644000412331307464.
- Bulmer, Simon; Paterson, William E. (2010): *Germany and the European Union. From ‘tamed power’ to normalized power?* In *International Affairs* 86 (5), pp. 1051–1073.
- Bulmer, Simon; Paterson, William E. (2018): *Germany and the European Union. Europe's Reluctant Hegemon?* London: Red Globe Press (The European Union Series).
- Bundesregierung (1993): *Asien-Konzept der Bundesregierung*. Deutscher Bundestag. Berlin (Drucksache, 12/6151).
- Bundesregierung (2001): *Asien-Reise des Bundeskanzlers vom 27. Oktober bis 2. November 2001*. Rede von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder vor den Studenten der Beida-Universität am 1. November 2001 in Peking. 02 Nov 2001. Available online at https://web.archive.org/web/20170609185545/https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Bulletin/2001_2007/2001/78-4_Schr%C3%B6der.html, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Bundesregierung (2002): *Rede von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder zur Verleihung der Ehrendoktorwürde der Tongji-Universität am 30. Dezember 2002 in Shanghai*. 30 Dec 2002, 2002. Available online at https://web.archive.org/web/20170729043720/https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Bulletin/2001_2007/2002/106-1_Schr%C3%B6der.html, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Bundesregierung (2014): *Gemeinsame Erklärung zum Besuch von Staatspräsident Xi: Schaffung einer umfassenden strategischen Partnerschaft zwischen Deutschland und China*. 28 Mar 2014. Bundesregierung. Berlin (Pressemitteilung, 102).
- Bundeswehr: *Stärke: Militärisches Personal der Bundeswehr*. Available online at <http://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde!/ut/p/c4/DcmxDYAwDATAWVgg7unYAUGC8kSWI4OMIesTXXm002D8SeWQy7jRStshc-4p94L0hENCnXEGUvXXSuMKG8FwBd26TD9uIZiT/>, checked on 3/20/2019.
- Burnham, Peter (2008): *Research methods in politics*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan (Political analysis).

- Byman, D. L.; Pollack, K. M. (2001): Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In. In *International Security* 25 (4), pp. 107–146.
- Cabestan, Jean-Pierre (2010): China's new diplomacy. Old wine in a new bottle? In Shaun Breslin (Ed.): *Handbook of China's International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Cambridge Dictionary (2021): Ignorance. Available online at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ignorance>, checked on 1/10/2021.
- Casarini, Nicola (2006): *The Evolution of the EU-China Relationship. From Constructive Engagement to Strategic Partnership*. European Union Institute for Security Studies. Paris (Occasional Paper, 64).
- Casarini, Nicola (2007): The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue. In *The International Spectator* 42 (3), pp. 371–389. DOI: 10.1080/03932720701567588.
- Casarini, Nicola (2009): *Remaking Global Order – The Evolution of Europe-China Relations and its Implications for East Asia and the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CDU, CSU & FDP (2009): *Der Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP (17. Legislaturperiode). Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt*.
- CDU, CSU & SPD (2005): *Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD (16. Legislaturperiode). Gemeinsam für Deutschland – Mit Mut und Menschlichkeit*.
- CDU, CSU & SPD (2013): *Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD (18. Legislaturperiode). Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten*.
- CDU, CSU & SPD (2018): *Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD (19. Legislaturperiode). Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa; Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland; Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land*.
- CDU/CSU (2007): *Asien als strategische Herausforderung und Chance für Deutschland und Europa*. Berlin.
- Chazan, Guy (2016): German angst over Chinese M&A. In *Financial Times*, 8/9/2016.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. (1998): The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory (Review Article). In *World Politics* 50 (2), pp. 324–328.
- Chen, Zhimin; Armstrong, John (2010): China's relations with Europe. Towards a 'normal' relationship? In Shaun Breslin (Ed.): *Handbook of China's International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- China Daily (2007): Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together. In *China Daily*, 8/25/2007, p. 16. Available online at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2007-08/27/content_6057954.htm, checked on 3/23/2019.
- China Daily (2010): China, Germany to forward strategic partnership: communique. In *China Daily*, 7/16/2010. Available online at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-07/16/content_10118456.htm, checked on 2/5/2018.
- Chinesische Botschaft (2004): *Partnerschaft in globaler Verantwortung. Gemeinsame deutsch-chinesische Erklärung anlässlich des Besuchs des Ministerpräsidenten der Volksrepublik China, Wen Jiabao, vom 02. - 05. Mai 2004*. Berlin.
- Cho, Joanne Miyang; Crowe, David M. (2014a): Brief Overview of German-Chinese Relations since the Eighteenth Century. In Joanne Miyang Cho, David M. Crowe (Eds.): *Germany and China. Transnational encounters since the eighteenth century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 1–6.
- Cho, Joanne Miyang; Crowe, David M. (Eds.) (2014b): *Germany and China. Transnational encounters since the eighteenth century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Clarke, Michael; White, Brian (1989): *Understanding Foreign Policy. The Foreign Policy Systems Approach*. Cheltenham: Edgard Elgar.
- Council of the European Union (2012): *Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia*. Brussels. Available online at http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/asia/docs/guidelines_eu_foreign_sec_pol_east_asia_en.pdf, checked on 3/22/2019.
- Crawford, Alan; Czuczka, Tony (2013): *Angela Merkel. A Chancellorship Forged in Crisis*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Crawford, Beverly (2007): *Power and German foreign policy. Embedded hegemony in Europe*. Basingstoke England, New York: Palgrave MacMillan (New perspectives in German studies).
- Czempiel, E.-O. (2000): Determinanten zukünftiger deutscher Außenpolitik. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* B24.
- D'Amico, Francine (2010): Women National Leaders. In Francine D'Amico (Ed.): *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*: Oxford University Press.
- Dagger, S.; Greiner, C.; Leinert, K.; Meliß, N.; Menzel, A. (Eds.) (2004): *Politikberatung in Deutschland. Praxis und Perspektiven*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Dalton, Russell J. (2014): Interpreting Partisan Dealignment in Germany. In *German Politics* 23 (1-2), pp. 134–144.
- Dams, Jan (2017): So stoppt Berlin den Kauf deutscher Hightech-Firmen. In *WELT*, 7/12/2017.
- Davidson, William D.; Montville, Joseph V. (1981): Foreign Policy According to Freud. In *Foreign Policy* (45), p. 145.
- Deggerich, Markus (2001): Schröder spielt die chinesische Karte. In *Spiegel Online*, 10/30/2001. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/kanzlerreise-schroeder-spielt-die-chinesische-karte-a-165420.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Delcker, Janosch (2016): Sigmar Gabriel's mission to halt China's investment spree. In *Politico*, 11/1/2016.
- Dempsey, Judy (2007): Despite censure from Beijing, Merkel meets with Dalai Lama in Berlin. In *New York Times*, 9/23/2007. Available online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/23/world/europe/23iht-berlin.4.7609899.html>, checked on 12/5/2018.
- Der SPIEGEL (1969): Vom Tisch, vom Tisch. In *Der SPIEGEL* 39, 9/8/1969. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-45522255.html>, checked on 3/26/2019.
- Der SPIEGEL (2005): Schröder spielt weiter Tennis mit Pierer. In *Der SPIEGEL*, 8/31/2005. Available online at <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/merkel-berater-schroeder-spielt-weiter-tennis-mit-pierer-a-372282.html>.
- Destatis (2018): GENESIS Statistical Database. Federal Statistical Office of Germany. Available online at <http://www.destatis.de/genesis>.
- Deutsche Bundesbank (2018a): Die Neuausrichtung der chinesischen Wirtschaft und ihre internationalen Folgen. Frankfurt am Main (Monatsbericht, 41).
- Deutsche Bundesbank (2018b): Statistics Database. Available online at <https://www.bundesbank.de/Navigation/EN/Statistics/statistics.html>.
- Deutsche Welle (2005): Hu meets Merkel As Germany Reaffirms EU Arms Ban. In *Deutsche Welle*, 11/11/2005. Available online at <http://www.dw.com/en/hu-meets-merkel-as-germany-reaffirms-eu-arms-ban/a-1773563-1>, checked on 5/18/2017.

