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Signaling Illiberalism: Democratic Backsliding. A Case Study of Germany and Hungary.

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Signaling Illiberalism: 
*Democratic Backsliding. A Case Study of Germany and Hungary.*

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Abstract

In the past decade, the decline, or backsliding, of democracy has reemerged as a concern in international affairs with many leaders overstepping constitutional restraints to accumulate power in their hands. While democratic backsliding occurs in various ways and in regions all over the world, Europe has struggled to control its spread as populist parties become closer and closer to taking power with each election cycle. In this paper, I examine the cases of Germany and Hungary, which share similar historical and cultural backgrounds yet differ in their democratic strengths: Germany remains a strong beacon of Western, liberal democracy, but Hungary has shifted towards an illiberal democracy. I aim to demonstrate how rhetoric, a tool used by leaders to mobilize the citizenry and justify policies, differs between strong democratic countries and backsliding countries. In particular, I assess speeches by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán from 2014 to 2017. This aims to add to the dialogue on democratic backsliding and encourage to further research on political rhetoric as a signal for anti-democratic policies in other countries.

**Keywords:** Democracy, discourse analysis, rhetoric, Hungary, Germany, Merkel, Orbán, democratic backsliding, illiberalism, liberalism
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Introduction

No form of government is perfect. Culture, religion, and history determine a society’s willingness and ability to accept a government’s authority and preserve its power. Democracy, in particular, has been notorious for its lack of success in regions all over the world; perhaps the most recent example was in 2010, where mass revolutions in the Middle East, known as the Arab Spring, failed to create democratic change in all but one country. Democracy is not without its faults. “Indeed,” famously testified Winston Churchill before the British House of Commons, “it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried” (“The Worst Form”). A governmental system whose power is derived directly from its citizenry creates strong, representative institutions, compared to other systems which do not require such support and encourage corrupt and abusive leaders. Thus, the deterioration of democracy in the world is a reason for concern.

“Democratic backsliding” is any state-led attempts to deliberately weaken or eliminate the political institutions responsible for maintaining a democracy (Bermeo 2016). While it is not a new term in political science, it regained interest in the 2010s when many leaders have begun to guide their countries in anti-democratic directions. By analyzing the speeches of the heads of government in backsliding and non-backsliding European countries, I intend to answer the following question: How does political rhetoric differ between strong democratic countries, like Germany, and democratic backsliding countries, like Hungary? In political speeches, heads of government provide justifications for their actions and have been overlooked in academia as a way to analyze how backsliding is presented to the public in certain states.

In order to avoid bias, I study two countries to which I have no affiliation. Evaluating speeches from Germany and Hungary allows for a more objective analysis than if I were, for example, to analyze speeches of American presidents. I do have prior experience with political
speeches, as I was a former intern in the White House’s Office of Presidential Speechwriting. While I did not have a hand in writing any speeches, I came to understand the importance of the speeches delivered by American presidents through my role in the office. Mr. Anthony Dolan, former Chief Speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan, who I met during my internship, stated that speeches are how presidents “tell the bureaucracy what to do and mobilize the American people behind their agenda.”¹ I realized that topics such as democratic backsliding could be analyzed through speeches of other elected leaders, too, as they justify their countries’ changes.

I analyze the speeches of the heads of government in two democracies in Europe. Germany represents a strong, stable democracy in Europe, while Hungary represents a backsliding, less established democracy. Both of these countries’ leaders, Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, speak for their citizens and discuss democratic themes in different ways. Their rhetoric will be examined and compared in this case study to demonstrate how rhetoric differs in democratic states and in states which are backsliding.

Section I: Background

Part I: Democracy and Democratic Backsliding

Democracy is not easy to define, as it varies across time, space, and culture. Many political scientists use the broad definition of “free and fair elections” to classify this system of government, but I, like many others, argue that more constitutes a true democracy than simply its elections. Voters must be given the right to choose in a democracy, constituting the need for an agreed set of rules for elections, a “substantial” rate of participation, and a variety of political candidates to vote for (McNair 2003). Checks and balances are needed to prevent one party from consolidating too much power and term limits must be instituted to ensure a cyclical election pattern (Mounk 2018, 8). These norms are supported and upheld by various political and non-political institutions.

There are two major types of democracy which I will examine: liberal and illiberal. The word “liberal” can constitute the traditional liberal-versus-conservative debate in terms of political spectrum, but liberals in this case are “committed to the basic values like freedom of speech, separation of powers, or the protection of individual rights” (Mounk 2018, 25). A liberal democracy, therefore, “both protects individual rights and translates popular views into public policy” (Mounk 2018, 73). Germany is the example used in this paper to represent a state with a liberal democracy. Illiberal democracies, on the other hand, favor popular views over those of minorities within the population. They tend to occur in places where the majority prefers a strong executive branch over independent institutions or where they favor restricting the rights of minorities (Mounk 2018, 27). While illiberal democracies typically hold free and fair elections, elected leaders are inclined to overstep constitutional restrictions on their power, like checks and balances. Overstepping includes “failing to uphold the political rights of their opponents, pressuring the media into subservience, or redrafting existing law to grant themselves greater
powers” (Baker 2014, 241). These events have occurred in states such as Turkey, Russia, Venezuela, and, as this paper will examine, Hungary. Illiberal democracies are, in principle, not forms of autocracies, since they do not misrepresent the majority’s opinion and still uphold election results. They do, however, tend to ignore the minority’s rights and centralize power in the hands of a single actor, causing reason for concern since they step further away from being democracies and closer towards becoming dictatorships.

Democracy, in general, is on the decline in the world. Only about half of the world’s democracies hold free and fair elections (Bishop and Hoeffler 2016, 608). Globally, the number of liberal democracies is declining, while illiberal democracies are on the rise (Mounk 2018, 35). Citizens all over the world have become incredibly disillusioned with democracies. These trends cause reason for concern, but their permanence is questionable. Samuel Huntington’s (1991) *Democracy’s Third Wave* explored the increase in democracies through time in what he described as “waves” and can be used to prove that the rise and fall of democracies is a cyclical pattern in history. Huntington recorded democratic waves from the 1820s to the book’s publication in 1991; each wave began with important global events: the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, World War II’s conclusion, and the formation of the European Community. He also recognized that what he called a “reverse wave” occurred between each wave. After the first and second waves, democracies were replaced by “new forms of authoritarian rule” – fascism and bureaucratic authoritarianism. Huntington did not live to see a third reverse wave, though there may be reason to argue for its existence today, as shown by these recent declines in democracy.

While a “reverse wave” refers to the worldwide, quantitative decline in the number of democracies, the term “democratic backsliding” focuses on the democratic decline in a particular country. Bermeo (2016, 5) provides the soundest definition: a “state-led debilitation or
elimination of any of the political institutions that sustain an existing democracy.” However, I argue that this definition should also include non-political institutions since not all institutions which uphold a democracy are considered directly political in nature. Institutions that are indirectly influential to a country’s political state, such as independent media organizations and a country’s economy, can still affect public opinion. If one element of democracy is abused or abandoned, dysfunction can spread easily and cause a democracy to backslide and eventually digress into a dictatorship or autocracy (Mounk 2018, 6). Therefore, even the slightest evidence of democratic backsliding can signal greater problems for a state.

Not all occurrences of democratic backsliding are the same. Backsliding has changed across history in numerous ways and occurred at varying speeds. In the past, it has taken the form of dramatic uprisings by leaders: coups d’état, executive coups, and blatant election fraud. While coups d’état and blatant election fraud are more commonly known, executive coups are the outright suspension of a constitution to gain power in “one swift sweep” (Bermeo 2016). Three modern forms, on the other hand, typically take place in increments while also garnering popular support. One form is “promissory coups,” which frame ousters as defending the country’s democracy. Another is “executive aggrandizement,” in which executives weaken checks on their power (Bermeo 2016, 8-13). This form is particularly relevant to Hungary, where governmental institutions, such as the court system, have been degraded (Butikova and Guasti 2017, 167). The third type is strategic election manipulation (Bermeo 2016, 13). These patterns suggest that leaders attempt to conceal their actions better than they did in the past and are able to convince citizens into accepting their new government.

Many scholars have tried to attribute the success, or backsliding, of democracy in a society to certain factors. Economic development is a popular subject. Huntington (1991, 30) noted this link, stating, “Few relationships between social, economic, and political phenomena
are stronger than that between the level of economic development and the existence of
democratic politics.” The majority of democratic countries, he concluded, are wealthy and the
majority of wealthy countries are democratic. However, recent scholars (Kapstein & Converse
2008; Branco 2012) have begun to doubt such links. As Kapstein and Converse (2008) contest,
despite enduring economic hardships in the 1990s similar to the Great Depression, Central-
Eastern European countries did not waver in their democratic pursuits. Thailand, on the other
hand, fell victim to a military coup in 2006 despite experiencing years of economic growth
(Kapstein & Converse 2008, 57). While the direct correlation between economics and the
likelihood of a democracy in a country is still up for debate, but it is important to include in this
analysis since strong economies are more likely to incentivize a country to keep a government in
power (Rupnik 2016).

The system of checks and balances are important to preventing democratic backsliding.
Constitutional courts “act as a safeguard against the tyranny of the majority,” through checking
initiatives made by the legislative and executive branches (Mounk 2018, 72). A study of 163
countries conducted by Gibler and Randazzo (2011, 696) showed that established courts were
more likely to prevent regime shifts towards authoritarianism; on the other hand, they found that
newer courts were more likely to suffer regime collapses. In post-communist countries,
international organizations, such as the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission, assisted courts
to become important “veto players” in politics (Bugarič and Ginsburg 2016, 71). Thus,
Hungary’s dismantling of the court system is problematic for many reasons, showing why it
might be backsliding when compared to Germany’s strong institutions.

A free and independent press is crucial for a strong democracy. The media stands as a
critic to an existing government, providing the public with information that leaders may wish to
conceal. No media source can be entirely unbiased, but in democracies, as argued by Becker
“the press should reflect different views and ideologies.” A state-controlled media is considered undemocratic because it can manipulate public opinion by concealing any “inconvenient information” (McNair 2003, 26). Furthermore, the press facilitates information for elections and governmental affairs to the citizens of a country (McNair 2003, 26). Its purpose, therefore, is to educate and engage readers about democratic movements along with other affairs in the country or in the world.

Outside influences, including other states and international organizations, play a large role in democratic backsliding as well. “Reverse snowballing” was another phrase coined by Huntington (1991), used to denote the spread of authoritarianism from one state to another, which can put democracy in danger due to foreign influence. Conversely, international institutions like the European Union can counter democratic declines. The European Union’s high cost of admission, which ensures that all states are democratic upon entry, uses democracy as an incentive to acquire the benefits that the institution has to offer (Pappas 2016). Nevertheless, democracy is still declining in some of its present members, including Poland and the Czech Republic, bringing its effectiveness into question.

All of these factors and more will be accessed when comparing Germany and Hungary in order to gain a complete view of their democratic statuses.

**Part II: Present State of Backsliding in Europe**

The world’s political systems are continually evolving, but contemporary global events have caused faster evolutions in political regimes than ever before. The Arab Spring, beginning in 2010, sparked mass revolutions in the Middle East. Six years later, Great Britain voted to leave the European Union, a movement known today as “Brexit.” Small regions within European countries, such as Catalunya and Scotland, have voted on referendums for independence. Some of these movements have generated change: Tunisia successfully adopted a democratic
government and Catalunya voted in favor of independence despite Spanish suppression efforts. Others did not produce results or problems continued to deteriorate, such as Scottish citizens voting for the status quo and Syrians continuing to engage in a civil war against their government, which used chemical weapons against its people. The world wants change, but not everyone is always content with the outcome.

In democratic states, elections have become a way for citizens to voice their discontent. People have been disillusioned with politics since the 1990s (Mounk 2018, 2). European citizens “participate less in formal political institutions than they used to” (Mounk 2018, 100). This is one reason for the recent rise of populism in European countries. Populist politicians are difficult to define, for not all are inherently in favor of illiberal democracies, although they favor the majority’s opinion. Rhetoric is one of the best ways to distinguish populists from other politicians. Perhaps the most distinguishing factor is how populists present themselves as common people who stand up against corrupt leaders in power (Skolkay 2000, 3; Bugarič and Ginsburg 2016). They offer easy solutions, particularly during crises, when the citizens are “more sensitive to extreme and seemingly extreme solutions” (Skolkay 2000, 3). Populists primarily blame foreigners and bureaucrats for the country’s issues to centralize their audience’s fear of radical terrorism and the government’s inefficiencies to solve problems (Mounk 2018, 7). They also tend to use radical rhetoric to draw attention to their cause. For example, Germany’s National Democratic Party, or NDP, “glorified senior Nazis like Rudolf Hess and cast doubt on the legitimacy of the country’s postwar constitutional order” (Mounk 2018, 51). This combination, while extreme, did draw attention and generate a following for the NDP.

