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Master's thesis in European Studies
Supervisor: Carine S. Germond
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Abstract

Addressing environmental challenges in the context of energy policy requires political actors to define and understand concepts such as sustainability. Therefore, this thesis asks how the governing parties in Germany framed the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy by investigating their diagnostic and prognostic framing and comparing it to their previous environmental discourse. The thesis also sets out to examine why the governing parties brought up the particular frames by analysing framing considerations, goals, and strategies. Moreover, the frames in the discussion are mapped through a discourse analysis that involves the coding of coalition politicians' statements in public documents and newspaper articles.

The findings demonstrate the pervasive utilisation of environmental frames by the coalition parties, and they continue to be part of the discourse of ecological modernisation. While a consensus exists regarding the understanding of nuclear energy as unsustainable, conflicting interpretations of gas were observed. Furthermore, the study formulates novel concepts of framing considerations, goals, and strategies by drawing upon scholarship on social movements' framing and political party behaviour. The analysis also enhances the understanding of the influence of the multiple framing considerations, goals, and strategies in shaping the definition of environmental issues and solutions.

The thesis contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of political actors' diverse interpretations of sustainability. Political parties are driven to engage in competition over the legitimacy of their interpretation of sustainability rather than debating the necessity of sustainable measures. The complex dynamics inherent to the environmental discourse of political parties bear practical implications for the problem-definition process as the initial stage of the decision-making process. Consequently, political parties influence the terms and parameters of how the public environmental discourse is set.

Sammendrag

Håndtering av miljøutfordringer i konteksten av energipolitikk krever at politiske aktører definerer og forstår begreper som bærekraft. Derav, setter denne oppgaven søkelys på hvordan regjeringspartiene i Tyskland «framet» inklusjonen av gass- og kjernekraft i EUs taksonomi ved undersøke diagnostiske og prognostiske frames og sammenligne resultatene med partienes historiske miljødiskurs. Oppgaven tar også sikt på å undersøke hvorfor regjeringspartiene brukte nettopp disse frames ved å analysere framing hensyn, mål og strategier. Partienes frames kartlegges gjennom en diskursanalyse som innebærer koding av politikeres uttalelser i offentlige dokumenter og avisartikler.

Funnene viser hyppig bruk av miljø-frames blant koalisjonspartiene, og stadfester en kontinuitet i partienes «ecological modernisation»-diskurs. De viser også at det er enighet tilknyttet definisjonen av kjernekraft som ikke-bærekraftig. Samtidig ble det observert motstridende tolkninger av gass. Utover dette utvikler studien nye konsepter for framing hensyn, mål og strategier ved å trekke på forsking om sosiale bevegelsers framing og politiske partiers atferd. I tillegg utdyper analysen forståelsen av innflytelsen av framing hensyn, mål og strategier på defineringen av miljøspørsmål og løsninger.

Oppgaven bidrar til en mer omfattende forståelse av politiske aktørers varierende tolkninger av bærekraft. I stedet for å sette spørsmålstegn ved nødvendigheten av bærekraftstiltak, drives politiske partier til å konkurrere over legitimiteten av sin tolkning av bærekraft. Den komplekse dynamikken som ligger bak partiers miljødiskurs, har konsekvenser for problemdefinisjonsprosessen som innledende stadiet av den politiske beslutningsprosessen. Følgelig har politiske partier innflytelse på vilkårene og parameterne for hvordan den offentlige miljødiskursen føres.

Acknowledgements

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BMF	Bundesministerium der Finanzen - The German Federal Ministry for Finance
BMUV	Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz - The German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
BMWK	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz - The German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
CCDA	Complementary Climate Delegated Act
CDU/CSU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands/Christlich-Soziale Union Bayern - The German Christian Democratic Party and its Bavarian sister party
EC	European Commission
EGD	European Green Deal
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei - The German Liberal Party
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands - The German Social Democratic Party
SZ	Süddeutsche Zeitung
Taz	Taz. Die tageszeitung
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Topic

„Environmental politics is only partially a matter of whether or not to act, it has increasingly become a conflict of interpretation in which a complex set of actors can be seen to participate in a debate in which the terms of environmental discourse are set."
(Hajer, 1997, p. 15)

In Germany, there is a broad understanding that climate change and its consequences are one of the biggest challenges of the current century (European Investment Bank, 2022). For instance, the German "Energiewende"[1] is a multi-decade climate strategy by the German government to transition to renewable energies and low-carbon alternatives (von Hirschhausen, 2014). However, the German governments or governing parties have not always agreed on what should be regarded as "sustainable" energy (Hake et al., 2015). In other words, German coalition governments across the last decades agree on the aim of the Energiewende but not so much on how it is achieved. Interestingly, this raises the question of which energy sources are interpreted as "sustainable" by different governing parties and why this might be the case.

In 2020, the European Commission (EC) introduced a system that classifies whether economic activities are considered environmentally sustainable—namely, the EU taxonomy (Lucarelli et al., 2020). Moreover, on December 31, 2021, the EC first proposed the Complimentary Climate Delegated Act (CCDA), which includes gas and nuclear activities, to the taxonomy (Commission Delegated Regulation, 2022/1214; European Commission, 2022). Both the public and the government in Germany quickly expressed dissatisfaction (Kurmayer, 2022b; Simon & Taylor, 2022; Statista, 2022). The German government even released a statement opposing the proposition to include nuclear activities and requesting to ease the restrictions on natural gas (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022b; Kurmayer, 2022a). Hence, from the perspective of the German government, nuclear energy should be regarded as "unsustainable" and natural gas as "sustainable". Looking at Germany's history of nuclear scepticism and dependency on natural gas imports, this might not be shocking (Hake et al., 2015; Halser & Paraschiv, 2022).

Nevertheless, in the following months, a lot changed. The Russian-led invasion of Ukraine caused an energy crisis in Germany, as natural gas imports were mainly supplied by Russia (Halser & Paraschiv, 2022; Umwelt Bundesamt, 2022). Moreover, Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz from the Social Democrats (SPD) proclaimed a "Zeitenwende", a turning point, for German foreign and security policy (Blumenau, 2022). One objection of the Zeitenwende was to become less dependent on energy imports (Scholz, 2022). This led to new debates on nuclear energy and other alternatives to Russian gas. However, the three governing parties, the Greens, the Liberals (FDP) and the Social Democrats, do not entirely agree on which role natural gas should play and whether the nuclear age should continue or not (Tagesschau, 2022c). How can the governing parties' interpretation of nuclear energy and natural gas be better understood? Has the energy crisis in Germany really changed their

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[1] English translation: Energy transition or turning point.

party positions regarding the two energy sources? Moreover, how do the positions in the debate on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the taxonomy compare to the parties' previous environmental discourse? Accordingly, this study will explore the German government's environmental discourse on the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy.

1.2   Research Questions and Methodology

The thesis aims to examine German governmental parties' environmental discourse. Two main research questions and several sub-research questions will guide the research. The first main research question relates to the governing parties' discussion and interpretation of natural gas and nuclear energy as being classified as sustainable in the EU taxonomy. The second main research question aims to examine whether the parties' presentation of natural gas and nuclear energy in the discussion on the taxonomy was influenced by considerations, goals, and strategies. By strategies, I mean deliberate or goal-directed efforts (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624). The objective of this section is to present and elaborate on the research questions as well as introduce the methodological approach.

First, the thesis aims to explore the German governmental parties' environmental discourse by examining their interpretation in the discussion of the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. The period from 1 January to 31 July is examined because it was a crucial timeline for political possibilities and influence. On 31 December 2021, the EC submitted a proposition for the CCDA, and member states, like Germany, could subsequently provide feedback to the Commission (European Commission, 2022; Kurmayer, 2022b). Furthermore, the European Parliament did not reach a majority to stop the proposal during a vote on 6 July 2022, and the Council of the EU did not object by 11 July 2022 (European Parliament, 2022). Hence, Germany could vote in the Council of the EU or influence the outcome through German politicians in the European Parliament. Furthermore, the examined period was extended to 31 July to include immediate reactions to these two events.

Moreover, the three German governmental parties are chosen as objects of study because they directly deal with both the national and the EU level of the issue at hand, in contrast to non-governmental parties. Additionally, the coalition government decides and represents the official position of the whole nation on this issue. Interestingly, the Social Democrats, the Greens, and the Liberals constitute different ideologies and reflect different political positions in German society. Thus, I expect them to have contrasting environmental discourses and disparate views regarding gas and nuclear power as environmental energy sources.

While discourse analysis is the method of the thesis, environmental discourse is the object of study. An analysis of environmental discourse seeks to understand why specific interpretations of environmental problems emerge and prevail (Hajer, 1997). Other objects in analysing environmental discourse are understanding actors' means and ends and explaining why a particular interpretation of a problem becomes dominant while other interpretations are discredited (Hajer, 1997). The first step in examining the environmental discourse entails identifying it. Frames will be used to map the discourse of the governing parties. The frames represent bits and pieces that, combined, say something about the parties' environmental discourses. Hence, this study aims to identify which frames were

utilised by which governing party to understand their environmental discourse further. Thus, the first main research question (1) of the thesis is:

> *(1) How did the governing parties in Germany frame the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy?*

However, this is still a broad question. Therefore, two sub-research questions have been included to limit and clarify the scope of the study. First, this will be done by delineating the concept of framing. In the literature on framing, the term is commonly conceptualised as diagnostic (or problem) frames and prognostic (or solution) frames (Buzogány & Scherhaufer, 2022; Eilders & Lüter, 2000; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Snow & Benford, 1988). This conceptualisation will allow for a well-structured mapping of the frames in the discussion on including gas and nuclear energy in the EU Taxonomy. Hence, the first sub-research (1a) accordingly asks:

> *(a) How do the governing parties frame the problem (diagnosis) and the solution (prognosis) in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy?*

The identified frames the coalition parties use in the discussion may uncover whether gas or nuclear energy is interpreted as "sustainable". They might also say something about why this might be the case. As mentioned, the sum of all the identified frames helps understand the parties' environmental discourse. The German coalition parties appear ideologically different. The Social Democrats, the Liberals, and the Greens have historically promoted different environmental discourses (Hake et al., 2015). Nevertheless, their environmental discourse has aligned over the last few decades (Leipprand et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, 2022 was an eventful year, which raises the question of whether the Zeitenwende has stirred up the environmental discourses of the parties. This, and other factors, can be uncovered by comparing the previous environmental discourse of the parties with the discourse identified by the mapping of frames. Accordingly, the second sub-research question (1b) is:

> *(b) Do these frames reflect a continuity or a break with the parties' traditional environmental discourse?*

Moreover, political parties do not produce frames in a vacuum (Elias et al., 2015). According to Helbling (2014, p. 26), "political actors are not free in their choice of frames". Therefore, to ensure an exhaustive analysis of these findings, it is necessary to contextualise them. The second main research question (2) examines the factors influencing the frames and the frame producers:

> *(2) Why did the governing parties bring up the particular frames identified in the discussion?*

Even though there is much research on framing, only limited research has examined factors influencing the early framing stages of political parties (Helbling, 2014). Based on the literature on framing of social movements and political behaviour, I propose that political parties are influenced by "considerations", "goals", and "strategies" while producing and developing frames. Benford and Snow (2000) explain that the framing of social movements is constrained or facilitated by considerations. Thus, it would be interesting to investigate

if this also applies to political parties by drawing on scholarship on political party theory. The first sub-question (2a) of the second main research question explores this:

> *(a) Which considerations constrained or facilitated the governing parties' framing?*

Framing can also be used strategically (Elias et al., 2015; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Matthes, 2012; Snow & Benford, 1988). Strategic framing efforts are "deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed", according to Benford and Snow (2000, p. 624). However, goal-oriented or strategic framing of political parties has not been much studied. Hence, it would be valuable to explore possible framing goals and framing strategies of political parties to facilitate the understanding of why political parties bring up the specific frames in the first place. The second sub-question (2b) of the second main research question asks:

> *(b) Which framing goals and framing strategies can be identified in the governing parties' framing?*

1.3 Literature Review

This section sets out to review the existing scholarship on the topic of EU taxonomy in general and about Germany specifically. The chapter aims to show that there is a need for more research on this topic. Moreover, this literature review also shows the thesis's relevance and its contribution to the literature. First, this section presents some of the main strands on the topic of the EU taxonomy in general. Secondly, it reviews the literature which examines the EU taxonomy about Germany. Thirdly, it examines the methods identified in the reviewed literature. Finally, this section points at the gaps in the literature and how this thesis contributes to filling some of these gaps.

In general, a significant amount of research examining the EU taxonomy focuses on its economic or financial circumstances or consequences (Dumrose et al., 2022; Fuest & Meier, 2022; Kirschenmann, 2022; Kooths, 2022; Pacces, 2021). For instance, Esposito et al. (2022) developed an environmental risk indicator based on, among other things, the EU taxonomy's criteria. Another strand of literature focuses on the impact of the taxonomy on specific sectors, especially the building sector is prominent (Esposito et al., 2022; Pohl et al., 2022; Schütze & Stede, 2020, 2021; Schütze et al., 2020). In other words, a large part of the literature is rather technical. However, some studies examine the more social aspects of the taxonomy. For instance, scholars have examined the relationship between scientific production on the taxonomy and its societal impact (Lucarelli et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers have looked at expert groups' role in forming the EU taxonomy (Tripathy et al., 2020). Moreover, Dusík and Bond (2022) have investigated the potential usefulness and effects of the taxonomy in decision-making processes and outcomes. They also identify an economic frame and an ecological frame connected to sustainable taxonomies. Nevertheless, none of the studies mentioned closely examine the effects of the EU taxonomy within certain member states.

Despite Germany being an essential and influential EU member state, literature on the EU taxonomy and Germany is sparse. Searching multiple databases[2] in both English and German gave few to no results. Moreover, the literature identified is of limited relevance

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[2] Scopus, Google Scholar, Web of Science and Jstor

as it often focuses on the EU taxonomy whilst only briefly mentioning Germany or vice versa (Schütze & Stede, 2020, 2021; Schütze et al., 2020). For instance, Pohl et al. (2022) do a risk assessment of climate hazard resistance of the building sector in Germany in light of, inter alia, the EU Taxonomy. One of the few articles addressing the EU Taxonomy and Germany as the main topics of the study is Chrzan and Pott (2022). They undertake an experimental investigation of how the taxonomy affects professional and private investors in Germany (Chrzan & Pott, 2022). Secondly, Wendland (2022) uses the taxonomy as a case and maps how different occupations and employees will be affected by the transformation caused by decarbonisation in Germany. Thus, previous literature which looks at the EU taxonomy related to Germany is within the fields of finance and employment. The scholarship here is technical and quantitative.

Furthermore, there is a relatively wide range of variation in the methods used in the literature reviewed in this chapter. For instance, many studies are theory-based, relying on previous literature and literature reviews (Esposito et al., 2022; Kirschenmann, 2022; Pacces, 2021; Schütze & Stede, 2021). For example, Lucarelli et al. (2020) employ a bibliometric analysis and Dusík and Bond (2022) conduct a discourse analysis. Another qualitative study has drawn on the authors' own experience as researchers and practitioners (Tripathy et al., 2020). Furthermore, quantitative approaches like regression analysis and multivariate analysis have also been employed (Dumrose et al., 2022; Lucarelli et al., 2020). Additionally, some studies use a mix of both quantitative and qualitative approaches by coding responses of an official public consultation and using case studies (Schütze & Stede, 2020, 2021; Schütze et al., 2020).

Beyond this, the literature reviewed here, the scholarship is both fragmented and limited. For instance, there is no literature on the political reception or debate of the EU taxonomy in Germany in any aspect. Moreover, even in general, there are no studies on the relationship between the taxonomy and political parties. This is probably due to the novelty of the EU taxonomy as a research field. Furthermore, as of the time of writing, there is no scholarship examining the taxonomy in light of the CCDA. However, this is undoubtedly due to the fact that the CCDA was just recently presented. The contribution of this thesis is thus manifold. Nevertheless, conducting research without much previous literature to build on is challenging, as it may limit the methodological possibilities. Due to the lack of research on the EU taxonomy and Germany as a key political actor in the EU this thesis seeks to analyse the discourse by examining problem and solution frames as well as investigating what influenced the framing of the governing parties.

1.4 German Gas and Nuclear Policies and the EU Taxonomy

In order to conduct a discourse analysis of German governing parties' discussion and framing of the taxonomy's inclusion of natural gas and nuclear energy, it is essential to understand the backdrop. "In order to grasp the full relevance of a frame in public discourse (…) we need to reflect the environment it appears in – we need to contextualize frames" (Baden, 2010, p. 28). This section aims to give a brief overview of German nuclear and gas policies as well as present the EU taxonomy and the CCDA.

Natural gas and nuclear energy play a historically significant and problematic part in the history of German energy policy. Compared to other European countries, the German population is distinctly sceptical towards nuclear energy (Hake et al., 2015, p. 542). The

German nuclear era began in the 1950s. However, nuclear optimism was soon replaced with scepticism, as the biggest anti-nuclear protests[3] in German history took place in the 1970s and 1980s (Zeit, 2010). Furthermore, as a consequence of the 1986 Chornobyl accident, the majority of the public shifted towards wanting a phase-out of nuclear energy (Hake et al., 2015). Moreover, in 2000, under the first red-green[4] government, an agreement for a nuclear phase-out was settled (Agreement between the Federal Government and the Power Utilities, 2000). Other parties and later governments contested this. However, after the Fukushima accident in 2011, public support for nuclear energy in Germany dropped to one of the lowest worldwide (Hake et al., 2015, p. 542; Ipsos, 2011). This led to the immediate and permanent decommission of eight[5] reactors and the phase-out of all nuclear power by the end of 2022 (Bundesamt für die Sicherheit der nuklearen Entsorgung, 2022). However, due to the energy crisis caused by the Russian-led war in Ukraine, Chancellor Scholz controversially decided to extend the lifetime of the last three nuclear power plants until April 2023 (Tagesschau, 2022d).

On the other hand, natural gas continues to be Germany's second most important primary energy source (Halser & Paraschiv, 2022). German gas development already started in the 1920s. However, it started to flourish fully in the 1970s when the agreement "pipes for gas" established several long-term contracts between the Soviet Union (USSR) and West Germany (Stern, 2005; Sullivan, 2022). Accordingly, West Germany supplied steel pipes to the USSR in exchange for natural gas (Belov, 2022). There was a significant increase in the natural gas demand due to large investments in the industry in eastern parts of Germany. Thus, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, gas deliveries continued and even grew between Russia and reunited Germany (Belov, 2022; Stern, 2005). Furthermore, due to the phasing-out of both nuclear power and coal, Germany's reliance on natural gas imports increased (Halser & Paraschiv, 2022). For instance, in late 2011, the gas pipeline between Russia and Germany, Nord Stream 1, was launched (Belov, 2022). The planning of a second pipeline between Russia and Germany, Nord Stream 2, began shortly thereafter. As a consequence of Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the plans were temporarily set on hold. Nevertheless, in 2018 the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline began. These pipelines caused widespread controversy and led to heavy criticism from both the EU and the USA (Janjevic, 2018). This shows why Germany is a particularly interesting country to look at regarding the CCDA.

The EC first presented the EU taxonomy in 2020 as a project to meet the objections of the European Green Deal (EGD) (European Commission, n.d.; Taxonomy Regulation, 2020/852). One objective of the EGD is the supply of secure, clean and affordable energy, where "renewable energy sources will have an essential role" (The European Green Deal, 2019). The taxonomy is a classification system which determines whether economic activities that companies carry out are environmentally sustainable (European Commission, n.d.). Furthermore, the aim of the taxonomy is to increase sustainable investment by serving as a definition tool for companies, investors, and policymakers (Lucarelli et al., 2020).

On 31 December 2021, the EC submitted a proposition for a delegated act to the EU taxonomy, the CCDA. The proposed CCDA included gas and nuclear to the taxonomy's list

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[3] Gorleben and Bonn in 1979, Brokdorf in 1981, and Wackersdorf in 1986
[4] SPD and the Greens
[5] Biblis A, Biblis B, Neckarwestheim 1, Brunsbüttel, Isar 1, Unterweser, Philippsburg 1 and Krümmel

of environmentally sustainable economic activities (Commission Delegated Regulation, 2022/1214; European Commission, 2022). In other words, the EU decided to change the definition of what should be seen as sustainable and what is not. Some newspapers speculated that the inclusion of gas was a concession to Germany, and the inclusion of nuclear energy was a concession to France (Herwartz et al., 2022; Kurmayer, 2022a). In early 2022 member states could provide feedback to the Commission (Kurmayer, 2022b). In this context, the German government officially objected to the proposition to include nuclear activities and requested to ease the restrictions on natural gas (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022b; Kurmayer, 2022a). Subsequently, the EC eased some of the requirements for natural gas labelling as sustainable (Kurmayer, 2022a). The EC formally adopted the CCDA on 9 March 2022.

Moreover, the CCDA was met with controversy across EU member states and provoked mixed reactions in the European Parliament (Herwartz et al., 2022; Simon & Taylor, 2022). Many raised question marks on whether gas and nuclear should be labelled as "green" or "sustainable" energy sources (Rauhala, 2022). Nonetheless, the EP and the Council of the EU did not object to the CCDA (European Parliament, 2022). The CCDA officially entered into force as of 1 January 2023 (European Parliament, 2022). Furthermore, Austria and Luxembourg have announced to challenge the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the taxonomy in the Court of Justice of the EU. Also, the German Green Party contemplated this but yielded to pressure from the coalition partners (Noyan, 2022). This thus points to the fact that there was disagreement amongst the coalition parties. But to what extent was there disagreement? Moreover, at the beginning of the Russian-led war in Ukraine, more than half of Germany's natural gas imports came from Russia (Tagesschau, 2022e). Currently, Norway is Germany's main supplier of gas, followed by the Netherlands and Belgium (Bundesnetzagentur, 2023). Did the nature of the debate shift or emphasise different aspects in light of the energy crisis? Or did the parties' pre-war positions prevail?