- Deutsche Welle (2014): Economy on the agenda for Angela Merkel on China visit. In *Deutsche Welle*, 7/5/2014. Available online at <https://p.dw.com/p/1CWDs>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Deutsche Welle (2015): New business deals signed as Merkel wraps up China trip. In *Deutsche Welle*, 10/30/2015. Available online at <https://www.dw.com/en/new-business-deals-signed-as-merkel-wraps-up-china-trip/a-18817481>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Deutscher Bundestag (1990): Festhalten an den Beschlüssen des Deutschen Bundestages vom 15. und 23. Juni 1989 zu China. Deutscher Bundestag. Bonn (11/8353). Available online at <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/11/083/1108353.pdf>, checked on 2/22/2019.
- Deutscher Bundestag (2005): Unterrichtung durch den Präsidenten des Deutschen Bundestages. Bericht über die internationalen Aktivitäten und Verpflichtungen des Deutschen Bundestages. Deutscher Bundestag. Berlin (Drucksache, 15/5056).
- Deutscher Bundestag (2008): Unterrichtung durch den Präsidenten des Deutschen Bundestages. Bericht über die internationalen Aktivitäten und Verpflichtungen des Deutschen Bundestages. Deutscher Bundestag. Berlin (Drucksache, 16/7841).
- Deutscher Bundestag (2017a): German Basic Law. Berlin.
- Deutscher Bundestag (2017b): Unterrichtung durch den Präsidenten des Deutschen Bundestages. Bericht über die internationalen Aktivitäten und Verpflichtungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 1. Oktober 2015 bis 30. September 2017. Berlin (Drucksache, 18/13690).
- Deutscher Bundestag (2019a): Deutscher Bundestag – Webarchiv. Available online at <https://webarchiv.bundestag.de>.
- Deutscher Bundestag (2019b): Research and Documentation Services. Available online at https://www.bundestag.de/en/documents/research_and_documentation, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Dexter, Lewis Anthony (2006): *Elite and specialized interviewing*. 1. publ. by the ECPR press. Colchester: ECPR Press (ECPR classics).
- DG RELEX (2017): EU-China Relations: Chronology. European Commission – DG External Relations. Available online at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/index_en.htm, checked on 11/30/2017.
- DG Trade (2019a): Countries and Regions: China. European Commission. Available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/china/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- DG Trade (2019b): Negotiations and Agreements. European Commission. Available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/negotiations-and-agreements/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Diamond, Louise; McDonald, John (1996): *Multi-Track Diplomacy. A Systems Approach to Peace*. 3rd ed. (Kumarian Press).
- Doering, Kai (2015): Schröder-Biografie: Ein Kanzler-Leben auf 1000 Seiten. In *vorwärts*, 9/22/2015. Available online at <https://www.vorwaerts.de/artikel/schroeder-biografie-kanzler-leben-1000-seiten>.
- Dombey, Daniel (2005): EU puts Chinese arms embargo on the back burner. In *Financial Times*, 6/7/2005. Available online at <https://www.ft.com/content/aaf99fdc-d795-11d9-9f43-00000e2511c8>, checked on 1/31/2018.
- Dominguez, Gabriel (2013): EU-China trade 'too big to fail'. In *Deutsche Welle*, 8/21/2013. Available online at <http://www.dw.com/en/eu-china-trade-too-big-to-fail/a-17035965>, checked on 1/17/2018.

- Doyle, Michael (2012a): Liberalism and foreign policy. In Steve A. Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Timothy Dunne (Eds.): *Foreign Policy. Theories, Actors, Cases*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 54–78.
- Doyle, Michael W. (2012b): *Liberal peace. Selected essays*. London: Routledge.
- Drews, Markus (2017): Handlungsanleitung oder leeres Versprechen? Menschenrechte in der jüngeren deutschen Außenpolitik. In Ulrich Roos (Ed.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Arenen, Diskurse und grundlegende Handlungsregeln*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Drosdowski, Günther (1992): Duden "Redewendungen und sprichwörtliche Redensarten". Wörterbuch der deutschen Idiomatik. Mannheim: Dudenverl. (Der Duden in zwölf Bänden, 11).
- Duchene, F. (1973): The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence. In M. Kohnstamm, W. Hager (Eds.): *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community*: Macmillan, pp. 1–21.
- Eberlei, Walter; Weller, Christoph (2001): *Deutsche Ministerien als Akteure von Global Governance. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der auswärtigen Beziehungen der Bundesministerien*. Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden, Gerhard-Mercator-Universität Duisburg. Duisburg (INEF Report, 51).
- Edmonds, Richard Louis (2002): *China and Europe since 1978. A European perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The China quarterly special issues, 2).
- Eilfort, Michael (2017): Fraktionen und Ausschüsse des Deutschen Bundestages. In Svenja Falk, Manuela Glaab, Andrea Römmele, Henrik Schober, Martin Thunert (Eds.): *Handbuch Politikberatung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica (2019): *Foreign Policy*. Available online at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-policy>, checked on 3/19/2019.
- Erber, Georg (2012): German-Chinese Economic Relations – Opportunities and Risks. In *DIW Economic Bulletin* 2 (3).
- European Commission (2016): *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Elements for a New Strategy on China*. European Commission. Brussels.
- European Council (1989): *Council of Ministers Declaration on China (26-27 June 1989)*. Madrid.
- Eurostat (2018): *Statistics Database*. Statistical Office of the European Union. Available online at <http://eurostat.ec.europa.eu/newxtweb/>, checked on Aug 2018.
- Falk, Svenja; Glaab, Manuela; Römmele, Andrea; Schober, Henrik; Thunert, Martin (Eds.) (2017): *Handbuch Politikberatung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Faust, J.; Messner, D. (2008): "Ankerländer" als außenpolitische Herausforderung. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 43.
- FAZ (2007): Merkel: "Ich entscheide selbst, wen ich empfangen und wo". In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11/21/2007.
- Festinger, Leon (1957): *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fischer, Thomas (2007): Bundesländer und Bundesrat. In Siegmar Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 192–202.
- Flockhart, Trine (2012): Constructivism and foreign policy. In Steve A. Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Timothy Dunne (Eds.): *Foreign Policy. Theories, Actors, Cases*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Fox, John; Godement, François (2009): A Power Audit of EU-China Relations. European Council on Foreign Relations. London.
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2003): Chinas Präsident empfängt „alten Freund“ Schröder, 12/1/2003. Available online at <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/staatsbesuch-chinas-praesident-empfaengt-alten-freund-schroeder-1129059.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Frankfurter Buchmesse (2019): Our Profile. Available online at <https://www.buchmesse.de/en/about-us>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Fröhlich, S. (2008): Deutsche Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik im Rahmen der EU. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 43.
- Fulda, Andreas (2009): Förderung partizipativer Entwicklung in der VR China. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen politischer Einflussnahme durch Akteure der deutsch-chinesischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (2003 - 2006). 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwiss.
- Gambetta, Diego (Ed.) (1988): Trust. Making and breaking cooperative relations. Oxford, Cambridge, Mass., USA: B. Blackwell.
- Gareis, Sven Bernhard (2009): Grundlagen, Akteure, Strukturen und Prozesse. In *Informationen zur politischen Bildung (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 1 (304).
- Garver, John W. (2016): China's Quest. The history of the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gaskarth, Jamie; Oppermann, Kai (2021): Clashing Traditions. German Foreign Policy in a New Era. In *International Studies Perspectives* 22 (1), pp. 84–105. DOI: 10.1093/isp/ekz017.
- Gehrig, Sebastian (2014): Friend or Foe? The People's Republic of China in west German Cold War Politics. In Joanne Miyang Cho, David M. Crowe (Eds.): *Germany and China. Transnational encounters since the eighteenth century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 233–248.
- Generalkonsulat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Shanghai (2012): Deutsches Generalkonsulat Shanghai. Blick auf 30 Jahre. Shanghai. Available online at <https://china.diplo.de/blob/1156124/9f306a31ba0204523c55ca378c1602d2/40-30-jahre-broschuere-data.pdf>.
- George, Alexander (1972): The case for multiple advocacy in making foreign policy. In *American Political Science Review* 66 (3), pp. 190–222.
- George, Alexander L. (1994): The Two Cultures of Academia and Policy-Making. Bridging the Gap. In *Political Psychology* 15 (1), p. 143.
- Geyer, Christian (2009): Wenn der Menschenrechtsreflex einsetzt. In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9/17/2009. Available online at <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buchmesse-2009/china/china-und-die-buchmesse-wenn-der-menschenrechtsreflex-einsetzt-1855496.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Giesen, Christoph; Strittmatter, Kai (2017): Deutsche Stiftungen in China sind "technisch illegal". In *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3/13/2017. Available online at <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/2.220/gesetze-in-china-deutsche-stiftungen-in-china-sind-technisch-illegal-1.3416071>, checked on 12/8/2018.
- Godement, François; Vasselier, Abigael (2017): China at the Gates. A New Power Audit of EU-China Relations. European Council on Foreign Relations. Brussels.
- Gottwald, Jörn-Carsten (2005): Germany's China- Policy: Trade Promotion, Human Rights and European Disunity. In Marco Overhaus, Hanns W. Maull, Sebastian Harnisch (Eds.):