Despite almost achieving electoral success in Western Europe, such as Marine Le Pen’s National Rally in France and Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, populist leaders have only gained power in Central and Eastern Europe (Rupnik 2016, 77). In the region,
where there is a long history of xenophobic nationalism, hate speech is spreading to become “a _lingua franca_” as anti-liberal governments come to power (Bugarič and Ginsburg 2016, 70). Despite its extremism and harsh rhetoric, populism is still a democratic movement. Populism has become a “regional revolutionary” movement in Central and Eastern European countries as it has spread between countries in the region, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. It is also “world revolutionary,” having also taken effect in other countries, such as Turkey and Brazil. Populism’s rhetoric is unique and can provide a window into democratic backsliding when compared to the rhetoric of leaders of strong democratic states.

**Part III: Political Discourse, Discourse Analysis, and Rhetoric**

The communication of ideas is fundamental to the human race. Aristotle defined speech as that which separates humans from animals (Chilton 2004). Language itself plays a central role in human development. Parents strongly encourage the senseless babbling of a baby and their subsequent first words are regarded as a very important milestone. With development, language can be used “as an instrument of truth, as a means of artistic expression, and a tool of persuasion” (Lasswell et al 1949).

Speech and discourse are also essential to modern politics. As Lasswell et al (1949, 8) wrote, “[T]he language of politics is the language of power. It is the language of decision. It registers and modifies decisions.” Heads of government in Europe have used language in this way since the beginning of the sixteenth century with the invention of the printing press. Over time, the medium used for political communication changed to broadcasted audio and images with the invention of television and radio (Lasswell et al 1949, 4). With world leaders, such as American President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron, increasingly using social media, one can argue for the reemergence of textual media. Nevertheless, orally delivered speeches still remain important for democratic leaders. After 1989 and the end of the Cold War,
the “management of public opinion through political communication” became vital (McNair 2003, xix). It helps citizens understand policies, mobilize them behind certain causes, and feel closer to their government.

Despite its negative connotation, rhetoric is essential to political discourse. “Rhetoric” is the writing of a speech based off of its audience and venue in order to convey a particular message (Tracy and Robles 2013, 32). In politics, rhetorical decisions are essential since “[e]very word used can make a difference” on both the national and international stages (Tracy and Robles 2013, 33). Using the wrong word can cause immediate backlash and scrutiny just as easily as the correct word can create unity and hope. In 2017, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stated this importance overtly: “I extend a special welcome to the President of the KDNP [Christian Democratic People’s Party]…because I envy his continued freedom to deliver speeches off the cuff. I’m not allowed to do that, as it’s said that every word I say is important…”2 In this sense, the idea of “choosing” each word in a speech implies how politicians attempt to sway their constituency’s opinions towards their cause or away from another.

The opinion of the majority in a country forms the foundation of a democracy and this opinion can be shaped and manipulated over time. Framing and spinning of particular ideas in speeches can provide a logical foundation to change the opinion of a populace. For example, Rice (1992) argues that authorizing figures unify a country through mentioning a shared historical practice in order to justify present actions. By employing this rhetorical maneuver, the public can be persuaded that present actions are acceptable and will not be pushed to question them further. This is not to say that the citizens of democratic countries are ignorant, but, rather, to point out how speeches can influence their outlook on policies. Politicians can also communicate an idea in a particular way to distract from their true motives, which some might

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call a “diplomatic” choice. Rather than explicitly disagreeing with a policy or person, they might maneuver their words to circumvent their dissention.

It is difficult not to be swept up in the rhetorical beauty of a turn of phrase. “We need to survey history…from the celestial vantage point occupied by our great forebears,” Orbán said on the anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. “From those starry heights to which we humble descendants only descend by rope ladder, the centuries crystallize into unity, allowing us to marvel at the indefinitely simple and translucent fabric of the history of the Hungarian people.”

Imagery created in rhetoric, such as this metaphor, is appealing, but what it aims to accomplish is what I intend to highlight through this study: rhetoric can be used to convey messages to a specific, targeted audience as well as justify certain decisions made by political leaders.

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Section II: Comparison of Germany and Hungary

I chose to compare Germany and Hungary as the two European countries to compare in this paper. Germany represents a strong democratic state, while Hungary represents a backsliding state. They were selected based off of their similar histories and cultural backgrounds, which are analyzed in this section along with their differences.

Part I: Cultural Similarities

While Germany and Hungary are situated on opposite sides of Europe with Germany in Western Europe and Hungary in Central-Eastern Europe, they share similar cultural characteristics. Both have a high composition of native ethnic groups: 85.6% of Hungary’s population is Hungarian and 91.5% of Germany’s population is German. Over a quarter of their populations identify as Roman Catholic. They have a rapidly aging population with a total median age of over 42 years old, presenting a dilemma for their labor markets since there are not enough young laborers to fill the positions of those retiring (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2018; hereafter CIA). Table 1 demonstrates how demographically alike these two countries are to one another.

Table 1. Demography in Germany and Hungary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Ethnic Group</td>
<td>91.5% German</td>
<td>85.6% Hungarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Religion (excluding atheists)</td>
<td>29.0% Roman Catholic</td>
<td>37.2% Roman Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>47.4 years</td>
<td>42.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth Rate</td>
<td>-0.17%</td>
<td>-0.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Migration Rate (per 1,000 population)</td>
<td>1.3 migrants</td>
<td>1.5 migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fertility Rate</td>
<td>1.46 children born per woman</td>
<td>1.45 children born per woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA 2018
Part II: Historical Similarities

Germany and Hungary have shared common histories since the early twentieth century. Even though the Nazi Party originated in Germany, it also greatly influenced Hungary’s history. Hungary and Germany converted to fascist regimes during the Great Depression in the 1930s, contributing to Huntington’s (1991) second reversal wave. Despite democratizing at the end of World War I, “the last vestiges of democracy were swept aside [for] anti-democratic right-wing regimes” in Central and Eastern European countries as they followed the fascist model created by Germany (Nagle & Mahr 1999, 21). Conservatives promoted National Socialism as Adolf Hitler and the Nazi-inspired Hungarian National Socialist Party came to power in the two countries (Nagle & Mahr 1999, 22).

In 1941, as a result of choice and the fact that other Central-Eastern European countries were beginning to take sides, Hungary entered World War II in support of the Germans (Borhi 2004, 19; Visegrád Group 2019). The Nazi Party inflicted large, lasting impacts on both countries. Approximately six million Jewish people died during the German Holocaust (Israeli Knesset 2005). In March 1944, the Nazis also occupied Hungary, which provided refuge for Jewish people escaping from Germany, Poland, Austria, and Romania (Palasik 2011, 5). The Allied Powers’ inability to recognize the threat to the last large Jewish community in Europe resulted in the deaths of an estimated half a million Hungarian Jews (Borhi 2004, 19; Palasik 2011, 5). By April 1945, Soviet forces drove German troops from Hungary before Germany signed an unconditional surrender in May (Visegrád Group 2019). Approximately 5.5 million Germans and 1 million Hungarians lost their lives in World War II (National World War II Museum n.d.; Visegrád Group 2019).

After the war, both Germany and Hungary were occupied by the USSR. The impact felt by Germans is more widely known, as Berlin was the site of the famous Berlin Wall. Once the
country surrendered on May 8, 1945 to the Allied Powers, it was split into four zones. The United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France each were responsible for their particular zone. As tensions arose between the West and the Soviet Union, the U.S., France, and Great Britain all merged their zones in September 1949 to create what was later known as West Germany, or the German Federal Republic. The Soviets oversaw the creation of their zone in East Germany (U.S. Department of State n.d.). West and East Berlin were separated by communist East German police and military units, which erected twenty-seven miles of fencing topped with barbed wire during the night of August 13, 1961. No one was allowed to cross between the two sides. Afterwards, the wire was replaced by concrete, cementing the Berlin’s division for twenty-eight years (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2011; hereafter, U.S. CIA). East Berlin was ruled by communism, while West Berlin was ruled by a democracy. The country would not be reunited until November 1989 when the Berlin Wall would be torn down.

On the other hand, Hungary was completely occupied by Soviet troops which caused nationalistic tendencies in the country. Unlike Germany and Western European states, Eastern European states were of “secondary importance” to the United States and its allies, leaving them to defend themselves with little outside assistance (Borhi 2004, 269). Hungary was ruled from 1945 to 1956 by a de facto leader named Mátyás Rákosi then afterwards by Janos Kadar (Apor 2007). From 1945 to 1952, under the rule of Rákosi, the country was controlled under a period of “high Stalinism” (Nagle & Mahr 1999, 26). Beneath the Soviet Union’s leader, Joseph Stalin, Rákosi and other satellite rulers led under a strict, fear-based system. As described by Stark (n.d.), “ethnic cleansing and the using of masses for forced labor were all essential parts of the Soviet system.” The situation in Hungary was no exception. From December 1944 to January 1945, all ethnic German males aged 17 to 25 and females aged 17 to 30 were to be sent to the Soviet Union from Hungary and other neighboring states for physical labor (Stark n.d.; Borhi
“If there were enough Germans they took Hungarians instead,” so anywhere from 23,000 to 44,000 Hungarians were sent for physical labor as well (Borhi 2004, 55-56). In addition, from March to April 1945, Stalin ordered the capture of 600,000 Hungarians as prisoners of war, justified by the “great human and financial losses incurred” in his country during World War II (Stark n.d.; Borhi 2004, 56). People died in mass, approximately ten to twenty percent dying from freezing temperatures in transport to “collecting camps”; in some camps, ten percent of prisoners were killed, while in others, nearly all prisoners died (Stark n.d.).

The death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 permitted a shift towards democratization as the Soviet regime loosened its grip on political discourse and lessened the intense purges taking place (Nagle & Mahr 1999, 27). While leaders maintained Stalin’s fear-based approach, they did not meet the same levels of brutality as their predecessor. Tanks were used to crush pro-democratic demonstrators in East Berlin in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956, which gave rise to nationalistic sentiments against Soviet troops (U.S. Department of State n.d.-c). Throughout the next thirty-six years, the Soviet Union became less and less strict with its policies as it tried to politically, militarily, and economically compete with its rival, the United States, in spite of internal dissention. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in the USSR and demonstrated his leniency through the implementation of perestroika and glasnost – restructuring and transparency (U.S. Department of State n.d.-b). In 1989, Eastern European countries overthrew their Communist rulers and the Berlin Wall fell (U.S. Department of State n.d.-c).

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Germany became a strong democracy in the region through the help of Western states. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1989) released his “Ten-Point Plan for German Unity” in order to increase cooperation between the East and West. Germany was established as a federal republic and both sides were reunited under the constitution, known as the Basic Law. Under the electoral rules established in the constitution,
the first German coalition government was formed in 1990 (Anderson 1999, 30). It became quickly integrated into the European Coal and Steel Community, which was created to “unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace” (“The History of” n.d.). This community later became known as the European Union, a strong political and economic partnership for European democracies, which today has 28 members.

By the Cold War’s conclusion, democracy began to spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe in the absence of the USSR’s control (Huntington 1991, 16). Hungary, already one of the most liberal communist governments, was considered a “forerunner of building democracy and market economy” in the region (Szikra 2014, 487; U.S. Department of State n.d.-b). Many considered Hungary to be “a harbinger of democracy in Eastern Europe and a symbol of hope for liberal institutionalists within the EU” (Slattery 2012). It became the first Central-Eastern European country to develop a functioning party system, with a major party both on the left and right of the political spectrum (Dimitrov, Goetz, and Wollmann 2006, 49-50). While every Eastern country that democratized from 1989 to 1990 had a constitutional or tribunal court, Hungary’s was considered even more powerful than those in Western Europe, holding “remarkably broad jurisdiction and extensive authority” (Schiemann 2001, 357). This established constitutional court functioned as a safeguard, meant to uphold the rule of law (Schiemann 2001, 357). After all of these components were established, and with support from the West, Hungary’s held its first democratic elections in April 1990 (Dimitrov, Goetz, and Wollmann 2006, 50).