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured into six chapters. The second chapter will present the conceptual framework of the thesis. It clarifies how frames can be used to identify environmental discourse. Furthermore, frames are conceptualised as "diagnostic" and "prognostic". Chapter two also presents what is meant by environmental discourse and finds that the previous environmental discourse of the coalition parties has aligned over the last decades (Leipprand et al., 2017). The chapter also outlines six framing considerations, three framing goals, and five framing strategies. The third chapter explains the methodological choices taken in conducting the discourse analysis. This includes explaining discourse analysis and its constructive nature and describing the data collection. Additionally, "diagnostic" and "prognostic" frames are operationalised through the development of codes and categories. The limitations of the study are also commented on in this chapter. The fourth chapter presents and analyses the frames identified in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy. It also compares the governmental parties' previous environmental discourse to the one observed in the discussion. While chapter four answers the main research question and its sub-questions, chapter five answers the second research question and its sub-questions. The fifth chapter examines and discusses the governmental parties' possible framing considerations, goals, and strategies. The thesis concludes by stating that the Social Democrats, Greens, and Liberals

are part of the ecological modernisation discourse, even though they frame gas differently. Several framing considerations and strategies were identified. Finally, the Greens maximised governmental control in the question of nuclear energy, while the Social Democrats and the Liberals maximised governmental control regarding natural gas. Political parties appear to be competing for the legitimacy of their definition of sustainability. They also influence the problem-definition process and the terms of how public environmental discourse is set.

2 Frames, Environmental Discourse, and the Influence of Framing Considerations, Goals, and Strategies

In order to answer the research questions presented in the introduction, this chapter will define and conceptualise several terms. Chapter 2.1 aims to delineate the concepts relating to the first main research question: How did the governing parties in Germany frame the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy? Firstly, this will be done by clarifying the relationship between discourse analysis, environmental discourse, and frames. Subsequently, chapter 2.1.1 will conceptualise frames as "diagnostic" and "prognostic", according to research question 1a. Followed by this, chapter 2.1.2 presents environmental discourse. Here the previous environmental discourse of the coalition parties in Germany is explored to facilitate the later discussion of research question 1b.

Furthermore, chapter 2.2 aims to clarify the concepts needed to answer the second research question and its sub-questions. In order to investigate why the governing parties brought up the particular frames identified in the discussion, chapter 2.2.1 will introduce six different "framing considerations". Afterwards, in chapter 2.2.2, three "framing goals" and five "framing strategies" are developed. In conceptualising the terms "diagnostic" and "prognostic framing", as well as "framing considerations", "goals", and "strategies", literature on social movements' framing is used to supplement the relatively scarce scholarship on the framing of political parties.

2.1 Conceptualising Frames as Tools for Understanding Environmental Discourse

To clarify, the environmental discourse in Germany is the object of the study, and discourse analysis is the method of the study. "Discourse analysis tails an examination of how and why things appear the way they do, and how certain actions become possible" (Dunn & Neumann, 2016b, p. 4). Furthermore, a discourse analysis comprises representational practices through which meaning is produced, and language is closely studied (Dunn & Neumann, 2016a). This will be dealt with more in-depth in the methodological section. The object of study in this thesis is the German governmental parties' discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the taxonomy. This discussion is part of the environmental discourse in Germany.

However, there are multiple ways of analysing the environmental discourse. Here, framing is chosen as an approach to analysing the discourse, as frames can be used as an effective tool to structure and interpret discourse. This is done because it is difficult to measure and quantify discourse. Hence, framing is conceptualised and operationalised to identify and measure the discourse. I argue that frames can be used as bits and pieces which, combined, say something about the parties' environmental discourse(s).

Within the social sciences and humanities, the concept of framing is utilised in various fields. There are strands of scholarships on framing within the fields of political science and public opinion, media and communication, and social movements, to highlight a few (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Scheufele, 1999; Snow & Benford, 1988). However, no clear and general theory of framing exists across these disciplines. Notably, framing is often defined

causally (Entman, 1993). To some confusion, framing often shares a similar definition to concepts like "narratives", "storylines", or even "discourse" itself (see, for instance, Hajer, 1997 or Patterson & Monroe, 1998). One objective of this section is thus to present and delineate the concept of framing. Another objective is introducing political parties as frame producers and conceptualising governing parties' framing.

According to Gamson and Modigliani, a frame "provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (1987, p. 143). It is, in other words, a lens through which an event can be viewed. More specifically, Entmann describes framing as selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1993, p. 52). This definition implies that someone produces frames. Moreover, a frame is heavily dependent on a frame producer's perception of reality and how they choose to emphasise a specific aspect of this reality. Furthermore, frames make some elements appear more appropriate and others problematic (Entman, 1993; Hajer, 1997). Additionally, coherent frames reduce complexity by creating a recognisable story for recipients (Osmundsen & Olsen, 2017). Moreover, recognisable arguments give actors authority, affecting the perceived performance in a debate (Osmundsen & Olsen, 2017). If this is done effectively, frame producers become more resilient towards facts, and it will create political momentum (Osmundsen & Olsen, 2017, p. 140).

Hence, identifying the frames in an environmental debate means examining what and how actors promote a particular aspect of an environmental issue. For example, political party "A" may frame nuclear energy as dirty, while party "B" may frame it as clean. Moreover, a single frame produced by one party or politician alone might not tell us much. However, if multiple frames are "woven" together, they can say something about the environmental discourse (Baden, 2010, p. 27). Thus, examining multiple frames in a discussion and contextualising them is helpful to understand the discourse in which they appear. Before taking a closer look at environmental discourse (2.1.2), the following sub-section will conceptualise frames as diagnostic and prognostic (2.1.1).

2.1.1 Diagnostic and Prognostic Framing

The previous paragraphs show that frames in an environmental debate make some aspects of an environmental issue appear more appropriate or problematic (Entman, 1993; Hajer, 1997). Furthermore, frames are dependent on frame producers' perception of reality. But how exactly can the frames be identified? The definition of framing presented above is still somewhat unclear and leaves a lot of questions open. Therefore, framing will be conceptualised as "diagnostic" and "prognostic" in this section. This is done as a first step in examining the first sub-question (1a) of the first main research question.

Within some strands of political science, framing is commonly conceptualised as "diagnostic", "prognostic", and to some extent "motivational" (Buzogány & Scherhaufer, 2022; Eilders & Lüter, 2000; Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006; Snow & Benford, 1988). Snow and Benford (1988) first introduced the concepts of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames in the context of social movements. Some scholars argue that frames are inevitable in party communication, and politicians and parties can be seen as frame producers (Baden, 2010; Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006). Looking at framing literature on political parties and politicians, framing has been conceptualised as "substantive issue" and "contest" or "generic" frames in addition to Snow and Benford's (1988) conceptualisation (Aalberg et al., 2012; Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Helbling, 2014).

The conceptualisation of diagnostic and prognostic framing is the most beneficial for the thesis foci. This is because "substantive issue" and "generic" or "contest" frames focus on how the media presents political actors. "Substantive issue" framing describes statements connected to themes or specific issues. "Generic" framing, on the other hand, describes statements on more general structures as the political contest between parties or politicians. However, the aim of the thesis is to focus on the political parties as frame producers rather than the media's selection and presentation of political statements. Thus, framing will be conceptualised based on Snow and Benford's (1988) understanding.

Snow and Benford (1988, p. 200) define *diagnostic framing* as the "identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality". Hence, diagnostic frames identify (1) an event or aspect of reality as problematic and (2) who or what is to blame or other causal aspects of the problem (Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006; Snow & Benford, 1988). There is more often consensus on problem identification than on the question of causality and blame for the problem (Snow & Benford, 1988). For instance, in this case, the governing parties in Germany considered including gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy as problematic. However, the parties most likely have different views on what the consequences of the CCDA will be. It will be interesting to see whether parties blame the EU or other actors.

Moreover, *prognostic framing* is closely related to diagnostic framing. Prognostic framing suggests solutions to the problems identified (Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006; Snow & Benford, 1988). Furthermore, prognostic frames outline what needs to be done (Snow & Benford, 1988). In this case, however, it would also be interesting to look at statements that outline what should not be done. Thus, prognostic frames say which solutions should or should not be pursued. For example, statements might suggest talking with the EU or claiming that taking the EU to court is not the solution.

Additionally, Snow and Benford (1988) outline a third framing component: motivational frames. Motivational frames in the context of social movements are "the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis" (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 202). This definition does not transfer to political parties as neatly as the previous two. A diagnostic or prognostic frame "fosters or facilitates agreement," while a motivational frame "fosters action, moving people from the balcony to the barricades" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615). This is not necessarily always the aim of political parties. Therefore, I have decided to exclude motivational framing as part of the conceptualisation of the framing of political parties. Instead, later sections will elaborate on which possible considerations, goals, and strategies influence the development of a frame produced by a political party.

2.1.2 Environmental Discourse in Germany

As mentioned, piecing together multiple frames can say something about the broader environmental discourse. Thus, once the diagnostic and prognostic frames of the governing parties in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy are identified, it will be possible to examine how they fit into the environmental discourse in Germany. This section will define what environmental discourse means and examine the government parties' previous environmental discourse. This is done to facilitate later discussion of the second sub-question (1b) of the first main research question, which examines whether the frames reflect a continuity or a break with the parties' traditional environmental discourse.

Hajer (1997) argues that environmental debate has become discursive as environmental considerations are no longer perceived as a radical social critique. Moreover, in the European Union and Germany, there is a broad understanding that climate change and its consequences are one of the biggest challenges of the current century (European

Investment Bank, 2022). According to Hajer (1997), the focus has gradually shifted away from whether there is an environmental crisis to how it is interpreted. Thus, analysing the environmental discourse concerns actors' different ways of interpreting environmental issues. For instance, analysing the environmental discourse may concern examining the meaning of clean and dirty or emphasising morale and efficiency (Hajer, 1997).

Furthermore, there is some scholarship that has examined environmental discourse in Germany. For instance, Buschmann and Oels (2019) present the "energy mix" discourse and the "energy transition" discourse. The energy mix discourse views nuclear power, coal, and gas as necessary and appropriate bridging technologies (Buschmann & Oels, 2019). Some environmental concerns are emphasised, for instance, climate change (Leipprand et al., 2017). However, arguments of the energy mix discourse often focus on the economic and security aspect of the energy supply. These aspects are often used as counterarguments to the energy transition discourse. According to this discourse, a broad energy mix is needed to achieve a reliable energy supply (Leipprand et al., 2017).

The transition discourse, on the other hand, perceives renewable energy resources as favourable to non-renewables (Buschmann & Oels, 2019). A vital concern for the environment is central to this discourse, where fundamental system changes need to be implemented (Leipprand et al., 2017). Especially the threat of climate change and the risks of nuclear power are underlined (Leipprand et al., 2017). In addition to being anti-nuclear, the transition discourse supports the phasing-out of coal and gas (Buschmann & Oels, 2019). Another argument of the energy transition discourse is that the transition to renewables will benefit the economy, energy security and independence, and the creation of jobs (Leipprand et al., 2017). However, how has this been reflected in the discourse of the three governing parties, the Social Democrats, the Greens, and the Liberals?

Leipprand et al. (2017) argue that the Liberals have been part of the energy mix discourse, and the Greens and the Social Democrats have been part of the transition discourse from the late 1980s until 2011. However, from approximately 1950 to the 1980s, both the Social Democrats and the Liberals were optimistic towards nuclear energy production in Germany (Hake et al., 2015). Anti-nuclear protest movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s largely influenced the formation of the Green Party in 1980. Furthermore, the Chornobyl accident in 1986 was a turning point. After the incident, the Social Democrats became anti-nuclear. This remained unchanged until the Fukushima accident in 2011 (Hake et al., 2015).

However, after the 1980s, nuclear energy was no longer presented as an innovative technology as it had been previously by the pro-nuclear parties (Hake et al., 2015). Instead, during the 1990s, climate change became an increasingly important topic. The Liberals, continuing to favour nuclear energy, now argued that it was a "climate-friendly energy source" (Hake et al., 2015, p. 538). This entrenched the two contrasting discourses in the parliament even more. Moreover, while in government, the Social Democrats and the Greens initiated the nuclear phase-out in the early 2000s (Hake et al., 2015). In the following years, the Liberals rejected the nuclear phase-out, arguing that nuclear energy is a safe, inexpensive transition energy. The Social Democrats and the Greens continued to argue to preserve the nuclear phase-out (Hake et al., 2015). Whilst the nuclear disagreement remained in this period, the Liberals discourse started to draw on some energy transition discourse elements (Leipprand et al., 2017).

Another shift in the discourse on nuclear energy happened after the Fukushima accident in 2011. The public and the media heavily criticised the nuclear policies of the Liberals and the Conservatives who were in government at the time (Hake et al., 2015). Despite some

internal opposition, the idea of nuclear power as a "bridge" energy was abandoned by the Liberal Party. Nuclear energy was, at this point, no option for any of the three parties (Hake et al., 2015). Leipprand et al. (2017) argue that the two discourses had aligned at this point. For instance, economic arguments were now used to debate how the transition of energies is reached effectively rather than questioning if there should be an energy transition at all (Leipprand et al., 2017). In other words, the marginal energy transition discourse became de-radicalised and hegemonic (Buschmann & Oels, 2019).

Additionally, Leipprand et al. (2017) argue that the transition discourse has changed over the last three decades and has become part of the ecological modernisation discourse. Ecological modernisation aims to align environmental protection with mainstream economic logic (Eckersley, 2016; Leipprand et al., 2017). This, for instance, comprises increasing resource efficiency, innovation and using economic instruments to reach environmental objectives (Leipprand et al., 2017).

In contrast to nuclear energy, to this author's knowledge, the gas discourse of political parties in Germany has not been investigated much, with the exception of some comments by Buschmann and Oels (2019). They claim that arguing for a stable role of gas has been a part of the energy mix discourse. To understand more about the coalition parties' previous gas discourse, previous governments' natural gas policies can be investigated. This is, on the contrary, a much-studied field.

Under the Social-Liberal governments in the 1970s, there was enthusiasm for natural gas as long-term contracts with the Soviet Union were signed (Stern, 2005; Sullivan, 2022; Wintour, 2022). The Liberal-Conservative governments throughout the 1980s and 1990s continued and increased the natural gas policy with Russia (Belov, 2022; Stern, 2005). Furthermore, as the concern about climate change grew, the position of coal weakened, and the reliance on natural gas increased (Hake et al., 2015; Halser & Paraschiv, 2022). Under the Social-Conservative and Liberal-Conservative Merkel governments, from 2005-2021, gas investments expanded through the Nord Stream project (Belov, 2022).

Furthermore, after the Fukushima accident, Buschmann and Oels (2019) explain that gas and coal were manifested as a necessary transition energies by the Liberal-Conservative government. In other words, the gas policy of the coalition parties appears to have been relatively continuous. Moreover, it will be interesting to see whether the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 influenced the gas discourse of the parties in the discussion on the CCDA. The historical environmental discourses of the coalition parties described in this section are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: The governmental parties' historical environmental discourse

	1950-1980	1980-1986	1986-2011	2011-2022
Social Democrats	• Nuclear energy as innovative technology • Enthusiasm for natural gas	• Nuclear energy as innovative technology	• Transition discourse • Anti-nuclear • Pro-natural gas policies	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear • Pro-natural gas policies
The Greens		• Anti-nuclear	• Transition discourse • Anti-nuclear	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear
Liberals	• Nuclear energy as innovative technology	• Nuclear energy as innovative technology • Enthusiasm for natural gas	• Energy mix discourse • Energy transition discourse • Nuclear, gas and coal as transition energies • Pro-natural gas policies	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Gas and coal as transition energies • Pro-nuclear energy position abandoned

Source: Author's own compilation based on Belov (2022); Buschmann and Oels (2019); Hake et al. (2015); Halser and Paraschiv (2022); Leipprand et al. (2017); Stern (2005); Sullivan (2022); Wintour (2022).

2.2 Conceptualising Framing Considerations, Goals, and Strategies

The previous sections concerned the first main research question and its sub-questions. The thesis's second main research question asks why the governing parties brought up the particular frames identified in the discussion. The first step in examining this question is acknowledging that frames are produced in a context.

Interestingly, a majority of studies examining framing focus on the media and the effects of framing (Helbling, 2014). This also includes the understanding questions linked to the publishing medium or platform of statements (De Vreese, 2005; Helbling, 2014). This implies that earlier stages in the framing process are often neglected (Helbling, 2014). For instance, a political party does not frame in a vacuum (Elias et al., 2015). Earlier stages may consider the emergence, development, or elaboration of frames by frame producers (Benford & Snow, 2000; De Vreese, 2005). This entails an examination of the frames themselves and the factors which influence the frames and the frame producers. Examining these factors contribute to understanding why political parties bring up the specific frames in the first place (Helbling, 2014).

The following sub-chapters electively draw on previous scholarship to conceptualise possible factors influencing the political parties and the emergence, development, or elaboration of the frames. The influencing factors are conceptualised into political parties' framing considerations, goals, and strategies. First, six different framing considerations are presented using previous literature on framing: context, ideology, previous

commitments, competition, credibility, and legitimacy. Secondly, three framing goals and five framing strategies are identified. The following three framing goals are described based on the literature on political party behaviour: maximising votes, control within the coalition, and the ideological effect on public policy. Building on scholarship on framing strategies, five concepts of framing strategies are developed: bridging, amplification, transformation, counter-framing, and politicisation and de-politicisation.

2.2.1 Framing Considerations

Political parties do not produce frames in a vacuum (Elias et al., 2015). They are affected by the context and society they engage in. According to Elias et al. (2015), political parties are affected by, inter alia, the preferences of voters, ideology, previous commitments and the nature of the issue. Furthermore, certain considerations may constrain or facilitate the framing opportunities of parties (Benford & Snow, 2000). This section aims to identify possible considerations which may constrain or facilitate the framing of political parties and facilitate the analysis of the first sub-question (2a) of the second main research question. This is done by drawing on the scholarship of framing considerations of social movements and literature on political parties. This serves to shed light on political parties' room for manoeuvre while developing and elaborating frames.

Political parties have to consider the external *context* while framing issues (Benford & Snow, 2000; Helbling, 2014). The political, social, cultural, and economic environment influence a party's framing efforts (Snow & Benford, 1988). Furthermore, the context may constrain or facilitate both the thematic aspect of the frames as well as the framing strategies available (Benford & Snow, 2000; Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). Furthermore, these are considerations that are external to a political party. The political context may relate to political structures, for instance, political, institutional structures or informal relations in political systems (Benford & Snow, 2000). In this specific case, this is connected to the German political system and the political system of the EU. Moreover, social, cultural, and economic factors of the environment may relate to traditional discourses on nuclear energy and gas, or the energy crisis in Germany.

Moreover, internal considerations can also constrain or facilitate the development of frames by political parties (Snow & Benford, 1988). For instance, political parties must consider their political ideology and previous commitments (Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). The *ideology* of a political party is a set of ideas that relate to how society should work or a lens through which the world is understood (Heywood, 2012). In studies of political parties and ideology, the left-right dimension is commonly used to describe political positions (Hooghe et al., 2002; Lachat, 2018; Mair & Mudde, 1998). This means that political preferences and positions can be assigned to a point on a scale of the political left or right (Lachat, 2018). Dippel et al. (2022) look at German parties' and their voters' perceptions of ideology and argue that the parties can be placed on the left-right dimension. They map the parties from most left to most right: the Left; the Greens; the Social Democrats; the Liberals; the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU); the Alternative for Germany (AfD) (Dippel et al., 2022).

Moreover, some scholars argue that parties can be positioned more effectively along other dimensions, especially regarding questions of European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Hooghe et al., 2002; Lachat, 2018). For example, Hooghe et al. (2002) present the idea of a dimension ranging from Green/Alternative/Libertarian (GAL) to Traditional/Authoritarian/National (TAN). According to Reinl and Wallaschek (2023), the German parties can be positioned as follows on the GAL-TAN dimension: the Greens; the Left; the Social Democrats; the Liberals; the Christian Democrats; the Alternative for

Germany. On the left-right dimension, the Greens, the Social Democrats, and the Liberals are relatively close to one another. However, on the GAL-TAN dimension, there is more distance between the Greens and the Social Democrats, to the Liberals. In other words, the Greens and the Social Democrats have a stronger focus on green, alternative, and libertarian than compared to the Liberals. Furthermore, particular frames can facilitate a strengthening of parties' ideological profile (Wonka, 2016). At the same, when parties frame, they are constrained to using frames that are somehow compatible with their ideology.

In addition to ideology, parties have to consider their *previous commitments* (Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). This links to how the parties have previously positioned themselves on an issue. This can – but does not have to – be connected to ideology. For instance, being against nuclear energy is at the core of the Green Party's ideology, as it was born from the anti-nuclear movement (Hake et al., 2015). Compared to the Social Democrats and the Liberals, this is not the case to the same extent. The Social Democrats and the Liberals have had shifting opinions on nuclear energy (Hake et al., 2015). Moreover, to some degree, frames will have to deal with or reflect previous commitments (Helbling, 2014).

Furthermore, in multi-party systems, parties have to decide which parties they wish to cooperate with (Strøm et al., 2010). This is because political parties are inherently competitive and contest or cooperate to gain power (Elias et al., 2015). According to Strøm et al. (2010, p. 519), in Western European electoral systems, "one party's gain has to be another party's loss". Parties in a coalition government primarily wish for the loss of the opposition parties. However, coalition parties also commonly compete for votes amongst each other (Strøm et al., 2010). This drives parties to find ways to control partners in a coalition government (Strøm et al., 2010). This means that parties in government have to choose to contest or cooperate on the frames produced by coalition partners. Helbling (2014, p. 26) even argues that "political actors are not free in their choice of frames; rather, frames are endogenous to political competition". Nonetheless, this thesis argues that frames and framing strategies are products of internal and external circumstances. Thus, Coalition parties must consider the *competition* against opposition and coalition parties when choosing a frame.