- German-Chinese Relations: Trade Promotion Plus Something Else ? Trier (German Foreign Policy in Dialogue, 6 (16)), pp. 7–13.
- Gottwald, Jörn-Carsten (2006): Business as Usual. Red-Green Politics toward Pacific Asia. In Hanns Maull (Ed.): Germany's uncertain power. Foreign policy of the Berlin Republic (New perspectives in German studies), pp. 247–259.
- Gottwald, Jörn-Carsten (2010): Europe and China. Convergence, Politicization and Assertiveness. In *East Asia* 27 (1), pp. 79–97.
- Grant, Charles (2005): Germany's foreign policy: What lessons can be learned from the Schröder years? In *Centre for European Reform Insights*.
- Grant, Wyn (2000): Pressure groups and British politics. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Grieger, Gisela (2018): China, the 16+1 format and the EU. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Brussels (PE 625.173).
- Grimmett, Richard; Papademetriou, Theresa (2005): European Union's Arms Control Regime and Arms Exports to China: Background and Legal Analysis. CRS Report for Congress. Washington DC.
- Gross, Matthias; McGoey, Linsey (Eds.) (2015): Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies. London: Routledge (Routledge international handbooks).
- Haas, Jens; Vogt, Katja Maria (2015): Ignorance and investigation. In Matthias Gross, Linsey McGoey (Eds.): Routledge international handbook of ignorance studies. London: Routledge (Routledge international handbooks), pp. 17–25.
- Hacke, Christian (2006): Mehr Bismarck, weniger Habermas. Ein neuer Realismus in der deutschen Außenpolitik? In *Internationale Politik* 61 (6), pp. 68–76.
- Hacke, Christian (2008): Germany's Foreign Policy under Angela Merkel. AICGS.
- Haftendorn, Helga (Ed.) (1978): Verwaltete Außenpolitik. Sicherheits- und entspannungspolitische Entscheidungsprozesse in Bonn. Köln: Verl. Wiss. und Politik (Bibliothek Wissenschaft und Politik, 20).
- Hall, Peter A.; Soskice, David W. (2001): Varieties of Capitalism. The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Halperin, Morton H. (1971): Why Bureaucrats Play Games. In *Foreign Policy* 2 (1), pp. 70–90.
- Handelsblatt (2016): Regierung gibt grünes Licht für die Übernahme. In *Handelsblatt*, 8/17/2016.
- Handelsblatt (2017): Gabriel warnt Europäer vor Spaltung durch China. In *Handelsblatt*, 8/30/2017.
- Harlen, Christine Margerum (2002): The Leadership Styles of the German Chancellors from Schmidt to Schröder. In *Politics & Policy* 30 (2), pp. 347–370.
- Harnisch, Sebastian (2003): Theoriegeleitete Außenpolitikforschung in einer Ära des Wandels. In Gunther Hellmann (Ed.): Die neuen internationalen Beziehungen. Forschungsstand und Perspektiven in Deutschland. 1. Aufl. Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verl.-Ges (Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert, 10), pp. 313–360.
- Harnischfeger, Horst (2007): Auswärtige Kulturpolitik. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 713–726.
- Hauschild, Helmut; Jungbluth, Cora; Gerlach, Sally; Gramke, Kai; Limbers, Jan; Weiß, Johann (2015): China – Partner und Konkurrent. Eine Analyse der deutsch-chinesischen Handelsbeziehungen. Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh.