**Part III: Similarities Between Current Leaders**

Some of the most important similarities between Germany and Hungary lie in Viktor Orbán and Angela Merkel both as leaders and as people. Their similar perspectives lend to the inherent persona and tone present in political rhetoric. Before their rise to power, both Merkel and Orbán grew up in countries controlled by the Soviet Union; Merkel lived in Eastern
Germany and Orbán lived in Hungary. As heads of government, both leaders have been in power for extensive amounts of time. In November 2005, Angela Merkel was elected as Germany’s chancellor and has maintained her position for the past fourteen years. Viktor Orbán served as Hungary’s Prime Minister from 1998 to 2002 and was reelected in 2010; he has retained this post for the past nine years (Freedom House 2012). As Viktor Orbán pointed out in 2015, “I have served as prime minister for a combined total of nine years; in Europe, only Mrs. Merkel has more experience as a head of government.” Merkel announced in October 2018 that she will not seek re-election in 2021, while Orbán has not given any indication of resigning. Furthermore, both are leaders of parties with conservative, Christian ties. Merkel is the head of the Christian Democratic Union, or CDU, and Orbán’s Fidesz party is allied with the Christian Democratic People’s Party, or KDNP.

Part IV: A Comparison of Democracies

In this case study, Germany represents a strong democracy in Europe and serves as a comparison to Hungary, which represents a country that is currently backsliding. This part will compare the two governmental systems through the institutions which uphold their free, democratic structures.

When comparing their democracies as a whole, Germany’s system is clearly stronger than Hungary’s. Freedom House is a commonly utilized resource for country-specific democratic assessments. Since 1972, this independent organization has published annual reports evaluating freedom in the world. Freedom in a country is rated from one to seven, based on an aggregate score of political rights and civil liberties ratings; the lower the rating, the greater the freedom is

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4 Orbán, Viktor. 2015. “Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the Presentation Ceremony for the Golden Umbrella Award.” February 20. Warsaw, Poland.
in the country (Freedom House 2016). Hungary’s Freedom House Score has reflected the country’s democratic decline since Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Fidesz came to power in 2010. Germany’s freedom status has been maintained (Figure 1). There are many reasons for this deviation. I will focus on comparing the democracies of Germany and Hungary from 2010 to 2017, as these are the years most relevant to my analysis.

![Figure 1. Freedom House Scores Over Time](image)

Germany has been recognized as a strong democracy after its unification, but Hungary's democracy has struggled in recent years along with other countries in Central-Eastern Europe. Studies have shown post-communist countries – specifically in the Visegrád Four, or V4, which include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – have experienced a rise in populism and have shifted away from democratic ideals (Bustikova and Guasti 2017; Kapstein and Converse 2008). The reason for this is not inherently because of their communist pasts. As Solkay (2000, 5) states, “the legacy of communism…does not explain populism, or its strength and duration.” None of these states have experienced the same amount of backsliding or have the same populist roots in their countries. For example, Hungary and Poland’s backsliding are
different, as Poland’s primarily focuses on a restructuring of the judiciary. While I will not attempt to determine what has enabled Germany to maintain a strong democracy or what has caused Hungary to backslide, noting their democratic differences is important to analyzing why rhetoric may differ between them.

Hungary and Germany have different governmental systems, though neither inherently creates stronger democracies than the other. Hungary has a parliamentary republic, meaning that the parliament selects the prime minister and all cabinet members; thus, the executive branch has a responsibility to both the people and the parliament. Germany has a federal parliamentary republic. Federal parliamentary republics are a combination between parliamentary republics and federal republics, which derive power from semi-autonomous regions; therefore, the government is responsible to both national and regional parliaments (CIA 2018).

Between 2010 and 2017, Germany held federal elections twice: once in 2013 and again in 2017. Hungary held elections in 2010, 2014, and 2018. Free and fair elections were held in both countries. Germany provided “for general, direct, free, and equal suffrage by direct ballot” and did not give any advantages to any particular party or group (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe 2013; hereafter OSCE). However, in the Hungarian elections, Fidesz has gained substantial advantages over other political parties. In 2014, Fidesz “enjoyed an undue advantage because of restrictive campaign regulations, biased media coverage and campaign activities that blurred the separation between political party and the State” which likely affected votes in its favor (OSCE 2014). This trend continued in 2018 (OSCE 2018).

These recent federal elections have created large party majorities in both Germany and Hungary’s parliaments. While Germany has a bicameral legislative branch, with the Bundesrat

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and the Bundestag as its upper and lower houses, Hungary has a unicameral legislative branch called the National Assembly. In 2010, Fidesz gained a super-majority in the Hungarian Parliament, meaning it controlled two-thirds of the seats in Parliament. A similar phenomenon occurred in Germany with 50% of the parliamentary seats being held by CDU/CSU. However, while German democracy remained largely unaffected, democratic backsliding began in Hungary in 2011. Fidesz used its majority to pass a new constitution in a month and over 700 acts which were to be implemented in just three years. Most of these acts were passed without public approval, showing more abuses to the rule of law. Prime Minister Orbán nominated loyalists to fill some of the country’s “most important economic, cultural, and judicial positions” and the Parliament passed them through (Szikra 2014, 489). Some of these appointments include the state-run media, which is used to garner support for Fidesz (Mounk 2018, 10). While the party defends Hungary as one of the final states in the communist bloc to replace its constitution, many remain skeptical of the monopoly Fidesz holds in the country.

From 2010 to 2017, Germany’s judicial branch was considered strong and promoted democracy through its rulings, which are essential to keeping the system of checks-and-balances intact. Hungary’s courts were deprived of their power starting in 2011 when the new Hungarian constitution’s Fourth Amendment repealed all decisions made by the Constitutional Court before January 1, 2012; thus, all precedent previously set by the court is invalid. The scope of the court was also reduced to ignore constitutional amendments, except those that were made after the constitution came into effect (Bugarič and Ginsburg 2016, 73). The court does have the ability to overrule some of Fidesz’s attempts to seize greater power, such as its ruling in 2012 which annulled a rule that forced over 200 judges into retirement (Freedom House 2013). Nevertheless, its power remains severely weakened, especially in comparison to Germany’s courts.
Freedom of the media also differs between the two countries. Germany has largely promoted the freedom of the press and the Internet. Although the government did block a neo-Nazi group’s Twitter account in 2011, an act which could be considered a restriction on free speech, the country’s history with Nazism justified its actions and the international community accepted it (Freedom House 2012). In comparison, Fidesz began its monopoly on the media in 2010 with the establishment of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, which is largely controlled by Fidesz supporters. Every media outlet is required to register with this authority and can have their licenses to operate within Hungary revoked at any time (Freedom House 2011-b). As a result, the state was able to target dissenting organizations, such as Klubradio, a Hungarian radio station that engaged in a two-year court battle in order to restore its license (Freedom House 2014-b). The government became the country’s largest advertiser in 2011 after withdrawing “most advertising from independent media since the 2010 elections” (Freedom House 2013). This domination has been accused by organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2014) and Reporters without Borders, as providing Fidesz with a strong advantage over other parties which do not get covered as often in the media during political campaigns.

Citizens in both countries can protest and organize demonstrations freely. Germany does restrict protests by “outlawed groups, such as those advocating Nazism or opposing the democratic order,” as outlined by the country’s constitution for the same historical reasons mentioned above (Freedom House 2014-a). Protests by other groups, nevertheless, are allowed. For instance, in 2014, anti-immigrant protests were permitted without government interference or suppression (U.S. Department of State 2014). Hungary also lets citizens protest freely and shows strength in this aspect of democracy since mass protests have occasionally convinced the
government to change laws. For example, the government abolished an internet tax, which it attempted to implement in 2014, in the wake of protests by tens of thousands of Hungarians.⁷

Although both countries are part of the European Union, its influence differs between the two countries. Germany and Hungary are both part of the EU’s Schengen Area, which was established in 1985 as an area “within which citizens, many non-EU nationals, business people and tourists can freely circulate without being subjected to border checks” (European Union n.d.-a). This area was particularly important between 2010 and 2017 with the Syrian refugee crisis; if refugees were let in one area, they could also travel to other European countries within the Schengen Area. Germany uses the European euro, but Hungary currently uses the Hungarian forint, though it is preparing to adopt the euro. Furthermore, Germany has 96 members in the EU’s European Parliament – the most of any other member state – while Hungary only has 21 members; members of the European Parliament are directly elected by voters and make decisions for EU laws, international agreements, and enlargements (European Union n.d.-b). Nevertheless, both member countries have weight in the organization.

All of these institutions and more will be included in my analysis of rhetoric between the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to determine how rhetoric differs between the two countries.

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Section III: Methodology

Part I: Document Sample

In this paper, I analyze the speeches made by the German and Hungarian elected heads of government. This narrow scope permits me to analyze the discourse of the figureheads of each country. All speeches were delivered orally and have a transcript, which I code for political rhetoric and themes. All transcripts were written after the speech’s delivery and include any unscripted remarks given by a speaker. I do not examine any improvised answers to questions by the press, such as interviews, or written proclamations, such as press statements, in my analysis; these remarks are not as precise as prepared speeches and can differ in rhetoric.

All speeches used in this analysis were obtained from each country’s official government website. I used the German Bundekanzlerin’s website to acquire transcripts of speeches made by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, which yielded speeches from January 28, 2011 to December 10, 2018. From this sample, I chose to analyze speeches delivered from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2017. This range served to produce three complete years of data and 331 speeches given by Chancellor Merkel. I also used the Hungarian Government’s website to attain speeches made by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, which produced speeches from June 6, 2014 to December 21, 2018. I narrowed this timeframe as well to speeches from June 6, 2014 to December 31, 2017, which provided me with 235 speeches delivered by Prime Minister Orbán. Because this analysis occurred during 2018, all speech transcripts were not published on the government websites for the year; therefore, they were not included in my analysis.

There is likely to be a selection bias by governments in which speeches are translated. For example, the German government only translates international speeches made by the Chancellor, while the Hungarian government translates both domestic and international speeches made by Prime Minister Orbán. Through the German Bundestag’s website, I was able to acquire
Chancellor Merkel’s domestic speeches, though they were written in German. I used Google Translate to individually translate each of these speeches into English; when compared to a government-translated text, Google Translated speeches were very accurate and easy to produce (see Appendix II). This was why I had more speeches for Chancellor Merkel than for Prime Minister Orbán.

**Part II: Speech Themes**

There are three central themes I will code for: democracy, international institutions, and economy. Each theme can be used to analyze the strength of democracy in each country and, thus, show democratic backsliding or prove the upholding of democracy in a state. Each theme is accessed by coding speeches for certain terms, which are provided below. I will specifically note whether I code for direct references to each subtheme, indirect references, or both. Direct references are any time the speaker explicitly references a specific term. Indirect references include other terms related to that specific topic. For example, “voters” and “elections” are considered indirect references to “democracy.”

**Theme I: Democracy.** Each of the following terms is correlated with elements affecting democracy. Each term or phrase is italicized, followed by a brief description that includes whether direct and/or indirect references are coded and why the term is analyzed. For certain terms, specific references are coded while others are not; each of these will be justified as necessary. For each reference, different variants are coded as well. For example, “democracy” is coded in addition to “democracies,” “democratic,” and “democratically.”

“*Democracy*” – Any direct or indirect reference to democracy or its founding ideals. References include “democracy,” “voting,” “voters,” “elections,” and a government that “represents the people.” “Referendums” and “national consultations” are also coded, as they allow people to vote in decisions their government makes. Any references to “checks and
balances” are also counted since they are included in the definition of a democracy. Democracy is central to this paper. Upholding rights such as free speech and maintaining free and fair voting practices are important in a government that helps its people rather than one which takes advantage and abuses them. Leaders recognizing the importance of democracies in their countries and other regions of the world could signal that they will take steps to ensure its continuance. On the other hand, if it is mentioned often, it could also show that the country is not very free or democratic. Chancellor Merkel be less likely to mention it than Prime Minister Orbán because her state’s democracy is stronger and does not need affirmation.

“Liberal” – Any direct reference to liberalism or liberal democracies. As stated in Section I, this does not include terms which denote a liberal-versus-conservative mindset on a political spectrum. Instead, I code based on references to liberal democracies. Noting the references to these types of democracies and ideals can show how countries like Hungary and Germany view liberal democracies and their beliefs.

“Illiberal” – Any direct reference to an illiberal democracy. Illiberal democracies are also cited by scholars as “hybrid regimes,” “semi-democracies,” “semi-authoritarian,” “semi-consolidated regimes,” or “partly-free regimes” (Baker 2014; Ágh 2016; Cabada 2017; Bozóki and Hegedűs 2018). Any direct reference to these terms is also coded. Prime Minister Orbán specifically began referencing Hungary’s existence as an illiberal democracy in his 2014 speech at the 25th Báylványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. “The liberal democracy and liberal Hungarian state did not protect community assets. And so…the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state.”8 Here, he directly references his country’s backsliding. It is important to examine along with his reasoning for upholding this system of government.