In addition, for voters to believe in and support the frame of a political party, the frame has to be *credible* (Benford & Snow, 2000). For a frame to be credible, there must be evidence at hand supporting the frame (Snow & Benford, 1988). Is it somehow testable or verifiable? Furthermore, in a debate, multiple frames can be credible. Thus, credibility also relates to how the recipients experienced credibility (Snow & Benford, 1988). Literature explaining voters and voting behaviour emphasises historical, social, psychological, or economic aspects as possible explanatory factors (see Campbell et al., 1960; Downs, 1957a; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). However, this is not something that will be explored any further in this thesis. Here, a frame is considered credible if it relays on scientific facts.

Finally, political parties must consider the aspect of *legitimacy* when creating frames (Gerhards, 1995; Helbling, 2014). „Every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy" (Max Weber, 1964, as cited in Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 91). Moreover, legitimate actions are "desirable, proper, or appropriate" within a specific social system (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). A government in a liberal democracy has to reflect the appropriateness and rightfulness of the ruling order in developing frames (Braun & Schmitt, 2009). Legitimacy can often be dependent on other considerations. For instance, a party's legitimacy is hurt if a frame proves not credible or does not consider its own

ideology or previous commitments. Additionally, a frame that inappropriately deals with the social, cultural, or historical context harms a party's legitimacy.

This identification of framing considerations is comprehensive but not exhaustive. A summary of the framing considerations is presented in table 2. As mentioned earlier, this conceptualisation does not include the reception of the media and the voters. Furthermore, factors linked to economic interests and lobby group interests have also not been taken into consideration.

Table 2: Framing considerations of political parties

Framing Considerations
• Context
• Ideology
• Previous Commitments
• Competition
• Credibility
• Legitimacy

Source: Author's own compilation based on Benford and Snow (2000); Elias et al. (2015); Gerhards (1995); Helbling (2014); Snow and Benford (1988); (Strøm et al., 2010)

2.2.2 Framing Goals and Framing Strategies

Political parties do not only have to take framing considerations into account, but they also make deliberate decisions based on political goals and strategies. Hence, the objective of this section is to identify possible framing goals and framing strategies of political parties in general. The identified goals and strategies will later serve to answer the second sub-question (2b) of the second research question, which asks which framing goals and framing strategies the German governmental parties used.

According to Strøm (1990), there are three models of party behaviour. In advanced parliamentary democracies, the objectives of competitive political parties are distinguished to be vote-seeking, office-seeking or policy-seeking (Strøm, 1990, p. 566). As the thesis is examining parties in government, a special focus is being placed on the behaviour of governmental parties. The model of vote-seeking parties draws on Downs' (1957b) rational choice theory. This model views parties as "seeking to maximize their electoral support for the purpose of controlling government" (Strøm, 1990, p. 566). In other words, *maximising votes* is an objective of political parties as votes yield political influence (Elias et al., 2015).

The model of office-seeking explains party behaviour as aiming to maximise "control over political office" (Strøm, 1990, p. 567). Office-seeking parties pursue office benefits or private goods. Looking at the coalition government, this concerns staying in office or *maximising control vis-à-vis the coalition parties* (Strøm, 1990). The third model of party behaviour describes policy-seeking parties as wanting to *maximise their effect on public policy* (Strøm, 1990, p. 567). This is a supplement to the second model, which views parties as not only being concerned with their governmental portfolios but also emphasising "the ideological disposition of the coalition" (Strøm, 1990, p. 568). These overarching behavioural goals will affect which frames political parties choose to use in a debate. To summarise, political parties frame to sustain or increase the number of votes to secure political influence (vote-seeking), increase their control within the coalition (office-seeking) or influence public policy ideologically (policy-seeking). Nonetheless, these are general

goals. It is not unlikely to assume that political parties also have more issue-specific goals. However, this will not be further explored here.

Furthermore, "deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed" framing efforts are described by Benford and Snow (2000, p. 624) as being strategic framing. Although political parties may engage in strategic framing, this does not necessarily have to be aligned with the goals outlined previously. This is because frames could also be the product of constraining considerations or issue-specific goals. Moreover, the literature on framing strategies is more elaborate on social movements than on political parties or politicians. Thus, framing strategies identified by the literature in both these strands of scholarship will be combined to ensure a comprehensive understanding of framing strategies. Four much-cited framing strategies for social movements outlined by Benford and Snow (2000) are frame bridging; frame amplification; frame extension; and frame transformation. These will be examined more closely. Benford and Snow's (2000) framing strategies will be adjusted to better fit political parties or discarded if necessary. Additionally, drawing on literature on political parties, counter-framing and politicisation are presented as framing strategies.

Frame bridging is the liking of two or more frames on an issue. These frames are "ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624). Frame bridging happens on different levels (Benford & Snow, 2000). For instance, a bridging frame can connect actors who share a common sentiment or opinion. A political party can use frame bridging to link to their own cause to that of other organisations, groups, industries, or stakeholders. This is done to appeal to other groups of people. An example from research on political parties is Caiani and della Porta (2011) who find that extreme right parties in Germany and Italy have bridged "the people" frame with frames of exclusive nationalism and anti-establishment.

Moreover, *frame amplification* relates to the "idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or belief" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624). However, idealisation or embellishment are framing features that can be found as part of other framing strategies as well. Instead of being a strategy, it can be seen as a tool of the strategies. Take the previous example, "the people" is a frame that certainly can bear features of idealisation or embellishment. Notably, here, frame amplification is understood to be a consistent clarification or invigoration of a frame. In order to persuade the public, frames often need to be reinvigorated. Frames that are consistently invoked exert power as they give audiences the possibility to "notice, understand, and store the mental association for future applications" (Matthes, 2012, p. 252). A frame, thus, is amplified when it is consistently highlighted (Snow et al., 1986).

A third framing strategy which Benford and Snow (2000) mention, is frame extension. This strategy will, however, be excluded here, as it mainly applies to social movements. Frame extension entails extending a frame beyond a social movement's primary interest (Benford & Snow, 2000). In contrast to political parties, social movements are noninstitutional, informal networks of supporters engaged in conflicts as a response based on shared collective identities (Diani, 1992; Schwartz, 2010). Whereas a political party in power in some way has to consider any given issue it is confronted with. Frames might possibly serve to adjust party positions, ideology, or foci. However, this a question that goes beyond the resources of this thesis.

Furthermore, as communication is a dynamic process, frames may be *transformed* or modified (Benford & Snow, 2000; Matthes, 2012). Frames may evolve as political parties react to new information. This might, for instance, be due to a change in the nature of the

problem, opinion polls or reactions to the media (Matthes, 2012). Hence, frame transformation involves some sort of reframing (Snow et al., 1986).

In addition to the strategies described by Benford and Snow (2000), *counter-framing* is a framing strategy prominently found in political debates due to political parties' competitive nature (Chong & Druckman, 2012). Counter-framing involves a form of reaction to an original frame. Counter-framing denies, contradicts, or criticises the original frame (Anderson, 2018; Chong & Druckman, 2012; Lindekilde & Olesen, 2014). Attacking the nature of the frame producer as a reaction to the original frame is also part of counter-framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Lindekilde & Olesen, 2014). A counter-frame can also be employed as a measure to contain or reverse damage to the actor that is being attacked (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Moreover, framing can strategically be used to *politicise* or *de-politicise* one or more components of an issue or solution (Roos, 2019). Politicisation is an "increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values" within the discourse (De Wilde, 2011, p. 566). For instance, certain aspects of an issue can be selected and promoted in a way that opposes or diverges from other parties framing, thus causing increased political conflict. On the other hand, actively avoiding a "framing pattern may thus serve as a preventive step, helping to de-politicize public and political discourse" (Roos, 2019, p. 636). Frames that are blurring, vague or even contradictory may also function to depoliticise the issue at hand (Elias et al., 2015). Furthermore, non-ideological or pragmatic framing can be understood to depoliticise issues (Helbling, 2014; Scott, 2022; Seeberg, 2010). Pragmatic frames contain references to technical aspects of a problem, for example, describing "legal, interest-based and efficiency" characteristics (Helbling, 2014, p. 24; Seeberg, 2010).

To summarise, five framing strategies for political parties have been identified: bridging, amplification, transformation, counter-framing, politicisation and de-politicisation. These are presented together with the framing goals in table 3. Moreover, these frames are not mutually exclusive. For instance, counter-framing and frame amplification can be used to politicise. Finally, as no previous research has examined framing considerations, goals, and strategies for political parties more research should be conducted in order to test and elaborate on the concepts presented.

Table 3: Framing goals and framing strategies of political parties

Framing Goals	Framing Strategies
Maximising • Votes • Control within Coalition • Ideological Effect on Public Policy	• Bridging • Amplification • Transformation • Counter-framing • De-/Politicisation

Source: Author's own compilation based on Anderson (2018); Benford and Snow (2000); Chong and Druckman (2012); Elias et al. (2015); Helbling (2014); Lindekilde and Olesen (2014); Matthes (2012); Roos (2019); Scott (2022); Seeberg (2010); Snow et al. (1986); Strøm (1990).

3 Methodology

This chapter aims to explain the methodological choices that have been taken in order to answer the research questions. The first main research question of the thesis sets out to understand how the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Liberals framed the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. Furthermore, the sub-questions aim to examine the diagnostic and the prognostic frames (1a) and to compare the results to the parties' previous discourse on the topic (1b). To answer these questions, the frames in the discussion have to be operationalised and identified. This process will be outlined in detail in this chapter. Moreover, to answer 1b, the findings as well as the previously presented secondary literature is drawn upon. The second main research question seek to investigate why the coalition parties brought up frames in the discussion. Its sub-questions investigate which framing considerations constrained or facilitated the governing parties (2a) and which framing goals and framing strategies can be identified (2b). To answer these questions the results from the mapping exercise will be used and, additionally, sources which contextualise the findings will be utilised.

Firstly, this chapter will outline the methodological framework of constructivism and discourse analysis elaborated on (3.1). Secondly, the exercise of mapping frames is explained in detail (3.2). The measures time frame and the chosen sources for the data collection are carefully described (3.2.1). Furthermore, the coding process and the establishment of categories is presented (3.2.2). Finally, the limitations of the thesis are outlined (3.3).

3.1 Constructivism and Discourse Analysis

Moses and Knutsen (2019) reject the division between qualitative and quantitative research. Instead, they present a dichotomy of two methodological traditions: naturalism and constructivism. However, research in the social sciences is more often than not a mixture of the two (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). While naturalism focuses on discovering and explaining patterns, constructivism emphasises that an object of study cannot be independent of the observer. Furthermore, constructivist researchers value understanding the social world (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). Even though this thesis attempts to observe and explain (naturalism) frames and the influencing framing factors, constructivism is at the core of the research design. This is due to the interpretive nature of discourse analysis.

In this thesis, frames are used as a method of identifying and measuring the discourse. In other words, it is a means of data collection. Furthermore, discourse analysis is more an analytical approach than a method of producing data (Tjora, 2018). Discourse analysis aims to interpret and understand one or more texts. It seeks to examine "how and why things appear the way they do, and how certain actions become possible" (Dunn & Neumann, 2016b, p. 4). When analysing the discourse, the researcher closely studies the language at hand and identifies patterns (Dunn & Neumann, 2016a; Taylor, 2001). Language affects how problems are viewed and solved. Hence, analysing the discourse facilitates understanding the political room of manoeuvre (Bratberg, 2021). A researcher's

key role in the process is to interpret and understand the meaning of the language studied (Bratberg, 2021).

Moreover, from a constructivist perspective, language does not only concern "the relationship between the observer and what is being observed" but also the social world in which it is produced (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, p. 194). The social world is reflected and constructed through language as language is not a neutral vessel of information (Bratberg, 2021; Dunn & Neumann, 2016a; Taylor, 2001). Thus, to analyse the discourse critically, the social context in which a discourse is produced has to be understood (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Discourse analysis critically assesses which representations of reality lie beneath and how it limits political decision-making (Bratberg, 2021). In other words, in discourse analysis, the social realm and knowledge are not strictly separated (Dunn & Neumann, 2016a). To summarise, analysing the discourse means closely interpreting and understanding the language of a text and, by looking at the social context, trying to identify patterns. The objective of the thesis is not to uncover an objective truth but to contribute to understanding the competing ideas in a policy discussion (Leipprand et al., 2017).

3.2   Mapping Frames

How should one identify or measure discourse? One way of operationalising discourse analysis is through framing. The previous chapter has already dealt in-depth with the conceptualisation of frames and the framing considerations, goals, and strategies. Here, the focus will be on the operationalisation of framing. This sub-chapter will first describe the data collection process. Furthermore, the selected time frame is explained and the types of sources that are used are presented. Secondly, this sub-chapter will outline the coding process and the established categories.

3.2.1 Data Collection

The statements assessed in the data collection is limited to the period 1 January 2022 to 31 July 2022. This period was chosen because the EC submitted the proposition for the CCDA on 31 December 2021 (Kurmayer, 2022b). In the following weeks, member states could provide feedback to the Commission (European Commission, 2022). After this, the Commission adopted the CCDA on 9 March 2022. On 6 July, a vote in the EP did not reach the needed majority to reject the CCDA (European Parliament, 2022). The Council of the EU did not object to the act either by the end of the scrutiny period on 11 July. Thus, the CCDA entered into force in 2023. The period for data collection was set to 31 July 2022 to capture the immediate reactions to the vote in the European Parliament.

Initially, the aim was to focus on sources directly linked to the German governmental parties. These sources are valuable as they reflect the positions of individual politicians and parties, as well as joint governmental statements. Furthermore, using these sources, the context of the statements could be examined. The term "Taxonomie" was used to search various official web pages. Other terms as "Nachhaltige Einstufung" (sustainable classification), "Gas", "Nuklear" (nuclear), or "Atomkraft" (nuclear power) were discarded as they gave many, and mostly irrelevant, results. The sources included in the first round of data collection were the three parties' national web pages and the web pages specifically for the fraction of parties in government. Furthermore, the official web pages of the government and the parliament were searched. Additionally, all the web pages of the federal ministries were searched. The three following ministries had relevant results:

Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz[6] (BMUV), Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz[7] (BMWK), and Bundesministerium der Finanzen[8] (BMF). Finally, the Parliament's official newspaper, "Das Parlament" was also included. These sources gave results of different types of text, e.g., parliamentary sessions, press conferences, speeches, official statements, articles etc. Nevertheless, several texts overlapped, and 54 results relevant were considered relevant. Table 4 provides an overview of the sources and types of texts.

Table 4: Initial Data Collection

Webpage		Type of text	Number of texts
The German parliament: www.bundestag.de		Parliamentary questioning and responses by the government; parliamentary sessions; newsletters; preliminary law; discussion with experts	15
The German government: www.bundesregierung.de		Press conferences; speech	9
Ministries' webpages	BMUV: www.bmuv.de	Statements; press releases; interviews	5
	BMWK: www.bmwk.de	Statements; press releases; magazine	5
	BMF: www.bundesfinanzministerium.de	Interview	1
Party's webpages	SPD: www.spd.de & www.spdfraktion.de	Press release; party programme	2
	The Green Party: www.gruene.de & www.gruene-bundestag.de	Articles; speeches; statements; podcast transcription	13
	FDP: www.fdp.de & www.fdpbt.de	Speech; statement; policy paper; article	2
Parliamentary newspaper "Das Parlament": www.das-parlament.de		Newspaper articles	2
		Total	**54**

Source: Author's own compilation.

As the initial search gave fewer results than expected, I decided to expand the number of sources. The database Factiva gives access to various German newspaper articles and was thus used to supplement the data collection. I expected to find interviews, quotes, or paraphrases by politicians of the governing parties that were not accessible through the web pages. Searching for German newspapers in German language with the search term "(EU or Europa or Europäische) and (Taxonomie or nachhaltige Einstufung) and Gas and

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[6] English: Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
[7] English: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
[8] English: Federal Ministry of Finance

(Atom* or Kern*)" in Factiva gives 2.299 results. This shows that the topic was well covered in newspapers. The search had to be limited as there was not enough time to review all the articles. According to Statista (2023), the daily newspapers with the highest circulation in Germany are Bild, „Süddeutsche Zeitung" (SZ), „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (FAZ), „Handelsblatt", „Die Welt", and „Taz. Die tageszeitung" (Taz). FAZ was not available, but all the other five newspapers were used.

These nationwide newspapers were chosen as searching for regional or local newspapers gave a high percentage of overlap in newspaper articles. Moreover, these newspapers stem from different publishers[9]. Additionally, they are different types of newspapers and have different target groups. For instance, Bild is particularly tabloid and sensational (Esser & Brüggemann, 2010). Furthermore, SZ is a serious and acknowledged newspaper through independent journalism and represents various opinions (deutschland.de, 2020). Taz is a politically-left newspaper with a mixture of news and entertainment (deutschland.de, 2020). Die Welt is a bourgeois-conservative newspaper focusing on news analyses and columns (deutschland.de, 2020). Finally, Handelsblatt is the most prominent economic and finance newspaper in Germany with a liberal orientation (eurotopics, n.d.).

Searching for these five newspapers' original and online versions with the same term as above gave 278 results. Moreover, not all these results were relevant. Only newspaper articles which used direct citations from politicians or a governmental institution (e.g. the ministry of finance) were included. Furthermore, paraphrases were only included if they were written in the German grammatical form "indirect speech"[10]. This was done in order to avoid including the newspaper framing. For instance, using this method, I could exclude statements as the following which appeared in Bild: "Chancellor Olaf Scholz (63, SPD) is not upset about the taxonomy regulation. (...) Finance Minister Christian Lindner (43, FDP) would also rather argue about debt policy in the EU than about nuclear power"[11] (Block, 2022).

Furthermore, articles only quoting German Green, Liberal, or Social Democratic politicians who were members of the European Parliament were not included. Even though they represent the same party, they work in another institution than the one investigated here. Local or regional politicians were not quoted in the relevant documents which were examined. Moreover, statements related to the debate on a "social taxonomy" and the impact of the taxonomy on shipping were also excluded. As expected, quotes, paraphrases, and interviews which were not published on the other web pages were identified. In addition to this, some articles included tweets from politicians. 91 of the newspaper articles proved to be relevant. Another 30 articles were excluded as quotes directly overlapped with those found in the initial data collection or with other newspaper articles. Thus, 61 newspaper articles were included (see Table 5). The total amount of documents that were examined in the coding process were 115. A list of all the documents used for data collection can be found in Appendix 1.

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[9] Axel Springer EG publishes Bild and Die Welt, Süddeutsche Zeitung GmbH publishes SZ, Handelsblatt Media Group (DvH Medien) publishes Handelsblatt, and Taz. Die Tageszeitung Verlagsgenossenschaft publishes Taz

[10] Identified by the verb form subjunctive I (Konjunktiv I)

[11] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Kanzler Olaf Scholz (63, SPD) regt sich über die Taxonomie-Verordnung nicht auf. (…) Auch Finanzminister Christian Lindner (43, FDP) will sich in der EU lieber über Schuldenpolitik als über Atomstrom streiten"

Table 5: Included newspaper articles

Newspapers	Number of articles
Handelsblatt	22
Die Süddeutsche Zeitung	15
Die Welt	13
Taz. die tageszeitung	8
Bild	3
Total	**61**

Source: Author's own compilation.

3.2.2 Coding and Categories

Nvivo was used to organise, code, and categorise the statements of the relevant texts. First, relevant statements were analysed to be either diagnostic or prognostic according to the conceptualisation presented in the previous chapter. Table 6 summarises the conceptualisation. For instance, the following statement by finance minister Christian Lindner (Liberals) was classified to be diagnostic as it presents nuclear energy as a problematic part of the taxonomy: "In this case it is clear that nuclear energy is CO2-free, but it is anything but sustainable. Just think of the unresolved final storage problem"[12] (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022a).

Table 6: Diagnostic and prognostic frames

Diagnostic frames	Prognostic frames
• Identify an event or aspect of reality as problematic • Express who or what is to blame or other causal aspects of the problem	• Suggest solutions to the problems identified • Explains which solution should or should not be pursued

Source: Author's own compilation based on Snow and Benford (1988).

The diagnostic and prognostic classification was further nuanced by creating codes and sub-codes. The codes relate to the content of the statements. They say something about what aspect of the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the taxonomy is problematic or who is to blame for it. For example, Lindner's quote was coded as "nuclear energy is not sustainable due to final storage problem". Initially, this procedure resulted in many detailed codes. Following this, similar codes were combined to make more general codes. Hence, specific codes such as "nuclear energy is not sustainable due to final storage problem" were included in the more general codes such as "nuclear energy is not sustainable". Another example of the code "nuclear energy is not sustainable" is the following statement: "Nuclear energy is not sustainable, it is connected to immense risks, it is too expensive, and the planning and construction processes take far too long for it to make any

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[12] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „In der Sache ist klar, dass Kernenergie CO2-frei ist, aber alles andere als nachhaltig. Man denke nur an die ungelöste Endlager-Problematik"

contribution to the goal of climate neutrality"[13] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2022c).

In addition, this statement was also coded as "nuclear energy is not safe", "nuclear energy is expensive", and "nuclear energy is complicated or bureaucratic". After reviewing all the codes, a total of 45 codes and sub-codes were left, which were sorted into categories (see table 7). This way, similar codes were gathered, making it easier to analyse the results. Due to the quantity of the codes, I will not describe all of them here. However, an overview of all the categories, codes, and sub-codes can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 7: Coding categories

Diagnostic	Prognostic
• Blame • Cultural • Economic • Environmental • Security • Pragmatic	• Active • Passive

Source: Author's own compilation.