- Heberer, Thomas (2008): Die Verteufelung Chinas. Die Haltung westlicher Medien vor Olympia zeigt: Veränderungen Chinas im Zuge der Reformpolitik seit den 70er Jahren sind in Vergessenheit geraten. 14 Thesen. In *taz*, 4/15/2008. Available online at <http://www.taz.de/!5183550/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Heberer, Thomas; Senz, Anja (2011): Die deutsche Chinapolitik. In Thomas Jäger, Alexander Hoese, Kai Oppermann (Eds.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*. 2., aktualisierte und erw. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften / Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, pp. 673–692.
- Heiduk, Felix (2014): Conflicting Images? Germany and the Rise of China. In *German Politics* 23 (1-2), pp. 118–133. DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2014.916693.
- Heiduk, Felix (2015): What is in a name? Germany's Strategic Partnerships with Asia's Rising Powers. In *Asia Europe Journal* 13 (2), pp. 131–146.
- Heilmann, Sebastian (2007): Volksrepublik China. In Siegmar Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 580–590.
- Hellmann, Gunther (2002a): Creative Intelligence. Pragmatism as a Theory of Thought and Action (Paper). "Millenium" Special Issue Conference. London.
- Hellmann, Gunther (2002b): Der "deutsche Weg". Eine außenpolitische Gratwanderung. In *Internationale Politik* 9.
- Hellmann, Gunther (2003): Agenda 2020 – Crisis and future of German foreign policy. In *Internationale Politik* 58, pp. 39–50.
- Hellmann, Gunther (2009): Fatal attraction? German Foreign Policy and IR/Foreign Policy Theory. In *J Int Relat Dev* 12 (3), pp. 257–292.
- Hellmann, Gunther; Wagner, Wolfgang; Baumann, Rainer (2014): *Deutsche Außenpolitik – Eine Einführung*. 2. Auflage. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Hellmann, Gunther; Wolf, Reinhard; Schmidt, Siegmar (2007): Deutsche Außenpolitik in historischer und systematischer Perspektive. In Siegmar Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 15–48.
- Hermann, Margaret G.; Kegley, Charles W. (1995): Rethinking Democracy and International Peace. Perspectives from Political Psychology. In *International Studies Quarterly* 39 (4), p. 511.
- Herrmann, Richard; Fischerkeller, Michael (1995): Beyond the Enemy Image Spiral Model. Cognitive-Strategic Research after the Cold War. In *International Organization* 49 (3).
- Hill, Christopher (2003): *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*. Houndmills, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hilz, W. (2009): Kontinuität und Wandel deutscher Außenpolitik nach 1990. In *Informationen zur politischen Bildung (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 304.
- Hockenos, P. (2007): Is Germany still a Civilian Power? In *IP Journal (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik)* (102-106).
- Hogrefe, Jürgen; Knaup, Horand; Leinemann, Jürgen; Lersch, Paul; Palmer, Hartmut; Reiermann, Christian et al. (1999): Freie Hand für den Kanzler. In *Der SPIEGEL*, 3/14/1999. Available online at <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/freie-hand-fuer-den-kanzler-a-7c008c6b-0002-0001-0000-000010208952>.

- Holsti, Ole (1970): The "Operational Code" Approach to the Study of Political Leaders: John Foster Dulles' Philosophical and Instrumental Beliefs. In *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 3 (1), pp. 123–157.
- Horn, Gustav; Sturn, Simon; van Treeck, Till (2010): Die Debatte um die deutsche Exportorientierung. In *Wirtschaftsdienst* 90 (1), pp. 22–28. DOI: 10.1007/s10273-010-1018-4.
- Houghton, David Patrick (2007): Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Toward a Constructivist Approach. In *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, pp. 24–45.
- House of Lords (2010): Stars and Dragons: The EU and China – Volume I: Report. 7th Report of Session 2009-10. London.
- Hsu, Sarah (2016): China's Stock Market Crash: One Year Later. In *Forbes*, 7/13/2016. Available online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahsu/2016/07/13/chinas-stock-market-crash-one-year-later/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Huawei (2012): Deutschland und China – Wahrnehmung und Realität – Die Huawei-Studie 2012. Huawei Technologies Deutschland GmbH. Berlin. Available online at <http://www.huawei-studie.de/downloads/Huawei-Studie-2012.pdf>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Huawei (2014): Germany and China – Perception and Reality – The Huawei Study 2014. Huawei Technologies Deutschland GmbH. Berlin. Available online at <http://www.huawei-studie.de/downloads/Huawei-Studie-2014-EN.pdf>.
- Huawei (2016a): Deutschland und China – Wahrnehmung und Realität – Die Huawei-Studie 2016. Huawei Technologies Deutschland GmbH. Berlin. Available online at <http://www.huawei-studie.de/downloads/Huawei-Studie-2016-DE.pdf>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Huawei (2016b): Die Huawei-Studie 2016 – Annex. Huawei Technologies Deutschland GmbH. Berlin. Available online at <http://www.huawei-studie.de/>.
- Hudson, Valerie M. (2012): The history and evolution of foreign policy analysis. In Steve A. Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Timothy Dunne (Eds.): *Foreign Policy. Theories, Actors, Cases*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 13–34.
- Hudson, Valerie M.; Day, Benjamin S. (2020): *Foreign Policy Analysis. Classic and Contemporary Theory*. Third edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Ismayr, Wolfgang (2007): Bundestag. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 175–191.
- Ismayr, Wolfgang (2012): *Der Deutsche Bundestag*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Jäger, Thomas; Hoese, Alexander; Oppermann, Kai (Eds.) (2011): *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*. 2., aktualisierte und erw. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften / Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden.
- Janes, Jackson (2015): Merkel 3.0. German Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of the 2013 Bundestag Election. In Eric Langenbacher (Ed.): *The Merkel Republic. An appraisal*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 192–202.
- Janis, Irving (1982): *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Jeffery, Charlie; Paterson, William (2003): Germany and European Integration. A shifting of tectonic plates. In *West European Politics* 26 (4), pp. 59–75.

- Jervis, Robert (2013): Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know? In *International Security* 22 (2), pp. 153–179.
- Jones, Peter (2015): *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Jungbluth, Cora (2018): Is China Systematically Buying Up Key Technologies? Chinese M&A transactions in Germany in the context of "Made in China 2025". Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh. Available online at https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/MT_Is_China_Systematically_Buying_Up_Key_Technologies.pdf.
- Kaarbo, Juliet (2015): A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on the Domestic Politics Turn in IR Theory. In *International Studies Review* 17 (2), pp. 189–216.
- Kaarbo, Juliet; Lantis, Jeffrey S.; Beasley, Ryan K. (2012): The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. In Ryan K. Beasley, Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, Michael T. Snarr (Eds.): *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior*. 2nd ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Kamp, Karl-Heinz (2019): *Mythen der Zwei-Prozent-Debatte*. Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik (Arbeitspapier Sicherheitspolitik).
- Karnitschnig, Matthew (2020): How Germany opened the door to China – and threw away the key. *Politico*. Available online at <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-china-economy-business-technology-industry-trade-security/>.
- Karnitschnig, Matthew; Hanke Vela, Jakob (2020): Germany's economy minister defends Berlin's muted response to China's crackdown in Hong Kong. In *Politico*, 7/15/2020. Available online at <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/15/germany-hong-kong-china-365499>.
- Katzenstein, Peter (1991): Die Fesselung der deutschen Macht im internationalen System. In Bernhard Blanke, Elmar Altvater (Eds.): *Die alte Bundesrepublik. Kontinuität und Wandel*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. (Ed.) (1997): *Tamed power. Germany in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Kinzelbach, Katrin (2015): *The EU's Human Rights Dialogue with China: Quiet Diplomacy and Its Limits*. London: Routledge.
- Kirste, Knut; Maull, Hanns W. (1996): Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie. In *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 3 (2), pp. 283–312.
- Klormann, Sybille; Udelhoven, Britta (2008): Der Imagewandel von Helmut Kohl, Gerhard Schröder und Angela Merkel. In *CAP Working Paper*.
- Knoll, Thomas (2010): Das Bundeskanzleramt – Funktionen und Organisation. In Klemens H. Schrenk, Markus Soldner (Eds.): *Analyse demokratischer Regierungssysteme*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 201–220.
- Koch, Moritz; Riecke, Torsten (2019): Joschka Fischer: "Wir Europäer werden gehäckselt, wenn wir nicht zusammenstehen". In *Handelsblatt*, 3/28/2019. Available online at <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/ex-aussenminister-im-interview-joschka-fischer-wir-europaeer-werden-gehaeckselt-wenn-wir-nicht-zusammenstehen/24149546.html>, checked on 3/29/2019.
- Kohler-Koch, Beate (1991): Deutsche Einigung im Spannungsfeld internationaler Umbrüche. In *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 32 (4), pp. 605–620.
- Körper Stiftung (2017): *Einmischen oder zurückhalten? Eine repräsentative Umfrage im Auftrag der Körper-Stiftung zur Sicht der Deutschen auf die Außenpolitik – Tabellenband*.