8 Orbán, Viktor. 2014. “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 25th Báylványos Summer Free University and Student Camp.” July 30. Tusnádfürdő (Băile Tușnad), Romania.
“Freedom” – Any direct reference to citizens being “free” or having the “freedom” to exercise their rights. This does not include “free trade,” which has more to do with economics rather than the freedom of the people. This subtheme also does not include people who were liberated from types of oppression, such as from poverty, war, or concentration camps; they do not discuss the ability of citizens to exercise their rights as one would with the freedom of speech. Furthermore, references to the freedom of states are included in the section referring to “National Independence” or “National Sovereignty” rather than in this subtheme. Discussing citizens’ freedom proves a leader is more willing to recognize the freedom of all people; this recognition directly correlates freedom with liberal democracy, which recognizes the rights of all people, including minorities. On the other hand, just like references to “democracy,” if a leader emphasizes freedom too often, it could also show that citizens are perhaps not as free as they appear.

“Strength” – Any direct reference to the “strength” of the country. While “strength” is a very nuanced term, illiberalists and populists are known to support a strong leader in power. Thus, it is likely that Viktor Orbán, as a populist, will reference this strength often. In 2016, he said, “At times like this we need charismatic leaders, strong leaders and political stability; and we also need a robust parliamentary majority, in order to have the power to enforce an economic policy based on new approaches.”9 Strong countries are led by strong leaders, according to populists. Thus, strength is an important term to code in order to distinguish between these two countries.

“Constitution” – Any direct reference to the country’s constitution, including new changes being made to it. References to the “Basic Law” and the “Fundamental Law,” the

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English translations for the names of Germany and Hungary’s constitutions, respectively, will be counted towards this subtheme. Constitutions provide the basis for any and all laws created in the country. In democracies, they typically outline the need for, and rules of, free and fair elections. Hungary changed its constitution in 2010 after Fidesz gained a supermajority in Parliament. The circumstances of this constitution’s adoption invite criticism and any references to it likely dictates a justification for its creation. On the other hand, Germany’s constitution has not generated as much recent criticism since it is older, having been adopted in 1949 then amended in 1990 after East and West Germany were reunified.

“Courts” – Any direct reference to the court system within a country, including constitutional courts and smaller, localized courts. This also includes references to “judges,” who are fundamental to the court system. Constitutional courts are important to maintaining a government’s checks and balances, so recognizing their power is fundamental to a democracy.

“Parliament” – Any direct reference to the country’s parliament or its members. This subtheme also includes any references made to Fidesz’s supermajority in the Parliament. References to the “Parliament” or the names for their parliamentary houses – the German “Bundestag” and “Bundesrat” as well as the Hungarian “National Assembly” – are coded. Like the courts, parliaments contribute to the system of checks and balances in a democracy.

“Media”/“Press” – Any direct reference to the media or press. This includes mentioning specific media outlets; mediums such as “magazines,” “newspapers,” or “publishers”; and authors such as “journalists.” A free press is essential in a democracy. The media transmits a viewpoint of the government to its viewers, although some outlets are more biased than others. Populists openly criticize the media. Through coding for it, I will be able to determine if this dislike for the media is also true in a liberal country like Germany and/or in an illiberal country like Hungary. As stated in Section II, Germany’s media organizations act independently of the
state, but Hungary’s government has its own state-run media. The perspectives of these two leaders will likely differ on the media, but democratic countries uphold the freedom of the press.

“National Unity” – Any direct or indirect reference to a unified country or to the unity of the country. References to the fall of the Berlin Wall, without also mentioning the reunification of the German people, are not coded. This idea is particularly important in both Germany and Hungary, which have large populations that identify as German and Hungarian, respectively (see Table 1). If there are more references to German or Hungarian unity compared to European unity, it would likely show that the country is more focused on national beliefs rather than on upholding European beliefs.

“Christianity” – Any direct reference to Christianity or a symbol of this religion. References include “Providence,” “the Bible,” “Jesus Christ,” “churches,” “cathedrals,” and “the Pope” who is a figurehead for Roman Catholicism which is the largest religion in both countries (CIA 2018). Mentions of “God” are also included, but not for colloquial phrases such as, “oh God” or “my God,” such as when Chancellor Merkel said, “…but they think, oh God, the Germans” in a speech.10 Both leaders’ parties and coalitions – Prime Minister Orbán’s Fidesz-Christian Democrats alliance and Chancellor Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union of Germany – are based off of Christianity, so through referencing this religion, they appeal to their voter base. Populists also tend to reference religion often for their cause. Although Hungary is a largely secular country, Viktor Orbán regards Christianity as the “unifying force of the nation,” without which the country would not exist (Ádám and Bozóki 2016, 129). This helps to contrast his party, Fidesz, with left-wing parties, associating them with the country’s “communist past, which promoted a secular ideology” (Ádám and Bozóki 2016, 130). Therefore, this rhetoric aids to appeal to their voter base and justify their actions.

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10 Merkel, Angela. 2015. “Speech by Federal Chancellor Merkel at the Event ‘60 years of Guest Workers in Germany.’” December 7. Berlin, Germany.
“Immigrants” / “Immigration” – Any direct or indirect reference to migrants entering the country or those already in the country. It includes terms like “migrants,” “immigrants,” “asylum-seekers,” “refugees.” This does not include references made to people emigrating out of either Hungary or Germany or to those emigrating out of other countries, such as Syria, since they are not necessarily immigrating into Europe, Germany, or Hungary. Immigration has played a strong role in both countries, especially in the role that it plays with national security. It has been argued that the cultural divide between immigrants and European host states created a crisis in Hungary which caused “old structures to reassert themselves” and let the country’s democracy slide further backwards (Rupnik 2016). Germany does not have borders on the outside of the European Union and, thus, does not have to worry about the threat of immigrants as strongly, but still experienced an influx of immigrants from the Syrian refugee crisis. According to the Eurobarometer, an annual survey conducted by the European Commission (2018) every year in European Union member states, 2018 was the second straight year for citizens to mark immigration as the leading concern for Europe. Both immigration and terrorism have been considered the top two issues facing the European Union by its citizens for three straight years. If these threats are addressed by both the German chancellor and the Hungarian prime minister in speeches during and after 2015, they will show that they care about their citizens. Their approaches on the issue, however, will likely differ. Furthermore, these countries also use guest workers due to the demographic shifts they are incurring. As a result, all references towards “guest workers” will be included in this subtheme.
“Terrorism” – Any direct or indirect reference to terrorist groups or to acts of terror in the country or the region. Such terms would include “terrorism,” “terrorists,” terrorist attacks like those in Paris in 2015, and groups such as the “Islamic State” or “IS.” Terms that are not included in this category are “extremism” or “extremists,” which do not necessarily indicate terrorism and could mean extreme beliefs. “Terror” as an emotion is not included either. For example, in 2015, Chancellor Merkel said, “We know what war and terror mean. Our older generation has experienced that.”\textsuperscript{11} She does not reference “terrorism,” but the feeling of being scared and terrified. Thus, it is not included. Based on the data presented in Figure 2, terrorism has remained as one of the largest issues facing the European Union for four years. As a result, this will be discussed by both leaders during their speeches. Different rhetoric could be used by both leaders when they discuss this subtheme, though they are both considered conservatives.

**Theme II: International Institutions.** The second group of themes relates to international institutions. While both countries are members of the United Nations and NATO, neither

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.png}
\caption{Top Issues Facing the European Union}
\end{figure}

organization imposes democracy upon its members as strongly as the European Union; therefore, neither the United Nations nor NATO is included in this theme.

“The European Union” – Any direct reference to the European Union or one of its institutions. These include “European Union” or, more simply, “the EU” or “the Union”; it is also occasionally referred to as “Brussels” after the location of its headquarters, though references to Brussels as a city are not included. Any mention of an EU institution, such as the European Parliament, European Council, or the Court of Justice, are also coded. Mentions of the Union’s member states as a whole, not individually, are coded as well as other groups within the Union, such as the Schengen area where free movement takes place between borders and the “Eurozone” where countries use the euro as their form of currency. Founding documents such as the Treaty of Maastricht or the Treaty of Rome are included in this category. The European Union’s commitment towards democracy has been steadfast, requiring in Article 2 of the Treaty of Maastricht that member countries are based “on the principles of liberty, democracy, and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Bugarič and Ginsburg 2016, 70). Both Germany and Hungary are members of this international institution. Hungary, however, has been under direct scrutiny by the E.U. for its illiberal democracy, invoking the Union to initiate Article 7; this launched an investigation by the European Parliament to see if Hungary is in violation of the Union’s democratic values. If Hungary is found guilty, it will lose its voting rights within the Union until it changes. Thus, Prime Minister Orbán typically criticizes its effectiveness. Due to Germany’s close ties to the institution, Chancellor Merkel traditionally testifies for its importance to the region. As the Chancellor said in 2011, “[F]or us Germans, the European Union and the euro are close to our heart.”

“European Unity” – Any direct reference to the unity of Europe. This includes references to “European integration” and calls for Europe to work together towards a common goal. It does not include references to joint policies, such as the creation of a Digital Single Market, as these references are coded under “European Union.” If leaders are committed to the European Union and creating a unified Europe, they will likely be more committed to democracy. However, recent disillusions, such as Britain’s attempt to leave the EU, have created obstacles for a truly unified Europe.

“Independence” or “Sovereignty” – Any direct reference to the independence or sovereignty of a nation, not to that of a person (see “Freedom”) or an institution. References to “territorial integrity” are also included in this category. If leaders strongly emphasize their country’s sovereignty, they are less likely to participate, and cooperate, in international institutions. Instead, they emphasize their country’s ability to make its own decisions.

“National” – Any direct reference to “national” ideals or principles. This does not include proper nouns such as “National Socialism” or the “National Assembly,” as these are not ideals but groups. Similar to references to independence or sovereignty, when leaders emphasize domestic standards, they are less likely to participate in international institutions and instead promote self-interests.

“The West/Western Ideals” – Any direct reference to the West or Western ideals. This does not include direct references to specific Western countries, such as the United States or France, or references to the west as a cardinal direction. The West is traditionally correlated with liberal democracy, which many Central-Eastern European countries like Hungary have decided not to adhere to in recent history.

“The East/Eastern Ideals” – Any direct reference to the East or Eastern ideals. This does not include direct references to specific Eastern countries, such as Latvia or Turkey; it also does
not refer to the east as a cardinal direction or regions such as the Middle East. Just as the term “West” seeks to capture the link between Western culture and democracy, coding this term seeks to capture the sentiment that Central-Eastern European countries share of being alienated or separate from the West and its cultural ideals. If they use this term often, they show their sentiments of feeling like a part of the East rather than of the West and Europe as a whole.

Theme III: Economics. The third group of subthemes refers to economics. Recent scholars (Kapstein & Converse 2008; Branco 2012) argue against the correlation between economic development and democracy, but the state of the economy is important in pacifying voters. A strong, successful economy gives citizens a reason to keep the government in power and trust the system they have (Rupnik 2016). After World War II, for example, pro-democratic advocates were able to usher democracy into Germany once the “chronic instability” of the country’s economy ended (Bernhard 2015). Since then, democracy has remained strong and so has the economy (see Figure 4). In 1991, Huntington observed that general economic collapses, such as the Great Depression, contributed to reverse waves and hypothesized it would cause the third reverse wave in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is important to observe the emphasis both leaders place on the economy in their rhetoric to pacify their voter base.

“Economy” – Any direct reference to the economy. Indirect references include economic measures, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP), which are two of the most commonly used economic indexes; descriptions of an economic situation, such as a crisis, although this excludes the 2008/2009 economic crisis since it is coded separately; and governmental budgets, debts, and trade. However, economic unions, such as the G20, are not included since both countries are not part of the same unions. Hungary’s and Germany’s economies differ greatly. As Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate, Hungary’s GDP lags well behind Germany, though they have followed the same trends.
“2008/2009 Economic Crisis” – Any direct reference to the 2008/2009 financial and economic crisis, also known as the Great Recession. As shown below in Figure 3, Hungary has suffered large fluctuations in its GDP since the 2008 crisis. While CEE countries did not experience effects from the 2008 economic Great Recession until 2010, there were large social policy reforms made during this timeframe. The leading coalition between Fidesz and KDNP “used the global economic crisis to justify ‘unorthodox measures’ in the political and economic sphere, in order to remove democratic barriers from the way the executive power” (Szikra 2014, 488). Germany also suffered a large economic setback in 2008, though not nearly as intensely as Hungary did. Germany’s economic levels have returned to their pre-2008 state, while Hungary
has still struggled. It is thus used as a justification for backsliding and will be analyzed in this paper.