For the diagnostic codes, the following categories were established: "Blame"; "Cultural"; "Economic"; "Environmental"; "Security"; and "Pragmatic". All the codes which blamed someone or something were placed in the blame category. Codes identifying the discussion's cultural aspects as problematic were sorted into the cultural category. Furthermore, codes which point at economic or environmental issues in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy were categorised respectively. For instance, the "nuclear energy is not sustainable" code was placed in the environmental category, and the "nuclear energy is expensive" code was categorised as economic. Additionally, codes as "nuclear energy is not safe" were categorised into security. Finally, the code "nuclear energy is complicated or bureaucratic", and other codes relating to the issue's non-ideological, legal, or technical aspects were categorised as pragmatic.

The categories "Active" and "Passive" were created for the prognostic codes. Here codes were divided based on whether they suggested solutions that required the government's active measures. For example, Steffi Lemke (The Greens) who is head of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) said: "Our statement will contain a clear no"[14] (Bundesministerium für Umwelt Naturschutz nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz, 2022a). This statement was coded „Position against CCDA". All statements linked to the government perusing to make statements against the CCDA, vote against it in the Council of the EU or have talks with the EU were gathered in this code. This code was categorised as active.

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[13] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Atomkraft ist nicht nachhaltig, mit immensen Risiken verbunden, sie ist zu teuer und die Planungs- und Bauprozesse dauern viel zu lange, als dass sie noch einen Beitrag zum Ziel der Klimaneutralität leisten könnte"
[14] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "Unsere Stellungnahme wird ein klares Nein enthalten"

Another example is the following statement by Jürgen Trittin (The Greens): „Part of being a good European is sometimes suffering a bitter defeat, like the one we suffered as a federal government on the question of the taxonomy. We will probably not be able to stop that"[15] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2022c). The statement was coded as "the government cannot do anything". In other words, this code was assigned to all statements that somehow expressed that the issue is out of the hands of the government. This statement justified non-action from the government and was therefore categorised as passive.

3.3 Limitations

The are several factors which limit the study. Only statements by governmental politicians or institutions were analysed during the data collection to secure higher validity. However, a couple of aspects have influenced the validity of the results. For instance, new energy and environmental debates arose after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the following energy crisis in Germany. A crucial question was linked to how Russian gas supply should be replaced (Tagesschau, 2022e). Discussions were held on whether the end of the nuclear era should be extended and whether a quick expansion of liquified natural gas (LNG) terminals would solve the crisis (Tagesschau, 2022a, 2022d). In the newspaper articles, the debate on the CCDA was often intertwined with these debates. Furthermore, citations by politicians were sometimes given with little context, making it challenging to identify which debate the statement was commenting on. On the other hand, a significant majority of the documents analysed are from January 2022. 47 of the 61 newspaper articles were published in January. Nonetheless, the question could be raised of whether these debates should have been examined together.

Another limitation of this study relates to reliability. Van Gorp (2005, p. 484) asks an interesting question regarding the detecting frames in texts: "How can they be defined independently of the researcher's perspective, knowing that the naming of frames in itself already involves a kind of framing?". In doing a discourse analysis, the researcher's interpretation is at the core of understanding and producing meaning (Bratberg, 2021). However, this is at the core of constructivism, to accept that "observations and experience depend on the perspective of the investigator" and that "they are not neutral and not necessarily consistent across investigators" (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, p. 10).

Additionally, by analysing frames it is not possible to establish a strong causal relationship (Lindekilde & Olesen, 2014). It is difficult to establish exactly what influences the production and development of frames. While this thesis attempts to pinpoint some possible influential factors, it is not possible to say anything about the direction of the relationship. In other words, the thesis cannot answer whether a frame has emerged due to a certain framing consideration, goal, or strategy. Nonetheless, I believe looking at the range of factors described, it will still give valuable insights regarding the parties' framing efforts.

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[15] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Guter Europäer wird man nicht dadurch, dass man immer in der Mehrheit ist. Zu einem guten Europäer gehört, dass man auch mal eine bittere Niederlage erleidet, wie wir sie als Bundesregierung in der Frage der Taxonomie erlitten haben. Das werden wir wahrscheinlich nicht aufhalten können"

4 Identifying the Frames and the Environmental Discourse of the German Governmental Parties

This chapter aims to present and analyse the diagnostic and prognostic frames identified. Based on the findings, the parties' environmental discourse is examined. The identified environmental discourse is then compared to the parties' previous environmental discourse. Hence, this chapter answers the first main research question and sub-research questions. To recapitulate, the main research question asks how the governing parties in Germany frame the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. The first sub-question (1a) examines how the governing parties frame the problem (diagnostic) and the solution (prognostic) in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. The second sub-question (1b) seeks to answer whether the identified frames reflect a continuity or a break with the parties' traditional environmental discourse. The structure of the chapter reflects the chronological order of the research questions. Firstly, section 4.1 introduces and analyses the diagnostic frames. Secondly, section 4.2 illustrates and examines the prognostic frames. Thirdly, section 4.3 compares the results with the traditional environmental discourse of the coalition parties.

4.1 The Diagnostic Frames

As presented in the methodology chapter, the identified diagnostic frames are sorted into six different thematic categories. The three German governing parties produced frames that expressed blame in the discussion on including gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. The government also created frames that emphasised positive or negative cultural, economic, environmental or security aspects of the problem. Finally, pragmatic frames were also identified. Figures 1 to 6 give an overview of the quantity of the frames identified in each category. The frames are sorted according to whether the Social Democrats, the Greens, the Liberals, or the government employed the frame. Frames used by ministries or governmental speakers are understood to be "the government".

A general finding is that the Green Party produced the most statements and documents regarding the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. A complete collection of the number of frames used by each party can be found in Appendix 3. One hundred statements were coded to be the Green Party. Whereas for the Liberals, 25 statements were coded, and for the Social Democrats, 22 statements were coded. Furthermore, 56 statements were coded as the government. There might be several reasons for this. One reason is that two of the ministries responsible for questions relating to the environment and energy sources like nuclear power and gas are led by politicians from the Green Party. Robert Habeck from the Greens is head of the BMWK. Furthermore, the BMWK has historically been central in shaping German EU policies (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, n.d.). The BMUV is led by the green politician Steffi Lemke. These two politicians stood for a total of 50 coded statements. Furthermore, Lemke

also gave a couple of interviews about the CCDA in newspapers, and Habeck was prominent in press releases.

However, as the discussion also relates to finance, it was surprising only to identify 13 statements by the liberal politician Christian Lindner, the head of the BMF. Moreover, with 11 coded statements, Chancellor Olaf Scholz was the Social Democrat most frequently commenting on the issue. Interestingly, the web pages of both the Social Democrats and the Liberals gave limited results regarding the proposed delegated act of the taxonomy (2 each). In contrast, the Greens had several (13) results on the topic. Furthermore, in the parliamentary sessions, primarily politicians from the Greens commented on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy. Thus, when assessing the findings, the prominence of the Green Party statements should be kept in mind.

Figure 1: Overview of frames expressing blame
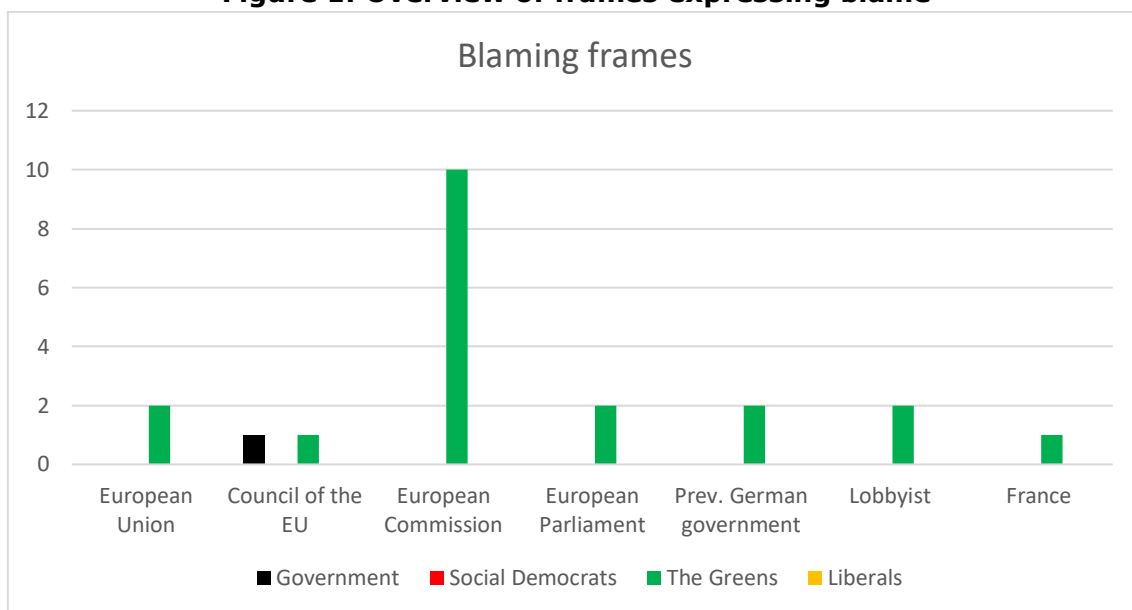
Source: Author's own compilation

Notably, frames that expressed blame mainly were used by the Green Party (see figure 1). The Green Party most frequently blamed the European Union and its institutions. Mainly the European Commission was blamed. This is not unexpected, as the EC was the actor proposing the CCDA. In addition, the Commission is the institution most often associated with "Brussels" and has the sole right to initiate legislation. For instance, Green politician Steffi Lemke commented that it is: „(…) absolutely wrong that the European Commission intends to include nuclear power in the EU taxonomy for sustainable economic activities"[16] (Welt Online, 2022a). The previous Social-Conservative government under Angela Merkel, gas lobbyists, and France were also blamed by the Greens for why the issue of the CCDA appeared in the first place. Lisa Paus from the Green Party, for example, said that: "Then France realised that nuclear was not at all in it [taxonomy] and that that is not good for

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[16] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "(…) absolut falsch, dass die Europäische Kommission beabsichtigt, Atomkraft in die EU-Taxonomie für nachhaltige Wirtschaftsaktivitäten"

France"[17] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2022e). Nevertheless, an interesting question is why there is a lack of blaming frames by the Social Democrats and the Liberals and, to some extent, the government.

Figure 2: Overview of frames linked to cultural aspects
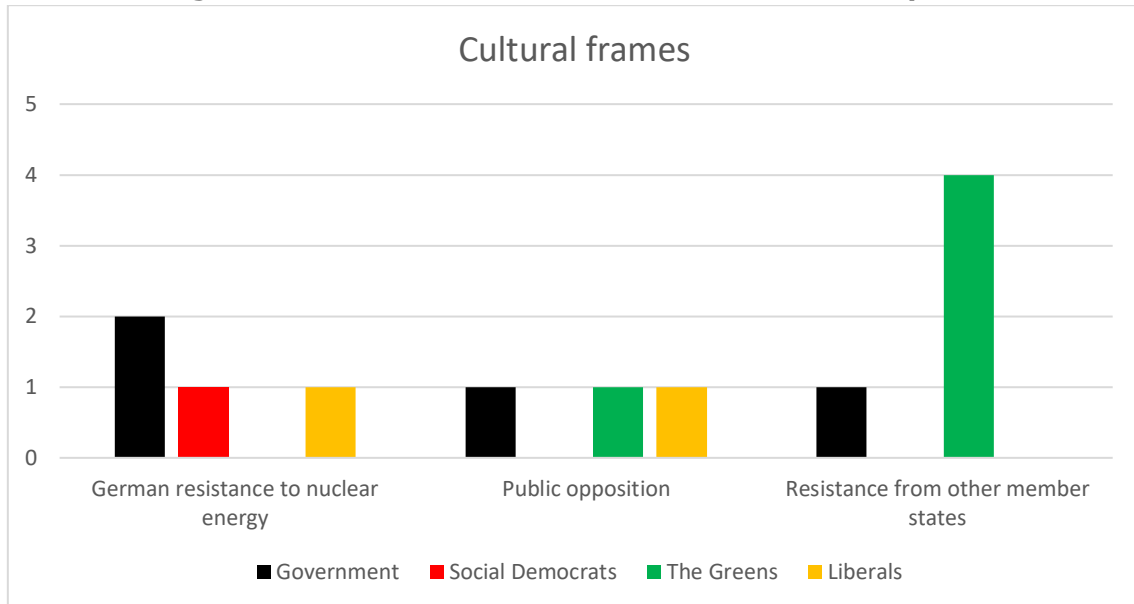
In contrast, cultural frames were used by all of the coalition parties and the government (see figure 2). However, few cultural frames were identified. Among the cultural frames, the Greens used the "resistance from other member states" the most. This frame argues that there is resistance from other EU member states in addition to Germany against the CCDA. For instance, Habeck and Lemke declared the following in a joint statement: "Like a number of other EU member states, the German government clearly rejects the inclusion of nuclear energy in the taxonomy"[18] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2022c). The Green Party also framed the issue of the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy as negative due to "public opposition". The Liberals also used this frame. Additionally, the Liberals and the Social Democrats framed the issue as problematic as "German resistance to nuclear energy" exists. Furthermore, the government used all three frames. This shows that the frames of all the coalition parties were represented in the governmental framing. These frames also demonstrate that the parties and the government attempted to convince that their point of view is widely shared.

Economic frames, on the other hand, were more frequently used in the discussion (see figure 3). Interestingly, all coalition parties and the government used the "nuclear energy is expensive" frame to emphasise why nuclear energy should not be included in the EU taxonomy. For instance, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Social Democrats) said that „The use of nuclear energy is not sustainable and it does not make sense economically (…) substantial

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[17] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Dann hat Frankreich festgestellt, dass Atom ja gar nicht drinsteht und dass das nicht gut ist für Frankreich"
[18] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Wie eine Reihe anderer EU-Mitgliedstaaten lehnt die Bundesregierung die Aufnahme von Atomenergie in die Taxonomie klar ab"

investments are needed for new nuclear power plants"[19] (Welt Online, 2022b). Hence, this frame reflects unity among the parties. However, a majority of the economic frames are not shared by all parties. The Liberals, as the only party, framed nuclear energy as problematic as it is an energy source controlled by the German government. For example, Linder (Liberals) said, „As a free-market economist, I also reject an energy source that permanently calls for state liability, state-owned enterprises and state subsidies"[20] (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022a). This frame alludes to the Liberal Party's ideological preference for economic liberalism and shows ideological nuances in the parties' framing.

Figure 3: Overview of frames linked to economic aspects
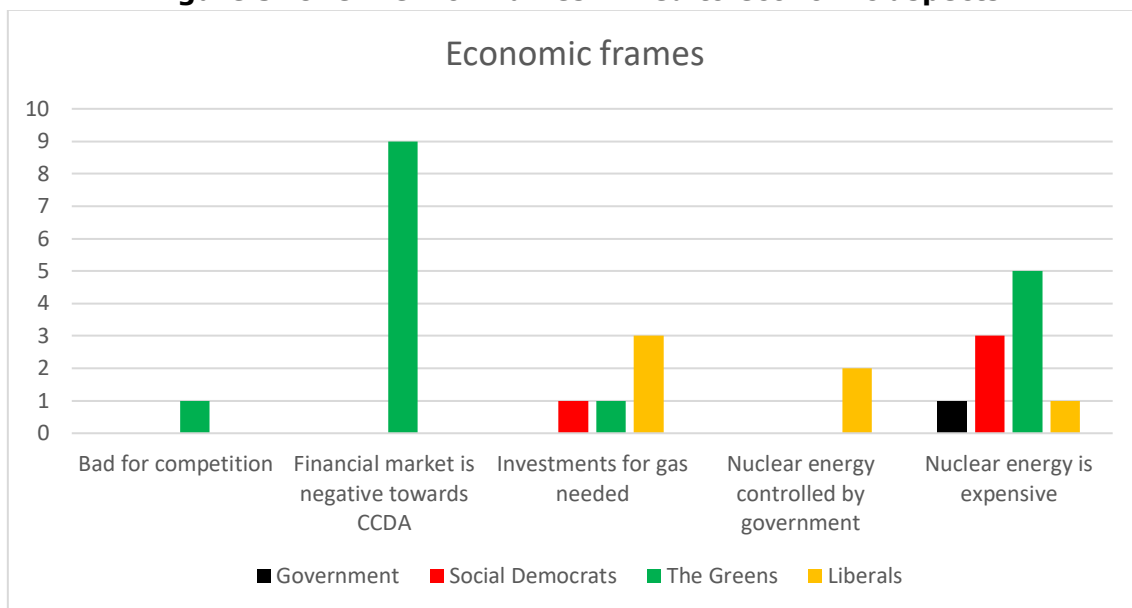
Source: Author's own compilation

Furthermore, amongst the economic frames, the Liberals used the frame "investments for gas are needed" the most. Also, the Social Democrats and the Greens did, to some extent, consider the CCDA as important as investments for gas are needed in Germany. According to the Liberals, "the taxonomy as a whole is very important. The inclusion of natural gas in the taxonomy is also important in view of the high investments required in gas-fired power plants"[21] (Deutscher Bundestag, 2022b). This frame also appears to be consistent with the ideology of the Liberals. The Social Democrats have previously executed pro-gas policies. Therefore this frame is not unpredictable. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the

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[19] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "Die Nutzung der Kernenergie ist nicht nachhaltig und sie ist auch wirtschaftlich nicht sinnvoll (…) erhebliche Investitionen für neue Kernkraftwerke notwendig"

[20] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Als Marktwirtschaftler lehne ich zudem eine Energiequelle ab, die dauerhaft nach Staatshaftung, Staatsbetrieben und Staatssubventionen verlangt"

[21] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Taxonomie insgesamt sei aber sehr wichtig. Auch die Aufnahme von Erdgas in die Taxonomie sei angesichts der erforderlichen hohen Investitionen in Gaskraftwerke wichtig"

Social Democrats did not use the frame more frequently. Considering their ecological ideology, it is also surprising that the Greens used this frame.

The same applies to the Greens' framing that including gas and nuclear energy would be "bad for the competition" in the economic market and that actors in the "financial market is negative towards the CCDA". "Financial market is negative towards the CCDA" was even the most frequently applied frame by the Greens. As an example, Lemke expressed that: "Banks, insurance companies and financial experts are equally against it [taxonomy]. So we are in a much more intense debate than many had expected"[22] (Bundesministerium für Umwelt Naturschutz nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz, 2022b). The emphasis on economic and financial factors might be an attempt to reach out to groups not persuaded by the environmental argument.

Notably, frames relating to environmental aspects of the issue were the most recurrent among all the coalition parties and the government (see figure 4). Unsurprisingly, this category was dominated by the Greens. This shows that the Social Democrats and the Liberals have adopted positions or frames that used to be more traditionally associated with the Green Party. Hence, ecology seems to have become more politically mainstream in Germany. This supports Hajer's (1997) claim that environmental debate has become discursive and is no longer a radical critique. While all the parties agree that this is an environmental problem, the focus has shifted to how the problems and solutions of the debate are interpreted (Hajer, 1997). This will be further elaborated in chapter 4.3.

The frame "nuclear is not sustainable" is interesting as it was much applied by all parties and the government as a whole. Steffen Hebestreit, a speaker of the government, explained that: "Regardless of the outcome of the vote, the federal government stands by its position and considers nuclear energy unsustainable"[23] (Die Bundesregierung, 2022d). This was the government's most used frame. In other words, the government highlighted the narrative that nuclear energy is unsustainable. This also demonstrates consensus among the coalition partners on nuclear power. This is interesting because the Liberal Party, in the autumn of 2022 and spring of 2023, argued for an extension or against the end of the nuclear age in Germany (Tagesschau, 2022c, 2023b).

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[22] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Banken, Versicherungen und Finanzfachleute sprechen sich ebenso dagegen aus. Wir sind also in einer wesentlich intensiveren Debatte als viele erwartet hatten"

[23] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Ungeachtet des Abstimmungsergebnisses bleibt die Bundesregierung bei ihrer Position und betrachtet Kernenergie als nicht nachhaltig"

Figure 4: Overview of frames linked to environmental aspects
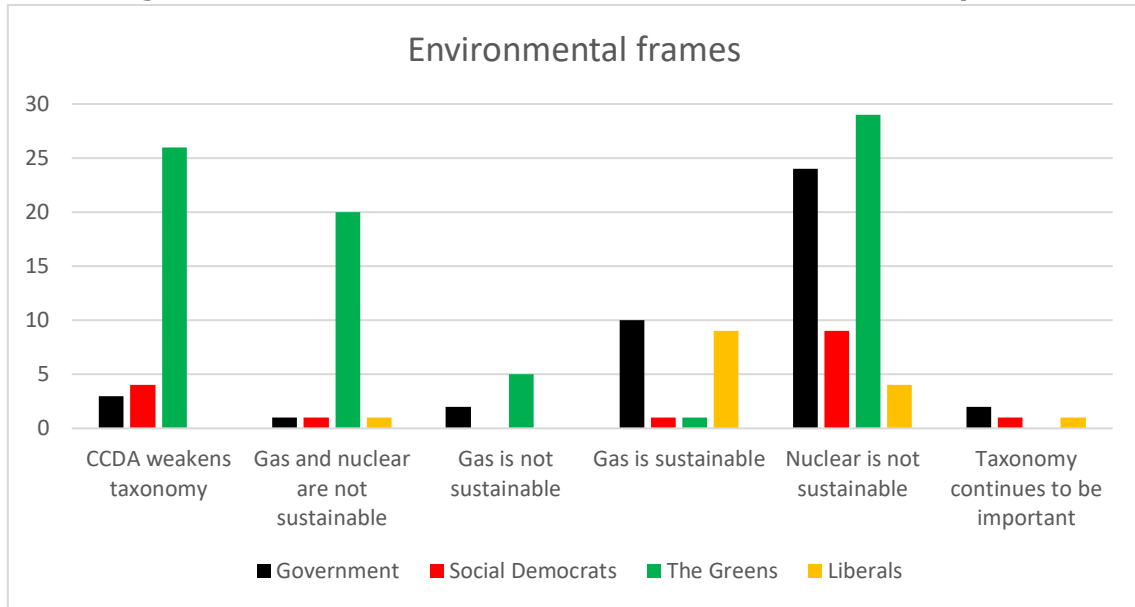
Source: Author's own compilation

However, this is different when it comes to gas. Historically, gas has had a less contested role in German history than nuclear energy (Hake et al., 2015; Halser & Paraschiv, 2022). Nuclear energy appears to be heavily politicised, while gas is possibly even de-politicised in Germany. Even though scholars like Hake et al. (2015) have argued that the nuclear question in Germany is settled, recent debates point to the opposite (Tagesschau, 2022c, 2023b). The debate on nuclear power with starkly polarising positions is flaring up from one time to another. The criticism of gas has, furthermore, been more marginal.