- Korte, Karl-Rudolf (2001): Regieren. In Karl-Rudolf Korte, Werner Weidenfeld (Eds.): Deutschland-TrendBuch. Fakten und Orientierungen. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 515–546.
- Korte, Karl-Rudolf (2007): Bundeskanzleramt. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 203–209.
- Korte, Karl-Rudolf (2010): Machtmakler im Bundeskanzleramt. In Martin Florack, Timo Grunden (Eds.): Regierungszentralen. Organisation, Steuerung und Politikformulierung zwischen Formalität und Informalität. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 123–142.
- Krasner, Stephen D. (2019): Power, Polarity, and the Challenge of Disintegration. In Helga Haftendorn, Christian Tuschhoff (Eds.): America and Europe in an Era of Change: Routledge, pp. 21–42.
- Krause, Joachim; Wilker, Lothar (1978): Bürokratie und Außenpolitik. In Helga Haftendorn (Ed.): Verwaltete Außenpolitik. Sicherheits- und entspannungspolitische Entscheidungsprozesse in Bonn. Köln: Verl. Wiss. und Politik (Bibliothek Wissenschaft und Politik, 20), pp. 39–52.
- Kronenberg, Volker (2009): Grundzüge deutscher Außenpolitik 1949-1990. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn (Informationen zur politischen Bildung, 304).
- Kundnani, Hans (2016): Germany's New Skepticism About China. German Marshall Fund. Available online at <http://www.gmfus.org/blog/2016/10/24>, checked on 5/10/2017.
- Kundnani, Hans; Parello-Plesner, Jonas (2012): China and Germany: Why the Emerging Relationship Matters for Europe. European Council on Foreign Relations. Brussels (55).
- Langenbacher, Eric (2015): Merkel's Nachsommermärchen? In Eric Langenbacher (Ed.): The Merkel Republic. An appraisal. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 1–25.
- Lee, Felix; Kreutzfeldt, Malte (2014): Treffen mit Dissidenten unerwünscht. In *taz*, 4/23/2014. Available online at <http://www.taz.de/!5043714/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Lehne, Stefan (2017): Is there Hope for EU Foreign Policy? Carnegie Europe. Brussels.
- Lehning, H. (2004): Die Verbände als Politikberater und Interessenvertreter. In S. Dagger, C. Greiner, K. Leinert, N. Meliß, A. Menzel (Eds.): Politikberatung in Deutschland. Praxis und Perspektiven. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Leitz, Christian (2004): Nazi foreign policy, 1933-1941. The road to global war. London: Routledge (The Third Reich).
- Li, Cui (2007): China's Growing External Dependence. In *Finance and Development, IMF* 44 (3).
- Link, Werner (2000): Deutschland im multipolaren Gleichgewicht der großen Mächte und Regionen. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* B24.
- Liu, Xiaozhuo; Guo, Rong (2018): Chinese cities where Merkel left footprints and forged friendships. In *China Daily*, 5/23/2018. Available online at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201805/23/WS5b04bfdba3103f6866eea004_10.html, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Lorenz, Dagmar (2008): China in den deutschen Medien. Goethe Institut. Available online at <https://www.goethe.de/ins/cn/de/kul/mag/20727463.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Luo, Xun (2015): Lernstile im interkulturellen Kontext. Eine empirische Untersuchung am Beispiel von Deutschland und China. Wiesbaden: Springer VS (Research).

- Maass, Harald (2006): Die Handelsreisende in China. In *Der Tagesspiegel*, 5/25/2006. Available online at <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/die-handelsreisende-in-china/712966.html>.
- Mai, Manfred (2010): Strukturelle Konflikte in Regierungszentralen. In Martin Florack, Timo Grunden (Eds.): *Regierungszentralen. Organisation, Steuerung und Politikformulierung zwischen Formalität und Informalität*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 107–122.
- Malzahn, Christian (2005): Schroeder's China Policy: Getting Cozy with the Dragon. In *Spiegel Online*, 4/1/2005.
- Manager Magazin (2005): Der mit dem Kanzler fliegt. In *Manager Magazin*, 8/30/2005. Available online at <https://www.manager-magazin.de/unternehmen/artikel/a-372126.html>.
- Masala, Carlo (2008): Neuorientierung deutscher Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 1 (43).
- Mauß, Hanns (Ed.) (2006a): Germany's uncertain power. Foreign policy of the Berlin Republic (New perspectives in German studies).
- Mauß, Hanns (2006b): Introduction. In Hanns Mauß (Ed.): Germany's uncertain power. Foreign policy of the Berlin Republic (New perspectives in German studies), pp. 1–14.
- Mauß, Hanns (2013): "Zivilmacht": Karriere eines Begriffs. Abschiedsvorlesung am 3. Mai 2013. Universität Trier.
- Mauß, Hanns W. (1990): Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers. In *Foreign Affairs* 69 (5), pp. 91–106.
- Mauß, Hanns W. (2007): Deutschland als Zivilmacht. In Siegmund Schmidt, Günther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 73–84.
- Mauß, Hanns W. (2015): Deutsche Außenpolitik – Verantwortung und Macht. In *Z Außen Sicherheitspolit* 8 (S1), pp. 213–237.
- Mauß, Hanns Walter (2004): 'Normalisierung' oder 'Auszehrung'? Deutsche Außenpolitik im Wandel. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 1 (B11), pp. 17–23.
- Mearsheimer, John J. (1990): Back to the Future. Instability in Europe after the Cold War. In *International Security* 15 (1), p. 5.
- Mearsheimer, John J. (2001): *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton (The Norton series in world politics).
- Mearsheimer, John J. (2009): Reckless States and Realism. In *International Relations* 23 (2), pp. 241–256.
- Mehta, Manik (2006): Kampf den Kopisten. In *Der SPIEGEL*, 4/17/2006. Available online at <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/technologie-klau-in-china-kampf-den-kopisten-a-410685.html>.
- Meißner, Werner; Feege, Anja (Eds.) (1995): *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990: Eine Quellensammlung*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- MERICS (2019): MERICS – About Us. Mercator Institute for China Studies. Available online at <https://www.merics.org/en/about-us>, checked on 3/24/2019.
- Mertes, Michael (2000): Führen, koordinieren, Strippen ziehen. Das Kanzleramt als Kanzlers Amt. In Karl-Rudolf Korte, Gerhard Hirscher (Eds.): *Darstellungspolitik oder Entscheidungspolitik*. Publikation von Korte und Hirscher. Über den Wandel von