“Employment” – Any direct or indirect reference to employment within a country. Direct references include “employment” or “unemployment.” Indirect references include phrases such as “providing jobs for” or “hiring.” However, they do not include “employees” or any references to a specific employee, or words such as “work,” as I am examining references to the change in employment rates which affect the economy. I do not wish to examine those who are currently employed. Employment is a measurement of the economy, so I will include it in my analysis.

I have chosen not to examine references to tax policies or budgets, as these can change in democracies according to the party in power.

Addressing Overlap Between Terms and Other Nuances. Some terms do tend to overlap in their usage in speeches, so it is important to maintain consistency when it does occur. Examples of common terms and how determinations are made when addressing their overlap can be found below.

“European Court of Justice” / “European Parliament” – These two terms are coded as institutions of the European Union, not as courts or parliaments. They are referred to as an EU institution, not as a court or parliament.

“Constitutional Court” – This term could be coded for “constitution” and/or for “court.” However, it is only listed under “court” since references are being made to the court, not to the constitution itself.

“Freedom of Movement” – While this phrase could be coded under the “European Union” as a fundamental for the Schengen area and under “freedom,” it is only coded for the European Union. It does not refer to the freedom of individuals within a country to exercise their rights, but as a broader ideal of the European Union.
Speech Greetings – Both Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Orbán greet specific guests at the beginning of their speeches. While Chancellor Merkel tends to greet each audience member or group before beginning her speech, Prime Minister Orbán typically opens with “Ladies and Gentlemen” before noting who is in attendance. When analyzing both speakers, references to audience members in the opening statements are not coded because they do not relate to the theme of the speech itself. It is merely a recognition of audience members. Greetings to the parliament, for example, are not references to the democracy or the government’s checks and balances. They merely point out that the speech is being delivered to members of parliament. It is done out of courtesy and does not represent a theme.

“It” and “They” – Neither of these terms were counted in my analysis to avoid redundancy. In order for these pronouns to be used, the idea must have already been previously mentioned; therefore, to count them would be redundant and unnecessary. For example, Chancellor Merkel said, “Many diseases are a great danger for refugee children. Many of them have lost their parents, are separated from them, do not know where they are.” The only reference coded in this passage was the word “refugee,” which was coded under “immigration.” Because the words “their” and “them” directly refer to the refugees, it would be unnecessary to code them, too. The word “it” can create uncertainty during coding analysis. “More than ever before, craft is seen as an independent economic sector, as a strong unit,” Chancellor Merkel said in 2014. “It is really impressive: About every fourth German company counts among the crafts.” The word “it” can refer to many topics in this sentence: the independent economic sector, the fact that every fourth company counts among the crafts, or the strength of the craft.

sector. Therefore, due to these discrepancies, neither term was counted. Instead, I followed the
guidelines set forth in the parts above.

**Part III: Coding Techniques**

The techniques used for coding is detailed specifically in Appendix I. Speeches were
coded according to year and separated by country. They were coded every time the speaker
mentioned one of the subthemes mentioned in Part II above. Each reference was recorded and
later examined using the data analysis software, Stata.
Section IV: Findings

After conducting the rhetorical analysis for Merkel and Orbán’s speeches, I was able to generate various conclusions about democracy in Germany and Hungary. The findings of this paper are separated according to theme and then broken down further into subthemes. The conclusions drawn from each subtheme contribute to the overall theme’s conclusions and prove whether or not the theme is presented differently in a democratic country, Germany, compared to a democratic backsliding country, Hungary. When applicable, themes are also compared when delivered to domestic and international audiences, since rhetoric can change depending on who speeches are being given to. The determination of the audience type was made based off of the speech’s location, specific people or groups in attendance mentioned by the speaker, and the speech title. Data will be presented in accompanying figures or tables.

Part I: Democracy

Compared to Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Orbán was more likely to mention democratic elements than Chancellor Merkel and use the mention of these elements to his advantage in justifying various governmental policies.

Democracy. As shown in Figure 5, Chancellor Merkel’s average mentions of democracy and democratic elements remained relatively consistent while Prime Minister Orbán’s fluctuated. This could represent Merkel’s continual support for democracy both at home and abroad. As she said in 2014, after World Wars I and II, “It is a miracle that our two nations [Great Britain and Germany] can talk about how we can work together even better on the basis of democracy and freedom, and how we can jointly support those – for example, Ukraine – who still have to fight for their freedom today.”15 She continually emphasized the need for democracy in European

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countries as well as the good fortune it brought Germany both economically and socially. On the other hand, Prime Minister Orbán was not as consistent.

Since Hungary held elections in 2014, a higher average for rhetoric involving democracy could be expected. The elections took place in April 2014, but the translated speeches do not begin until two months after the election on June 6, 2014; there was no available data in order to compare Orbán’s rhetoric before and after the elections. As Figure 5 illustrates, Orbán mentioned democracy and democratic elements approximately 5 times per speech in 2014 and almost 6 times per speech on average in 2015. During these two years, he emphasized the two-thirds majority his party achieved in Parliament for the second consecutive election cycle and declared his mission to create a “civic Hungary (i.e. one based on Christian-democratic, conservative principles).”16 His continual praise of the two-thirds parliamentary majority was interesting to note; in comparison, Chancellor Merkel’s party, CDU/CSU, gained half of the seats in the German Bundestag in 2013, yet she did not boast about it afterwards in her speeches like Orbán.

He continuously asserted the strength of Hungary’s democracy while simultaneously denouncing Western democracies as undemocratic in comparison. In 2015, he promoted the results of the “National Consultation” given on July 21, 2015, which asked citizens to vote for the country’s immigration policy. Of the 8 million questionnaires sent out, only 1.68 million were completed, yet Orbán declared that, “In contrast to Brussels’ lenient policy, four-fifths of Hungarians encourage the Government to adopt stricter regulations to curb illegal immigration: regulations allowing us to detain people who have illegally crossed Hungarian borders, and to deport them within the shortest possible time.”17 This fallacy – as not four-fifths of Hungarians believe in this, but only four-fifths of the one-eighth of the population which voted in the

consultation or 16.8% of the total Hungarian population – provided the basis for his movements against immigrants, including the construction of a 4-meter-high border wall. In 2017, he said, “You may well not like the opinion of 1.7 million people, but that’s no reason to get angry with the Prime Minister.”

He attributed harsh immigration policies to the will of the people rather than the will of a strong leader. The National Consultation served as a way for Orbán to not only promote Hungarian democracy but to also denounce other Western democracies as undemocratic. In 2017, he said, “What we’re faced with is a problem of democracy in the Western countries…We’re not involved in this problem of democracy, as on this very important issue – whether we should become an immigrant country – we’ve opted for a solution which, through national consultations, continuously involves those citizens who are prepared to state their opinion in the process of decision-making by the political leadership.”

Another National Consultation was given on May 31, 2017, to solicit the people’s opinions on whether the economy and immigration should be managed by the European Union or by the national government. This questionnaire was not as widely discussed by Orbán and was not used as heavily as the 2015 consultation to promote his nationalistic agenda.

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The data also showed that 68% of Prime Minister Orbán’s domestic speeches mentioned democracy at least once compared to 40% of his international speeches. This 28% difference was over twice as large as Chancellor Merkel’s, as democracy was mentioned at least once in 54% of her domestic speeches and 44% of her international speeches. Therefore, it can be concluded that while both leaders promoted democracy more domestically than internationally, Germany emphasized democracy to audiences abroad more than Hungary did. This could be because of Germany’s prominence within the European Union, but it can also demonstrate democratic backsliding. Because Prime Minister Orbán did not promote democracy abroad and also mentioned it in 14% more domestic speeches, it is unlikely that his democracy was as stable and showed his use of rhetoric to make up for it. His use of democratic practices like a national consultation to portray his actions as democratic also shows backsliding since they did not necessarily reflect the people’s opinions as completely as he described.

Liberal. While neither leader mentioned liberalism often in their speeches, Merkel mentioned it most in 2015 and 2017 compared to other years. In 2015, Merkel defended the German policy of protecting refugees and immigrants arriving in Europe from Syria based on the country’s liberal beliefs. She said, “wanting to exclude entire groups of people because of their belief or their origin – this is not worthy of our liberal state, incompatible with our constitutionally guaranteed
values and humanly reprehensible.”21 In 2017, she used Europe’s shared liberal beliefs to call for unity within the European Union: “A united Europe is and remains our best insurance for a life of peace and freedom…it is basically about living models in open, liberal, free societies, in which the dignity of each individual is respected…”22 She promoted liberal beliefs in 9% of her domestic speeches and 7% of her international speeches, creating a balance between the two audiences.

In 2014, Orbán discussed liberalism at an average rate of 1.6 mentions per speech. This average was only this high because he mentioned liberalism twenty-four times in his speech at the 25th Báylványos Summer Open University and Student Camp in Romania. At the summer camp, which, since 1989, has served as a “platform for dialogue between Hungarians and Romanians” since many ethnic Hungarians live in Romania, he denounced liberalism and promoted illiberalism in its place.23 He portrayed the liberal West as a place which “embod[ies] corruption, sex, and violence,” emphasizing that liberalism is an ideal on decline. Orbán argued, “The [former] liberal democracy and liberal Hungarian state did not protect the community assets” by forcing it into debt and destruction.24 After 2014, Orbán’s average mentions of liberalism remained low, though he was continuously critical of liberal democracies.

Illiberalism. Although Merkel highlighted liberal beliefs in her speeches, she did not take a hardline stance against illiberal or backsliding countries. It was not until 2017 that she would criticize Turkey, a country which has shown recent backsliding in its democracy. Turkey drew Merkel’s attention when it placed German citizens in “pre-trial detention”; during her mention of it in a 2017 speech, the Chancellor declared that the EU should stop negotiations with Turkey as it was “increasingly leaving the rule of law, in part at a very fast pace.”25 From 2014 to 2017, however, she made no mention of Hungary or other Visegrád Four countries, which have been recently criticized for their loss of liberal democratic beliefs.

In 2014, Prime Minister Orbán mentioned illiberalism in two speeches. The first, and most prominent, was delivered on July 30, 2014 at the 25th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp. In place of a liberal democracy, he proposed the construction of Hungary as an illiberal democracy. It would not discard liberal principles such as freedom “but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization, but instead includes a different, special, national approach.”26 Although he stated that the Hungarian people elected him because

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26 Orbán, Viktor. 2014. “Prime Minister Orbán’s Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp.” July 30. Tusnádfürdő, Romania.
they were ready for such an approach, his announcement came three months after the most recent elections. It was Hungary’s Prime Minister and his party which drove the illiberal shifts in Hungary rather than a popular vote or movement reflecting the desire of the country’s majority. Nevertheless, his outward proclamation of the country’s movement towards liberal democracy supports Bermeo’s (2016) interpretation: modern democratic backsliding actions are occurring publicly rather than behind-the-scenes by leaders.

 Orbán’s rhetoric defending illiberal democracies increased from 2014 to 2017. He changed the definition of illiberal democracies in 2017 when addressing the European Parliament, stating, “It is thought that in Central Europe there is simply no democracy if the liberals do not win or are not part of the government…Illiberal democracy is when someone other than the liberals have won.”27 “Liberals” in this case are non-conservatives. He contested that Europe denounces Hungarian democracy because it was run by a conservative rather than by a liberal politician; by shifting the blame to liberal-versus-conservative beliefs, he attempted to place the blame on a political spectrum rather than on the state of democracy in the country. Freedom. Compared to other democratic subthemes, both leaders mentioned freedom rather consistently. Merkel and Orbán emphasized freedom in their countries, which is a fundamental principle of democracy, especially in the context of their communist pasts. It was important to establish this consistency between both countries, as it shows that freedom is still valued despite the illiberal norms in Hungary.

When analyzing the frequency of freedom in domestic and international speeches, however, there was a noticeable difference. As with previous subthemes, Merkel kept her rhetoric similar between both audiences: 49% speeches mentioned freedom domestically compared to 43% of international speeches. On the other hand, 52% of Orbán’s domestic speeches mentioned freedom compared to 28% of international speeches. This large difference was also represented in previous subthemes, showing that he did not necessarily uphold other states to the same standards or promote freedom on the world stage.