The Green Party is the only party that pursued frames claiming that either gas or both gas and nuclear energy are not sustainable. On the website of the Greens, they state that: "The combustion of natural gas is also unsustainable"[24] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2022a). Nevertheless, Habeck was somewhat less explicit, calling the sustainable classification of gas "questionable" (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2022a). This might be because the other parties were more optimistic about gas. The Linder frames natural gas as sustainable by comparing it to coal: "The situation is different with natural gas. It is not CO2-free, but it is much more climate-friendly than coal"[25] (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022a). Furthermore, the Social Democrats only implicitly framed gas as sustainable in many cases. Olaf Scholz, said gas was "needed" and referred to the coalition agreement between the parties (Handelsblatt, 2022c). However, governmental speaker Hebestreit more explicitly frames gas as sustainable: "If one is committed to clearly

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[24] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Verbrennung von Erdgas ist ebenfalls nicht nachhaltig"

[25] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Anders verhält es sich mit Erdgas. Das ist zwar nicht CO2-frei, aber wesentlich klimafreundlicher als Kohle"

sustainable energy production, as we are, you need natural gas as a bridging technology (…)"[26] (Die Bundesregierung, 2022c).

The Social Democrats are the largest party in the coalition government, and the Chancellor is a Social Democrat. This might suggest that, at least partially, there has been pressure from the Social Democrats, in addition to the Liberals, to frame gas as sustainable. I will delve more into this in the following chapters. Moreover, the Greens, Social Democrats, and the government framed the CCDA to be weakening the taxonomy. Except for the Greens, the other parties and the government also framed the taxonomy to continue to be important. This illustrates that the Green Party views the CCDA as more harmful regarding sustainability goals than the Social Democrats and the Liberals.

Apart from environmental frames, frames linked to security issues were also produced during the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy (see figure 5). "Nuclear energy is not safe" was a frequently used frame by the Greens, the Social Democrats and the government. Lemke, for example, said that: "Nuclear power is not a safe source of energy, we do not yet have a single final repository for highly radioactive waste globally"[27] (Bundesministerium für Umwelt Naturschutz nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz, 2022a). Especially this safety frame, an old one that is regularly revived, it would seem. This is, for instance, reflected by the German reactions after the Chornobyl and Fukushima accidents.

Moreover, the Green Party was the only one to create frames linked to the security threat of labelling Russian gas or nuclear energy as sustainable: "Greenpeace has researched that Russia would benefit greatly from the taxonomy - and could earn up to 4 billion euros more annually. Please prevent us from financing the Russian war of aggression!"[28] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2022d). Furthermore, a couple of statements of the Liberals and the Greens framed gas as an essential transition energy to sustain German energy security. The liberal politician Lukas Köhler explained that: "Without a massive expansion of gas-fired power plants, security of supply cannot be guaranteed"[29] (Handelsblatt, 2022b). All the security frames are playing on people's fears.

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[26] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Wenn man auf eine eindeutig nachhaltige Energieerzeugung setzt, wie wir das tun, braucht man Erdgas als Brückentechnologie (…)"
[27] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Atomkraft ist keine sichere Energiequelle, wir haben global noch kein einziges Endlager für hoch radioaktive Abfälle"
[28] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Greenpeace hat rechercheriert, dass Russland stark von der Taxonomie profitieren würde - und bis zu 4 Milliarden Euro jährlich mehr verdienen könnte. Bitte verhindern Sie, dass wir den russischen Angriffskrieg finanzieren!"
[29] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Ohne einen massiven Zubau an Gaskraftwerken kann die Versorgungssicherheit nicht gewährleistet werden"

Figure 5: Overview of frames linked to security aspects
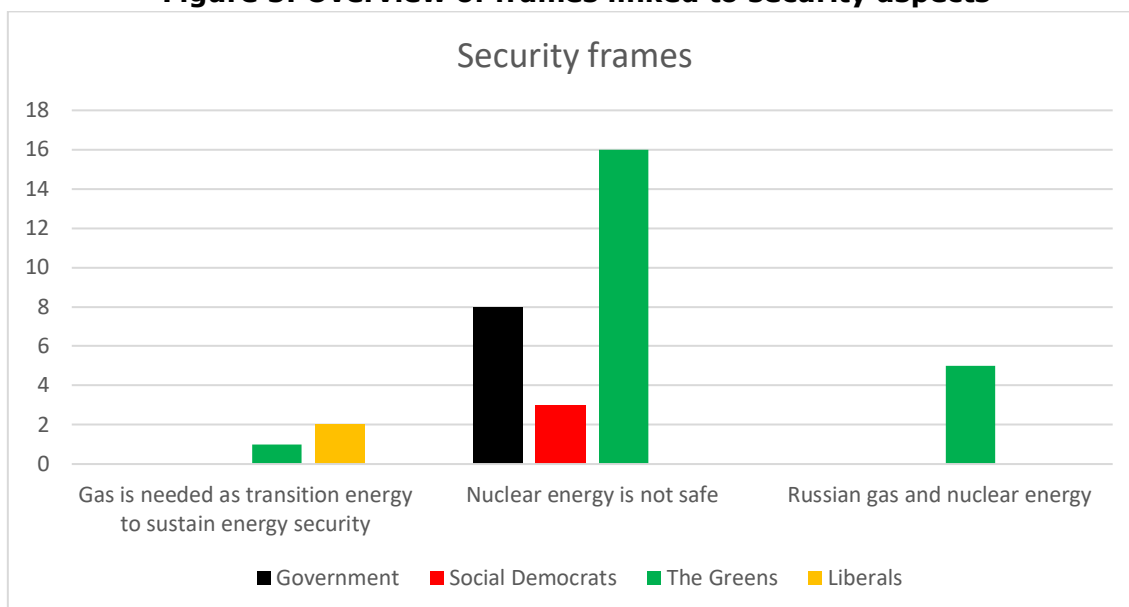
Source: Author's own compilation

Finally, pragmatic frames were the most commonly used frames in the discussion after environmental frames. Especially the government frequently applied pragmatic frames. The pragmatic frames highlight practical, factual or non-ideological aspects of the issue. For instance, the government framed gas as a short-term transition energy (see figure 6). "We also campaigned for this because we are clearly convinced that we need natural gas as a bridging technology on the way to CO2 neutrality, which is to be achieved by 2045 at the latest"[30] (Die Bundesregierung, 2022d). Also, the Green Party and the Social Democrats emphasised the planned factual timeframe of gas investments. This de-politicises the issue by pointing at certain factual circumstances or underlining what is "realistic" and what is not. It seems unexpected that the Greens frame gas as necessary. However, this might be due to concessions towards the other parties. Hence, a pragmatic framing of gas might help the Green Party to de-politicise the issue vis-a-vis more ecologically stringent parts of the parties and environmental movements.

Moreover, the government, the Greens and the Liberals highlighted technical aspects in the debate. Technical frames refer to technicalities of the CCDA, the process or the governmental position: "The Federal Government's statement was sent to the Bundestag in accordance with the principles of information regulated in § 3 of the Act on the Cooperation of the Federal Government and the German Parliament in European Union Affairs (EUZBBG)"[31] (Deutscher Bundestag, 2022c). Technical framing like this can serve to answer questions without taking a clear ideological stance.

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[30] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "Wir haben uns auch dafür eingesetzt, weil wir klar der Überzeugung sind, dass wir Erdgas als Brückentechnologie auf dem Weg zur CO2-Neutralität, die spätestens 2045 erreicht werden soll, brauchen"

[31] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung wurde dem Bundestag gemäß den in § 3 des Gesetzes über die Zusammenarbeit von Bundesregierung und Deutschem Bundestag in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union (EUZBBG) geregelten Grundsätzen der Unterrichtung zugestellt"

Figure 6: Overview of frames linked to pragmatic aspects
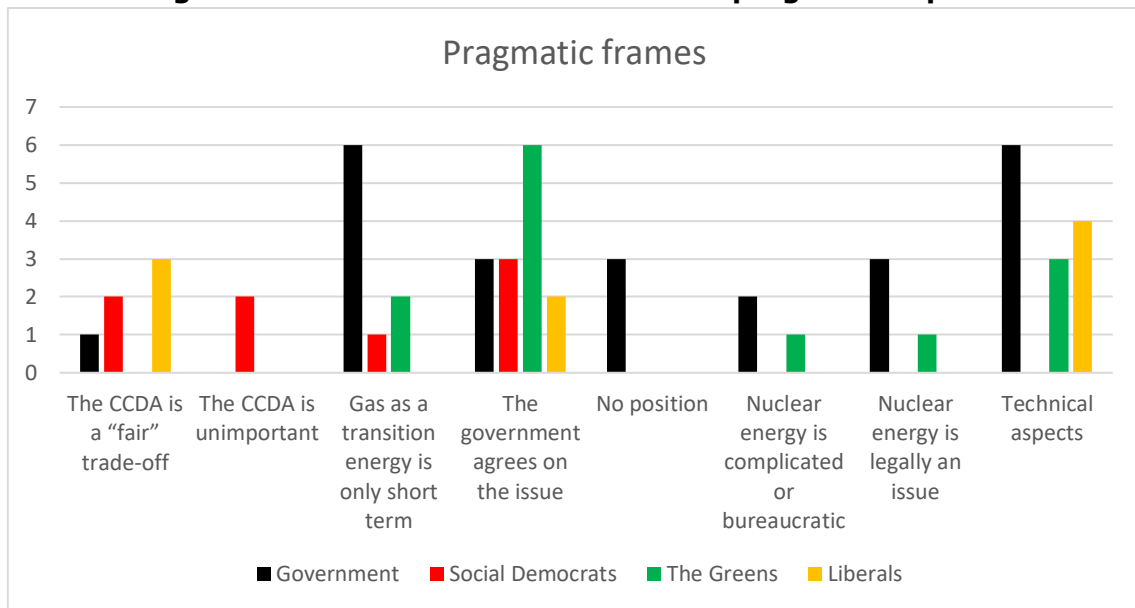
Source: Author's own compilation

This also applies to the frames "nuclear energy is complicated or bureaucratic", "nuclear energy is legally an issue", and statements where "no position" was given. Both the government and the Green Party framed nuclear energy as complicated or bureaucratic. For instance, this frame was used regarding German rules and regulations for the construction of power plants. The Greens and the government also framed nuclear energy as a legal issue: "In addition, it [the government] expresses its doubts that the inclusion of nuclear energy is compatible with the requirements of the Taxonomy Ordinance and thus draws attention to legal concerns"[32] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2022b). Furthermore, in some press conferences, the government did not answer the questions on including gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy or refer to where an answer could be found without stating the answer.

Furthermore, the government and all the three coalition parties frequently used frames in the discussion, underlining that the coalition government agrees in the discussion on the CCDA. This is significant because, as the findings have shown, they did in fact not agree on the issue of gas. "The federal government has always acted together on this issue and will continue to do so in a timely manner"[33] Chancellor Scholz stated (Die Bundesregierung, 2022b). This illustrates that the governing parties tried to appear more coherent than they were. The coalition is fairly fragile, as there have been many conflicts among the three parties since they came to power. Some recent examples are the conflict over the federal budget or the future heating plans[34] (Tagesschau, 2023c, 2023d). The Liberals, in

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[32] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Zudem bringt sie ihre Zweifel zum Ausdruck, dass die Aufnahme der Atomenergie mit den Vorgaben der Taxonomieverordnung vereinbar ist und macht damit auf rechtliche Bedenken aufmerksam"

[33] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Bundesregierung hat in dieser Frage immer gemeinsam agiert und es auch weiterhin fristgerecht wird tun"

[34] German: "Heizungspläne"

particular, have been under pressure as they have performed weakly in state elections during early 2023 (Tagesschau, 2023a).

In addition, Scholz was also the only one framing the discussion of the CCDA as unimportant: "The question is completely overrated. (...) This is about assessing the activities of companies"[35] (Handelsblatt, 2022a). This might be connected to the fact that he was Minister of Finance under the last Merkel government (Der Bundeskanzler, n.d.). According to Kurmayer (2021), Scholz was responsible for overseeing the EU's green finance rules during those years. However, this is hard to assess as it concerns negotiations which happened behind "closed doors".

The findings also demonstrate that both the Social Democrats and the Liberals, and to a certain degree the government, framed the inclusion of nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy as a fair trade-off for gas. Christian Dürr from the Liberals argued that Germany needs gas and that "In this context, compromising on the use of nuclear energy in other EU countries may well make sense"[36] (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2022b). This shows that the Social Democrats and the Liberals are more convinced that gas is essential to Germany's energy close future than the Greens. They are willing to accept the inclusion of nuclear energy because the CCDA will ease gas investments. Diagnostic frames were most used in the discussion. Nonetheless, the prognostic frames the parties used in the discussion also give valuable insights.

4.2 The Prognostic Frames

As mentioned in chapter 3, the prognostic frames were divided into the two categories: active and passive. The number of frames used by each party and the government of each category is presented in figure 7 and 8. Figure 7 visualises the active solution frames employed by the three coalition parties and the government. The figure demonstrates that all the parties framed the solution in the discussion to be an official positioning against the CCDA. This frame was especially prevalent in the early stages of the discussion. For instance, the Green politician Katharina Dröge said: „I think a statement by the federal government is extremely important"[37] (Die Welt, 2022). After the official statement on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy was released, the focus shifted towards positioning against the delegated act in the Council of the EU or having talks with the EU or EU officials. "If nuclear energy remains in it in the form it is in now, then Germany should vote no"[38] Habeck stated regarding the vote in the Council of the EU (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2022c).

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[35]Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Frage wird völlig überbewertet. (…) Es geht hier um die Einschätzung der Aktivitäten von Unternehmen"

[36] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "In diesem Zusammenhang Kompromisse in Bezug auf die Nutzung der Kernenergie in anderen EU-Ländern einzugehen, kann durchaus Sinn machen"

[37] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Ich halte eine Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung für extrem wichtig"

[38] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Wenn Atomenergie in der Form, wie sie jetzt drinsteht, auch drinbleibt, dann sollte Deutschland mit Nein stimmen"

Figure 7: Overview of frames linked to active solutions
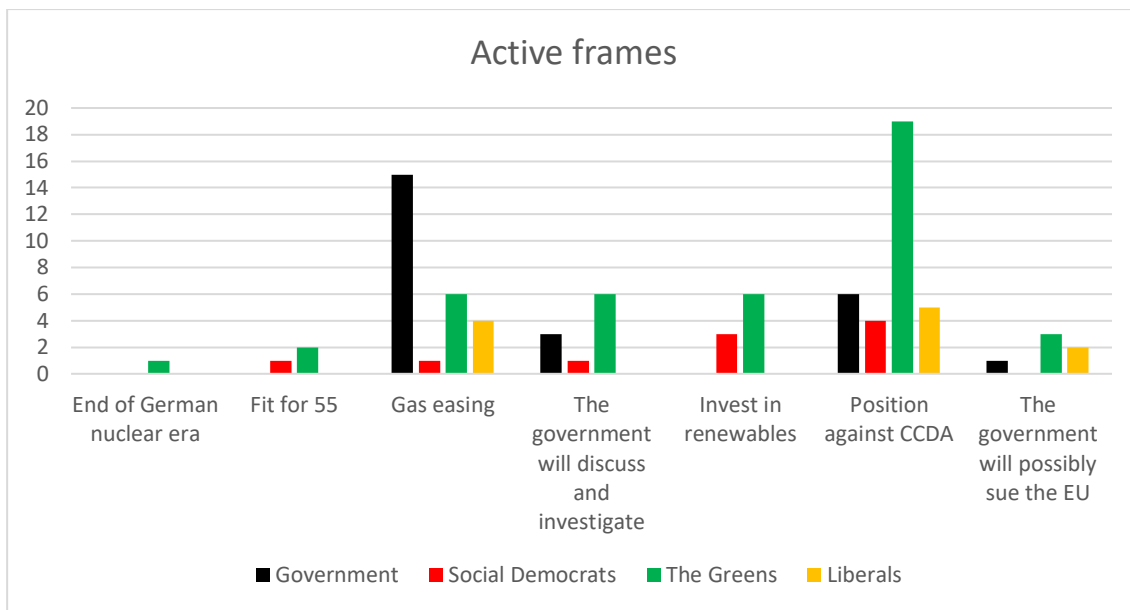
Source: Author's own compilation

Moreover, the government framed gas easing as a solution. In the official statement of the government, which was published on 21 January, the government pushed for an easing of the restrictions for gas:

> The Federal Government also points out that it is inconsistent if the delegated act rightly defines strict conditions for natural gas as a transitional technology and, for example, requires technical progress, while for nuclear energy, the current state of the art and the applicable legal situation are sufficient[39] (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2022b).

"Infrastructure for hydrogen" was identified as a much-used sub-frame of the gas-easing-frame (not represented in figure 7). For example, governmental speaker Hebestreit expressed the following: "If one is committed to clearly sustainable energy production, as we are doing, one does need natural gas as a bridging technology, and one does need the investments to make such an H2-ready power plant possible"[40] (Die Bundesregierung, 2022c). This framing reflects that the government united believes that gas is necessary and effective transition energy as its infrastructure can be used for hydrogen in the future. Nonetheless, it seems surprising that this frame is also much used by the Green Party. This was possibly done to accommodate those parts of the party that were firmly against gas.

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[39] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Die Bundesregierung weist außerdem darauf hin, dass es inkonsistent ist, wenn der delegierte Rechtsakt für Erdgas als Übergangstechnologie zu recht strikte Voraussetzungen definiert und bspw. technischen Fortschritt verlangt, bei der Atomenergie demgegenüber den derzeitigen Stand der Technik und die geltende Rechtslage ausreichen lässt"

[40] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "Wenn man auf eine eindeutig nachhaltige Energieerzeugung setzt, wie wir das tun, braucht man Erdgas als Brückentechnologie, und man braucht die Investitionen, um ein solches H2-readyKraftwerk zu ermöglichen"

Another active prognostic frame that was applied in the discussion was that the government will discuss and investigate more on the issue of the CCDA. The Liberals did not use this frame. This could arguably also be a passive prognostic frame, as it remains unclear whether and to what extent this happened. However, it is regarded as active because the frame is used to convince recipients that the coalition parties actively are doing something about the problem.

Furthermore, the Social Democrats and the Greens framed increased investments in renewable energies to be a suggested solution in the discussion. Matthias Miersch from the Social Democracts proposed: "That's why we must fight together to ensure that everything is done for renewables at national level, at European level and (...) within the framework of the Climate Club"[41] (Deutscher Bundestag, 2022a). This framing is taking the focus away from the problem of the CCDA itself. It is a proposal to alternatively act on renewable investment through other channels. While it may not be possible to change the course of the CCDA, Germany or the EU could still invest in renewables.

In addition, the Social Democrats and the Greens framed the advancement of the "Fit for 55" package as a solution. Scholz evidently argued that: "(...) not only when we discuss issues of taxonomy, but rather when it comes to advancing the European 'Fit for 55' package, which lays important foundations for (...) being able to stop climate change"[42] (Die Bundesregierung, 2022a). Similarly, as the "invest in renewables" frame, this appears to be a distracting frame, as it proposes a solution that is unrelated to the issue itself.

The Greens also once framed the German end of the nuclear era as the solution to the problem of including nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy. This was a briefly used frame to underline that Germany will not be using nuclear energy no matter what the EU decides. Finally, the Liberals, Greens, and the government used the frame "the government will possibly sue the EU" over the decision to include of nuclear energy in the taxonomy. The Social Democrats did not pursue this frame. This frame was, however, not much used. This is probably because there was some disagreement on the topic. This is seen through the use of the passive frame "the government will not sue the EU".