- Politikstilen in westlichen Demokratien. München: Forschungsgruppe Deutschland, pp. 62–84.
- Messner, Dirk (2000): Ist Außenpolitik noch Außenpolitik ... und was ist eigentlich Innenpolitik? Die Transformation der Politik in der „Ära des Globalismus“. In *Prokla* 30 (118), pp. 123–150.
- Mielke, Gerd (2010): Regierungszentralen zwischen Formalität und Informalität. Informelle Strukturen und Prozesse in Staatskanzleien. In Martin Florack, Timo Grunden (Eds.): *Regierungszentralen. Organisation, Steuerung und Politikformulierung zwischen Formalität und Informalität*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 92–105.
- Miskimmon, Alister; Paterson, William E. (2003): *Foreign and Security Policy. On the Cusp Between Transformation and Accommodation*. In Alister Miskimmon, William E. Paterson (Eds.): *Germany, Europe, and the Politics of Constraint*: British Academy.
- Möller, Kay: *Germany and China: A Continental Temptation*.
- Morin, Jean-Frederic; Paquin, Jonathan (2018): *Foreign Policy Analysis. A Toolbox*. Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, Gisela (2010): Still the Driving Force of European Integration? In Silvia Bolgherini, Florian Grotz (Eds.): *Germany after the Grand Coalition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 69–86.
- Mushaben, Joyce Marie (2017a): *Becoming Madam Chancellor. Angela Merkel and the Berlin Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mushaben, Joyce Marie (2017b): Wir schaffen das! Angela Merkel and the European Refugee Crisis. In *German Politics* 26 (4), pp. 516–533.
- Narramore, Terry (2008): China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy. In *The Pacific Review* 21 (1), pp. 87–108.
- Neuber, Harald (2013): Die verschwiegene Rolle deutscher Stiftungen. In *Telepolis*, 4/9/2013. Available online at <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/38/38898/1.html>, checked on 2/26/2015.
- Niclauß, Karlheinz (2015): *Kanzlerdemokratie. Regierungsführung von Konrad Adenauer bis Angela Merkel*. 3rd ed. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien.
- OECD (2018): *Statistics Database. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development*. Available online at <https://stats.oecd.org>.
- Oetzel, John; Ting-Toomey, Stella; Masumoto, Tomoko; Yokochi, Yumiko; Pan, Xiaohui; Takai, Jiro; Wilcox, Richard (2001): Face and facework in conflict. A cross-cultural comparison of China, Germany, Japan, and the United States. In *Communication Monographs* 68 (3), pp. 235–258. DOI: 10.1080/03637750128061.
- Oppelland, Torsten (2007): Parteien. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 269–279.
- Orbovich, Cynthia B.; Molnar, Richard K. (1992): Modeling Foreign Policy Advisory Processes. In Eric Singer, Valerie M. Hudson (Eds.): *Political Psychology and Foreign Policy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Overhaus, Marco (2006): Civilian Power under Stress. Germany, NATO, and the European Security and Defense Policy. In Hanns Maull (Ed.): *Germany's uncertain power. Foreign policy of the Berlin Republic (New perspectives in German studies)*, pp. 66–78.
- Peschel, Sabine (2019): Ai Weiwei will Berlin verlassen und teilt aus. In *Deutsche Welle*, 8/9/2019. Available online at <https://www.dw.com/de/ai-weiwei-will-berlin-verlassen-und-teilt-aus/a-49971699>.

- Pew Research Center (2018a): Global Indicators Database: China Personal Freedoms. Available online at <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/71/survey/all/>, checked on 11/16/2018.
- Pew Research Center (2018b): Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China. Available online at <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/24>, checked on 11/16/2018.
- Poggetti, Lucrezia (2019): Europe's search for a China strategy. MERICS. Berlin. Available online at <https://merics.org/en/analysis/europes-search-china-strategy>.
- Pogorelskaja, Svetlana W. (2002): Die parteinahen Stiftungen als Akteure und Instrumente der Deutschen Außenpolitik [German]. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* (B 6-7).
- Preker, Simon (2021): Illegitimate Representatives. Manchukuo-German Relations and Diplomatic Struggles in Nazi Germany. In Joanne Miyang Cho (Ed.): *Sino-German Encounters and Entanglements*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 289–317.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (2013): Erfahrungen deutscher Unternehmen mit chinesischen Investoren.
- Proctor, Robert; Schiebinger, Londa L. (Eds.) (2008): *Agnotology. The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Putnam, Robert (1988): Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games. In *International Organization* 42 (3), pp. 427–460.
- Qiu, Feng; Dauth, Tobias (2021): Virtual work intensity, job satisfaction, and the mediating role of work-family balance. A study of employees in Germany and China. In *German Journal of Human Resource Management* 3 (3), 239700222199822. DOI: 10.1177/2397002221998227.
- Rapoza, Kenneth (2013): On Solar Wars, Even Germany Pro-China. In *Forbes*, 6/2/2013. Available online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2013/06/02/on-solar-wars-even-germany-pro-china/>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Rapport, Aaron (2016): *Cognitive Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis*. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. Paris.
- Rathbun, Brian Christopher (2018): Trust in International Relations. In Eric M. Uslaner (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 687–706.
- Rettman, Andrew (2011): EUobserver / EU to keep China arms embargo despite massive investments. Available online at <http://euobserver.com/9/31592>, checked on 11/30/2017.
- Reuters (2007): Schroeder regrets Merkel's Dalai Lama meeting, 11/8/2007. Available online at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-germany-dalai/schroeder-regrets-merkels-dalai-lama-meeting-idUST594920071109>, checked on 12/5/2018.
- Ripley, Brian (1993): Psychology, Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory. In *Political Psychology* 14, pp. 403–416.
- Risse, Thomas (2000): Let's Argue: Communicative Action in World Politics. In *International Organization* 39 (1).
- Rittberger, Volker (1993): Nach der Vereinigung. Deutschlands Stellung in der Welt. In Ernst-Otto Czempiel (Ed.): *Regieren in der Bundesrepublik*, pp. 119–142.
- Rittberger, Volker (Ed.) (2001): *German foreign policy since unification. Theories and case studies*. 1. publ. Manchester, New York, NY, New York, NY: Manchester Univ. Press; Palgrave (Issues in German politics).

- Robinson, Piers (2001): Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy. In *European Journal of Communication* 16 (4), pp. 523–544. DOI: 10.1177/0267323101016004005.
- Rogelja, Igor; Tsimonis, Konstantinos (2020): Narrating the China Threat. Securitising Chinese Economic Presence in Europe. In *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 13 (1), pp. 103–133. DOI: 10.1093/cjip/poz019.
- Röhr, Wolfgang (2021): Was denkt die deutsche Politik über China? In Chunchun Hu, Hendrik Lackner, Thomas Zimmer (Eds.): *China-Kompetenz in Deutschland und Deutschland-Kompetenz in China*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, pp. 199–213.
- Roos, Ulrich (2010): *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Eine Rekonstruktion der grundlegenden Handlungsregeln*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Roos, Ulrich (Ed.) (2017): *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Arenen, Diskurse und grundlegende Handlungsregeln*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Rosenau, James N. (1966): Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy. In Barry R. Farrel (Ed.): *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*. Illinois: Evanston.
- Rudzio, Wolfgang (1991): Informelle Entscheidungsmuster in Bonner Koalitionsregierungen. In Hans-Hermann Hartwich, Göttrik Wewer (Eds.): *Regieren in der Bundesrepublik II: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften*, pp. 125–141.
- Rungius, Charlotte (2017): TTIP und die transatlantischen Beziehungen in einer geökonomischen Weltordnung. In Ulrich Roos (Ed.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Arenen, Diskurse und grundlegende Handlungsregeln*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, pp. 49–88.
- Sandschneider, Eberhard (2002): China's Diplomatic Relations with the States of Europe. In *The China Quarterly* (169), pp. 33–44. Available online at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4618704>.
- Sauerbrey, Anna (2019): Germany's China Problem. Berlin is walking a thin line between its strongest ally and its biggest trading partner. In *New York Times*, 1/17/2019, A23.
- Scharrenbroch, Christine (2016): Der Fall Aixtron. Was Gabriels Übernahmeverbot bedeutet. In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11/14/2016. Available online at <http://www.faz.net/-i2s-8mwqr>.
- Schlotter, Peter (1992): Die Einhegung einer neuen Großmacht? Deutschland und die zukünftige Architektur Europas. In Bruno Schoch (Ed.): *Deutschlands Einheit und Europas Zukunft*. 1. Aufl. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, pp. 280–300.
- Schmidt, Dirk; Heilmann, Sebastian (2012): *Außenpolitik und Außenwirtschaft der Volksrepublik China*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften (SpringerLink : Bücher).
- Schmidt, Siegmund; Hellmann, Gunther; Wolf, Reinhard (Eds.) (2007): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Schnellbach, Christoph; Man, Joyce (2015): *Germany and China: Embracing a Different Kind of Partnership?* [Working Paper]. Center for Applied Policy Research, University of Munich.
- Schöler, Uli; Winter, Thomas von (2017): Die Wissenschaftlichen Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages. In Svenja Falk, Manuela Glaab, Andrea Römmele, Henrik Schober, Martin Thunert (Eds.): *Handbuch Politikberatung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Schöllgen, G. (2000): Zehn Jahre als europäische Großmacht. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* B24.