**Strength.** The mention of strength by a country’s leader could possibly prove the promotion of strong leaders, which reinforce strong institutions and policies. However, both countries demonstrated similar trends in this subtheme: neither mentioned the theme often or considerably more than the other (Figure 8). Even in the year with the largest divergence between the two countries, 2017, Orbán’s average mentions were only higher by one mention which is hardly significant. Furthermore, both countries were similar in mentions domestically and internationally; Merkel had an 8% difference between the two, while Orbán had a 5% gap. Therefore, this subtheme does not appear to be different in democratic or backsliding countries.
Constitution. As demonstrated in Figure 9, the Hungarian Prime Minister mentioned his country’s constitution more than the German Chancellor referred to hers. This finding was not particularly surprising, as Hungary’s new constitution was only adopted in 2011 and was created by Prime Minister’s party, Fidesz. While Chancellor Merkel did mention the constitution more in 2017 compared to Prime Minister Orbán, it did not increase from the average mentions she made in 2016. Chancellor Merkel tended to mention the strength of constitutional procedures in her country, while Prime Minister Orbán used the constitution as a justification for his country’s backsliding in 2015. With the increase in migrants fleeing the Syrian Civil War in 2015, Prime Minister Orbán declared it was the federal government’s “constitutional duty” to protect its citizens “from the undesirable effects of this invasion” and therefore took strong anti-immigrant measures.\textsuperscript{28} He also stated it was the government’s “constitutional duty” to make “our own sovereign, national decision[s].”\textsuperscript{29} As a result, he was able to take aggressive measures, such as the building of the border fence, and make quick decisions in the name of both the constitution

\textsuperscript{28} Orbán, Viktor. “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 5th Meeting of the Hungarian Diaspora Council.” December 2. Budapest, Hungary.

and the national consultation. This reasoning, thus, clearly demonstrated how the country was backsliding.

Since domestic constitutions do not typically apply to international settings, both leaders mentioned the constitution domestically more than they did nationally. Nevertheless, there was a difference. While 34% of Merkel’s domestic speeches included this subtheme, 19% of her international speeches did as well. Prime Minister Orbán mentioned his country’s constitution in 49% of his domestic speeches, but only 17% of his international speeches did as well. The 32% gap between domestic and international rhetoric mentioning the Hungarian constitution was notable compared to the 15% difference in Merkel’s speeches. It could signal attempts by Orbán not to call attention to the new constitution, which limits press freedom, powers of the judiciary, and other anti-democratic movements which are criticized as democratic backsliding.

Courts. The recognition of courts and domestic parliaments are important to establishing the checks and balances in a country’s democracy, which prevent one person from gaining too much power. On average, courts in both countries were not mentioned more than once in any given year. In Germany, courts are recognized as a strong institution and a necessity to the country’s democracy. Therefore, Chancellor Merkel did not need to reinforce its importance more than mentioning its rulings if they were important to her policies. In Hungary, it was expected that

![Figure 9. Average Mentions of the Country's Constitution](image-url)
Orbán would mention courts more in order to show a balance of power in the country; instead, the average number of mentions remained the same. In a backsliding country like Hungary, where twelve of the fifteen Constitutional Court justices were elected by the Fidesz-KDNP controlled parliament, the court does not pose a threat to the person in power (U.S. Department of State 2015). Average mentions increased in 2016 because Orbán mentioned courts and elements of the courts twenty times during a speech delivered on the “Annual Day of Recognition for the Prosecution Service” on June 9th.

Parliament. Both countries recognized their parliaments in their speeches more during election years. This was primarily because they discussed the election results and the number of seats their parties gained in parliament. The parliament was mentioned more than the courts in both countries. This equivalence can be attributed to the same factors discussed above with the courts in a country. Prime Minister Orbán was not afraid to openly criticize the Hungarian Parliament, as he did with a strong statement in 2017: “It seems as if someone has secretly launched a competition to see who can say the most shocking things, and who can be the coarsest. Congratulations! It seems to be that here, within the confines of this Honourable House,
standards are deteriorating rapidly.”³⁰ It is not against democratic norms to criticize a legislative branch’s operations, but outbursts like these are typical of populist, strongman leaders. It aims to discredit the Hungarian Parliament and it succeeds.

![Figure 11. Average Mentions of Parliament](image)

**Media/Press.** Freedom of the press is important in a democracy as it criticizes the political system, informs the public, and encourages civic discourse. Merkel mentions this often in her speeches, particularly in 2014 and 2016. She addressed six separate media organizations in Germany from 2014 to 2017, such as the Newspaper Congress of the Bundesverband Deutscher Zeitungsverleger. When addressing the 42⁰ Congress of German Local Newspapers, she said, “[T]here is no question that we need a diverse, free, independent and opinionated press.”³¹ She supported the freedom of the press during these years in particular, which was a promising sign in a democracy. 11% of her domestic speeches and 12% of her international speeches mentioned the press at least once.

On the other hand, as shown by Figure 12, Prime Minister Orbán did not reference the press often. There were increases in 2015 and 2017, opposite of Chancellor Merkel’s increases.

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but the rhetoric employed by the Prime Minister was much different and escalated overtime. He attacked international criticism of the country’s media policies. He argued that “freedom of thought, speech, and the media in Hungary is wider, deeper and more diverse than in countries to the west of Hungary.” This rhetoric continued in 2017 when he criticized international and Western media for falsely portraying the Hungarian state and its policies. For example, he said, “We who want a Europe of the nations are not Eurosceptics. Though this is what the Western press writes about us, this simply is not true…” Later in the year, his rhetoric escalated to go as far to say that the international media was controlled by Hungarian-American billionaire George “Soros’s mafia network and the Brussels bureaucrats.” Most of this rhetoric was employed domestically; 16% of his speeches delivered to domestic audiences discussed the press compared only 9% of those delivered to international audiences. Domestically, Orbán portrayed the liberal, “westernized” press as an enemy of the Hungarian state but did not typically discuss these beliefs internationally. This demonstrated more anti-European rhetoric since he denounced these outside sources while defending his policies. His lack of criticism towards domestic, Hungarian media also showed the lack of media freedom in Hungary. Merkel upheld the both the domestic and the international press, which operate freely and without state interference. It would not make sense for Orbán, however, to criticize a state-run media organization which supports his rule; by portraying the free, international press as an enemy of the Hungarian state, he was able to offset international criticism as false and run by enemies of the state, like George Soros, while also portraying his own version of the truth to gain public support.

National Unity. Merkel and Orbán followed the same trends when discussing national unity or trying to unite their country, but in 2014, they differed because of the Hungarian elections. In this context, Prime Minister Orbán often urged the government to “lead a unified and strong nation forward along the path that it started out on four years ago.”  

In 2015, both country’s average mentions peaked as a result of the Syrian immigration crisis. While Chancellor Merkel sought to unify her country and integrate migrants into German society, Prime Minister aimed to unify his country against immigrants and the European Union as it tried to take some of its sovereignty. Though they had separate and different missions, both still represented the importance of mobilizing the public towards a common goal in democracies.

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Christianity. Although the German Chancellor and Hungarian Prime Minister are members of parties which have Christian ties, they were not consistent with their references to Christianity. Prime Minister Orbán, on average, referred to Christianity at least two times more often than Chancellor Merkel. Both leaders noted the importance of Christians in Europe, though the Prime Minister tended to emphasize it more during his speeches. 68% of Orbán’s domestic speeches referred to Christianity compared to 23% of Merkel’s. This finding was surprising since Hungary is mostly secular, but in the context of its history, Hungary considers itself as the “gatekeeper” of Europe, separating itself from eastern, Islamic states. Populists are also known for using Christianity as a unifying force in various countries (Ádám and Bozóki 2016). In 2017, Orbán gave seven speeches to Christian organizations, including at the consecration of a new church and a speech to the Congress of the Federation of Christian Intellectuals; in the same year, Merkel only gave two speeches to Christian organizations. In 2015, Merkel said, “Muslims, Jews, and Christians have common roots.”

Christianity as an argument to deny immigrants. He argued, “For us [Hungarians], Europe is a Christian continent, and this is how we want to keep it.” During the same speech, he also pointed out that “our Fundamental Law constitutionally declares that we Hungarians recognize the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood.” Merkel used Christianity to argue for the unity of the continent, but Orbán exploited the religion as another justification towards his anti-immigrant policies and nationalistic tendencies.

![Figure 14. Average Mentions of Christianity](image)

**Figure 14. Average Mentions of Christianity**

Immigrants/Immigration & Terrorism. Due to the intensification of the Syrian refugees arriving in Europe in 2015, both countries increased their rhetoric during this time. However, in comparison, by 2017, Hungary’s average number of mentions remained higher than Germany’s (Figure 15). It was used as a justification for some of Orbán’s policies, such as the border fence and his stance against the European Union’s quotas. His nationalistic rhetoric contrasted sharply against Merkel’s since she promoted integration of immigrants into the country and encouraged EU quotas.

The correlation between mentions of immigration and mentions of terrorism was mainly visible in 2015 and 2017, though they differed in 2014 and 2016. During 2014 and 2016, Merkel showed compassion for other countries; she condemned the terrorist attacks in France and the United Kingdom often in her speeches. Orbán denounced terrorism in general, but also used this subtheme as a reason to promote his anti-immigrant policies. As he said in 2017, “It [immigration] will remain on the agenda until people everywhere realize that migration is the Trojan horse of terrorism.”

He blamed immigrants for terrorism, denounced the West for letting them into Europe, and used terrorism as a justification for protesting against the EU’s quotas. Merkel recognized terrorism’s impact by condemning terrorists with strong language such as calling them “inhuman and godless,” but she did not use terrorism to rationalize her policies. Instead, she said, “Terrorism is not a new problem that has come with the refugees.”

Although Germany also experienced changes as a result of immigration and terrorist attacks, such as in 2016 when a truck driver attacked a Christmas market in Berlin and a suicide bomber

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blew himself up in Ansbach, Merkel did not make any rash policy changes based off of terrorism alone. This singular issue helped Orbán enforce various new anti-democratic policies since he used it as a justification that Hungary would remain a place where “our guiding ideal is not international liberalism, but sovereignty and Christian social teaching.”

![Figure 16. Average Mentions of Terrorism](image)

**Part II: International Institutions**

While both countries mentioned European institutions, Prime Minister Orbán’s nationalistic rhetoric reflected his anti-European sentiments, enforcing his ability to promote democratic backsliding without being concerned about the international community’s reaction.  

**European Union.** The European Union is an international institution created, in part, to create more unity within Europe after World War II. To be a member, states must be democracies. It was presumed that a country referencing the EU often is more likely to recognize its power and authority; hence, it is more likely to be democratic. However, both Merkel and Orbán mentioned the EU at relatively consistent rates and often in their speeches (Figure 15). Both leaders also addressed the Union in domestic and international speeches. Merkel addressed it in 65% of her

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domestic speeches and 68% of her international speeches; Orbán discussed it in 68% of his domestic speeches and 75% of his international speeches.

Figure 17. Average Mentions of the European Union

Although both leaders did mention the EU often, their rhetoric about the EU differed significantly. From 2014 to 2017, Merkel often called for further integration within the EU in issues which are “not something that any one EU Member State could achieve single-handedly,”\(^\text{43}\) such as international economic crises and the Syrian immigration crisis. She promoted the Union in terms of its strong economic policies as well. Orbán rarely praised the EU and increased his anti-EU rhetoric from 2014 to 2017. In 2014, he endorsed the accession of Serbia and Macedonia to the EU and encouraged them to become member states. By 2016, his rhetorical praise had turned into cynicism and he rarely showed support for the Union. He warned against the European Union turning into “a kind of Soviet Union reloaded” as it nearly “overstep[ped] the boundaries of its own conceptions” by tackling issues like immigration.\(^\text{44}\) He also called EU-mandated quotas for the resettling of immigrants “the Mount Everest of demented


ideas.”⁴⁵ This increase in anti-EU rhetoric showed Orbán’s awareness that the EU would not punish his country for its recent backsliding away from democracy. The Union did not initiate Article 7, which began investigations into Hungary’s democracy, until 2018. He did not feel as tied to the international institution, which was supposed to hold him accountable for upholding specific democratic norms. He supported national policies instead (see “National”) and began to drift further away from the EU’s democratic standards due to the Union’s failure to act.

**European Unity.** While both leaders mentioned the European Union at approximately the same rates in all four years, Germany promoted European unity at a higher rate than Hungary did (Figures 15 & 16). This shows Germany’s tendency to promote the European Union’s interests in the name of European unity, while Hungary preferred to not promote the cohesion of member states (see Independence/Sovereignty & National below). As the Prime Minister said in 2015, “the differences between the Member States are still clearly visible.”⁴⁶ Orbán was therefore not as committed towards European ideals, such as democracy, but towards sovereignty instead and showed that he did not feel as responsible for upholding these ideals.