As seen in figure 8, passive solution frames were less frequently identified in the discussion than active frames. Particularly early in the discussion, the Greens and the Liberals framed the outcome of the issue to be in the hands of the European Commission. This is probably connected to the fact the EU member states had time to give feedback during January 2022, and the formal adoption of the CCDA first was not until 9 March 2022 (Kurmayer, 2022b). Furthermore, the Social Democrats, the Liberals and especially the Green Party framed the solution to be in the hands of the European Parliament. Katharina Beck from the Green Party argued: "It is still possible to prevent nuclear and gas from being classified as sustainable. A cross-party coalition of EU parliamentarians seems to be emerging to stop the inclusion of nuclear and gas in the EU taxonomy"[43] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen,

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[41] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: "Deswegen müssen wir gemeinsam dafür kämpfen, dass auf nationaler Ebene, auf europäischer Ebene und (…) im Rahmen des Klimaklubs alles für die Erneuerbaren getan wird"

[42] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „(…) nicht nur, wenn wir über Fragen von Taxonomie diskutieren, sondern vielmehr, wenn es darum geht, das europäische Paket ‚Fit for 55' voranzubringen, das wichtige Grundlagen dafür legt, (…), um den Klimawandel aufhalten zu können"

[43] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Es ist noch möglich, eine Einstufung von Atom und Gas als nachhaltig zu verhindern. Es scheint sich eine parteiübergreifende Koalition

2022b). This framing was used more later in the debate. This is unsurprising as the vote in the EP was on 6 July 2022 (European Parliament, 2022). Hence, the non-action of the coalition government was justified by first framing it as being in the hands of the European Commission and later in those of the European Parliament. Notably, German members of the EP from the Green Party campaigned to vote against the approval of the CCDA (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2022a).

Figure 8: Overview of frames linked to passive solutions
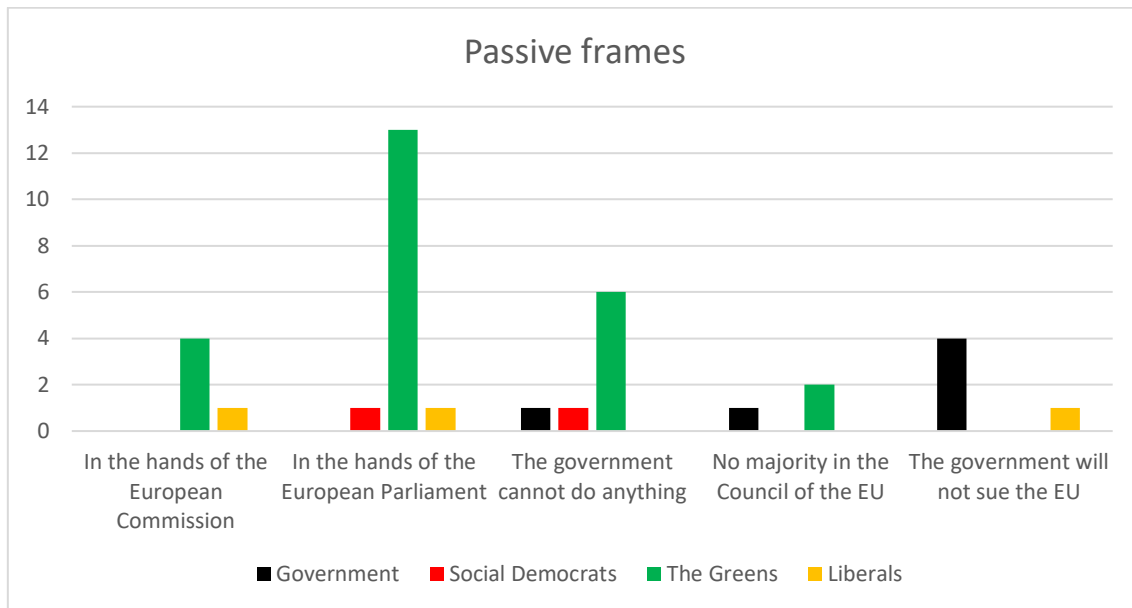
Source: Author's own compilation

Moreover, the Greens, the Social Democrats and the government framed the CCDA as not having any solution that the government could pursue. This is demonstrated by the earlier mentioned statement by the Green politician Jürgen Trittin: „Part of being a good European is sometimes suffering a bitter defeat, like the one we suffered as a federal government on the question of the taxonomy. We will probably not be able to stop that"[44] (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2022c). This frame is interesting as it is not entirely true. For instance, the government could have sued the EU or pursued domestic measures. However, because mainly the Green Party used the frame, it could reflect their political room for manoeuvre. Possibly, the Green Party was restricted by the Social Democrats and Liberals from acting further on the matter. For example, this is can be identified in the frame "the government will not sue the EU over the CCDA". The government and the Liberals used this frame as a solution that should not be pursued. Finally, a not so much used frame by the Greens and

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von EU-Parlamentarier*innen herauszubilden, die die Aufnahme von Atom und Gas in die EU-Taxonomie stoppen wollen"

[44] Author's own translation. Original statement in German: „Guter Europäer wird man nicht dadurch, dass man immer in der Mehrheit ist. Zu einem guten Europäer gehört, dass man auch mal eine bittere Niederlage erleidet, wie wir sie als Bundesregierung in der Frage der Taxonomie erlitten haben. Das werden wir wahrscheinlich nicht aufhalten können"

the government is that the issue does not have a solution as there would not be any majority in the Council of the EU for rejecting the CCDA.

4.3 Comparing the Environmental Discourses

Now that all the frames identified in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy have been presented, the parties' environmental discourse can be analysed. This chapter will discuss sub-research question 1b, which asks whether the identified frames reflect a continuity or a break with the coalition parties' traditional environmental discourse. This chapter will first revisit the previous environmental discourse of the coalition parties, as presented in chapter 2.1. Secondly, this will be discussed and compared to the frames presented in chapters 4.1 and 4.2, in order to answer the research question.

Chapter 2.1 presented the environmental discourses "energy mix", "energy transition", and "ecological modernisation". Furthermore, previous research has shown that the Social Democrats went from being optimistic towards nuclear energy to being anti-nuclear and becoming part of the energy transition discourse after the Chornobyl accident (Hake et al., 2015; Leipprand et al., 2017). It is more difficult to say something about the previous gas discourse of the coalition parties as this has not been researched. However, the Social Democrats seem to have had more or less continuous natural gas policies (Stern, 2005; Sullivan, 2022; Wintour, 2022).

Based on the literature examined, it is not possible to pinpoint the Green Party's previous gas discourse. Nonetheless, the Greens have continuously been anti-nuclear (Hake et al., 2015). According to Leipprand et al. (2017), the Greens have also been part of the transition discourse. On the other hand, the Liberals were part of the energy mix discourse until the Fukushima accident, increasingly drawing on elements from the transition discourse (Buschmann & Oels, 2019; Leipprand et al., 2017). The Liberals stopped being pro-nuclear after the Fukushima accident while continuing to argue that natural gas is a necessary transition energy (Hake et al., 2015; Leipprand et al., 2017).

Moreover, Leipprand et al. (2017) argue that the energy transition discourse and the energy mix discourse have increasingly aligned. Furthermore, the developed energy transition discourse is now part of the ecological modernisation discourse (Leipprand et al., 2017). The core objective of the ecological modernisation discourse is to align environmental protection with mainstream economic logic (Eckersley, 2016; Leipprand et al., 2017). For example, the ecological modernisation discourse argues that environmental objectives can be reached by using economic instruments and increasing resource efficiency and innovation (Leipprand et al., 2017). All governing parties are part of the ecological modernisation discourse (Leipprand et al., 2017).

How do the frames identified in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy compare to the historical environmental discourses of the coalition parties? To untangle this question, I will first examine the parties' discourse on nuclear energy and, secondly, the discourse on gas. All the parties clearly positioned themselves against nuclear energy in the discussion of the CCDA. This is reflected in several frames which the coalition parties used during the discussion. This is clearly demonstrated by three negatively connoted frames which were dominant in the discussion. The frames "nuclear energy is not sustainable" and "nuclear energy is expensive" were frequently used by all parties. In addition, the Greens and the government also emphasised the frame "nuclear energy is

not safe". In other words, according to the government, nuclear energy is not sustainable or safe and expensive. Moreover, the findings show that *all* frames relating to nuclear energy used by the coalition parties presented nuclear energy in a negative way.

This implies that the Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the Liberals have not changed their position regarding nuclear energy since the Fukushima accident. Hence, their discourse regarding nuclear energy has been continuous. This, furthermore, aligns with Hake et al. (2015) and Leipprand et al. (2017) description of the stabilised nuclear positions in Germany post-Fukushima. Another noteworthy finding is that the Liberals were outspoken and verbal in their resistance to nuclear energy. This is noteworthy as during debates on the end of the German nuclear era in late 2022 and early 2023, the Liberals argued for a prolongation of nuclear power (Tagesschau, 2022c, 2023b). It would be interesting to research further why this shift happened.

Secondly, the governing parties framed gas slightly less consistently. Most of the frames relating to gas that the Social Democrats used did not portray gas negatively. This is, for example, explicitly reflected in the frame "gas is sustainable". Nonetheless, this frame was not much used. However, it is also implicitly reflected through the frames "investments for gas needed", "gas as a transition energy is only short term", and "gas easing". The Social Democrats' use of these frames arguably outweighs the alone standing frame "gas and nuclear are not sustainable". This shows that the Social Democrats did not frame natural gas negatively in the discussion on the CCDA. This is probably because large parts of the Social Democratic Party have favoured gas. Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Social Democratic politicians defended the Nord Stream pipelines (Stukenberg, 2021). Conversely, it is somewhat hard to draw conclusions due to the lack of research on the parties' gas discourse. Even so, it appears there is a continuity in the discourse on gas, as the gas policy of the Social Democrats in their previous coalition governments reflected a general optimism about gas (Stern, 2005; Sullivan, 2022; Wintour, 2022).

Similarly, the majority of frames used by the Liberals did not portray gas negatively. The Liberals also once framed gas as sustainable. Other, more frequent, positive or neutral frames they employed were "investments for gas needed", "gas is needed as a transition energy to sustain energy security", and "gas easing". Equally, as the Social Democrats, the Liberals once used the frame "gas and nuclear are not sustainable". However, there seems to be more emphasis on the neutral or positive gas frames. This is not unsurprisingly, as the Liberal Party argued for the necessity of gas being a transition energy (Leipprand et al., 2017). Therefore, this demonstrates continuity in the gas discourse of the Liberals.

Moreover, the Greens have framed gas differently compared to the Social Democrats and the Liberals. They had a less coherent framing of natural gas during the discussion. For instance, the following positive or neutral frames related to gas were used: "gas is sustainable", "investments for gas needed", "gas is needed as a transition energy to sustain energy security", "gas as a transition energy is only short term", and "gas easing". Nevertheless, the Greens used negative gas frames more frequently than the other parties. For example, the negative frames the Greens used were "gas and nuclear are not sustainable", "gas is not sustainable", and "Russian gas and nuclear energy". A reason for the contradicting frames might be due to a split within the party or due to concessions towards coalition partners. This is probably a reflection of ideology meets realpolitik. A conclusion that can be drawn from these results is that the Green Party does not consider natural gas sustainable or favourable in general, but it is accepted as a transition energy.

As the Greens' discourse on gas has not been described in previous research regarding this topic, no conclusion can be drawn on whether this proves to be a break or continuity in their gas discourse.

Furthermore, the findings draw on elements from both the transition discourse and the energy mix discourse. For instance, all parties framed nuclear energy negatively. The anti-nuclear energy framing is a characteristic of the transition discourse. Looking at the Social Democrats and the Greens, they also used the frame "invest in renewables". Thus, they reflect the idea of renewable energies being preferable. However, the Greens emphasise this more than the Social Democrats. This is because the Social Democrats do not necessarily prefer renewables over natural gas. Preferring renewable energies is a characteristic of the transition discourse (Buschmann & Oels, 2019). This framing was, nonetheless, not used by the Liberals.

On the other hand, gas, as a non-renewable energy, is considered a necessary transition technology by all three parties. This is a trait of the energy mix discourse. Radical system change and the phasing out of gas are also transition discourse indicators that were not identified in any of the parties' framing (Buschmann & Oels, 2019; Leipprand et al., 2017). This demonstrates that none of the governing parties clearly represent either the transition or energy mix discourse. Nevertheless, there are differences in their discourse. If put on a scale, the Greens would be closer to the energy transition discourse, and the Liberals would be closer to the energy mix discourse. The Social Democrats would fit between the Greens and the Liberals.

As the parties do not fit into the energy transition discourse nor the energy mix discourse, it seems that the two discourses have aligned as described by Leipprand et al. (2017). However, this might be linked to the fact that the parties are in a coalition government where they must find common ground. It would be necessary to investigate other environmental policy debates of the three parties to determine to what extent the discourses have aligned. Nonetheless, the findings support the argument that the three coalition parties continue to be a part of the ecological modernisation discourse as presented by Leipprand et al. (2017). For example, the governing parties all accept that there will be a transition of energies. Instead of arguing whether there should be an energy transition, the debate considers how this is reached effectively, as Leipprand et al. (2017) described.

Furthermore, all the coalition parties used economic frames, an objective of the ecological modernisation discourse (Leipprand et al., 2017). In particular, this is illustrated by the frame "nuclear is expensive". Interestingly, this is also demonstrated by the sub-frames "better than coal" and "gas infrastructure 'H2 ready'". "Better than coal" argues that gas is more sustainable than coal. The frame "gas infrastructure 'H2 ready'" argues that the gas infrastructure is a good investment as it can be used for hydrogen in the future. These frames use arguments of efficiency, innovation, and other objects of mainstream economic logic (Leipprand et al., 2017). Table 8 summarises the coalition parties' previous environmental discourse compared to the environmental discourse identified in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy.

To conclude the chapter, looking at the coalition parties, there is no shift in the discourse on nuclear energy or gas. Even though gas from Russia is no longer desired, the idea that gas is vital for Germany has not been abandoned, and nuclear energy continues to be taboo. Furthermore, all coalition parties are the same environmental discourse, ecological modernisation. However, there are discursive differences between the parties, especially

regarding gas. Additionally, this case does not reflect the whole picture. Other cases should be researched as the Liberals and the Conservatives have been outspoken about a lifetime expansion of the last nuclear power plants in Germany (Tagesschau, 2022d, 2023b). Another noteworthy finding is that there was no significant shift in the discourse among any parties before and after the beginning of the Russian-led war in Ukraine.

Table 8: The comparison of the environmental discourse of the parties

	2011-2022	**Discussion on the CCDA**
Social Democrats	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear • Pro-natural gas policies	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear • Gas as a transition energy
The Greens	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear • Gas is not sustainable but a necessary transition energy
Liberals	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Gas and coal as transition energies • Pro-nuclear energy position abandoned	• Ecological modernisation discourse • Anti-nuclear • Gas as a transition energy

Source: Author's own compilation based on results from the data collection and Buschmann and Oels (2019); Hake et al. (2015); Leipprand et al. (2017); Stern (2005); Sullivan (2022); Wintour (2022).

5 Identifying the Framing Considerations, Goals and Strategies

This chapter aims to answer the second main research question and its sub-questions. The second research question sets out to examine why the governing parties brought up the particular frames identified in the discussion. The chapter is structured according to research questions. The first sub-question (2a) of the second main research question asks which considerations constrained or facilitated the governing parties' framing. Section 5.1 will examine and answer question 2a. In section 5.2, the second sub-question (2b) will be analysed. Question 2b investigates which framing strategies and framing goals can be identified in the governing parties' framing.

5.1 The Governmental Parties' Framing Considerations

Here I will analyse the six framing considerations identified in chapter 2. The six considerations described are context, ideology, previous commitments, competition, credibility, and legitimacy. The aim of this section is to discuss if and how these considerations constrained or facilitated the governing parties' framing process.

The first consideration described is context. Governmental parties have to consider contextual factors relating to the political, social, cultural and economic environment (Benford & Snow, 2000; Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). Context is a comprehensive consideration, as it can be almost anything. Hence, every aspect cannot be described here. However, a selection of contextual factors which appear to have influenced the parties' framing are presented. The first point regards the political and institutional aspects of the issue. An important contextual consideration is that the decision-making on this issue happened on the EU level. This seems to have both facilitated and constrained the German government's framing efforts.

In the decision-making process, the German government had the possibility to influence the proposed CCDA through multiple EU institutions. For instance, by providing feedback to the Commission, voting against it in the Council of the EU, or campaigning for the vote in the European Parliament (European Council & Council of the European Union, 2023; Kurmayer, 2022b). For example, this facilitated the frames expressing blame towards the EU institutions. It also facilitated the prognostic frames "in the hands of the European Commission/Parliament" and "position against the CCDA". Nonetheless, the fact that the legislation process was on the EU level constrained the production of solution frames.

Furthermore, a social and cultural contextual consideration is linked to the distinct German scepticism towards nuclear energy (Hake et al., 2015, p. 542). Especially after the Fukushima accident in 2011, nuclear energy seemed to turn unanimously as a "no-go" in German society (Hake et al., 2015; Leipprand et al., 2017). This facilitated the large amount of negative nuclear energy frames. It also possibly constrained the production of pro-nuclear frames. However, in late June 2022, the national news programme Tagesschau published a statistic showing that more Germans were for prolonging the nuclear era than

against it (Tagesschau, 2022b). Nonetheless, at this point in the discussion a re-framing of nuclear energy would seem illogical.

Another social and economic contextual factor that I expected to influence the parties' framing was the Russian-led war in Ukraine and the following energy crisis in Germany. This consideration was, however, less influential than anticipated. Still, it did facilitate the frame that it is a security threat to label Russian gas and nuclear energy as sustainable. The Greens were the only party to use this frame. Additionally, this consideration constrained the frequency and production of frames. This is because the Russian invasion of Ukraine probably was the most critical topic on the political agenda in Germany during these months.

The second framing consideration identified is ideology (Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). On the political left-right scale, the Green Party is described as the most left party among the three, followed by the Social Democrats and the Liberals (Dippel et al., 2022; Lachat, 2018). Looking at the GAL-TAN dimension, there is an even more considerable distance between the Green Party to its two coalition partners (Hooghe et al., 2002; Reinl & Wallaschek, 2023). Another ideological consideration is the fact that it is easier for opposition parties to push forward ideological positions than for parties in a coalition government. There will be ideological trade-offs in a coalition government, which constrains the parties from solely pursuing their own ideologies. Hence, the Greens, as a more GAL-oriented party than the Social Democrats and the Liberals, were more constrained in their framing of gas. Considering the Green Party's anti-nuclear history, the significant number of anti-nuclear frames strengthened the party's ideological profile (Hake et al., 2015; Wonka, 2016).

Thirdly, the parties had to consider their previous commitments during the framing process (Helbling, 2014; Snow & Benford, 1988). As shown in section 4.3, all parties reflected continuity in their framing of nuclear energy and gas compared to their previous discourse. The parties' previous commitments also relate to previous policies. For instance, the Liberals were in government (Merkel II) when it was decided to end the nuclear age by 2022 (Bundesamt für die Sicherheit der nuklearen Entsorgung, 2022). Furthermore, both the Liberals (Merkel II) and the Social Democrats (Merkel I, III and IV) were pro-gas while in coalition governments with the Conservatives (Halser & Paraschiv, 2022; Stukenberg, 2021; Sullivan, 2022; Wintour, 2022). In the previous government (Merkel IV) Chancellor Olaf Scholz was Minister of Finance under the last Merkel government where he had overseeing responsibility regarding EU sustainable finance (Der Bundeskanzler, n.d.; Kurmayer, 2021). Arguably, these previous commitments constrained the framing of the Liberals and the Social Democrats.

The fourth framing consideration described is competition (Helbling, 2014; Strøm et al., 2010). Both competition between the parties as well as between the government and the opposition can be observed. For example, all the coalition parties used the frame "the government agrees on the issue". Furthermore, a coalition government primarily wishes for the loss of the opposition parties (Strøm et al., 2010). Thus, this frame was possibly produced to convince voters and counter the opposition with the argument that the government is united and effective. Nonetheless, there was also competition between the coalition parties. This is reflected through the emphasis on different aspects of why nuclear energy is harmful and not agreeing on the status of natural gas. Hence, considerations regarding the competition both within and outside the government constrained the parties' framing.

Fifthly, credibility is an aspect that governing parties have to consider while framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988). Most of the frames used by the governing parties are considered credible, as they do not use false information. However, usurpingly, different facts are emphasised by the parties. This is the core of politics. Moreover, the following prognostic frame could be deemed not credible: "the government cannot do anything". In theory, the government could do something. For example, the government could draft domestic laws or regulations, or they could sue the EU. As mentioned earlier, this frame was used mainly by the Greens. Hence, this might instead be a reflection of their restricted political possibilities. In general, credibility is a consideration that constrains the governing parties in producing frames.

Finally, the coalition government had to consider legitimacy while creating frames (Gerhards, 1995; Helbling, 2014). Legitimacy is a constraining framing consideration as governments in liberal democracies must reflect the appropriateness and rightfulness of the ruling order (Braun & Schmitt, 2009). By looking at the frames and the other considerations, the frames appear to be legitimate. For instance, they are in line with contextual aspects like nuclear scepticism. Furthermore, they also reflect the ideology and previous commitments of the parties. Additionally, most of the frames are credible. Overall, the legitimacy of the coalition parties has not been harmed. However, environmentalists expressed anger and disappointment with the Green Party for not taking a more explicit stance against natural gas in newspapers (Jan Schulte, 2022). Furthermore, this analysis has not considered criticism by the opposition. They likely used frames which would attempt to delegitimise the government.

5.2 The Governmental Parties' Framing Goals and Strategies

This section examines the three framing goals and five framing strategies presented earlier in the thesis. The three framing goals are maximising votes, maximising control within the coalition and maximising the effect on public policy ideologically. The five framing strategies described are bridging, amplification, transformation, counter-framing, politicisation and de-politicisation. Firstly, the framing goals are examined, and secondly, the framing strategies are discussed. It is important to consider that framing goals and strategies are typically reflected implicitly rather than explicitly through the framing of political parties.