- Schöllgen, G. (2004): Das Ende der transatlantischen Epoche. In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10/12/2004.
- Schöllgen, G. (2005): Deutsche Außenpolitik in der Ära Schröder. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* 32-33.
- Schöllgen, Gregor: Gerhard Schröder. Die Biographie. Erste Auflage.
- Schröder, Gerhard; Meck, Georg (2014): Klare Worte. Im Gespräch mit Georg Meck über Mut, Macht und unsere Zukunft. 2. Aufl. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
- Schüller, Margot (2000): Überblick über die deutsch-chinesischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts. In *CHINA aktuell*.
- Schüller, Margot (2003): Strukturwandel in den deutsch-chinesischen Beziehungen – Analysen und Praxisberichte. Institut für Asienkunde. Hamburg.
- Schulte-Kulmann, Nicole (2002): Der Einfluss westlicher Rechtsberatung auf die Rechtsreformen in der Volksrepublik China. Zur Rolle von Akteuren und Interessen in der chinesisch-westlichen Rechtsberatung. In *China Analysis* 13.
- Schulte-Kulmann, Nicole (2005a): The German-Chinese "Rule of Law Dialogue": Substantial Interaction or Political Delusion? In Marco Overhaus, Hanns W. Maull, Sebastian Harnisch (Eds.): *German-Chinese Relations: Trade Promotion Plus Something Else ?* Trier (German Foreign Policy in Dialogue, 6 (16)), pp. 30–37.
- Schulte-Kulmann, Nicole (2005b): The German-Chinese 'Rule of Law Dialogue'. Substantial Interaction or Political Delusion? Trier (China Analysis, 47). Available online at http://www.chinapolitik.de/files/no_47.pdf, checked on 5/18/2017.
- Schwarzer, Daniela (2015): Germany's Historical Relationship with the European Union. In *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*.
- Schweller, Randall L. (2004): Unanswered Threats. A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing. In *International Security* 29 (2), pp. 159–201.
- Shambaugh, David L. (2007): Studies of China's Foreign and Security Policies in the United States. In Robert F. Ash, David L. Shambaugh, Seiichiro Takagi (Eds.): *China Watching. Perspectives from Europe Japan and the United States*. London: Routledge (Routledge contemporary China series).
- Shapiro, Debra L.; Sheppard, Blair H.; Cheraskin, Lisa (1992): Business on a Handshake. In *Negotiation Journal* 8 (4), pp. 365–377.
- Siemons, Mark (2009): Wir wussten, was kommt, und können viel erdulden. In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10/19/2009. Available online at <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buchmesse-2009/china/buchmesse-gastland-china-wir-wussten-was-kommt-und-koennen-viel-erdulden-1865623.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Sieren, Frank (2007): The China code. What's left for us? Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. Available online at <http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doi/10.1057/9780230625082>.
- Sieren, Frank (2011): Angst vor China. Wie die neue Weltmacht unsere Krise nutzt. Berlin: Econ.
- Sieren, Frank (2015): Sieren's China: The example set by Helmut Schmidt. In *Deutsche Welle*, 11/13/2015. Available online at <https://www.dw.com/en/sierens-china-the-example-set-by-helmut-schmidt/a-18849073>, checked on 3/22/2019.
- Sigmund, Thomas (2017): Yuan still welcome here. In *Handelsblatt*, 3/31/2017.
- Simon, Herbert A. (1956): Rational Choice and the Structure of the Environment. In *Psychological review* 63 (2), pp. 129–138.

- SIPRI: The 15 Countries with the Highest Military Expenditure in 2011. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Available online at http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/milex_15/the-15-countries-with-the-highest-military-expenditure-in-2011-table/view, checked on 3/23/2014.
- Smith, Karen Elizabeth (2008): EU foreign policy and Asia. In Zaki Laïdi (Ed.): EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World – Normative power and social preferences. New York: Palgrave MacMillan (Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics).
- Smith, Steve; Hadfield, Amelia; Dunne, Tim (2017). 2nd ed.: Oxford University Press (1).
- Smithson, Michael J. (2008): Social Theories of Ignorance. In Robert Proctor, Londa L. Schiebinger (Eds.): Agnotology. The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, pp. 209–229.
- Snyder, Richard C.; Bruck, H. W.; Sapin, Burton M. (1954): Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (Foreign Policy Analysis Project Series, 3).
- Snyder, Richard C.; Bruck, H. W.; Sapin, Burton M. (Eds.) (1963): Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Snyder, Richard C.; Bruck, H. W.; Sapin, Burton M.; Hudson, Valerie M.; Chollet, Derek H.; Goldgeier, James M. (2002): Foreign Policy Decision Making (Revisited). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sommer, Theo (2019): China First. Die Welt auf dem Weg ins chinesische Jahrhundert. München: C.H. Beck.
- SPD (1998): Aufbruch und Erneuerung – Deutschlands Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert. Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und Bündnis 90/Die GRÜNEN. SPD. Berlin.
- SPD & BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN (1998): Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der SPD und BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN (14. Legislaturperiode). Aufbruch und Erneuerung – Deutschlands Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert.
- SPD & BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN (2002): Koalitionsvertrag 2002 – 2006 (15. Legislaturperiode). Erneuerung – Gerechtigkeit – Nachhaltigkeit.
- Speth, R. (2004): Politikberatung als Lobbying. In S. Dagger, C. Greiner, K. Leinert, N. Meliß, A. Menzel (Eds.): Politikberatung in Deutschland. Praxis und Perspektiven. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Spiegel Online (1999): China-Besuch: Schröders schwerer Gang. In *Spiegel Online*, 5/11/1999. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/china-besuch-schroeders-schwerer-gang-a-21964.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Spiegel Online (2005): Schroeder Sparks Outrage with China Embargo Comments. In *Spiegel Online*, 3/31/2005. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel-s-daily-take-schroeder-sparks-outrage-with-china-embargo-comments-a-349026-druck.html>, checked on 2/2/2018.
- Sprout, Harold; Sprout, Margaret (1956): Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sprout, Harold; Sprout, Margaret (1965): The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs: with Special Reference to International Politics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Stadtverwaltung Köln (2019): Nihao und willkommen zum Kölner Chinajahr 2012. Available online at <http://www.stadt-koeln.de/chinajahr/>, checked on 2/21/2019.