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Independence/Sovereignty. Leaders who mention their country’s independence or sovereignty often are less likely to secede some of that power to international institutions. This was obvious in the analysis of the mentions of independence or sovereignty between Merkel and Orbán. In March 2014, with the annexation of Crimea by Russia, both nations advocated for the territorial integrity of Ukraine between 2014 and 2015. After the situation settled down, Merkel’s average mentions of this subtheme dropped significantly from 0.52 in 2014 and 2015 to 0.13 in 2016, then to 0.08 in 2017 (Figure 17).

Instead of promoting European unity, Orbán was more likely to promote his country’s independence. The rise of average mentions from 2014 to 2017 shows that Orbán promoted independence more over time. In 2015, Orbán advocated for Hungary’s independent right to decide its own stance on immigration while defying EU-mandated quotas. In a speech to Parliament, he said, “There is a reason why political forces are taking turns in criticizing Hungarians for standing up for our thousand-year-old-statehood, the country’s sovereignty and our independence. We got used to this since 2010.”47 He also promoted national independence often in 2017; this subtheme was mentioned thirty-two times in his speech about the 2017 National Consultation results. He stated that the Hungarian people “unanimously” voted to keep their sovereign right to determine economic and immigration policies for themselves rather than hand these powers to the EU.48 Therefore, Orbán demonstrated his lack of attachment to the EU and instead promoted a national agenda over an international one.

National. References to “national” ideals or principles could signal the promotion of self-interests by a country over those set by international institutions. From 2014 to 2017, both leaders were more consistent in their average mentions of “national” ideals than they were in any other subtheme; Merkel averaged between 0.64 and 0.71 mentions per speech, while Orbán averaged between 1.9 and 3.04. Furthermore, while Merkel mentioned national principles at least once in 40% of her domestic speeches, Orbán mentioned them in 85% of his domestic speeches. These differences were consistent with the findings discussed in the subthemes of “European Unity” and “Independence/Sovereignty”: Orbán’s focused on national standards in comparison to Merkel’s dedication to international cooperation. These results demonstrated that Orbán is less likely to promote democracy abroad or follow the democratic guidelines enforced by the EU.
West and East. Western states are typically correlated with liberal democracies and liberal democratic ideals, while Eastern states are not traditionally as strong in their democratic tendencies and can feel alienated from the West. As shown by Figures 21 and 22, Merkel spoke about the West and the East equally throughout the four years studied. She primarily spoke of the West-East divide in terms of the Cold War while also focusing on the solidarity formed between European nations afterwards. This contrasted sharply against Orbán’s use of both subthemes.

Orbán was quick to denounce the West in many of his speeches as well as liberal democracies. Although in 2015, he stated, “Hungary is part of the West, Hungary is itself in the West. We cannot open towards the West because we are in it,” and maintained this recognition for months afterwards, he did not recognize this stance once the immigration crisis became more of a reality.49 Later in the year, he accused Western countries of having no agreement on immigration and of not listening to their citizenry, “unlike Hungary, where surveys show people’s views with perfect clarity…”50 This anti-West rhetoric continued and became harsher within the next two years as it was accused of multiple atrocities. He blamed the West for not

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recognizing Hungary as western as a result of its history, “artificially separated as a consequence of wars or occupations.”51 The West, according to Orbán, was also responsible for restricting Hungarian sovereignty “in favor of European powers.”52 He accused the “Western media” of passing “judgement on [Hungary] with morally imperialistic, presumptuous arrogance” after the border fence was built.53 He also claimed that Western democracies are weaker because they do not listen to their citizens as his country did with its National Consultations. Because Western democracies tend to be liberal, Orbán was able to avoid by not referencing liberal democracies directly. In other words, by criticizing the West as a whole rather than specific countries, Orbán’s rhetoric could not be judged as harshly than if he were to criticize liberal democracies and ideals.

On the other hand, the East was mentioned less and with less criticism by Orbán. He primarily recognized the East in terms of the shift of economic growth from the West to the East. He discussed this both in the context of Europe to promote the growth of Hungary and other Eastern states, and in the world as a result of China and India’s successes.

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Therefore, these findings reinforced those found with the mentions of European unity. While Merkel was more likely to recognize Europe as a cohesive, unified place, Orbán recognized it in terms of its separate regions which work separately from one another.

Part III: Economics

These countries were very similar in their mentions of economic factors, proving evidence that the economy was important in both countries. Orbán tended to attribute positive economic statistics to his rise to power in 2010 while Merkel did not.

Economy. While the Orbán mentioned the economy more than the Merkel, though both had significantly high averages each year (Figure 23). This suggests that the economy, in rhetoric at least, does not necessarily signal democratic backsliding. Instead, it is important to all governments for citizen support.
While their average number of mentions followed the same patterns, both leaders spoke about the economy in different ways. Merkel discussed the economy primarily in terms of open trade and exchange. In addition, she promoted the common theme that, “We need civil society, above all we need the economy.” On the other hand, Orbán discussed the economy in the context of 2010. As he said in 2017, “Up until 2010 Hungary’s economy stumbled from crisis to crisis, but since 2010 it has regained its strength and continuously strengthened further.” Merkel did not make the same attribution between her role and the economy as Orbán did. Therefore, he clearly attributed the economic success of Hungary to his time in power. In particular, Orbán constantly referenced the new economic policy implemented in 2010 by Fidesz, which he declared “cannot be regarded as liberal because it does not give priority to the individual but requires a balanced relationship between the communal and individual interests.” It was used in this context to reference another aspect of Hungary which is illiberal, although Hungary’s economy is open to free trade, similar to other democratic economies.

2008 Economic Crisis. Neither country discussed the 2008 international economic and financial crisis very often and mentions of the crisis tended to decrease overtime (Figure 24). Trends of average mentions of the economic crisis followed those similar to the trends of the economic mentions. While Fidesz once used the economic crisis to justify policies which contributed to Hungary’s backsliding, it did not from 2014 to 2017 and rarely mentioned the crisis.

Employment. Mentions of employment followed the same trend as the other two economic variables, though employment was not discussed as often as the economy. Both leaders emphasized the positive trends in employment their countries had achieved in recent years. The primary differences between the two were that Merkel typically compared trends to the 1990s and emphasized various types of unemployment, while Orbán associated current trends to when he became Prime Minister in 2010 and focused on general unemployment in Hungary. For example, Merkel stated in 2017 that Germany had reached the lowest unemployment rates since 1991 and did not emphasize rates since her party began power in 2005. On the other hand, in 2017, Orbán compared the 12-13% unemployment in 2010 to the near-full employment rates that

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Hungary had reached in 2017. These differences proved that Orbán was more focused on the overall growth achieved since his time in power than the country’s growth in general. Orbán continually stated that unemployment had dropped as a result of the new “workfare economy” Fidesz implemented. Although Merkel compared unemployment levels to the reunification of Germany, Orbán used it to garner support for Fidesz’s economic changes rather than discuss the nation’s overall improvement.

Unlike liberal democracies, illiberal democracies focus primarily on the majority of the population rather than on minority groups, which was demonstrated in the rhetorical differences between Merkel and Orbán. When discussing employment, Merkel typically spoke about high employment rates within the EU, youth employment as a result of demographic challenges, women’s role in the workplace, and providing jobs for refugees. Orbán did not focus on employment among specific groups but discussed the country’s overall employment rates instead. Both countries suffer from demographic setbacks since they do not have enough young people to replace those retiring, yet Orbán did not as seem as concerned about this issue as Merkel. He stated, “Hungary is a country which is able to provide employment for every citizen who wishes to work.” Employment was mentioned at least once in 49% of Orbán’s domestic speeches and 33% of his international speeches.

Orbán also used employment rates to push his nationalistic agenda in various ways. In 2014, he emphasized the importance of Hungarian small and medium-sized businesses, which provided jobs to “hundreds of thousands of Hungarian families…” A year later, he blamed

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illegal immigrants for worsening the West’s already-rising unemployment rates.\textsuperscript{62} In 2017, he said, “I’d like to state my opposition to all efforts to automatically allocate certain jobs to foreigners. I think it is significant in a Hungarian hotel even the cleaners are Hungarian…”\textsuperscript{63} Orbán used unemployment to prove that his pro-Hungarian, anti-West agenda was working under Fidesz’s control, but Merkel used it as an economic indicator to show that Germany was on the right track.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure25.png}
\caption{Average Mentions of Employment}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{62} Orbán, Viktor. 2015. “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Presentation at the 26\textsuperscript{th} Bátványos Summer Open University and Student Camp.” July 25. Tüsnádfürdő, Romania.
Section V: Suggestions for Future Research

Democratic backsliding is not necessarily a new phenomenon, and it is not likely going to dissipate soon. By using the case studies of Germany and Hungary, I analyzed the differences in rhetoric between a democratic state and one that was experiencing democratic backsliding. This project could be expanded to study various elements of backsliding of democracies internationally.

European countries were used in this case study because of their similar histories and demographics. It would be important to study the rhetoric used by the leaders of other democratic countries in Europe, such as France or Switzerland, as well as other backsliding countries, such as other countries in the Visegrád Four like Poland or the Czech Republic, using the same parameters outlined in this paper. The results of these studies can be compared to further validate this study and/or prove new findings in the state of democratic backsliding in Europe.

Europe is not the only region in the world experiencing democratic backsliding. Russia has experienced a decline in its democracy since the 1990s as a result of heightened control on the media and civil society organizations. In Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has used a military coup d’état attempt in 2016 to overstep constitutional bounds and reduce the power of the parliamentary and judiciary branches as well as the country’s press. In Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro has intimidated media organizations, manipulated elections in his favor, and suppressed the political opposition, leading to a crisis in Latin America. These examples demonstrate common themes in backsliding, which are similar to Hungary: the repression of the media, the rise of a strong leader, and the overstepping of constitutional bounds. By examining the rhetoric in different backsliding countries, and perhaps through different periods of time,
studies could examine whether leaders use different justifications for their country’s shifts away from democracy based on regions in the world and historical backgrounds.

Studies should also be devoted to analyzing different types of democratic backsliding and how different institutions are affected by it. For example, Hungary’s constitution provided the basis for the changes in its democracy, but Poland’s backsliding has focused on its court system. It would be interesting, therefore, to study whether or not the Polish president discussed the courts more than Orbán did. Such a model could be used to analyze how rhetoric changes based on the institution(s) targeted during backsliding and whether countries recognize these institutions openly or not.

In addition, the rhetoric of authoritarian and democratic leaders across the world should be assessed to create a scale with which to analyze democratic backsliding. For example, speeches delivered by the leaders of North Korea, China, and Singapore can provide a basis for authoritarian rhetoric, while speeches given by the leaders of the United States, Norway, and Australia can demonstrate democratic rhetoric. By comparing the differences in the rhetoric used by both extremes, rhetoric used in democratic backsliding can be placed on a scale. Trends could be developed over time to signal whether a country is backsliding and what is being affected by it.

Finally, studies on rhetoric do not have to focus solely on heads of government. The rhetoric of members of the left- or right-wing opposition parties in Parliament could be examined to define how the opposition views democracy in the country; the same could be done for the members of the leader’s party, too. Court rulings could be analyzed to test whether or not laws are judged fairly or based off of a justified system. The rhetoric used by parties outside the country could be examined as well, such as members of the European Parliament when discussing Hungary’s backsliding. Through analyzing these sources, a broader picture of
democratic backsliding can be developed to gain insight into why countries backslide compared to others, how their backsliding is justified, and what the international realm can do to stop it.

**Conclusion**

In 2019, Hungary became the first member of the European Union to be downgraded from “Free” to “Partly Free” in Freedom House’s annual report. When comparing his rhetoric to Chancellor Merkel’s, Prime Minister Orbán showed a disinterest in following both liberal and international standards and his attempts to garner domestic support based off of economic factors, providing insight into why the country was downgraded under the strong leader.