The first possible goal that the three governmental parties could pursue is to maximise votes to yield political influence (Elias et al., 2015; Strøm, 1990). Here, a party would have to produce frames that resonate with as many German voters as possible. Arguably, this effect is achieved by using the anti-nuclear frames "nuclear is not sustainable" and "nuclear is not safe". These are frames playing on many people's fears. In addition, polls showing a shift in German public support for nuclear power first emerged in late June 2022 (Tagesschau, 2022b). Moreover, most statements, and thus most frames, were produced during January 2022 (see Appendix 1). Hence, it could be assumed that the parties produced the frames based on the knowledge that nuclear energy has been historically unpopular in Germany. Therefore, the anti-nuclear frames could have been an attempt to achieve the goal of maximising votes.

Another possible framing goal is maximising control within the coalition to secure office benefits or private goods (Strøm, 1990). However, by only looking at the frames produced by the governmental parties, it is not possible to determine if they pursued office benefits or private goods, as described by Strøm (1990). Nonetheless, it is possible to say something about the parties' goal of maximising control within the coalition. In the context of framing, this would concern the ability of a party to have their frames becoming the official framing of the government as a whole. Looking at the environmental frames of the government, it used the frame "gas is sustainable" more frequently than any of the parties. The Liberals were the only party using the frame "gas is sustainable" frequently. Consequently, it appears that the Liberals maximised the control within the coalition on the question of gas. In addition to "gas is sustainable", the government also frequently used the frames "gas as a transition energy is only short term" and "gas easing". This may indicate that the Green Party had to make concessions to the other parties regarding gas.

Furthermore, considering the security frame, "nuclear energy is not safe" seems to be a maximisation of coalition control by the Greens. This frame was not used by the Liberals and only rarely by the Social Democrats. At the same time, the government used the frame less than the Greens but notably more than the Social Democrats. A problem with evaluating governmental control this way is that it does not consider that parties can push specific frames without using them. The Social Democrats are the largest party in the coalition, and the chancellor is also Social Democratic. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the Social Democrats had more control of the coalition than what the frames reflect.

Moreover, this is connected to the third possible framing goal, maximising the ideological effect on public policy (Strøm, 1990). There is an emphasis on the ideological profile of the coalition government as a whole (Strøm, 1990). This is closely linked to the previous goal described. On the one hand, the Greens maximised their ideological effect in the discussion as environmental frames were most prominently used. On the other hand, this might also be due ecological modernisation discourse of all the parties. However, the much-used anti-nuclear frames reflect the Greens' ideological effect. Furthermore, the Liberals and the Social Democrats maximised their ideological effect on gas, considering their less GAL-oriented ideologies and previous commitments to gas. In other words, the Green Party maximised both control and ideology in the coalition regarding nuclear energy and the Social Democrats and the Liberals maximised control and ideology regarding gas.

Keeping this in mind, the framing strategies of the coalition parties will now be examined. The parties utilised several framing strategies in the discussion on including gas and nuclear energy in the EU Taxonomy. The first strategy that will be analysed is frame bridging. Frame bridging concerns the linking of frames in order to connect a party's cause to other groups and people in society (Benford & Snow, 2000). For instance, this is demonstrated in the case of the Green Party's production of economic frames. The frame "financial market is negative towards the CCDA" was only used by the Green Party. This frame appears somewhat unexpected. This suggests that the Green Party sought to establish a connection between their position and the concerns of banks and financial experts, a demographic not conventionally associated with the party's typical voter base.

Social Democrats and the Liberals possibly strategically bridged the environmental frames. Both parties emphasised environmental frames during the discussion. Arguably, their ideological core does not mainly concern environmental issues. Hence, the Social Democrats and the Liberals sought to persuade groups emphasising ecological concerns.

Therefore, one could question whether the ecological modernisation discourse embraced by Social Democrats and the Liberals is, to some degree, a product of strategy.

A second framing strategy used by the coalition parties in the discussion of the CCDA is amplification (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow et al., 1986). A frame is amplified when it is consistently reinvigorated or clarified (Matthes, 2012; Snow et al., 1986). In other words, an amplified frame is frequently repeated. The Green Party exhibited a substantial production of frames, surpassing the output of the other two coalition parties. The Greens also employed a significant repetition of these frames. For instance, they consistently repeated the frames "nuclear is not sustainable", "CCDA weakens the taxonomy", and "gas and nuclear are not sustainable". Unsurprisingly, the Greens had the highest degree of amplification in their environmental frames. The Greens' amplification of frames is influential as they allow audiences to "notice, understand, and store the mental association for future applications" (Matthes, 2012, p. 252).

The Social Democrats and the Liberals displayed a comparatively lesser degree of amplification in their frames. The Social Democrats repeated the frame "nuclear energy is not sustainable" the most, whereas the Liberals repeated "gas is sustainable" the most. The Social Democrats also amplified "nuclear energy is expensive", "CCDA weakens the taxonomy", and "position against CCDA" to some extent. In addition, the Liberals amplified the environmental frame, "nuclear is sustainable", the pragmatic frame which focused on "technical aspects", and the prognostic frames ", position against CCDA" and "gas easing". Similarly to the Green Party, both the Social Democrats and the Liberals demonstrated the highest level of amplification in their environmental frames. Nonetheless, the Greens surpassed this amplification of the frames of the Social Democrats and the Liberals by a significant degree.

The third framing strategy described is transformation. Frame transformation entails changing or modifying a frame as new information emerges in a debate (Benford & Snow, 2000; Matthes, 2012). This strategy is also identified in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy. One example is the two frames "the government will possibly sue the EU" and "the government will not sue the EU". During the initial stages of the debate (January-March), both the Greens and the Liberals employed the frame "the government will possibly sue the EU". The minister of justice, Marco Buschmann, was the only Liberal suggesting that suing the EU could be a possibility. Among the Greens, the frame was used by multiple politicians. However, this framing approach changed as the discussion progressed towards its later stages (May-July). The Liberals transformed the frame entirely, now utilising the "the government will not sue the EU" frame.

The reasons behind this are unclear, but given that only Buschmann used the frame, it is possible that a majority within the party was opposed to it. The Greens ceased mentioning the topic altogether. One newspaper reported that the Greens had to "back down" due to pressure from the Social Democrats and the Liberals (Noyan, 2022). Consequently, there appears to have been a discernible shift either within the Liberal Party itself or pressure from the Social Democrats, who remained silent on the matter. Nevertheless, this shift indicates that a compromise among the parties was reached not to pursue legal action against the European Union. One possible explanation for this could be that the Social Democrats and the Liberals aimed to incorporate gas into the EU taxonomy. Therefore, taking legal action against the European Union would potentially affect the inclusion of gas in the taxonomy as well.

Another frame transformation that can be observed is linked to the vote in the European Parliament. In particular, before the vote in the European Parliament, the Greens prognostically framed the issue to be "in the hands of the European Parliament". However, the Greens abandoned this frame following the vote and the lack of objection against the CCDA. An interesting observation is that, overall, after the vote in the EP, all parties ceased discussing the topic.

Fourthly, counter-framing is a framing strategy identified in the discussion. Counter-frames are denying, contradicting, or criticising reactions to another frame (Anderson, 2018; Chong & Druckman, 2012; Lindekilde & Olesen, 2014). Arguably, counter-framing is best observed by comparing the frames of the government and the opposition. As the frames of the opposition parties have not been examined, it is difficult to investigate the extent to which counter-frames have been employed. However, some of the frames by the coalition parties were contradictory or conflicting within the coalition or the parties. The frames "gas is not sustainable" and "gas is sustainable" are good examples. The Greens framed gas as unsustainable, while the Liberals framed gas as sustainable. Nonetheless, neither the Greens nor the Liberals directly criticised the other party. While both parties had contradicting views regarding gas, they still attempted not to come across as an incongruent coalition vis-à-vis the opposition or voters. Interestingly, the Greens also once contradicted their frequently used frames "gas and nuclear are not sustainable" and "gas is not sustainable" with the counter-frame "gas is sustainable". This shows that opinions are not always consistent within the coalition and the parties themselves.

The last framing strategy described is the strategic politicisation or de-politicisation of one or more aspects of an issue or solution (Roos, 2019). Interestingly, both attempts at politicisation and de-politicisation can be observed in the discussion on the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy. A general finding is that the CCDA was much covered in the news[45]. Compared to extensive coverage in the news media, relatively few statements by the Social Democrats and the Liberals were identified. In addition to the limited production of frames, a substantial proportion of the generated frames were categorised as pragmatic. Following the environmental frames, pragmatic frames were most commonly used by the Social Democrats and the Liberals. This demonstrates that the Social Democrats and the Liberals have tried to de-politicise the issue of the delegated act. This is linked to the Social Democrats and the Liberals' ideology and previous commitments concerning gas. This highlights that the two parties were less opposed to the CCDA than the Green Party.

Moreover, the Green Party also employed some pragmatic frames. In contrast to the other diagnostic framing categories, prognostic frames were among the least frequently utilised by the Green Party. However, the Green Party and the Liberal Party appear to have politicised gas. This is because their frames were frequently used and polarising, as they represent two distinctly contrasting positions of the problem. This is noteworthy as the politicisation of gas in Germany has historically been limited compared to nuclear energy.

All coalition parties can be described as de-politicising the discussion during the second half of the period studied (April-July). In particular, there is a shift after the vote in the European Parliament on 6 July. This is because almost no statements were produced during the last period (see Appendix 1). A possible explanation is that the coalition government made a deliberate choice not to take further action regarding the CCDA. Consequently,

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[45] See for instance Google News or Factiva

bringing the topic on the political agenda would likely have a detrimental effect on the government's image than providing tangible benefits.

To conclude, this analysis cannot determine solely based on a discourse analysis whether the goals and the strategies identified were pursued intentionally or not. In order to establish whether these were used deliberately, it would be necessary to draw on other sources. Interviewing politicians could be one way to gain more insight. Insights into governmental papers, which are not accessible at this time, would also give further insights into intra-coalition bargaining. Notably, there are likely to be other framing goals and framing strategies that exist than those described here. This is something that would be interesting to investigate further.

6 Conclusion

The findings of this thesis shed light on the intricate dynamics of environmental discourse within the context of political parties, emphasising the influential role of framing and the complex interplay of framing considerations, goals and strategies. This study has investigated the diagnostic and prognostic frames of the governing parties in Germany. Furthermore, it has sought to contextualise these frames within the broader historical environmental discourse while also analysing the presence of the framing considerations, goals, and strategies of the respective parties.

The first main research question asked how the governing parties in Germany frame the inclusion of gas and nuclear activities in the EU taxonomy. The first sub-question (1a) aimed to examine how the governing parties framed the problem (diagnostic) and the solution (prognostic) in the discussion. By mapping the diagnostic and prognostic frames of the discussion, a total of 45 frames and sub-frames were found. The six following diagnostic framing categories were identified: blame, cultural, economic, environmental, security, and pragmatic. The two categories, active and passive, were established for the prognostic frames. The Green Party developed the most frames in the discussion. The Social Democrats, who are the largest party of the coalition, produced dubiously few frames. All the coalition parties and the government, as a whole, utilised environmental frames the most. Especially, and not unsurprisingly, the Green Party emphasised environmental frames.

In addition, the Greens blamed the EU institutions, especially the European Commission. Regarding nuclear energy, only negative frames were produced by the coalition parties. Evidently, nuclear energy was framed as unsustainable and expensive by all three parties. It was also framed as unsafe by the Social Democrats and the Greens. The cultural frames also show that the parties agree that there is some form of societal resistance against nuclear energy. On the contrary, the framing of gas was less coherent. In general, the gas frames were more often neutral or positive in contrast to nuclear energy. For instance, all coalition parties framed investments for gas to be important and suggested an easing of gas restrictions. Gas was also framed as sustainable by all parties, but especially the Liberal Party. However, the Green Party most frequently framed gas as unsustainable. The government regularly framed both nuclear energy and gas pragmatically.

Furthermore, active prognostic frames were more frequently used than passive frames. Passive frames portraying the issue as being in the hands of the European Parliament or Commission were used to justify the government's non-action. The most prominently active solution frame used by the parties was to somehow position against the CCDA. In general, the diagnostic and prognostic frames illustrate that the Social Democrats and the Liberals were more accepting towards the CCDA than the Greens.

As described by Hajer (1997), this demonstrates the discursive nature of the public environmental debate among the coalition parties in Germany. All governmental parties agree that climate change is a pressing issue which, to a certain extent, has to be mitigated. However, the parties differ in their interpretation of the sustainability and effectiveness of energy sources. In particular, there are differences in the status of gas as

sustainable or not. It would be interesting to compare this to the opposition parties or political parties in other countries.

The second sub-question (1b) of the first main research question sought to analyse whether the frames identified reflected a continuity or a break with the parties' traditional environmental discourse. In the discussion on including gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy, no break in the coalition parties' environmental discourse was identified. Unexpectedly, the Russian-led invasion of Ukraine did not influence their discourse significantly. While Russian gas was boycotted, the idea of gas being an essential part of the German energy mix has not been abandoned. Interestingly, the discussion reflects a clear anti-nuclear discourse. During later debates, the Liberals seem to have shifted towards a more nuclear-friendly discourse (Tagesschau, 2022d, 2023b). This should be investigated further in future research.

Furthermore, in the last decade, the Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the Liberals have been part of the ecological modernisation discourse. The frames identified in the discussion demonstrate that the three coalition parties continue to be part of the ecological modernisation discourse. Does this mean that the discourse of ecological modernisation is on the rise in Europe? If this is the case, its implications on party politics and ideology should be investigated. The findings of this thesis show that the German coalition parties do not share completely similar discourses regarding gas. Examining political parties' environmental discourse holds significance as the discursive nature of environmental debate necessitates political parties to engage in competition over the legitimacy of their own interpretation of sustainability as superior to alternative viewpoints.

The second main research question asked why the governing parties brought up the particular frames identified in the discussion. More particularly, the first sub-question (2a) to the second main research question set out to investigate which considerations constrained or facilitated the governing parties' framing. Six different framing considerations were developed and analysed: context, ideology, previous commitments, competition, credibility and legitimation. Contextual considerations both constrained and facilitated the production of specific frames among the coalition parties. The fact that the CCDA was part of the legislative process on the EU level facilitated frames expressing blame towards the EU institutions. It also facilitated the passive prognostic frames, which suggested that the issue was in the hands of the European Commission or the European Parliament. Furthermore, contextual considerations also facilitated anti-nuclear frames and constrained pro-nuclear frames. This is because, up until the time of the discussion, Germany has historically been uniquely anti-nuclear. In addition, contextual considerations also facilitated frames linked to the Russian-led war in Ukraine. However, fewer frames than expected explicitly reflected this.

Moreover, ideology and previous commitments also constrained the parties' framing efforts. This is demonstrated through the Green Party's ideological constriction in their framing of gas and the Liberals and the Social Democrats' constriction in the framing of nuclear energy and natural gas due to previous commitments. The Green Party's framing of nuclear energy has, however, facilitated a strengthening of its ideological profile. Competition was another constraining factor the coalition parties had to consider. The parties had to consider the competition with the opposition. Nonetheless, there was also competition within the coalition government and within the parties themselves. Evidently, this is shown through the parties' differing emphasis on why nuclear energy is harmful and generally not agreeing on the status of natural gas. The Green Party also had some

competing views within the party on gas. Credibility and legitimation were two constraining considerations that were taken into account most of the time by the parties.

Overall, the analysis of the framing considerations illustrates that political parties must take a complex interplay of considerations into account while producing frames. Confirming Elias et al. (2015) claim that parties do not produce frames in a vacuum. The framing considerations play a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape within which political parties operate, thereby influencing their scope for strategic manoeuvring. Consequently, framing considerations influence the strategic framing efforts of parties.

The second sub-question (2b) of the second main research question aimed to examine which framing goals and framing strategies could be identified in the governing parties' framing. Three framing goals based on political parties' behaviour were established: maximising votes, maximising control within the coalition, and maximising the ideological effect on public policy. Early in the discussion, the goal of maximising votes might have influenced and led to the parties' frequent and negative framing of nuclear energy. Furthermore, the Green Party maximised both control and ideology in the coalition regarding nuclear energy and the Social Democrats and the Liberals maximised control and ideology regarding gas. Whether this was done to secure office benefits or private goods remains unclear. Also, it is challenging to ascertain the full extent of the Social Democrats' influence on the coalition merely through frame analysis. This is given by the fact that they are the largest party in the coalition and that the chancellor is Social Democratic. It is, therefore, likely that the Social Democrats controlled the coalition more than what is possible to determine by analysing the frames.

Additionally, the following five framing strategies were examined: bridging, amplification, transformation, counter-framing, and politicisation and de-politicisation. The analysis of the framing strategies showed that the coalition parties used several strategies in the discussion. The Green Party attempted to bridge financial groups, while the Social Democrats and the Liberals attempted to bridge environmental groups. Moreover, all parties amplified their environmental frames the most. However, the Greens amplified their frames substantially more than the Social Democrats and the Liberals. Furthermore, the Liberals radically transformed the frame "the government will possibly sue the EU" to "the government will not sue the EU". The Greens, who also used the former frame, ceased to mention it in the latter half of the discussion due to pressure from the other two parties (Noyan, 2022).

Another framing strategy that was utilised in the discussion was counter-framing. The analysis showed that were contradicting frames in the discussion. The Greens framed gas as unsustainable, while the Liberals framed gas as sustainable. Interestingly, the Greens also one time contradicted their frequently used frames "gas and nuclear are not sustainable" and "gas is not sustainable" with the counter-frame "gas is sustainable". This demonstrates that opinions within the coalition and within the parties themselves are not always consistent. The last framing strategies identified are politicisation and de-politicisation. The Social Democrats and the Liberals made efforts to de-politicise the delegated act by presenting a limited number of frames, with a notable proportion being pragmatic. Furthermore, the Green Party and the Liberal Party appear to have politicised gas as gas frames were frequently and contrastingly used. Towards the end of the discussion, all parties de-politicised the CCDA. Bringing the topic on the political agenda would consequently have a detrimental effect on the government's image.

In general, political parties are goal-directed in their behaviour (Strøm, 1990). The goals of political parties will further influence the frames they choose to produce. Parties that engage in strategic framing intend to achieve a desired outcome or specific goal. Nonetheless, it remains unclear to what extent the framing goals and strategies identified were pursued intentionally or not. Further research is needed in order to establish whether these were used deliberately. Notably, it is worth acknowledging that there are likely additional framing considerations, goals and strategies beyond those described here. Moreover, this thesis might place too much emphasis on strategic elements. Consequently, more research on political parties' framing considerations, goals and strategies needs to be conducted to test and improve the concepts.

To conclude, this research endeavour has formulated novel concepts encompassing framing considerations, goals, and strategies by drawing upon scholarship on social movements' framing and political party behaviour. The analysis enhances the understanding of the influence of strategic and contextual factors in shaping the definition of environmental issues and solutions. Furthermore, the findings of this thesis make a significant contribution by shedding light on the issue of actors' varying interpretations regarding sustainability terminology. Moreover, political parties are compelled to compete over the legitimacy of their own interpretation of sustainability. The complexities and dynamics surrounding the environmental discourse of political parties have practical implications for the problem-definition process, which is the initial stage of the decision-making process. Hence, political parties influence the terms and parameters of the public environmental discourse.