- Steingart, Gabor (2006): Weltkrieg um Wohlstand. In *Der SPIEGEL* 37, 2006. Available online at <http://magazin.spiegel.de/EpubDelivery/spiegel/pdf/48826315>.
- Stewart, Thomas A.; O'Brien, Louise (2005): Transforming an Industrial Giant. In *Harvard Business Review*, Feb 2005. Available online at <https://hbr.org/2005/02/transforming-an-industrial-giant>.
- Stone, Diane (1996): Capturing the political imagination. Think tanks and the policy process. London: Cass.
- Strategic Direction (2020): Understanding strategy. In *Strategic Direction* 36 (12), pp. 35–37. DOI: 10.1108/SD-10-2020-0180.
- SWP & GMF (2013): New Power, New Responsibility. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik & German Marshall Fund of the United States. Berlin & Washington D.C.
- Tagesspiegel (2008): Ex-Kanzler Schröder bei Eröffnungsfeier. In *Der Tagesspiegel*, 8/8/2008. Available online at <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/sport/olympia-auftakt-ex-kanzler-schroeder-bei-eroeffnungsfeier/1296946.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- Tewes, Henning (2002): Germany, Civilian Power and the New Europe. Basingstoke England, New York: Palgrave MacMillan (New perspectives in German studies).
- Thimm, Caja; Bürger, Tobias; Kuhn, Phyllis (2014): China im Spiegel der deutschen Gesellschaft. Images, Einstellungen und Erwartungen in Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Kultur. Bonner Akademie für Forschung und Lehre Praktischer Politik. Bonn.
- Tompkins, David T. (2014): Divided Nations. Building and Destroying the Image of China in East Germany Through the 1960s. In Joanne Miyang Cho, David M. Crowe (Eds.): Germany and China. Transnational encounters since the eighteenth century. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 213–233.
- Uslaner, Eric M. (Ed.) (2018): The Oxford handbook of social and political trust. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Volkery, Carsten (2004): Kanzlerbesuch in China: Win-Win Schröder. In *Spiegel Online*, 12/7/2004. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/kanzlerbesuch-in-china-win-win-schroeder-a-331285.html>, checked on 3/23/2019.
- von Cramon, Viola (2013): "Zu wenige wissen, wie China tickt". In *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 2/20/2013.
- von Hein, Matthias (2015): Germany is first on Li's EU list. In *Deutsche Welle*, 5/24/2015.
- Wacker, Gudrun (2005): Lifting the EU arms embargo against China, U.S. and EU positions. Working Paper FG 7, February 2005. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Berlin.
- Walsh, Billie K. (1974): The German Military Mission in China, 1928-38. In *The Journal of Modern History* 46 (3), pp. 502–513.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. (1993): The Emerging Structure of International Politics. In *International Security* 18 (2), pp. 44–79.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. (2000): Structural Realism after the Cold War. In *International Security* 25 (1), pp. 5–41.
- Waltz, Kenneth Neal (1959): Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Watzal, L. (2000): Editorial. In *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb)* B24.
- Wilhelm, Andreas (2006): Außenpolitik. Grundlagen, Strukturen, Prozesse. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH. Available online at [wec](http://www.wec.de).

- Weller, Christoph (2007): Bundesministerien. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 210–224.
- Wells, Paul (2007): Nobody's Girl. Germany's popular chancellor will bend – but only so far. In *Maclean's* 120 (47), pp. 34–37.
- Wendt, Alexander (1992): Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics. In *International Organization* 46 (2), pp. 391–425.
- Wendt, Alexander (1999): *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Werkner, Ines-Jacqueline; Ebeling, Klaus (2017): *Handbuch Friedensethik*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden; Imprint: Springer VS, checked on masha.
- Wight, Colin (2006): *Agents, Structures, and International Relations. Politics as Ontology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilke, Jürgen; Achatzi, Julia (2011a): From Tian'anmen Square to the global world stage. Framing China in the German press, 1986–2006. In *Chinese Journal of Communication* 4 (3), pp. 348–364.
- Wilke, Jürgen; Achatzi, Julia (2011b): From Tian'anmen Square to the global world stage. Framing China in the German press, 1986–2006. In *Chinese Journal of Communication* 4 (3), pp. 348–364.
- Williams, Nigel (2011): Trade Distortions and the EU. CIVITAS – Institute for the Study of Civil Society.
- Wirtschaftswoche (2008): Ende der Eiszeit. In *Wirtschaftswoche* 5, 1/28/2008, p. 13.
- Wirtschaftswoche (2018): Planlos nach Peking. In *Wirtschaftswoche* 21, 5/18/2018, pp. 26–31.
- Wissenschaftliche Dienste (2011): Zur Menschenrechtspolitik Deutschlands gegenüber der Volksrepublik China. Berlin (Ausarbeitung, WD 2 - 3000 - 146/11).
- Wissenschaftliche Dienste (2013): Zur Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Deutschlands und der EU mit China. Berlin (Ausarbeitung, WD 2 - 3000 - 096/13).
- Wissenschaftliche Dienste (2018): Deutsche Entwicklungskooperation mit China. Berlin (Kurzinformation, WD 2 - 3000 - 025/18).
- Wivel, Anders (2005): Explaining why state X made a certain move last Tuesday. The promise and limitations of realist foreign policy analysis. In *J Int Relat Dev* 8 (4), pp. 355–380.
- Wolfrum, Rüdiger (2007): Grundgesetz und Außenpolitik. In Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf (Eds.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. 1. Aufl. Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 157–168.
- World Bank (2018): World Development Indicators Database. Available online at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.
- Wübbeke, Jost; Meissner, Mirjam; Zenglein, Max J.; Ives, Jaqueline; Conrad, Björn (2016): *Made in China 2025. The making of a high-tech superpower and consequences for industrial countries*. Mercator Institute for China Studies. Berlin (Papers on China, 2).
- Xinhua (2008): Chinese Vice Premier meets former German, French PMs. In *Xinhua*, 8/9/2008. Available online at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/09/content_9091999.htm, checked on 5/18/2017.

- Yoder, Jennifer A. (2011): An Intersectional Approach to Angela Merkel's Foreign Policy. In *German Politics* 20 (3), pp. 360–375.
- Yoder, Jennifer A. (2016): Dialogues, Trialogues and Triangles. The Geometry of Germany's Foreign Policy of Trust-Building. In *German Politics* 26 (2), pp. 195–218.
- Youngs, Richard (2010): *Europe's Decline and Fall. The struggle against global irrelevance.* London: Profile Books.
- Zeit Online (2011): Ai Weiwei eröffnet ein Studio in Berlin. In *Zeit Online*, 3/29/2011. Available online at <https://www.zeit.de/news-032011/29/iptc-bdt-20110329-11-29541264xml>, checked on 1/8/2019.
- Zmerli, Sonja; van der Meer, Tom (Eds.) (2017): *Handbook on political trust.* London: Edward Elgar Publishing (Elgar Original Reference Series).
- Zumpfort, Wolf-Dieter (2004): Unternehmenslobbying: Politik informieren – Interessen kommunizieren. In S. Dagger, C. Greiner, K. Leinert, N. Meli, A. Menzel (Eds.): *Politikberatung in Deutschland. Praxis und Perspektiven.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.