Orbán mentioned democratic elements more than Merkel and used them to falsify the democratic nature of his policies. German immigration policies were justified as components of the country’s liberal beliefs, but Hungarian nationalistic policies, which defied EU-mandated quotas, were defended based on the aggrandized results of “National Consultations.” Merkel did not denounce the political systems of any illiberal countries until German citizens were unjustly detained in Turkey in 2017; on the other hand, Orbán criticized liberalism with harsh, provocative rhetoric while promoting an illiberal Hungary starting in 2014. Recognition of their country’s parliaments and courts were reasonably equivalent between the two leaders, although this could be because of Fidesz’s two-third parliamentary majority and control of the court systems in Hungary which do not threaten Orbán’s power. The media was recognized by Merkel as necessary for democratic discourse, while Orbán criticized international news sources as part of George “Soros’s mafia network…” Orbán’s harsh rhetoric to criticize opposing viewpoints proved that he is a populist and the state of democracy in his country is declining.

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International institutions were also discussed differently in both countries, although they were spoken about by both leaders at similar rates. Merkel promoted more integration into the European Union, but Orbán accused the Union of trying to overstep its boundaries and rob states of their sovereignty. National policies and principles were promoted in 85% of Orbán’s domestic speeches compared to 40% of Merkel’s domestic speeches. Despite recognizing Hungary as part of the West in 2015, Orbán’s rhetoric often criticized the West while identifying Hungary as part of the East. Merkel did not divide the continent or world into these two parts but instead focused on European unity and cohesion. Both countries recognized positive economic trends in their countries, although Merkel discussed open trade and Orbán tended to attribute trends towards his time in power. He did not use the 2008 economic crisis to justify policies, though he did in the past; immigration and terrorism took its place instead.

These findings are just the beginning of research on rhetoric and democratic backsliding. This study should be expanded to see if these norms are representative of countries besides Hungary and Germany. Policies and governmental decisions are often defended through speeches by heads of government, making rhetoric one of the best ways to study democratic backsliding. Its importance should not be discounted.

Hungary and Germany are both changing in dynamic ways which may affect their democracies in the future. In October 2018, Angela Merkel announced her decision not to run for re-election in 2021 after holding office as the German Chancellor for thirteen years. This could cause large implications for both the country and for the European Union, especially if the German citizens elect a populist leader. On the other hand, in Hungary, Orbán won another two-thirds majority as a result of national elections held in 2018. This sparked mass protests in April 2018 against “an unfair electoral system,” which were attended by tens of thousands of people.65

More protests were held in December 2018, during which the state media unsurprisingly broadcasted a documentary on pigeons instead of covering the protests. The citizens’ dissention may signal a pro-democratic shift in power back to the people in the country, but Orbán still remains the Prime Minister with practically limitless power. The European Union also implemented Article 7 against Hungary in 2018, though in the past, it has proved powerless in forcing its member countries to change. Since it acted eight years after the country initially began backsliding, many argue that it is too late to cause any real changes.

The people have the power in a democracy, but when democratic backsliding occurs, some of that power is taken by a strong leader. Rather than listening to strong, provocative language, people need to listen to the arguments being made in political discourse. Through more research, rhetoric can be used as a signal for democratic backsliding and help international players recognize where it is occurring. Then, more emphasis can be placed on how to stop, or even reverse, these trends in order to restore democracy in the world and transition the system back to one constituted by the people rather than by a strong leader.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Coding Techniques

Compiling Speeches. There are many ambiguities that need to be accounted for when compiling and coding speeches. The slight difference in coding a word or phrase can make a large difference in the results. The methods employed for the analysis in this paper are accounted for in this appendix.

As previously stated, I chose to use only speeches from heads of government. These speeches were acquired from governmental sources only, as outlined in Section V. For both Hungary and Germany, I was careful to follow the same technique so as to eliminate any bias or issues during transfer. Each website ordered speeches chronologically, so I transferred each speech individually from the website to a Microsoft Word document to make coding easier. I maintained two separate documents, one for Hungarian speeches and one for German speeches. I put the title of each speech in bold, 14-point font to make each one distinguishable from the last. Below each title, I put the date in “month.day.year” format, the location (when applicable), and the word “link” which was hyperlinked to the URL to each speech. An example is below.

Prime Minister’s Speech at the Annual Meeting of Hungarian Ambassadors
Date: 08.25.2014
Link

Each speech began on a new page, so coding would not be confused between speeches. Beneath each title, I put the text in Times New Roman, 12-point font. I did not correct any spelling errors or any misuse of words; the texts were maintained exactly as they were written on the websites. Once every speech was compiled for one country, I cross-referenced the speeches I had obtained with those listed in the government’s website. This way, I made sure that I did not miss any speeches during the transfer. Afterwards, I created a template using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to put my coding results in. The columns were labelled as follows:

A. **Speech No.**: Each speech was given a number on the spreadsheet, ordered chronologically just as they were on each governmental website. This column was used just for ease of sorting.
B. **Date**: I put the date that the speech was given in the same format as on the Word document: “month.day.year.”
C. **Year**: I also listed speeches separately by year for further ease when I analyzed the differences between years.
D. **Title**: The title of the speech was placed in the column. I used the same title that was on the website and that was used in the Word document.
E. **Source**: I included a source column, in which I wrote “Hungarian Government” or “German Government” and linked the words to the URL for each speech. This was a precautionary measure, in case the document or spreadsheet became corrupted and I had to regain the speech again.
F. **Location**: I also made a separate column for the speech’s location for the same reason as to why I had a column for the source.
G. **Event**: Some speeches were given annually, so they would be easiest to separate and examine using this column.
H. **Speech Type:** I labelled speeches according to audience – domestic or international. Audiences, as stated earlier, form the basis for speech and rhetoric. Domestic and international audiences were determined based on the location, specific people or groups greeted by the speaker, and the speech title.

I. **Word Count:** Using the Word document, I would highlight the text of the speech (not including the title, date, or link) and write the word count of each speech in this column. The higher the word count, the more terms would be used. This was important to note in the examination.

After each component was listed for each speech on the spreadsheet, I again cross-referenced the list with that from the original government website. Then, I made sure that the order on the Word document matched the Excel spreadsheet. This step was particularly important. If the order was incorrect, my coding would be wrong and the analysis I conducted would thus be irrelevant.

After the column of word count, I listed each subtheme in alphabetic order in its own column. This order was most conducive to coding, as I could find each term with ease. For a list of these terms and the justification for the selection of each term, refer to Section V.

When I began coding, it became difficult to find the most recent speech I was working on after scrolling through dozens of speeches. I had to create a secondary Word document for both countries which I labelled, “READ.” Every read speech was transferred over to the second word document. The same order was maintained and I ensured that the whole speech was transferred when it was moved.

**Coding Methods.** There were three methods I could have use for coding each speech. Since all speeches were coded manually without the use of any computer software, consistency was fundamental. The benefits and disadvantages to each method are listed in the following section. It is important to note that I was not counting the number of words, which are used to discuss a particular idea; rather, I was coding for how many times a particular word, phrase, or idea is mentioned. The example provided in this section comes from Viktor Orbán’s 2014 speech called “Hungary 25 Years After the Opening of the Borders – 25 Years of Democracy and Freedom in Europe.”

**Method I.** The first method involved coding every time a subtheme was mentioned in a paragraph. This approach proved to be the least practical option since paragraphs are arbitrary in an orally delivered speech.
Method II. The second method involved coding the first time a subtheme was mentioned in a sentence. It avoided duplications, but also proved to be more difficult when considering which references to code.

We have been forced to face a problem that was previously only a problem of Europe; immigration or asylum policy. This is something that we must face up to. By way of background, and for those who are less familiar with Hungary, I would just mention that to the present day our country does not have an immigrant community that leads its cultural life according to patterns which are different from those of Hungarians. To put it another way, we have almost no Muslim immigrants whatsoever. Even though we can say that there are some, they form a small fraction of one per cent, and that is how we would like to keep it. Many find this a most uncivilised position, but I disagree. I dislike hypocrisy, and this is a time for straight talk: right now, Hungary would not be able to resolve the widespread problems that accompany immigration. At the same time, Hungary also holds the European view that in immigration policy we must naturally help every individual who is in distress. Therefore those whose lives are in danger and who are being persecuted on political grounds must be given help – as follows naturally from European and Christian morality – and must even be given leave to stay if circumstances warrant. However, no one can seriously think that all the refugees flooding Europe are political refugees. No one could seriously entertain such an idea. We therefore need a highly sophisticated, intelligent and responsive refugee policy, or else Europe will become a magnet attracting everyone but not equipped to provide for them, and this will have negative implications for us all. We therefore support, and at a European level promote, the approach of sealing our borders against immigration, economic immigration; we must also launch a policy which does not provide funds to refugees inside Europe, but channels them to those people’s home countries: problems must be solved at root, where they emerge. At the same time, we must also pursue a foreign policy which supports regimes that may not be fully democratic but are able to provide some degree of stability and are able to implement policies which restrict or control immigration – such countries formerly included Libya and Syria. Foreign policy campaigns driven by European ideological considerations have often led to upheavals in one corner of the world or another, resulting in refugees flooding into Europe. We must talk about this frankly. These are mistakes – foreign policy mistakes – which we must study and analyse, and which we must not continually repeat. I therefore believe that the refugee issue must be stripped of all taboos, and we must talk about it clearly and in a straightforward manner. We must also pursue a solution which takes into consideration both our interests and those of the people in trouble, and which offers a genuine way forward.
Method III. The third method generated the largest amount of coding results since a subtheme was coded every time it was mentioned. While it did produce duplications, such as the clarifying statement made in the sentence, “the approach of sealing our borders against immigration, economic immigration…” it proved to be the most effective method to ensure that all references were counted equally and generated more consistency while coding. I used this method in my coding analysis.

Once I selected the technique I would use for coding, I coded each speech individually by hand. This took an extensive amount of time, but also ensured that I could capture both direct and indirect reference a speaker made to a specific subtheme. Once I finished coding all of the speeches for both countries, I reread them again. The only computer program I used was Microsoft Word’s “Find & Replace” tool, which was used to highlight direct references to subthemes and help improve my overall accuracy.
Appendix II: Government Translations and Google Translate

There are two excerpts of a speech in this section, which was given by German Chancellor Angela Merkel before the United States Congress in 2009. Neither text has been altered from their provided translation. They are both very similar with the exception of a few words and phrases. After analyzing these two texts, I determined that Google Translate was a sufficient tool to use for the German speeches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel Before the United States Congress” Translated by the German Government</th>
<th>“Speech Chancellor Angela Merkel before the United States Congress” Translated Using Google Translate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Distinguished Members of Congress,</td>
<td>Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Distinguished Members of Congress,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to thank you for the great honor and privilege to address you today, shortly before the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.</td>
<td>Distinguished Members of Congress,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am the second German Chancellor on whom this honor has been bestowed. The first was Konrad Adenauer when he addressed both Houses of Congress in 1957, albeit one after the other.</td>
<td>Thank you all for the great honor of speaking to you today, shortly before the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our lives could not have been more different. In 1957 I was just a small child of three years. I lived with my parents in Brandenburg, a region that belonged to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the part of Germany that was not free. My father was a Protestant pastor. My mother, who had studied English and Latin to become a teacher, was not allowed to work in her chosen profession in the GDR.</td>
<td>Our two life paths could not be more different. In 1957 I was just a toddler of three years. I lived with my parents in Brandenburg, a region that belonged to the GDR, the unfree part of Germany. My father worked as a Protestant pastor. My mother, who had studied English and Latin to become a teacher, was not allowed to practice her profession in the former GDR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1957 Konrad Adenauer was already 81 years old. He had lived through the German Empire, the First World War, the Weimar Republic and the Second World War. The National Socialists ousted him from his position as mayor of the city of Cologne. After the war, he was among the men and women who helped build up the free, democratic Federal Republic of Germany.</td>
<td>Konrad Adenauer was already 81 years old in 1957. He had experienced the German Empire, the First World War, the Weimar Republic, the Second World War. He was removed from office by the National Socialists as Lord Mayor of the City of Cologne. After the war he was one of the men and women who helped build the liberal, democratic Federal Republic of Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing is more symbolic of the Federal Republic of Germany than its constitution, the Basic Law, or “Grundgesetz”. It was adopted exactly 60 years ago. Article 1 of the Grundgesetz proclaims, and I quote, “Human dignity shall be inviolable”. This short,</td>
<td>Nothing stands for this Federal Republic of Germany more than its constitution, its basic law. It was adopted exactly 60 years ago. Article 1 of this Basic Law states: &quot;The dignity of man is inviolable.&quot; This</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
simple sentence – “Human dignity shall be inviolable” - was the answer to the catastrophe that was the Second World War, to the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust, to the hate, destruction and annihilation that Germany brought upon Europe and the world.

short, simple sentence - "The dignity of man is inviolable" - was the answer to the catastrophe of the Second World War, to the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust, hatred, devastation and annihilation that has brought Germany over Europe and the world.
Bibliography