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zwischen den eigenen Prinzipien*.
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- Von der Leyen hält an "grüner" Atomkraft fest*

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Appendices

Appendix 1: A list of documents used for data collection

Appendix 2: An overview of categories, codes, and sub-codes

Appendix 3: The Number of Frames used by each Party

Appendix 1: A list of documents used for data collection

What	Title	Link	Date (2022)
The German parliament: www.bundestag.de			
Newsletter	Heute im Bundestag: Regierung kündigt Stellungnahme zur EU-Taxonomie an	https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/kurz meldungen-876622	12 January
Parliamentary session	Plenar Protokoll 20/11: 11.Sitzung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/20/20011 .pdf	13 January
Article	Finanzen: Lindner: Investitionen und Haushaltsdisziplin	https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/text archiv/2022/kw02-de-finanzen-874778	14 January
Parliamentary questioning	Drucksache 20/534: Schriftliche Fragen	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/005/2 000534.pdf	24 January
Parliamentary session	Plenar Protokoll 20/13: 13.Sitzung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/20/20013 .pdf	26 January
Parliamentary questioning	Drucksache 20/765: Schriftliche Fragen	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/007/2 000765.pdf	14 February
Parliamentary session	Plenar Protokoll 20/18: 18.Sitzung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/20/20018 .pdf	18 February
Parliamentary questioning	Drucksache 20/957: Schriftliche Fragen	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/009/2 000957.pdf	7 March
Response by the government	Drucksache 20/924: Antwort der Bundesregierung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/009/2 000924.pdf	9 March
Response by the government	Drucksache 20/1037: Antwort der Bundesregierung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/010/2 001037.pdf	15 March
Newsletter	Heute im Bundestag: Regierung sieht Atomkraft als nicht nachhaltig an	https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/kurz meldungen-886396	23 March
Preliminary law	Drucksache 20/1630: Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/016/2 001630.pdf	2 May
Response by the government	Drucksache 20/1683: Antwort der Bundesregierung	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/016/2 001683.pdf	6 May
Parliamentary Advisory Council Meeting	Protokoll-Nr. 20/4: Parlamentarischer Beirat für nachhaltige Entwicklung	https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/9 02090/dc53076ec53c70a0fc78ad653e13622 7/Protokoll-4-Sitzung-data.pdf	11 May
Newsletter	Heute im Bundestag: EU-Taxonomie könnte an Glaubwürdigkeit verlieren	https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/kurz meldungen-894632	12 May
Parliamentary newspaper, "Das Parlament": www.das-parlament.de			
Newspaper article	„Die schönen Dinge" by Hans-Jürgen Leersch	https://www.das-parlament.de/2022/3_4/thema_der_woche/ 877332-877332	17 January
Newspaper article	„Wir müssen Europas Souveränität stärken" by Jürgen Trittin	https://epaper.das-parlament.de/2022/3_4/index.html#0	17 January
The German government: www.bundesregierung.de			
Press conference	Regierungspresse-konferenz vom 3. Januar 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-3-januar-2022-1994578	3 January
Press conference	Regierungspresse-konferenz vom 10. Januar 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-10-januar-2022-1995480	10 January

Speech	Rede der Bundesministerin für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucher-schutz, Steffi Lemke	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/rede-der-bundesministerin-fuer-umwelt-naturschutz-nukleare-sicherheit-und-verbraucherschutz-steffi-lemke--1996332	12 January
Press conference	Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzler Scholz und dem Ministerpräsidenten Sánchez am 17. Januar 2022 in Madrid	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/pressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzler-scholz-und-dem-ministerpraesidenten-sánchez-am-17-januar-2022-in-madrid-1998406	17 January
Press conference	Regierungspressekonferenz vom 19. Januar 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-19-januar-2022-1999338	19 January
Press conference	Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzler Scholz, Bundesminister Habeck und Bundesminister Lindner im Anschluss an die Klausurtagung des Bundeskabinetts am 21. Januar 2022 in Berlin	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/pressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzler-scholz-bundesminister-habeck-und-bundesminister-lindner-im-anschluss-an-die-klausurtagung-des-bundeskabinetts-am-21-januar-2022-in-berlin-2000716	21 January
Press conference	Regierungspresse-konferenz vom 21. Januar 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-21-januar-2022-2000704	21 January
Press conference	Regierungspressekonferenz vom 2. Februar 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-2-februar-2022-2002836	2 February
Press conference	Regierungspressekonferenz vom 6. Juli 2022	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-6-juli-2022-2060064	6 July
Ministries' webpages: www.bmuv.de; www.bmwk.de; www.bundesfinanzministerium.de			
Official statement	EU-Taxonomie: Statement von Bundesminister Habeck	https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Meldung/2022/20220101-atomenergie-als-nachhaltig-zu-labeln-ist-falsch.html	1 January
Interview	Bundesfinanzminister Christian Lindner im Interview mit der Welt am Sonntag	https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Interviews/2022/2022-01-17-welt-am-sonntag.html	17 January
Interview	Steffi Lemke im Interview über die Verkehrswende und den Atomausstieg	https://www.bmuv.de/interview/steffi-lemke-im-interview-ueber-die-verkehrswende-und-den-atomausstieg	21 January
Statement	Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung zur Taxonomie der Europäischen Union	https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Downloads/S-T/stellungnahme-bundesregierung-taxonomie.html	21 January
Article	Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung zur EU-Taxonomie	https://www.bmuv.de/download/stellungnahme-der-bundesregierung-zur-eu-taxonomie	22 January
Press release	Habeck und Lemke bekräftigen Kritik an Atomreglen in Taxonomie	https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2022/01/20220122-habeck-und-lemke-bekraeftigen-kritik-an-atomregeln-in-taxonomie.html	22 January
Article	EU-Beratergremium für die Taxonomie lehnt aktuellen Vorschlag der EU- Kommission ab	https://www.bmuv.de/meldung/eu-beratergremium-fuer-die-taxonomie-lehnt-aktuellen-vorschlag-der-eu-kommission-ab	27 January
Interview	Steffi Lemke: "Das letzte Wort ist noch nicht gesprochen"	https://www.bmuv.de/interview/steffi-lemke-das-letzte-wort-ist-noch-nicht-gesprochen	30 January
Press release	Habeck und Lemke lehnen Taxonomie-Rechtsakt der EU-Kommission ab	https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2022/02/20220202-habeck-	2 February

		und-lemke-lehnen-taxonomie-rechtsakt-der-eu-kommission-ab.html	
Interview	Steffi Lemke über die Folgen der Energiepreis-Explosion	https://www.bmuv.de/interview/steffi-lemke-ueber-die-folgen-der-energiepreis-explosion	10 July
Magazine of ministry	Schlaglichter der Wirtschaftspolitik, August 2022	https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Schlaglichter-der-Wirtschaftspolitik/2022/08/04-im-fokus.html	27 July
The parties' webpages: www.spd.de; www.spdfraktion.de; www.gruene.de; www.gruene-bundestag.de; www.fdp.de; www.fdpbt.de			
Speech	Lindner-Rede auf dem Dreikönigstreffen 2022	https://www.fdp.de/pressemitteilung/lindner-rede-auf-dem-dreikoenigstreffen-2022	6 January
Speech	Rede von Jürgen Trittin: Außen, Europa und Menschenrechte	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/aussen-europa-und-menschenrechte-1	12 January
Speech	Rede von Stefan Wenzel: Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/umwelt-naturschutz-nukleare-sicherheit-und-verbraucherschutz	12 January
Speech	Rede von Katharina Beck: Finanzen und Haushalt	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/finanzen-und-haushalt-2	14 January
Speech	Rede von Lisa Paus: Finanzen und Haushalt	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/finanzen-und-haushalt-1	14 January
Preliminary decree	47. Ordentliche Bundesdelegiertenkonferenz: Vorläufiger Beschluss	https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/documents/Beschluss_D-02-03_EU-Taxonomie_Klare_Kante_gegen_Atom_und_Gas__kein_Greenwashing.pdf	28 January
Press release	Köhler: Ohne massive Investitionen in Gaskraftwerke wäre Kohleausstieg unrealistisch	https://www.fdpbt.de/koehler-ohne-massive-investitionen-gaskraftwerke-waere-kohleausstieg-unrealistisch	2 February
Statement	Lisa Paus und Julia Verlinden zur Entscheidung der EU-Kommission über die Taxonomie-Verordnung	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/presse/pressestatements/lisa-paus-und-julia-verlinden-zur-entscheidung-der-eu-kommission-ueber-die-taxonomie-verordnung	2 February
Press release	Taxonomie: Einordnung von Atomenergie als nachhaltig ist abzulehnen	https://www.spdfraktion.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/taxonomie-einordnung-atomenergie-nachhaltig-abzulehnen	3 February
Podcast transcription	Was müssen wir für stabile Energiepreise tun?	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/fraktion/fraktion-aktuell/uns-gehts-ums-ganze-der-podcast-der-gruenen-bundestagsfraktion/was-muessen-wir-fuer-stabile-energiepreise-tun	9 February
Article	Sustainable Finance Beirat nimmt Arbeit auf	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/themen/finanzen/sustainable-finance-beirat-nimmt-arbeit-auf	10 June
Party programme	Ein Jahrzehnt des Aufbruchs. Ein Jahrzehnt der sozialen Demokratie. Unsere Missionen für eine gerechte Transformation.	https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Parteikonvent/20221106_Beschluss_Transformation.pdf	11 June
Statement	Katharina Beck zur Ablehnung der Einstufung von Atomkraft und Gas als nachhaltig durch EU-Parlamentsausschüsse	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/presse/pressestatements/katharina-beck-zur-ablehnung-der-einstufung-von-atomkraft-und-gas-als-nachhaltig-durch-eu-parlamentsausschuesse	14 June

Article	Kein Greenwashing von Atomkraft!	https://www.gruene.de/artikel/kein-greenwashing-von-atomkraft	29 June
Statement	Katharina Beck und Lisa Badum zur EP- Abstimmung über die Aufnahme von Atom und Gas in die EU-Taxonomie	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/presse/pressestatements/katharina-beck-und-lisa-badum-zur-ep-abstimmung-ueber-die-aufnahme-von-atom-und-gas-in-die-eu-taxonomie	6 July
Article	Taxonomie als Instrument beschädigt	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/themen/energie/taxonomie-als-instrument-beschaedigt	7 July
Speech	Rede von Dieter Janecek Inflation	https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/inflation-3	7 July
Newspaper articles[46]: Bild, Handelsblatt, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Taz, Welt			
Bild	Vorschlag aus Brüssel; EU will Atom und Gas als klimafreundlich einstufen	Retrieved from Factiva	1 January
Handelsblatt	Klimakrise; EU-Kommission will Gas- und Atomkraft als grün einstufen – Wirtschaftsminister Habeck lehnt Pläne ab	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/klimakrise-eu-kommission-will-gas-und-atomkraft-als-gruen-einstufen-wirtschaftsminister-habeck-lehnt-plaene-ab/27938660.html	1 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Klimakrise; EU will Atomkraft und Erdgas als "grün" einstufen	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/taxonomie-atomkraft-erdgas-eu-kommission-1.5499363	1 January
Welt	Verordnungsentwurf; EU-Kommission will Gas und Atomenergie als klimafreundlich einstufen	https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article235973626/Klimafreundlich-Gruene-Umweltministerin-verurteilt-EU-Entscheidung-zu-Atomkraft.html	1 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Christian Lindner; "Deutschland benötigt moderne Gaskraftwerke als Übergangs-technologie"	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/christian-lindner-erdgas-atomkraft-eu-kommission-1.5499498	2 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Klimaschutz; Koalitions-Konflikt über Erdgas-Pläne der EU	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/klimaschutz-erdgas-atomkraft-1.5499923	2 January
Handelsblatt	"GRÜNE" EINSTUFUNG VON ATOMKRAFT UND ERDGAS; Umstrittene Klimaretter	Retrieved from Factiva.	3 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Klimapolitik; Wie Atomkraft und Erdgas bei der EU zu grünen Energiequellen avancierten	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/klimapolitik-wie-atomkraft-und-erdgas-bei-der-eu-zu-gruenen-energiequellen-avancierten-1.5500575?reduced=true	3 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	EU-Vorschläge; Grüner Herzschmerz	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/gruene-atomkraft-herzschmerz-eu-1.5500611?reduced=true	3 January
Taz	Die eine Hand greenwasht die andere	Retrieved from Factiva.	3 January
Taz	EU-Pläne zu nachhaltiger Energie; Grüne drängen auf Ampel-Veto	https://taz.de/EU-Plaene-zu-nachhaltiger-Energie/!5825548/	3 January
Welt	Vorschlag der EU-Kommission; Grünes Label für Atomkraft? Deutschland und Österreich kritisieren Brüssel	https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article235983930/Gruenes-Label-fuer-Atomkraft-Deutschland-und-Oesterreich-kritisieren-Bruessel.html	3 January

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[46] All newspaper articles were retrieved from the database Factiva. Not all articles are available outside the database. A link is provided for those articles that also are available outside of Factiva. The author can provide a PDF version of the documents only accessible in Factiva.

Welt	EU-Pläne zu Gas und Atomkraft spalten die Ampel	Retrieved from Factiva.	3 January
Welt	EU-Atompläne; Umweltministerin Lemke bleibt beim Vorwurf des "Greenwashing"	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article236000660/EU-Atomplaene-Umweltministerin-Lemke-bleibt-beim-Vorwurf-des-Greenwashing.html	3 January
Handelsblatt	Energiepolitik; Umweltministerin Lemke: Geringe Chancen für Änderung der EU-Atomkraftpläne	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/energiepolitik-umweltministerin-lemke-geringe-chancen-fuer-aenderung-der-eu-atomkraftplaene/27944092.html	4 January
Handelsblatt	Grüne protestieren gegen Taxonomie	Retrieved from Factiva.	4 January
Handelsblatt	KLIMASCHUTZ; Grüne bekämpfen EU-Vorschlag	Retrieved from Factiva.	4 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Grün oder gefährlich?	Retrieved from Factiva.	4 January
Welt	Atomkraft nachhaltig? Die Grünen sitzen in der Klemme zwischen den eigenen Prinzipien	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus236007488/Atomkraft-EU-Gruene-in-der-Klemme-zwischen-den-eigenen-Prinzipien.html	4 January
Handelsblatt	EU-TAXONOMIE; Umleitung von Steuergeld	Retrieved from Factiva.	5 January
Welt	Taxonomie; Deutschland zwingt ganz Europa zum Pakt mit Russland	Retrieved from Factiva.	6 January
Welt	"Brandgefährlich"; Neubauer fordert von der Regierung Ablehnung der EU-Pläne zur Atomkraft	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article236085966/Luisa-Neubauer-fordert-von-der-Regierung-Ablehnung-der-EU-Plaene-zur-Atomkraft.html	7 January
Bild	Große Energie-Debatte; Spaltet das Atom den Kern Europas?	https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-inland/grosse-energie-debatte-spaltet-das-atom-den-kern-europas-78764388.bild.html	9 January
Welt	EU-Taxonomie; So setzte Macron den Atomplan durch	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus236118038/EU-Taxonomie-So-setzte-Macron-den-Atomplan-durch.html	9 January
Handelsblatt	Nachhaltige Energieträger; EU-Taxonomie: Umweltorganisationen machen Druck auf Bundesregierung	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/nachhaltige-energietraeger-eu-taxonomie-umweltorganisationen-machen-druck-auf-bundesregierung/27962494.html	11 January
Handelsblatt	Umweltpolitik; „Wir werden sie brauchen": Von der Leyen verteidigt Atomkraft-Entscheidung	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/umweltpolitik-wir-werden-sie-brauchen-von-der-leyen-verteidigt-atomkraft-entscheidung/27968384.html	12 January
Welt	EU-Kommissions-präsidentin; "Wir werden sie brauchen" - Von der Leyen hält an "grüner" Atomkraft fest	https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article236198214/Wir-werden-sie-brauchen-Von-der-Leyen-haelt-an-gruener-Atomkraft-fest.html	12 January
Welt	"Dritter Corona-Winter möglich, wenn wir nicht beherzt handeln"	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article236215446/Katharina-Droege-Gruene-Halte-allgemeine-Impfpflicht-fuer-geboten.html	14 January
Taz	Schlag ins Gesicht der Klimabewegung	Retrieved from Factiva.	15 January
Handelsblatt	EU-Debatte über Nachhaltigkeit; Deutschland bekräftigt klares Nein zur Atomkraft	Retrieved from Factiva.	21 January
Handelsblatt	Stellungnahme zur Taxonomie; „Umbau des Energiesystems nicht	Retrieved from Factiva.	21 January

Süddeutsche Zeitung	behindern": Bundesregierung akzeptiert Gas als Brückentechnologie – unter Vorbehalt		
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Energiepolitik; Was Berlin zum Taxonomie-Vorschlag der EU sagen wird	Retrieved from Factiva.	21 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Energiepolitik; Berlin sagt Nein zum Taxonomie-Vorschlag der EU	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/eu-taxonomie-bundesregierung-atomkraft-gas-1.5512131?reduced=true#:~:text=EnergiepolitikBerlin%20sagt%20Nein%20zum%20Taxonomie%2DVorschlag%20der%20EU&text=Das%20französische%20Kernkraftwerk%20Cattenom%20nahe,grün%20gelten%20sollen%20%2D%20mit%20Erfolg.&text=Die%20Kommission%20will%20Investitionen%20in%20Atom%2D%20und%20Gaskraftwerke%20für%20nachhaltig%20erklären	21 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Strahlend grün; Die EU-Kommission will Investitionen in Atom- und Gaskraftwerke für nachhaltig erklären. Die Bundesregierung macht am Freitagabend klar, dass sie dies zumindest für die Kernenergie ablehnt	Retrieved from Factiva.	22 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Bis Freitag hatten die EU-Regierungen Zeit, sich zu äußern. In Berlin herrscht Unmut - und nicht nur da	Retrieved from Factiva.	22 January
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Klimapolitik; Bundesregierung sagt Jein zur Taxonomie	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/taxonomie-eu-kommission-erdgas-atomkraft-habeck-bundesregierung-1.5512976?reduced=true	22 January
Taz	Bundesregierung gegen EU-Taxonomie; Atom bremsen, Gas geben	https://taz.de/Bundesregierung-gegen-EU-Taxonomie/!5829932/	22 January
Handelsblatt	Omid Nouripour im Interview; Kandidat für den Grünen-Vorsitz Nouripour über Boni-Affäre: „Der politische Preis wurde schon im Wahlkampf bezahlt"	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/omid-nouripour-im-interview-kandidat-fuer-den-gruenen-vorsitz-nouripour-ueber-boni-affaere-der-politische-preis-wurde-schon-im-wahlkampf-bezahlt/27998912.html	23 January
Welt	Bewertung von Atomkraft; Die deutsche Widersprüchlichkeit in der Klimapolitik	https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus236407331/Bewertung-von-Atomkraft-Die-deutsche-Widerspruechlichkeit-in-der-Klimapolitik.html	23 January
Handelsblatt	TAXONOMIE; Atomkraft? Nein danke. Erdgas? Ja, aber ...	Retrieved from Factiva.	24 January
Handelsblatt	TAXONOMIE; Willkommen in der Realität	Retrieved from Factiva.	24 January
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Welt	Atomkraft ist jetzt grün	Retrieved from Factiva.	3 February
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Handelsblatt	BUNDESREGIERUNG; In der Koalition macht sich Ernüchterung breit	Retrieved from Factiva.	23 February
Handelsblatt	Energie; Deutschland stellt sich gegen grünes EU-Label für Atomkraft	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/energ ie-deutschland-stellt-sich-gegen-gruenes-eu-label-fuer-atomkraft/28340042.html#:~:text=Energie%20Deutsch land%20stellt%20sich%20gegen,Parlament%20über%2 0den%20Vorschlag%20ab.&text=Deutschland%20hält% 20weiterhin%20an%20seinem%20Ausstieg%20aus%20 der%20Atomenergie%20fest	14 May
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Taxonomie; Deutschland legt Veto gegen "grüne" Atomkraft ein	https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/ta xonomie-deutschland-legt-veto-gegen-gruene-atomkraft-ein-1.5585122?reduced=true	15 May
Taz	EU-Taxonomie: Veto ohne Wirkung	Retrieved from Factiva.	17 May
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Handelsblatt	EU-TAXONOMIE; Europaparlament beschließt Ökosiegel	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/eu-taxonomie-europaparlament-beschliesst-oekosiegel-fuer-gas-und-atomkraft-erleichterung-in-energiebranche/28483670.html#:~:text=EU%2DTaxono mie%20Europaparlament%20beschließt%20Ökosiegel,G laubwürdigkeit%20des%20Ökosiegels%20für%20Investi tionen	6 July
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Appendix 2: An overview of categories, codes, and sub-codes

	Category	Code	Sub-code
Diagnostic	Blame	The European Union	
		The Council of the EU	
		The European Commission	
		The European Parliament	
		France	
		Lobbyists	
		The previous government	
	Cultural	German resistance to nuclear	
		Public opposition	
		Resistance from other member states	
	Economic	Bad for competition	
		Financial market is negative towards CCDA	
		Investments for gas needed	
		Nuclear energy controlled by government	
		Nuclear energy is expensive	
	Environmental	CCDA weakens taxonomy	Greenwashing
		Gas and nuclear energy are *not* sustainable	
		Gas is *not* sustainable	
		Gas is sustainable	Better than coal
		Nuclear is *not* sustainable	
		Taxonomy continues to be important	
	Security	Gas is needed as transition energy to sustain energy security	
		Nuclear energy is not safe	
		Russian gas and nuclear energy	
	Pragmatic	In the hands of the European Commission	
		In the hands of the European Parliament	
		The government cannot do anything	
		No majority in the Council of the EU	
		The government will not sue the EU	

	Category	Code	Sub-code
Prognostic	Active	End of German nuclear era	
		Fit for 55	
		Gas easing	Gas infrastructure "H2-ready"
		The government will discuss and investigate	
		Invest in renewables	
		Position against CCDA	
		The government will possibly sue the EU	
	Passive	In the hands of the European Commission	
		In the hands of the European Parliament	
		The government cannot do anything	
		No majority in the Council of the EU	
		The government will not sue the EU	

Appendix 3: The Number of Frames used by each Party

Blaming frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
European Union	0	0	2	0
Council of the EU	1	0	1	0
European Commission	0	0	10	0
European Parliament	0	0	2	0
Previous German government	0	0	2	0
Lobbyist	0	0	2	0
France	0	0	1	0

Cultural frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
German resistance to nuclear energy	2	1	0	1
Public opposition	1	0	1	1
Resistance from other member states	1	0	4	0

Economic frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
Bad for competition	0	0	1	0
Financial market is negative towards CCDA	0	0	9	0
Investments for gas needed	0	1	1	3
Nuclear energy controlled by government	0	0	0	2
Nuclear energy is expensive	1	3	5	1

Environmental frames	Sub-frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
CCDA weakens taxonomy		3	3	21	0
	Greenwashing	0	1	5	0
Gas and nuclear energy are *not* sustainable		1	1	20	1
Gas is *not* sustainable		2	0	5	0
Gas is sustainable		7	1	1	5
	Better than coal	3	0	0	4
Nuclear is *not* sustainable		24	9	29	4
Taxonomy continues to be important		2	1	0	1

Security Frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
Gas is needed as transition energy to sustain energy security	0	0	1	2
Nuclear energy is not safe	8	3	16	0
Russian gas and nuclear energy	0	0	5	0

Pragmatic Frames	Sub-Frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
The CCDA is a "fair" trade-off		1	2	0	3
The CCDA is unimportant		0	2	0	0
Gas as a transition energy is only short term		6	1	2	0
The government agrees on the issue		1	2	6	2
	Manifested in the coalition agreement	2	1	0	0
No position		3	0	0	0
Nuclear energy is complicated or bureaucratic		2	0	1	0
Nuclear energy is legally an issue		3	0	1	0
Technical or factual aspects		6	0	3	4

Active Frames	Sub-frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
End of German nuclear era		0	0	1	0
Fit for 55		0	1	2	0
Gas easing		7	0	1	2
	Gas infrastructure "H2-ready"	8	1	5	2
The government will discuss and investigate		3	1	6	0
Invest in renewables		0	3	6	0
Position against CCDA		6	4	19	5
The government will possibly sue the EU		1	0	3	2

Passive Frames	Gov.	SPD	Greens	FDP
In the hands of the European Commission	0	0	4	1
In the hands of the European Parliament	0	1	13	1
The government cannot do anything	1	1	6	0